

**State and Federal Activities**

**COVID Relief**

Federal and state legislatures have been undertaking several measures to address health and economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic. This has included congressional actions to provide funding to individuals, health, transportation, state and local entities; proposals from President Biden and new Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg related to rebuilding infrastructure, climate change and severe-weather events, jobs, safety, and modernization of the transportation system; and state budget proposals and discussions related to distribution of federal relief funds.

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act  
*(aka CRRSAA, H.R. 133, COVID Relief)*

Enacted in December 2020, the Federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) provides \$900 billion in funding relief for individuals, families, businesses, and specified government agencies. For transit and roadways, the Act includes:

- \$14 billion for distribution by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). **METRO is expected to receive about \$13.5 million** in CRRSAA funding. Earlier in 2020, \$20 million in funds were awarded to METRO through the CARES Act.
- \$10 billion for distribution by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which includes **\$911 million to California**. In addition to traditional Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) eligibilities, the Act allows funds to be used for preventive maintenance, routine maintenance, operations, personnel, including salaries of employee (including those employees who have been placed on administrative leave) or contractors, debt service payments, availability payments, and coverage for other revenue losses. Funds may also be transferred to public tolling and ferry agencies. RTC and regional partners throughout the state have been advocating at meetings with the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and Caltrans that a significant portion of the funds flow to regions to be made available for local transportation projects. CTC staff initially proposed 60% of funds go to state programs (e.g. State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP)) and 40% of funds flow to regions through the State Transportation

Improvement Program (STIP). Many regions, counties, and others have suggested funds flow through the Surface Transportation Block Grant/Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (STBG/RSTPX), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Highway Bridge Program (HBP), and Active Transportation Program (ATP) instead. Discussions are ongoing. Depending on how the state decides to distribute the funds, RTC could receive between \$2 million and \$3.5 million for locally-selected projects. FHWA is expected to release guidance on the funds in March. The CTC is scheduled to consider options at its March 23/24 meeting.

### \$1.9 Trillion COVID Relief Proposal – “American Rescue Plan”

The Biden-Harris administration is working on a “two-step plan of rescue and recovery” to provide more COVID-19 relief funding – especially for transit agencies across the country – followed by a major infrastructure investment program. The first step is a \$1.9 Trillion [American Rescue Plan](#). While the majority the proposed \$1.9 trillion is targeted towards containing the coronavirus, a national vaccination program, reopening schools, \$1400 per-person stimulus checks to most households, rental and homeless assistance, and support to small businesses, the transportation and local government-related proposals include:

- \$42.5 billion for public transit, airports, and Amtrak
- \$350 billion in aid to states and local governments

The \$42.5 billion in the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) portion of the COVID rescue plan would provide \$30 billion for public transit agencies (\$10 billion more than was proposed in the Biden plan), \$8 billion for U.S. airports, including \$800 million for airport concessionaires, \$1.5 billion to Amtrak to recall furloughed Amtrak workers and restore service, and \$3 billion for a temporary payroll support program for aerospace manufacturing. The transit funds are aimed at preventing transit worker layoffs and reduction in routes essential workers rely on every day for transportation to and from their jobs. Transit agencies previously received \$39 billion in emergency assistance. The most significant change from the transit funding approved in December 2020 is the formula used to determine allocations. The T&I bill ensures that public transit agencies receive 132 percent, as opposed to 75 percent in the previous law, of their 2018 operating costs, when combined with their allocations from the two COVID-19 relief bills

enacted in 2020. Funds would be available through September 30, 2024.

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee proposal includes \$350 billion for state, local, and tribal government fiscal assistance. California's estimated share of these funds is \$41 billion (\$26 billion in state aid and \$15 billion for local governments). Every local jurisdiction, regardless of size, would receive local assistance via formula. The overall proposed aid package also includes funds for PPE to transit workers and FEMA funding for vaccines.

Congressional leadership has set a goal of sending a final budget reconciliation-pandemic relief bill to the President by March 14, when expanded unemployment benefits expire. In February, the House and Senate approved budget resolutions authorizing use of the "budget reconciliation" process to allow the pandemic rescue package to avoid being blocked in the Senate by a filibuster. A budget reconciliation bill can clear the Senate with a simple majority of 51 votes. There have been talks of a potential carbon tax to help pay for the rescue plan with potential support from both parties. Republicans opposing the bill have expressed concern about additional aid, noting some funds approved at the end of 2020 have still not yet been disbursed or spent.

