

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)  
**FROM:** Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner  
**RE:** Programming Competitive RSTPX Funds

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff, the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC), Bicycle Committee, and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) recommend that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Approve projects to receive up to \$350,000 in FY19/20-FY20/21 Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds, as follows:
  - BikeSmart and WalkSmart: Youth Bike & Walk Safety Education (Ecology Action): \$50,000
  - Bike Challenge + to increase bike commuting (Ecology Action): \$200,000
  - Project PASEO - Open Streets Events, Earn-a-Bike, and Pop Up Bike Lane (Bike Santa Cruz County): \$100,000

Staff further recommends that the RTC:

2. Adopt a resolution to ([Attachment 1](#)) amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Santa Cruz County and FY19/20 RTC Budget and Work Program to include these projects and funds.
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## **BACKGROUND**

As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Santa Cruz County, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for selecting projects to receive certain state, federal and local funds. These discretionary funds include regional shares of Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX). RSTPX funds are available for a variety of transportation projects as set forth in federal and/or state guidelines. These include various public street and highway, bicycle and pedestrian, transit, transportation system management, and transportation demand management projects.

In September 2019, the RTC indicated its intent to program all but \$350,000 of the region's shares of RSTPX through FY20/21 by formula to cities, the County of Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO). The RTC set aside \$350,000 for non-city, non-county, non-METRO entities, with projects to be selected through a competitive application process. At its December 2019 meeting, the RTC programmed formula funds. Projects proposed for competitive funds were reviewed by RTC's three advisory committees in December 2019 and January 2020.

## DISCUSSION

### RSTPX Competitive Grants

The RTC received four applications in response to the call for projects for \$350,000 in competitive RSTPX funds. Staff considered project deliverability, consistency with the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) goals, policies, and targets, consistency with RTC adopted planning documents, and federal and state criteria and guidelines when evaluating projects. **Staff, the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC), Bicycle Committee, and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) unanimously recommend that the RTC approve projects to receive competitive RSTPX grant funds, as summarized below.**

#### Recommendations for RSTPX Funds

Implementing Agency	Project	Request	Recommended RSTPX
Bike Santa Cruz County	Project PASEO - Open Streets Events, Earn-a-Bike, and Pop Up Bike Lane	\$100,000	<b>\$100,000</b>
Ecology Action	Bike and WalkSmart: Youth Bike & Walk Safety Education	\$50,000	<b>\$50,000</b>
Ecology Action	Bike Challenge + to increase bike commuting	\$200,000	<b>\$200,000</b>
Trail Now	Trail platform on top of railroad tracks at Antonelli Pond	\$79,087	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$429,087</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>

A summary of the proposals are included as Attachment 1. Applications are online at: <https://sccrtc.org/funding-planning/project-funding/2020-rstpx-competitive-grants/>

The RTC set aside up to \$350,000 for competitive grants, but could also decide to not fund some of these projects, fund projects at lower amounts, or only fund some components of projects. Any unprogrammed amounts would be held in reserve and could be used on these or other projects in the future.

Staff does not recommend funding the Trail Now platform on the railroad tracks project at Antonelli Pond at this time. If the RTC were to fund the platform on the railroad tracks project, the RTC or another agency with a Master Agreement with Caltrans would have to agree to serve as the lead agency responsible for ensuring all state and federal mandates are met, significant logistical challenges would need to be resolved with the federal, state, and local railroad agencies and regulators. Since the proposal is not consistent with the adopted Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan and due to significant unknowns regarding the cost and feasibility of this type of project, staff determined that time is better spent delivering the existing planned trail projects.

While University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) decided not to apply in this cycle due to the small pot of funds and their focus on implementing other projects in the next two years, the University has repeatedly expressed interest in applying for RSTPX funds in future cycles. Similarly, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO),

Community Bridges, and other entities have expressed interest in future RTC-discretionary funds.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

\$350,000 of the region's formula share of state Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds are available for programming; therefore, there is no new fiscal impact to the RTC other than ensuring that these funds are included accordingly in the budget for the corresponding projects. Approved projects are included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the funds are processed through the RTC budget.

### **SUMMARY**

The RTC is responsible for selecting projects to receive certain state and federal funds, including state Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds. The RTC issued a call for projects for \$350,000. Staff and RTC Advisory Committees recommend that the RTC award these grant funds to youth bike and walk safety education, open streets and youth earn-a-bike, and bike commute programs.

