

AGENDA: December 3, 2020

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

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

**MBSST – Segment 7 Phase I
Virtual Groundbreaking Ceremony**

The RTC and City of Santa Cruz will be co-hosting a virtual ribbon cutting for Segment 7, Phase I of the Coastal Rail Trail on Dec. 10 from 12:30-1 p.m. via Zoom. Visit the City of Santa Cruz [website](#) for information on joining this celebration.

**Highway 9
Public Meeting**

Supervisor Bruce McPherson's office will host a virtual public meeting on Wednesday December 16th from 5:30-7pm. Caltrans will update the public on two of their recently completed Project Initiation Documents (PIDs), including their Safety PID for bicycle and pedestrian access from Graham Hill Rd to the SLV Schools Complex along Highway 9, as well as their highway striping PID for work throughout the San Lorenzo Valley. There will be another meeting in February 2021 to discuss Caltrans' Highway 9 Capital Maintenance PID in and the Complete Streets PID. Please visit RTC's [website](#) for more information on attending the meeting.

**Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Project
Highway 1 and Soquel Drive Improvements – Grant Recommendation**

On November 16, 2020, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff released their recommendations for Cycle 2 funding of three Senate Bill 1 (SB1) programs, which included \$107.2 Million in recommended funding for the RTC's \$150.6 Million Watsonville to Santa Cruz - Multimodal Corridor Program – Cycle 2 Project. The CTC adopted the recommendation on December 2, 2020.

The Project integrates and improves infrastructure for transit, active transportation, and local roadway/highway modes of travel. The project provides transportation options for everyone, including our disadvantaged communities, and will significantly benefit the region's economy. The project will decrease congestion with increased

throughput, while reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and creating a safer and more sustainable community.

The Project includes safety and operational improvements on Highway 1, including the first 5.75 miles of an ultimate 7.5-mile long hybrid bus-on-shoulder/auxiliary lane facility. Three sets of auxiliary lanes will be constructed between Soquel Drive and State Park Drive, and transit buses will be permitted to ride on the shoulders at intersection locations to bypass traffic. The project also includes two new active transportation bridges at Chanticleer Avenue and Mar Vista Drive, as well as a bridge replacement at Capitola Avenue with sidewalks and bike lanes.

The Project also includes complete street improvements for Soquel Avenue/Drive between La Fonda Avenue, near Harbor Highschool, to State Park Drive in Aptos. The roadway will receive a cape seal of the pavement for 5.6-miles and then will be reconfigured with over 5-miles of buffered/protected bike lanes, 46 green bike boxes for left turn movements, sidewalk gap closures, 100 ADA ramps, 96 crosswalk upgrades, and crosswalk warning devices at 10-mid block locations. Adaptive signal control will be installed at 23 intersections, with bus transit prioritization.

RTC is working with Caltrans, Santa Cruz METRO, and the County to deliver the project improvements. The County of Santa Cruz is the lead agency in implementation of the Soquel Avenue/Drive multimodal improvements. The Highway 1 improvements will be constructed by Caltrans with the RTC implementing environmental clearance and final design.

A grant of this magnitude demonstrates the power of Measure D in leveraging additional funding. It also validates years of effective planning, especially in the inclusion of a sustainable community strategy within our Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the adoption of our Unified Corridor Investment Study, which served as our required multi-modal corridor plan.

SB1 funding for construction was programmed in Fiscal Year 2022-23, with \$92.8 Million coming from the Solutions to Congested Corridor Program (SCCP) and \$14.4 Million from the competitive Local Partnership Program (LPP). RTC staff will work with its partners to adjust the schedules to match programming. I anticipate that all components of the project will be under construction by 2023. Staff will provide regular updates on the delivery of this transformative project at subsequent meetings.

Highway 1 Improvement Project – State Park to Bay/Porter Release of Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

The RTC and Caltrans have released the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Highway 1 Auxiliary Lane Project from State Park to Bay/Porter. The 45-day public review and comment period is open through Jan. 11, 2021. A virtual

public hearing will be held on Dec. 8 from 5-6:30 p.m. to provide the public with the opportunity to learn more about the project and submit comments before a final design is selected. More information can be found on the RTC [website](#).

Federal Stimulus Legislation

Earlier this week, a bipartisan group of members of Congress unveiled the framework for a \$908 billion emergency relief proposal designed to carry the U.S. through March 31, 2021. The text of the bill is still being finalized, but the bipartisan coalition says it will include \$45 billion for transit, airlines, airports, buses and Amtrak – including \$15 billion for mass transit, \$1 billion for Amtrak and \$8 billion for buses and the motorcoach industry. How the transit funds would be distributed has not been finalized. The transit industry has been requesting at least \$32 billion in emergency relief as the combined impacts of the pandemic have left public transit systems across the United States struggling financially. The proposal also includes financial relief for states, local and tribal governments, students, small businesses, health care, low-income and minority communities the unemployed, among others. The framework is retroactive to Dec. 1 and extends to March 31, which gives Congress a few weeks to nail down details on the proposed legislation and potentially pass a piece of legislation.