### Biden's "Build Back Better Recovery" Plan

President Biden has indicated that the second part of his COVID recovery plan, the "Build Back Better Recovery Plan," will include "historic investments in infrastructure and manufacturing, innovation, research and development, and clean energy". He plans to lay out his proposal in his first appearance before a Joint Session of Congress, but has said that it would create more than 18 million jobs and include funds to rebuild roads, bridges, and ports, as well as funds for transit, rail infrastructure, improved transport of American-made goods, the power sector, buildings, housing, innovation, agriculture and conservation, environmental justice, racial equity, and climate resiliency. This second package is expected to be focused on "shovel-worthy" projects and may include FAST Act Reauthorization.

A Democrat-led infrastructure package is likely to also include provisions of a "Green Energy" package of tax breaks to promote conservation and renewable energy sources that was unveiled by House Democrats late last year. That package includes a proposal by Rep. Panetta, developed with the assistance of Santa Cruz METRO,

which would provide a 10% tax credit for manufacturers of zero-emissions buses.

### Local Agencies Ready to Put Any New Funds to Work

Local agencies in Santa Cruz County have already identified several projects which could possibly put new federal funds to work quickly. Examples of some possible projects include (but are not limited to):

- Highway 1 41<sup>st</sup> Ave-Soquel Dr Auxiliary Lanes/Bus-on-Shoulder and Chanticleer Bike/Ped Bridge
- Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST):
  - North Coast Rail Trail Segment 5
  - Segment 7-phase 2 (Santa Cruz Wharf to California Ave)
- Rail Corridor storm damage and bridge projects
- Cities/County: Roadway paving/resurfacing
- Pilot ebike/bike subsidy and countywide bikeshare program
- County of Santa Cruz:
  - Health Services Safe Routes to schools bike/ped education programs
  - County fire and storm damage
  - Highway 152/Holohan Intersection Multimodal Improvements
  - Seacliff Village Streetscape Improvement project
  - Various fire and storm damage
- Capitola:
  - 41st Ave/Capitola Road Intersection Improvements
  - Clares Street Traffic Calming
  - Citywide paving projects
- Santa Cruz:
  - RRFB crosswalk projects
  - ADA Curb Ramp projects
  - Swanton/Delaware Multi-Use Path
  - Ocean/Water intersection improvements
  - West Cliff Dr Multi-Use Path Pavement Rehab
  - Chestnut Street Roadway and Storm Drain Rehab
  - Dimeo Lane Paving and Storm Drain
  - Non-transportation wastewater, stormwater, and landfill projects
- Scotts Valley:
  - Bean Creek Road
  - Janis Way
  - Bluebonnet Sidewalks

- Watsonville:
  - Airport Blvd Reconstruction from Freedom Blvd to 600 ft west. \$0.75M. Construct in 2021.
  - West Beach St Digouts & Chip Seal from Walker St to City Limits. \$0.75M. Construct in 2021.
  - Bridge Deck Maintenance at various locations. \$0.1M. Construct in 2021.
- METRO:
  - Bus replacements
  - ParaCruz Operating Facility
  - Scheduling Software
  - Account-Based transit fare collection system
  - Passenger Wi-Fi on local buses
- METRO ParaCruz and Lift Line transportation to vaccination sites
- Lift Line electrification
- Possible Longer Term projects
  - Sections of the MBSST/Rail Trail in Watsonville, Seabright, and Live Oak
  - Hwy 9/SLV Complete Streets projects
  - Green Valley Rd Reconstruction from Freedom Blvd to Watsonville City Limits

### State Budget

On January 8, 2021, Governor Newsom released his \$227 billion FY21/22 proposed budget. Despite the COVID-19 recession, the State's revenues have been impacted significantly less than was predicted last year. The Legislature has until June 15 to review and make changes to the Governor's proposal. Staff will provide updates as details become available on how the budget proposals may impact local projects.

Overall, \$20.6 billion is budgeted for the state's transportation programs in FY21/22, maintaining current funding levels for most infrastructure investments and operations. It includes \$3 billion in fuel excise tax revenues to cities and counties for local streets and roads; \$5.4 billion for SB1-funded transportation maintenance, transit, congestion relief and active transportation programs; \$1.9 billion for transit and rail; and \$1.5 billion for zero emission vehicles and charging infrastructure.

