



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission 2021 STATE Legislative Program

Focus Areas in 2021

- Ensure legislative and administrative actions **support implementation of priority transportation projects and programs in Santa Cruz County**, including projects identified in the Measure D Expenditure Plan. Maintain and increase funding for RTC projects and programs, support streamlining and other actions which could expedite delivery of projects, and oppose efforts which could hinder implementation of RTC priorities.
- Support efforts to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility** through **increased funding for pedestrian, bicycle and transit projects**, and support California's passenger vehicle **emission standards** and increased equitable access to **zero emission vehicles** and infrastructure.
- Support legislative and administrative actions that will improve safety on state highways and local roads, including actions which would **allow for reduction of speed limits** and integration of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, especially where state highways serve as main streets.
- Support **Transportation Development Act (TDA) program modifications** which reduce the burden of outdated performance measures and eliminate the farebox recovery penalty for public transportation systems.
- Support state and federal **COVID-19 relief and stimulus funding** to support economic recovery and make up for state, local and transit agency transportation revenue losses.
- Support funding and policy strategies to help achieve and better coordinate state and regional climate goals, advance energy efficiency and **improve resilience and response to natural hazards** and the impacts of climate change, including extreme storms, sea level rise and wildfires.
- Temporarily **adjust maintenance of effort requirements**, for the SB1 Local Streets and Roads Program and local sales tax measure funds, given impacts on local revenues from COVID-19.
- Support new state and federal transportation funding mechanisms to replace gas and diesel taxes, especially with increased vehicle fuel economy and zero-emission vehicle adoption.
- Honor the will of the voters in preserving the intent of Senate Bill 1 (SB1) and local measure funding for transportation that will allow the State, Regions and Locals to improve transportation for all Californians.
- Support modifications to the Brown Act to enhance public participation in virtual meetings.



Ongoing Priorities

Transportation Funding

- **Protect Transportation Funding:** Preserve existing and new funding for transportation projects, maximize funding for Santa Cruz County transportation projects, and preserve regional discretion and priority-setting.
 - Stable, formula funding is essential for addressing the backlog of transportation infrastructure repairs and improvements in Santa Cruz County. Protect current and future taxes and fees and other transportation funds (including Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA), Transportation Development Act (TDA), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Active Transportation Program (ATP), and other funds) from elimination or diversion to other State programs, General Fund loans, general obligation bond debt service, or to other non-transportation purposes.
 - Support actions that preserve the intent of Senate Bill 1 (SB1) and local measure funding to allow the State, regions and local agencies to maintain, protect and improve existing transportation funds dedicated to transit, congestion management on the state highway system, lifeline arterials, and goods movement routes while also addressing immediate and long-term unmet funding needs.*
 - Monitor implementation efforts of Executive Order N-19-19, which directs the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to invest its annual \$5 billion portfolio to help reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and to ensure that state funds, specifically SB 1 funds, continue to be used for transportation purposes. Ensure that state regulations do not negatively impact implementation of the voter-approved Measure D Expenditure Plan.
 - With increased emphasis on vehicle fuel economy and zero-emission vehicle adoption, explore and support new funding mechanisms to replace gas and diesel taxes for transportation investments. Monitor proposals such as pay-by-the-mile user fees, public private partnerships, vehicle registration fees, or wholesale energy taxes. Ensure that proposals are equitable to disadvantaged and rural areas.*
 - Oppose proposals that could tie transportation fund availability to local jurisdictions, to non-transportation and development projects.
- **COVID Recovery:**
 - Support state and federal COVID-19 relief and stimulus legislation to provide funding to address adverse funding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transit and other local agencies and to expedite project implementation.
 - Temporarily **adjust maintenance of effort and performance criteria requirements**, for SB1 Local Streets and Roads Program, local sales tax measure funds, and fare-box recovery requirements for transit given impacts on local revenues from COVID-19.



