

AGENDA: October 1, 2020

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Guy Preston, Executive Director
RE: Director's Report

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Open House for Highway 1 Freedom to State Park Auxiliary Lanes / Bus on Shoulders / Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail

RTC and Caltrans are seeking public input on the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder Project between Freedom Blvd. and State Park Dr. and the Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 (State Park Dr. to Rio Del Mar Blvd) through an [online open house](#). Caltrans is formally initiating studies for the preparation of the draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) and the online open house presents factors to be considered in the draft EIR/EA for this segment of Highway 1 and the Coastal Rail Trail segment. Community members can visit the open house and provide their input through October 19, 2020. An additional link to the open house can be found on the homepage of the RTC's website.

Public Comment on Highway 1 – Mar Vista Overcrossing Project

The RTC is seeking public input on the aesthetics of the proposed Highway 1 - Mar Vista overcrossing. A video is now available on the RTC's [website](#) provides an overview of the project and shows examples of three conceptual design ideas for the overcrossing. The community is asked to share their thoughts on the proposed aesthetic concepts through October 9, 2020. An additional link to the open house can be found on the homepage of the RTC's website. The Mar Vista Overcrossing is being environmentally cleared as part of the Highway 1 – Auxiliary Lane and Bus on Shoulder Project between State Park and Bay/Porter. RTC has submitted this project for SB1 grant funding. If successful in obtaining this funding, this project could be constructed as early as 2023.

Coastal Rail Trail Update

Project development and construction continues on various segments of the coastal rail trail. To highlight this progress, The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County produced an informational [video](#), which shows significant construction progress on Segment 7-Phase I of trail, which extends across the west side of Santa Cruz. I expect to have an announcement on a virtual ribbon cutting of Segment 7 at the next RTC meeting.

The video also provides a nice overview of the full trail and discusses many of its design concepts. The status of project delivery is depicted in the following map:



Bike Wayfinding Signage Project Completion

The Santa Cruz County Bicycle Route Signage Program is expected to be completed tomorrow with the last signs being installed tomorrow in Capitola. In an effort to increase bicycle ridership and safety in the county, bicycle wayfinding signage has been installed at 303 locations throughout the county, funded primarily by a state Active Transportation Program grant. The signage will assist all types of bicycle riders in finding and accessing major destinations throughout the county. Signs also mark the revised long-distance Pacific Coast Route.

October is Bike Month, and in celebration, we encourage everyone to get out and explore the county on their bikes using the new signage to reach areas of interest as well as preferred and safe routes to travel throughout the county. An online map that shows the locations of all of the signs and maps out the preferred routes, as well as all the county’s bikeways, can be found on the RTC [website](#).

Emergency Contract for Repairs on Antonelli Trestle Railroad Bridge

On September 8, 2020, I executed an emergency sole source contract with Industrial Rail for \$8260 to make repairs to the maintenance walkway on the Antonelli Trestle, after conferring with Chair McPherson. This bridge was damaged

when an SUV tried to drive across the bridge and broke through the walkway. The work to repair the walkway has been completed. RTC is seeking reimbursement from the insurance of the driver.

Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis (TCAA)

RTC staff is working with its consultant, HDR Inc., on completing performance measure analysis and the draft report. The schedule was being driven by a Caltrans requirement associated with the network integration study. Caltrans has agreed to provide some relief to their deadline, which has allowed RTC and its consultant the latitude to adjust the schedule out by approximately a month. The extra time will be used to complete the supporting information and data needed to complete the analysis and report. The revised schedule is shown below:

November 2020 – Stakeholder outreach on performance measure results and locally preferred alternative including virtual public open house, partner agency meeting, and advisory committee meetings. Exact dates will be provided at the November meeting.

December 18, 2020 – presentation to METRO at December board meeting

January 14, 2021 - RTC meeting with public hearing, draft report and staff recommendation on locally preferred alternative – no action taken

February 4, 2021 – RTC meeting - action requested on final report and locally preferred alternative

April 1, 2021 – RTC meeting – Business Plan Report based on the locally preferred alternative

Governor's Executive Order N-79-20

On September 23, 2020 Governor Newsom released [Executive Order N-79-20](#) aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change by drastically reducing the demand for fossil fuels by phasing out gasoline-powered cars and trucks. Transportation currently accounts for more than 50 percent of California's greenhouse gas emissions. Zero emission vehicles are a key part of California's clean, innovative economy and is already California's second largest global export market.