The Department of Finance estimates that fuel excise tax revenues which are used to fund transportation projects, while growing moderately, are expected to be lower than pre-pandemic forecasts by a total of \$1.5 billion through FY24/25 (previous forecasts were a \$1.9

billion shortfall). Initial estimates are that this drop will impact \$100 million in projects statewide which are currently programmed to receive State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds between FY20/21 and FY24/25. Some projects may need to be delayed or deleted from the STIP and/or the 2022 STIP may include significantly less new funding than the 2018 and 2020 STIP.

The budget estimates the following amounts for core transit programs in FY 2021-22:

- \$667 million for State Transit Assistance, a \$23 million increase from the current year, but \$112 million less than FY 2019-20
- \$487 million for Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (funded by Cap and Trade pursuant to current law)
- \$107 million for Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (funded by Cap and Trade pursuant to existing law)

The budget indicates the Newsom Administration's support for regulatory and reporting relief related to the Transportation Development Act (TDA), to remove farebox recovery and efficiency requirements that are currently infeasible due to the loss of ridership during the pandemic. This has also been a priority for the California Transit Association and is included in RTC's 2021 Legislative Program.

The budget highlights implementation of transportation-related climate Executive Orders (N-19-19 and N-79-20) and development of the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI – see information below). To support implementation of Executive Order N-79-20, which set targets for zero-emission vehicle adoption, the budget proposes \$1 billion of future revenues from a supplement to the vehicle registration fee currently dedicated to an alternative and renewable fuel vehicle technology program administered by the California Energy Commission, for purposes of implementing zero-emission vehicle charging stations; and it proposes \$465 million in cap-and-trade funds for an electric vehicle purchase program administered by the California Air Resources Board, and \$50 million for ZEV charging at state facilities.

### State Legislation

The California Legislature reconvened for a new two-year session on December 7, 2020, and members had until February 19 to introduce new legislation. Staff is monitoring several bills which may impact local transportation programs, projects, and and/or plans. Given that it is early in the legislative session and most bills are expected to be

amended as they work through committees, staff is not yet recommending positions on bills, but may work in partnership with agencies statewide to provide input on bills that involve funding, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, transportation planning, land use planning, the environmental process, traffic safety, project delivery or that could directly affect the Commission. Some of the bills staff is monitoring include:

- **Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) Modifications:** SB 261 (Allen) and SB475 (Cortese) propose to change Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) requirements. SB 261 proposes new GHG reduction targets for 2035, 2045, and 2050, obtain Air Resources Board (ARB) approval of technical methodology used to determine SCS GHG emissions, and have every city, county, or city and county to biennially report to its MPO the number of housing and jobs, and transit supportive infrastructure, existing and planned, that demonstrates implementation of strategies included in the applicable SCS.
- **Local Agency meetings.** Several bills have been introduced to address increased use of teleconference technology for public meetings and modifications to Brown Act requirements, including AB 339 (Lee), AB 361 (Rivas), AB 821 (Cooper), AB 885 (Quirk).
- **Emissions, Climate Change and Resiliency:** Legislators have introduced dozens of bills aimed at addressing emissions and climate change, including AB 51 (Quirk) aimed at establishing criteria for the development of regional climate adaptation plans, AB 96 (O'Donnell) which would extend the requirement that 20% of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds for the California Clean Truck, Bus, and Off-Road Vehicle and Equipment Technology Program be made available to support early commercial deployment of existing zero- and near-zero-emission heavy-duty truck technology until December 31, 2026, AB 117 (Boerner Horvath) which provide incentives for purchasing electric bicycles as projects eligible for funding under the Air Quality Improvement Program, and SB 456 (Laird) indicated intent to enact subsequent legislation relating to climate resiliency and coordinating regional and local efforts with state climate adaptation strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- **Broadband:** Several bills have been introduced which would expand broadband services and access, including AB 41 (Wood) aimed at improving California's "Dig Once" policy on state highway rights-of-way, as well as AB 14 (Aguiar-Curry), AB 34 (Murasuchi), AB 537, and SB 378