- **Ensure Fair Distribution of Funding:**
 - Ensure state and federal funds are made available for projects in Santa Cruz County, are distributed equitably, and are not disproportionately distributed to large regions. Ensure competitive programs make funding reasonably available for multimodal projects in Santa Cruz County, that address local and regional priorities.
 - **Local Role:** Ensure a strong role for regional and local agencies in planning and determining transportation investment priorities. Support legislation that respects local authority, protecting or expanding local decision-making in programming expenditures of transportation funds, rather than the State making top-down funding decisions that are not community-based. Project and increase direct funding to regions through both federal and state programs; and reinforce and build upon the structure of SB45 that provides regions a strong voice in the programming of state funds.
 - **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):** Ensure equitable programming and allocation of STIP funds.
 - **“Disadvantaged Communities” Definition:** Ensure that legislation and programs aimed at benefiting disadvantaged communities use a definition of “disadvantaged communities” (DACs) that ensures that projects that benefit low-income and other transportation disadvantaged residents of Santa Cruz County are not excluded from funding opportunities that support sustainable communities, transportation choices, and investments in alternative modes of transportation. Ensure that the definition does not rely exclusively on communities defined as DACs by CalEnviroScreen, which disproportionately excludes many low-income communities in Santa Cruz County.
- **Increase Funding for All Transportation Modes:** Support measures that increase funding for and support implementation of transportation projects in Santa Cruz County, including funds for ongoing system maintenance, congestion reduction, safety, complete streets, active transportation bike, pedestrian, transit projects, transit-oriented development, and specialized transportation for seniors and people with disabilities in Santa Cruz County.
 - **New funding systems:** Phase in new funding systems which are tied to system use, rather than fuel consumption or fuel prices. May include new user fees, such as a Road User Charge or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) fee and other alternative funding mechanisms.
 - **Expand local revenue-raising opportunities** and innovative financing options to address the significant backlog of transportation needs. Provide locals with the ability to supplement and leverage state funding for investments that protect state and local transportation assets.
 - **Expand the authority of the RTC and local entities to increase taxes and fees** for transportation projects, such as new gas taxes, vehicle registration fees, property-tax financing, and infrastructure financing districts.



- Support clarifying amendment to Government Code Section 65089.20 that will give RTPAs equal treatment with Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) to seek voter approval for a local vehicle registration fee. *(SB83 cleanup)*
- **Lower Vote Threshold:** Support efforts to amend the California constitution to lower the voter threshold for local transportation and affordable housing funding measures, such as local sales tax or vehicle registration fee ballot measures, from the 2/3 supermajority to a simple majority or 55% vote. Support actions which would broaden eligibility in existing and/or new transportation funding streams to enable their use as a subsidy for low-income transportation system users (e.g. discounted fares for public transportation or shared mobility service).
- **Active Transportation Program (ATP):** Increase ATP funding and ensure potential reforms to the Active Transportation Program (ATP) do not reduce the proportion available for Santa Cruz County agencies to compete for, including funds to the competitive statewide, small urban and rural funding pots. Support efforts to simplify the Active Transportation Program (ATP) application and project delivery, build local capacity to deliver transformative projects, and provide regions greater flexibility to innovate and strategically invest funds to meet local needs.*
- **Cap & Trade:**
 - Increase percent of Cap & Trade revenues allocated to transportation projects and programs that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Santa Cruz County.
 - Support increases in Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) appropriations
 - Support policy changes to the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program (AHSC) that increase funding opportunities for projects in Santa Cruz County.
 - Ensure continued funding for low and zero emission transit deployment. Ensure regulatory and legislative requirements related to transit electrification provide flexibility, consider cost and available technology, and do not place an undue burden on transit agencies.
 - Support legislation to devote a permanent Cap-and-Trade funding allocation to the Active Transportation Program.
- Support legislation to **increase the availability of funding for cities, counties, and regions** to support economic development, affordable housing, and implementation of sustainable community strategies, as well as policy tools to reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel in a manner that ensures equitable policy outcomes.
- Support innovative projects such as a new state-supported intercity passenger rail service on the planned Coast Route between the Bay Area and Goleta *(previously called the Coast Daylight)*.*