#### Attachment:

1. Resolution
2. Summary of RSTPX Competitive Grant Applications Received

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**RESOLUTION NO. 90-19**

Adopted by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
on the date of February 6, 2020  
on the motion of Commissioner Alternate **Schiffrin**  
duly seconded by Commissioner **Rotkin**

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE  
2020 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND  
AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2019/20 BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAM TO  
PROGRAM \$350,000 REGIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM EXCHANGE  
(RSTPX) FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) prepared the *Santa Cruz County Transportation Improvement Program* consistent with the *Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) and state law, and in consultation and cooperation with local project sponsors and Caltrans District 5;

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) set aside \$350,000 from the region's anticipated formula shares of Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds through FY20/21 to be allocated through a competitive application process; and

WHEREAS, the RTC issued a call for projects and considered project deliverability, consistency with the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) goals, policies, and targets, consistency with other RTC adopted planning documents, and federal and state criteria and guidelines when evaluating project applications;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION:

1. The *2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for Santa Cruz County* is hereby amended to program \$350,000 of Santa Cruz County's regional apportionment of Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds as follows:
  - a. BikeSmart and WalkSmart: Youth Bike & Walk Safety Education (Ecology Action): \$50,000
  - b. Bike Challenge + to increase bike commuting (Ecology Action): \$200,000
  - c. Project PASEO - Open Streets Events, Earn-a-Bike, and Pop Up Bike Lane (Bike Santa Cruz County): \$100,000
2. The FY 19/20 RTC Budget and Work Program is hereby amended to include these new RSTPX allocations.
3. The RTC shall serve as the public agency sponsor for these projects.

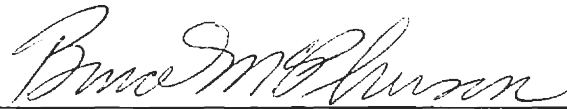
4. Prior to implementation, project sponsors shall present draft plans to and incorporate input from RTC's Bicycle Committee and/or Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC), as appropriate and feasible.

AYES: COMMISSIONERS **Bertrand, Brown, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Friend, Gonzalez, Johnson, Leopold, McPherson, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Meyers and Schiffrin**

NOES: COMMISSIONERS

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS



Bruce McPherson, Chair

ATTEST:



Guy Preston, Secretary

Distribution: Project Sponsors, RTIP file, RTC Fiscal

**Summary of RSTPX Competitive Grants Applications Received**

*Full applications are online at:*

<https://scstrc.org/funding-planning/project-funding/2020-rstpx-competitive-grants/>

**Project PASEO: Bike Santa Cruz County**

**RTC Staff and Committee Recommendation: \$100,000**

**1. Project Title:** Project PASEO (Positive Active Transportation Safety Education Opportunities)  
Proyecto PASEO (Positivo Transportación Activa Seguridad Educación Oportunidades)

**2. Description: Open Streets, Earn-a-Bike and Pop-Up Bike Lane**

Open Streets are free annual public events that temporarily transform roadways into parks for people to bike, walk, skate, and play in a safe and festive environment by temporarily diverting automobile traffic.

The Earn-a-Bike program is a free, seven week educational and recreational program providing bikes, tools, and safety supplies to middle school students, and instructing them in the basics of bike repair, cycling safety, and nutrition education. Teen mentors support program implementation for younger participants, encouraging biking and healthy eating behavior.

A Pop-Up Bike Lane is a temporary demonstration of a protected bike lane. A temporary demonstration is a pilot project and therefore easier for Public Works staff and the community to support. It also provides an opportunity for the community to experience and provide input as to whether a permanent installation is of interest. While exact locations are yet to be finalized, they may include 17<sup>th</sup> Ave in Live Oak and Pennsylvania Dr in Watsonville.

**3. Summary of Project Purpose, Need, Benefits:**

Santa Cruz County has a disproportionately high rate of bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities, ranking among the worst for all California counties. Bike Santa Cruz County has been supporting efforts to get local governments to adopt Vision Zero policies towards reducing all traffic-related serious injuries and deaths to zero. Providing our community members of all ages with multiple opportunities for learning how to walk and bike safely is a distinct public health and safety need. Open Streets, Earn-A-Bike and Bike Club programs, and Pop-Up/ Demonstration Protected Bike Lanes all benefit active transportation awareness, safety and confidence in communities and for community members.

Benefits of comprehensive Project PASEO: The combined effect of these three different programs, with the common goal of promoting active transportation. By instilling confidence in bike handling and bike maintenance skills, and experiencing cycling in safe locations, Project PASEO programs build structure and reduce barriers to cycling for daily trips, increasing quality of life and supporting positive health outcomes for youth and their families in disadvantaged communities, and creating the next generation of bicycle advocates.