- **Vehicles: required stops: bicycles.** AB 122 (Boerner Horvath) would require a person riding a bicycle, when approaching a stop sign at the entrance of an intersection, to yield the right-of-way to any vehicles that have stopped at the entrance of the intersection, have entered the intersection, or that are approaching on the intersecting highway close enough to constitute an immediate hazard, and shall continue to yield the right-of-way to those vehicles until reasonably safe to proceed.
- **Shared mobility devices.** AB 371 (Jones-Sawyer) would require a shared mobility service provider to affix to each shared mobility device (electrically motorized board, motorized scooter, electric bicycle, bicycle, or other similar personal transportation device) a tactile sign containing raised characters and accompanying Braille, as specified, to identify the device for the purpose of tracking and reporting. Current law requires a city or county that authorizes a shared mobility device provider to operate within its jurisdiction to adopt operation, parking, and maintenance rules, as provided, regarding the use of the shared mobility devices in its jurisdiction before the provider may offer shared mobility devices for rent or use.
- **Mobility devices: personal information.** AB 859 (Irwin) would authorize a public agency that issues a permit to an operator for mobility services or that otherwise regulates an operator, to require an operator to periodically submit to the public agency anonymized trip data and the operator's mobility devices operating in the geographic area under the public agency's jurisdiction and provide specified notice of that requirement to the operator. The bill would authorize a public agency to share anonymized trip data with a contractor, agent, or other public agency only if specified conditions are met, including that the purpose of the sharing is to assist the public agency in the promotion and protection of transportation planning, integration of mobility options, and road safety.
- **Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account apportionment of interest to SHOPP.** AB 604 (Daly) would continuously appropriate interest earnings derived from revenues deposited in the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the Department of Transportation for maintenance of the state highway system or for purposes of the State Highway Operation and Protection Program.
- **Transportation: interregional connectivity.** AB 840 (Holden) would express the intent of the Legislature to later enact legislation that would increase interregional connectivity for Californians across counties and improve interconnectivity across modes of transit, and pursue opportunities to meet the state's environmental goals



through evidence-based public planning that prioritizes diverse public transit options and active transportation infrastructure.

- **Project implementation.** SB 44 (Allen) establishes expedited administrative and judicial review procedures under CEQA for certain public transit projects.
- **Local government financing: affordable housing and public infrastructure: voter approval.** ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry) would lower the voter threshold from two-thirds to 55% for special taxes placed on the ballot by a city, county, or special district for construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of public infrastructure, affordable housing, or permanent supportive housing, or the acquisition or lease of real property for those purposes.

### Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI)

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), with input from the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Transportation Commission (CTC), the Department of Finance (DOF), other state agencies and stakeholders, has been developing a Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). The draft plan is expected to be released for public review in March 2021, with comments tentatively due in mid-April and a final plan to be presented to the Governor by July 15, 2021. Staff will provide additional information on CAPTI after the draft plan is released, likely at the RTC's April 2021 meeting.

The CAPTI is expected to create an investment framework that generally operates within existing funding programs to continue the Senate Bill (SB) 1 commitment to a "fix-it-first" approach to implement climate change priorities set by Executive Orders (EO) N-19-19 and N-79-20 to deploy infrastructure investments that mitigate or build resilience against climate change, where feasible.

**EO N-19-19** directed CalSTA to leverage over \$5 billion in annual state transportation infrastructure spending to tackle climate change by promoting investment to encourage further adoption and use of clean modes of transportation by:

- **Reducing public health harms and maximizing benefits to disproportionately impacted disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and communities of color,** in urbanized and rural regions, and involve these communities early in decision-making. Investments should also avoid placing new or exacerbating existing substantial burdens on communities, even if unintentional.

- **Making safety improvements to reduce fatalities and severe injuries of all users towards zero** on our roadways and transit systems by focusing on context-appropriate speeds, prioritizing vulnerable user safety to support mode shift, designing roadways to accommodate for potential human error and injury tolerances, and ultimately implementing a safe systems approach.
- **Assessing physical climate risk** as standard practice for transportation infrastructure projects to enable informed decision making, especially in communities that are most vulnerable to climate risks.
- **Promoting projects that do not increase passenger vehicle travel**, particularly in congested urbanized settings where other mobility options can be provided and where projects are shown to induce significant auto travel. These projects should generally aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and not induce significant VMT growth. When addressing congestion, consider alternatives to highway capacity expansion, such as providing multimodal options in the corridor, employing pricing strategies, and using technology to optimize operations.
- **Promoting compact infill development while protecting residents and businesses from displacement** by supporting transportation projects that support housing for low income residents near job centers, provide walkable communities, and address affordability to reduce the housing-transportation cost burden and reduce auto trips.
- **Developing a zero-emission freight transportation system** that avoids and mitigates environmental justice impacts, reduces criteria and toxic air pollutants, improves freight's economic competitiveness and efficiency, and integrates multi-modal design and planning into infrastructure development on freight corridors.
- **Protecting natural and working lands** from conversion to more intensified uses and enhance biodiversity by supporting local and regional conservation planning that focuses development where it already exists and align transportation investments with conservation priorities to reduce transportation's impact on the natural environment.