The Executive Order sets the following state goals to transition cars and trucks to zero-emission vehicles over the next 15-25 years:

- 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks to be zero-emission by 2035;

- 100 percent of medium-and heavy-duty vehicles on the road to be zero-emission by 2045 for all operations where feasible and by 2035 for drayage trucks (on-road, diesel-fueled, heavy duty trucks that transport containers and bulk to and from the ports and intermodal railyards); and
- Transition to 100 percent zero-emission off-road vehicles and equipment by 2035 where feasible.

The goals are expected to be achieved through a combination of policies, programs and regulatory actions, with the focus on requiring automakers to steadily sell more zero-emission vehicles until they make up 100% of new sales. The state will work in partnership with utility companies, local jurisdictions, air districts, transportation agencies, and other stakeholders to significantly expand charging infrastructure throughout the state and provide affordable fueling and charging options for zero-emission vehicles, in ways that serve all communities and in particular low-income and disadvantaged communities. The Executive Order also calls for development of a Zero-Emissions Vehicle Market Development Strategy including additional rebates to consumers. It also sets goals regarding oil production and extraction.

Locally, several entities have already been working to increase zero-emission vehicles. In 2013, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) developed a [plan](#) to outline the process of creating a vehicle activity intensity analysis to help identify potential charging areas in the Monterey Bay Area. The [Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Alliance](#) hosted National Drive Electric Week (9/29/20-10/1/20); the Monterey Bay Air Resources District is accepting applications for its new [Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Incentive Program](#) (rebates for fuel cell, electric, plug-in hybrid passenger vehicles) and Zero Emission School Bus Program; local jurisdictions are required to streamline electric vehicle (EV) charging station permits in order to expedite the availability of EV charging stations (as mandated by Assembly Bill 1236 from 2015). Santa Cruz METRO and Community Bridges/Lift line has been investing in electric infrastructure, with plans to further advance its electric fleet.

The Executive Order also directs state agencies to develop strategies to improve clean transportation, sustainable freight and transit options, including an integrated statewide rail and transit network and supporting bicycle, pedestrian and micro-mobility options, particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

RTC continues to prioritize multimodal, sustainable transportation solutions into long-range planning, including our Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs), Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) and the Transit Corridor Alternative's Analysis (TCAA). The TCAA includes a network integration component, funded by Caltrans. The study will integrate the transit assumptions and show connectivity to the State rail network. RTC is also advancing three hybrid Highway 1 auxiliary lane / bus on shoulder (BOS) projects that would promote clean electric transit, while improving

safety and operations and reducing cut-through traffic on local roads. The Highway 1 projects include bicycle infrastructure in a way that creates synergy between transportation modes. Our recent application for SB1 funding discusses how our proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Soquel Drive lead to active transportation bridges on the way to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL), another multi-modal facility consisting of the rail trail and future clean transit.

RTC staff and local jurisdictions will be participating in discussions with state agencies on the implementation of the Executive Order.

Governor signs SB288

On September 29, 2020, Governor Newsome signed SB288 (Wiener) allowing public transit agencies to temporarily bypass environmental reviews and fast-track projects such as bus lanes, bus routes and light rail service. According to press announcements, pedestrian pathways, bike-sharing facilities, bus-only lanes, charging stations for electric buses and light rail systems would all be easier for to construct under the law. Projects would have to be located within an existing public right of way, could not increase automobile capacity or demolish affordable housing, and would have to meet heightened labor standards to qualify. An existing exemption from the environmental review law for new bicycle lanes, plus parking and storage, will be extended through 2030. Cities and counties, transit, regional and state agencies are awaiting state guidance and evaluating which projects could be accelerated.

Federal Transportation Act:

On September 30, 2020 the Federal Transportation Act (FAST Act) was set to expire. On September 22, 2020 the House approved a one-year extension of the 2015 FAST Act, wrapped into a continuing resolution (CR) aimed at averting a federal government shutdown from October 1 through December 11. The Senate approved the extension yesterday. The extension includes \$14 billion that is needed to keep the Highway Trust Fund afloat.

Staff will be providing a more detailed roundup of state and federal legislative activities at the next RTC meeting.