- **Increase and Preserve Funding for Priority Projects in Santa Cruz County:**
 - Projects on Highway 1
 - Local Street and Roadway Preservation
 - Transit projects
 - 511 implementation
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities, including the Monterey Bay
 - Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) and in San Lorenzo Valley
 - Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line preservation
 - Soquel Avenue-Freedom Boulevard Corridor

- **Transportation Development Act (TDA):**
 - Monitor potential modifications to the TDA. Ensure funding for transit, planning, administrative, and other TDA purposes in Santa Cruz County are not reduced. Oppose efforts that would reduce TDA funds which are essential for RTC administration and planning. Support the development of greater efficiencies within the TDA while streamlining and updating performance metrics and eliminating penalties associated with farebox recovery. Support development of alternative performance measures that are focused on incentivizing transit agency actions that improve transit service and increase ridership, consistent with state and regional climate and equity goals.
 - Ensure discount fares aimed at boosting ridership and improving social equity do not result in reduced state funding. Pursue relief from TDA audits and performance criteria during the current economic downturn.

Project Implementation

- **Streamlining, Expediting, Facilitating Project Delivery:** Support administrative and/or legislative efforts which may be required to implement or expedite delivery of priority projects. Includes actions that streamline funding applications, simplify program administration, efforts that modernize and accelerate project delivery.
 - Support the development of greater efficiencies of transportation project implementation, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reform, storm water runoff regulations, CA Fish and Wildlife, CA Water Quality Control Board and California Public Utilities Commission permit and approval processes, to streamline both project development and delivery for priority transportation and transit projects, including the Scotts Creek Bridge Replacement and implementation of the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS), and eliminating any unnecessary, overly burdensome and/or duplicative mandates.
 - Support legislative and administrative actions required to secure permits that may be required to implement priority projects.
 - Opportunities to expedite transportation project delivery may include increasing contracting and financing options, increased flexibility in early allocation of programmed funds and initiating reimbursable work with local funds in advance of CTC allocation of all projects, efforts that expedite the Caltrans design review process, opportunities to expedite locally-sponsored projects on the state highway system, and increase in encroachment permit limits.
 - Support environmental streamlining measures for bike, pedestrian, transit, and infrastructure preservation within existing public rights of way, and other measures that expedite project delivery. Support efforts that provide for



streamlined project delivery for transit projects that fulfill the goals of AB 32 and SB 375, as well as other state and federal air quality mandates and mobility performance measures.

- Support delegation of fund allocation responsibilities to Caltrans.
- Allow advance payment of programmed funds, in order to expedite project delivery and resolve cash flow challenges faced especially by small agencies.
- **Advanced Mitigation:** Support implementation of “advanced mitigation” environmental programs, including approving up-front environmental mitigation funding for projects, such as the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing. Support creation of a low-interest loan program to support advance mitigation and habitat conservation plans that mitigate the impacts of transportation infrastructure and make project implementation more efficient.
- **Safety:** Support legislation and programs that improve transportation safety for all users and support programs aimed at eliminating all traffic-related serious injuries and fatalities.
 - Speed limits: Support proposals that would allow local jurisdictions to reduce speed limits on both local roads and state highways and work with state representatives to modify the California Vehicle Code to allow for prima facie speed limits of 25 mph on state highways that function as main streets, especially in business and school zones to address findings and to address other recommendations of the AB2363 Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force report.
 - Traffic Laws & Enforcement: Support proposals to increase enforcement and modification of traffic laws to better protect pedestrians and bicyclists, including proposals to authorize automated speed enforcement on a pilot program basis, and modifications to vehicle code to allow vehicles to cross a double-yellow line when passing cyclists.
 - Education: Support commercial driver, bus driver, motorist, bicyclist, and Safe Routes to Schools training and education programs which reduce collisions.
- **Active Transportation Facilities:** Support modification to rules, regulations, and government codes that will make roadways more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly, including: laws associated with sharing the road; ensuring complete streets components (e.g. accessible pedestrian signals) are considered during the design of all projects; increasing funds for pedestrian, bicycle, and new micro-mobility devices and services (e.g. bike share), and safety countermeasures (e.g. buffered or protected bike lanes, flashers and lighting at crosswalks); increasing funds to provide resources necessary for First/Last Mile improvements; Safe Routes to School Programs; and providing additional direction and consistency for accessible pedestrian design.
- **Land Use/Housing/Transportation Coordination:**
 - Support efforts to reduce vehicles miles traveled and promote job-housing balance which also protect locally-driven land use planning that implements broad policy goals set by the state to provide affordable housing in transit-rich areas. Encourage new developments to incentivize active transportation and transit use.