**4. Additional information on components of work plan**

Open Streets:

- RSTPX requested: \$50,000
- Total cost: \$112,079
- Schedule: 2 events in Watsonville - summer 2020 & spring 2021, 2 events in Santa Cruz - Fall 2020 & 2021, New TBD location - est. Spring 2021

## *Project PASEO Description - continued*

- Estimated users: 30,000 participants over the course of 5 events
- Benefits:
  - promote physical activity and health
  - promote a culture of bicycling and walking
  - foster community, civic pride and quality of life
  - increase safety and access to the roadway for users of all ages, abilities and modes

### Earn-A-Bike Programs:

- RSTPX requested: \$30,000
- Total cost: \$71,470
- Schedule: Feb 2020 Planning - June 2021 last workshop
- Estimated users: 15 middle school students, and 5 high school students each session (3 sessions, 7 weeks each)
- Benefits:
  - Remove barriers to cycling for youth by providing bicycles to youth, teaching bicycle safety practices and basic bicycle mechanic skills
  - Utilize a Peer-Mentor model to build community connectedness, build confidence for high school and middle school youth, build bikes, and build a youth advocacy base in these communities.
  - Youth in Santa Cruz County are disproportionately burdened by, and at risk for, diabetes and obesity, with 49% of Latino youth and 24% percent of white youth in Santa Cruz County outside the California Department of Education's "healthy fitness zone"
  - Biking can promote healthy lifelong fitness habits and provide a fun and convenient means of meeting recommended physical activity guidelines

### Protected Bike Lanes

- RSTPX requested: \$20,000
- Total cost: \$57,308
- Schedule: February 2020 – June 2021
- Estimated users: Live Oak - up to 150 cyclists per day; Watsonville - up to 100 cyclists per day
- Benefits:
  - Temporarily demonstrate what a protected bike lane is in order to encourage expansion of protected bicycle lanes throughout Santa Cruz County
  - Increase safety due to the physical separation, rather than just paint, between cyclists and motorists.
  - Increase bike ridership
- Design should address potential barriers to transit and pedestrians, especially at non-crosswalk locations

## **Bike Challenge +: Ecology Action**

**RTC Staff and Committee Recommendation: \$200,000**

1. **Project Title:** Bike Challenge + - a gateway to increased bike commuting
2. **Description:** The Bike Challenge + is an evolution of the Bike to Work is Every Day pilot program which catalyzed and propelled an increase in frequent bike commuting throughout Santa Cruz County. Based on the pilot success and lessons learned, version 2.0 will utilize an online tracking and encouragement platform (either Love to Ride or Ride Amigos) that leverages regular participant rewards, friendly competition and team support/encouragement. The twice-a-year Monthly Bike Challenge and year-round encouragement tools will target all commuters in Santa Cruz County. The Challenge + also includes bike commuter workshops, a Rail Trail Ride, marketing campaign, incentives and data/survey collection all geared toward increasing daily bike commuting.
3. **Summary of Project Purpose, Need, Benefits:** The Bike Challenge + is designed to shift more people to choose the bike for transportation and to increase the frequency of those who currently bike commute. As local jurisdictions build more and better bike infrastructure—such as the Rail —there is a need to create the bike social infrastructure of support and encouragement to get more people on bikes for every day transportation. Benefits include reduced commute and regular drive alone car trips therefore reducing VMT, GHG emissions & other tailpipe pollution, safer, less congested and more livable streets.
4. **Additional information on components of work plan**
  - RSTPX requested: \$200,000
  - Total cost: \$362,000
  - Schedule: January 2020-December 2021
  - Estimated daily users: 1685
  - Ecology Action will include outreach in Spanish

### **Project components:**

- **Two Month-long Bike Challenges:** High visibility month-long Bike Challenges in May and September. EA will utilize an online platform that engages, motivates, tracks and rewards bike commuter and transportation trips. EA will engage at least 1,300 participants from 80 work sites throughout the county. EA will target large employers and communities from a variety of locations, from south to north county.
- **12-month Targeted Encouragement:** Ongoing engagement and encouragement using variety of direct channels – including commuter workshops, bike rides and direct one-on-one outreach -- to motivate at least 1,900 Challenge participants to keep bike commuting year-round. EA will provide demographically specific, bike commuter essentials tool kits to prepare participants for commuting throughout the year.
- **10 bike commuter/safety workshops (five per year):** These direct to commuter workshops focus on safety, commuter gear/resources, bike routes and other essential information to give participants the information, skills and confidence to bike in traffic. EA's League of American Bicyclists certified instructors utilize video, slides, and interactive presentations to educate participants, including best practice skills for operating ebikes, JUMP bikes and for sharing and using the Rail Trail. Targets: new and intermediate cyclists to teach them how to safely and confidentially navigate busy roads and paved trails. Workshops will be split between community events at high-



*Bike Challenge Description - continued*

profile sites and include lunch time and evening workshops at geographically diverse locations across the County.