Ensure SB743 (Steinberg, 2013) implementation supports infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and expedites transportation project delivery. Support innovative measures to mitigate growth in vehicle miles traveled, such as regional mitigation banks.

- Support state goals to reduce homelessness. Monitor implementation of Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-23-20 which requires Caltrans to develop a model lease template to allow counties and cities to use Caltrans property adjacent to highways or state roads for short-term emergency homelessness shelter; and requests that special districts, cities, counties, and transit agencies, and others to examine their ability to provide shelter and house homeless individuals.
- Support efforts to streamline SB375 implementation and extend the timeframe between required Regional Transportation Plan updates.

- **Federal Transportation Act Implementation:** Support legislation and administrative strategies to implement the federal authorization bill, in a way that ensures the best possible outcome for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.
- **SHOPP Program:**
 - Support Caltrans' efforts to provide more outreach regarding State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects and to include measureable targets for improving the state highway system. Support clarification of existing laws to permit the expenditure of SHOPP funds for operational projects on state highways.
 - Support inclusion of complete streets within SHOPP projects, as appropriate, but especially in areas where state highways serve as main streets, such as Highway 1/Mission St, Highway 9 through San Lorenzo Valley, and Highway 152 in Santa Cruz County.
- **Commuter Programs:** Support policies and legislation aimed at reducing trips and vehicle miles traveled and associated traffic congestion, including, but not limited to, employer-based programs to help reduce the share of commuting by single-occupant vehicles, expanding broadband and incentives to facilitate telecommuting, expanding park and ride lots, and a regional commuter benefits ordinance. Support dedicated funding for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and strategies.
- **Shared Mobility Systems:** Support policies that enable technological innovations to improve mobility, while protecting the public's interest. Monitor legislation and regulations related to shared mobility, such as transportation network companies (TNCs) and real-time carpooling, to ensure that mobility benefits are maximized, especially for underserved populations, and access to critical data for transportation and land-use planning and operational purposes is assured. Support measures that allow for local control and regulation of shared mobility systems such as scooters, bikes, and other fleets.
- **Connected and Autonomous Vehicles:** Monitor and engage in legislation and regulations to facilitate deployment of connected vehicles and autonomous vehicles. Oppose federal efforts to preempt local authority over the use of autonomous vehicles



in their communities. In partnership with California cities and counties, transit agencies, the business community, and other transportation organizations, engage in regulatory and legislative efforts related to connected and autonomous vehicles with the goal of accelerating their safety, mobility, environmental, equity and economic benefits. Similar to the “shared mobility” strategy, support access to critical data for transportation and land use planning and operational purposes.

- **Electrification and Zero Emission** vehicle fleets: Support funding and coordination, including policy, planning, and infrastructure, for low and zero emission vehicles.
 - Support additional dedicated funding to help transit operators and colleges convert their bus and van fleets to zero-emission in order to meet the state’s Innovative Clean Transit rule and accelerate the decarbonization of the transportation system. Support reduced utility pricing for public transit electric vehicle fleets.
 - Support proposals that provide funding for regions and localities to build infrastructure and provide incentives for zero-emission vehicle and other modal device purchases, considering cost of increased usage of electricity, electric power storage capacity, proper safety protocols* and access for lower-income households.
- **Resilience:** Monitor and support legislation that invests in projects and programs to improve resilience to the impacts of climate change on transportation infrastructure and utilization of public transit in emergencies that address scenarios such as severe storm events, public safety power shut off events, wildfires, and sea level rise.*
- **Encroachments:** Support legislation that clarifies the authority under which rail property owners may remove, or by notice may require the removal of encroachments.
- **Unfunded Mandates:** Oppose unfunded mandates and seek funding for mandates imposed in recent years. Require new regulatory proposals to include an estimate of the cost and impact such proposals will have in the delivery of California’s transportation program.
- **Central Coast Representation:** Advocate for Central Coast representatives to be appointed to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and other state boards and committees in order to ensure that the complexities of small, coastal, and rural jurisdictions addressing their infrastructure and mobility needs are considered.*
- **Modernization of the Brown Act:** Enact legislation to expand public and board participation in public meetings. In order to maximize participation and access by board and committee members, modify the Brown Act to enhance participation and eliminate requirement to notice of all remote board or committee member locations.*

The 2021 Legislative Program was accepted by the RTC on 2/4/21.

**Starred items are also part of the Central Coast Coalition’s legislative platform.*

s:\legislat\2021\2021-rtc-legislativeprograms.docx





Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission 2021 FEDERAL Legislative Program

- **Priority Projects:** Seek and preserve funding for priority transportation projects and programs in Santa Cruz County, including:
 - Projects on Highway 1
 - Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line preservation
 - Transit operations and capital projects
 - Local street and roadway preservation
 - Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST/Rail Trail)
 - 511 implementation
- **Support COVID Relief and Economic Recovery:** Support federal relief and stimulus funding to support economic recovery, support state and local and state responses to the COVID-19 public health crisis, and backfill state, regional, and local transportation revenue losses due to COVID-19, preventing layoffs, major reductions in transit service, and project delays. Expedite federal transit funding grants such as FTA 5311 and FTA 5339 discretionary grants.
- **Transportation Act Reauthorization**
 - As Congress works on reauthorization of the FAST Act, which expires in September 2021, support California's reauthorization principles for a **long-term, fully funded** transportation authorization that supports local agencies achieving national, state and regional goals related to infrastructure condition, safety, mobility, and air quality.
 - **Raise New Revenues & Grow Existing Programs:** Support raising and indexing federal gas taxes and development of new funding mechanisms to ensure the financial integrity and solvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and Mass Transportation Account. Increase federal transportation investment all modes to bring transportation infrastructure up to a good state of repair and meet growing transportation needs in Santa Cruz County.
 - **Increase funding:** Support a reauthorization bill and other legislative actions that increase funding for priority projects in Santa Cruz County, including:
 - **Active Transportation:** Bicycle and pedestrian safety and mobility projects, such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).
 - **Transit:** Includes continued and accelerated growth of the Small Transit Intensive Cities Program (STIC), funding for acquisition of transit capital (Bus and Bus Facilities, and Low and No Emissions Bus Programs), Capital Investment Grants, funding for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) implementation, state of good repair, and other transit programs. Support tax credits for the purchase of electric buses.
 - **Local Roads and Highways:** Support robust funding for core programs such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and bridge programs needed for local entities to address the backlog of bridge and roadway projects.
 - **Self-Help Counties:** Support programs that reward areas which have approved self-help revenue measures like Measure D and the METRO dedicated sales tax.
 - **Planning:** Existing federal planning funds are inadequate, especially given increased planning, performance measure, monitoring, and model requirements.