- **Host Rail Trail Ride (one in 2021):** Community bike ride and pop-up event on the Westside of Santa Cruz to directly promote and engage the community in making the best use of the newly opened section of the Rail Trail.
- **Survey and Data collection (one baseline and least one follow up survey for each participant):** Collection of both baseline and follow-up survey data to measure the impact of the Challenge + and evaluate the impact of new bike infrastructure such as the Westside Rail Trail. EA will work with RTC staff to design survey questions, analysis and timeline.
- **Incentives:** Randomly selected Challenge participants will be receive rewards to motivate the greatest number of riders throughout the year.
- **Marketing:** Design and implement a marketing campaign based on a needs assessment of new and intermediate riders. The campaign will use a variety of media channels such as social media, original content, photographs and videos, digital graphics/art, monthly e-newsletters, ads, news stories, and on street promo. This campaign will increase awareness and engagement to maximize the number of Challenge participants and move them to adopting bike commuting as a daily habit.

**Bike and WalkSmart: Youth Bike & Walk Safety Education: Ecology Action**  
**RTC Staff and Committee Recommendation: \$50,000**

1. **Project Title:** Bike and WalkSmart: Youth Bike & Walk Safety Education
2. **Description:** Walk Smart and Bike Smart program provides 2nd graders pedestrian safety training and 5th graders bicycling safety training throughout Santa Cruz County. This proposal will allow us to teach bike and walk safety to 860 second and fifth graders at some 22 classrooms over the 2-year grant period.
3. **Summary of Project Purpose, Need, Benefits:** Increase safe and regular biking and walking to school by elementary students. Young students lack the knowledge and skills to safely bike and walk to school and other frequent destinations. This program will provide the training to give these students the tools to be safe and frequent active transportation users.
4. **Additional information on components of work plan**
  - RSTPX requested: \$50,000
  - Total cost: \$56,000
  - Schedule: February 2020-December 2021
  - Estimated users: 860 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders

**Project components:**

- **Bike Smart:** 50-minute classroom presentation followed by a separate 50-minute on-bike training session/ bicycle safety obstacle course (aka bike rodeo) with 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The on-bike session is preceded by an in-class reminder of previous lesson and followed by a lessons-learned summary. Bike Smart classroom presentations use a variety of mediums - live demonstrations, animations, videos and discussion - to teach safety behavior to students. Lessons cover the benefits of bicycling, rules of the road, the importance and correct use of a bicycle helmet, choosing safe routes, safely navigating intersection crossings, being visible, and other safe bike-handling topics. Students are quizzed on their knowledge of bicycle safety both before and after completion of the Bike Smart program, to measure program effectiveness.
- **Walk Smart:** This program is also structured with a classroom and 'walk around the block' field session, which requires 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to walk through a series of exercises including stopping, looking both ways, and crossing the street only when it is free of oncoming vehicles. The training is preceded by either classroom or assembly presentations. The programs utilize bilingual and bicultural staff, coordinate with law enforcement, and provide targeted educational handouts.
- This proposal will move EA closer to reaching every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grader with essential walk and bike safety education trainings that will help meet RTC's Safe Routes to School goals while providing our youth with skills for adopting life long active transportation habits.

**Platform on railroad tracks to provide a transportation trail- Trail Now**

**RTC Staff and Committee Recommendation: \$0**

**Staff does not recommend RSTPX funds for this project. Using state or federal funds and addressing permit and other challenges would require significant RTC staff time.**

**5. Project Title: Platform on railroad tracks to provide a transportation trail**

**6. Description:**

- Design and engineer a platform that is placed on top of the existing railroad tracks to be used as transportation trail
- Platform designed to be removed to allow use of railroad tracks when required.
- Fabricate a platform section as a proof of concept for future implementation along corridor
- Proof of concept platform will allow for cost and regulatory assessments for extended trail platform system
- Conduct public-outreach with platform
- Provide cost estimate to build standard platform for expansion across Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor (Railroad)
- Final permanent location of platform at Antonelli Pond crossing for improved public access
- Report to RTC on platform

**7. Summary of Project Purpose, Need, Benefits:**

- Lower cost approach for narrow sections of coastal corridor
- Reduce tree and brush cutting requirements
- Allow for wetlands to remain intact and environmentally-sensitive areas
- Increase public access to coastal corridor
- Support long-term trail and transit plans for Santa Cruz County
- Support Railroad and California Transportation Commission (CTC) requirements
- Reduce deterioration of transportation resource
- Enable community to use the coastal corridor for active transportation today

**8. Additional information on components of work plan**

- RSTPX requested: \$79,087
- Total cost per application: \$89,334
- Schedule: December/2019 to August/2020
- Estimated users: Not available