- **Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** May include federal grants or pilot programs for comprehensive planning that supports opportunities to connect housing, jobs, and mixed-use development with transportation options.
- **Infrastructure Initiative:** If an infrastructure package, such as HR2, the “Moving Forward Act”, advances, ensure that the initiative increases transportation investment opportunities for projects in Santa Cruz County and addresses principles for reauthorization of the transportation act. Any infrastructure package should ensure projects in Santa Cruz County are not disadvantaged in accessing those funds. The initiative should also include a significant investment of **new** federal funds for transportation, stabilize the Highway Trust Fund and not be offset by reductions to other federal programs serving Santa Cruz County residents.
- **Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Climate Resiliency:** Strengthen federal partnership to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and make our communities and transportation networks resilient to a changing climate.
 - **Funding:** Support development of new resources to support climate adaptation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation (similar to those included in the Senate FAST Act reauthorization bill (S. 2302)), expand eligibility for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and other funding programs to Santa Cruz County.
 - **Electrification:** Support federal funding, tax credits, and coordination of vehicle electrification purchase (including buses), planning and infrastructure.
 - **Mitigation:** Defend against rollbacks of California’s air quality and climate change laws and regulation, such as fuel efficiency standards and cap-and-trade programs.
 - **Resiliency:** Support resiliency and climate change preparedness and efforts that could support local efforts to improve resiliency, respond to new or worsening storm, fire, and other environmental hazards and meet regional climate goals. Support efforts to increase planning funds that help regional governments address climate change and make regional transportation infrastructure more resilient.
 - **Disaster Recovery:** Ensure the federal government provides sufficient emergency relief appropriations and federal agency resources to support rebuilding and recovery efforts for wildfire, storm, and other natural disasters. Support legislative efforts to extend the timeframe for road projects qualifying for federal disaster reimbursement to move to the construction phase from two years to six years.
- **Federal Authorization Implementation:** Support legislation and administrative strategies to implement federal transportation authorization bills in a way that ensures the best possible outcome for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County. Ensure that U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) implementation of MAP-21, FAST Act, and any new transportation act rules and regulations do not have a negative impact on local projects and programs.
 - **Discretionary Grants:** Advocate for discretionary transportation grant awards for priority transportation projects in Santa Cruz County, including the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD, formerly TIGER) and Capital Investment Grant program.
 - **Innovative Financing:** Ensure proposals for public-private partnerships and innovative financing are favorable for project implementation in Santa Cruz County. Support and expand the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program and make the



Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program more accessible to smaller public agencies.

- **Department of Transportation Budget and Annual Appropriations.** Ensure that Congress appropriates funding consistent with amounts authorized in federal transportation authorizations (e.g. FAST Act), even if Continuing Resolutions (CR) are needed to keep transportation programs running each fiscal year.
- **Oppose rescissions or arbitrary cuts** that could reduce funding for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.
- **Support transparent congressionally-directed spending** (earmarks) to allow for Congressional support of priority projects in Santa Cruz County
- **Oppose unfunded mandates** and support legislation that provides funding for past mandates.
- **Performance Measures:** Support development of appropriate performance measures which are consistent with RTC approved goals, policies, and targets and which recognize data limitations of many regions. Support open collaboration, data sharing and funding to successfully implement state and federal performance-based planning and management requirements.
- **Protect and expand transportation fringe benefits.** Reinstated the commuter benefit, which was eliminated under the tax reform bill. In addition, advocate for expanding pre-tax transportation fringe benefit eligibility to include shared mobility options, such as bike-share and shared ride carpool services.
- **Shared Mobility:** Advocate for federal legislative and regulatory updates that support shared mobility options such as bike-share, shared rides, carpooling, and shared scooters. Support expanding pre-tax transportation fringe benefit eligibility to include shared mobility options. This change would support the now-permanent Bay Area Commuter Benefits program by expanding federal tax incentives utilize alternatives to single occupancy travel to commute to work.
- **Autonomous Vehicles:** Oppose federal efforts to preempt local authority to regulate the use of autonomous vehicles in their communities.
- **Streamline Project Delivery:** Support regulations to streamline and integrate federal project delivery requirements for project planning, development, review, permitting, and environmental processes in order to reduce project costs and delays.

||rtcserv2|shared|legislat|2021|2021-rtc-legislativeprograms-.docx