EO N-79-20: CAPTI is also expected to set a course for implementing Governor Newsom's [Executive Order N-79-20](#) (September 2020), which is focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change by increasing investments in new clean transportation options; drastically reducing the demand for fossil fuels by phasing out gasoline-

powered cars and trucks; building an integrated, statewide rail and transit network; and increasing investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

- **Including investments in light, medium, and heavy-duty zero-emission-vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure** or supportive infrastructure as part of larger transportation projects. Support the innovation in and development of the ZEV market.
- **Building towards an integrated, statewide rail and transit network**, centered on the existing California State Rail Plan that leverages the California Integrated Travel Program to provide seamless, affordable, multimodal travel options in all context, including suburban and rural settings, to all users.
- **Investing in networks of safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure**, particularly by closing gaps on portions of the State Highway System that intersect local active transportation and transit networks or serve as small town or rural main streets and supporting micro-mobility options, particularly in low income and disadvantaged communities across the state.

### **Other Federal Activities**

FY20/21 Appropriations: The \$1.4 trillion FY20/21 omnibus appropriations package, approved as part of the COVID Relief Package in December 2020, includes funding for ongoing federal highway and transit programs, as well as funding for several grant programs including \$1 billion for the BUILD competitive grant program, \$2 billion for transit Capital Investment Grants (Small Starts/New Starts), \$375 million in Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program (CRISI), \$2 billion in general fund supplements to help support highway bridge rehabilitation based on 2018 National Bridge Inventory data, and increases of \$198 million in FTA formula funds for transit agencies and \$250 million in grants for bus replacements.

Federal Transportation Act: A key issue at the federal level for 2021 includes reauthorization of the multiyear federal transportation act which authorizes federal highway and transit programs. In September 2020, Congress approved a one-year extension of the 2015 Federal Transportation Act (the current Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act), which was set to expire on September 2020, as part of a continuing resolution (CR) aimed at averting a federal government shutdown.

The most significant hurdle to enactment of a new multi-year reauthorization remains how to fund transportation projects. The September extension included \$14 billion that was needed to keep the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) afloat; Congress has transferred roughly \$144 billion to the HTF since 2008. Given that the federal gas tax has not increased since 1993, revenues have not keeping pace with vehicle miles traveled and the cost to maintain and improve multimodal transportation systems. For now, raising the federal gasoline tax for the first time in 30 years is the most practical vehicle for such revenues, however members of Congress remain nervous about their electoral prospects if they raise taxes. While other types of funding are being examined to potentially replace the gas tax as the primary source of funding for the HTF, such as charging drivers by vehicle miles travelled (VMT), none have garnered a consensus.

New Secretary of Transportation: Pete Buttigieg has been confirmed as President Biden's new Secretary of Transportation (replacing Elaine Chau). His agenda includes "investing in robust transit and transportation infrastructure" in both urban and rural communities, climate change initiatives, expanding the workforce, maintaining safety, ensuring the country's infrastructure is resilient to severe-weather events, technological advancements across the mobility grid, and boosting funding for rail and transit. He plans to work with Congress to create a more predictable and sustainable fund source for the Highway Trust Fund. He has discussed the importance of promoting the use of and creating the infrastructure for electric vehicles and transition to a less fossil-fuel-dependent economy, which may influence funding strategies.

Climate Resiliency: The Biden administration and Congress are collaborating to introduce legislation that embraces a climate resiliency approach to building and improving infrastructure, including an emphasis on promoting use of electric vehicles and alternative modes of transportation. There is a reasonable amount of expectation that the next two years will see a lot of bills and executive actions stemming from the intersectionality of transportation infrastructure needs and climate change resiliency – "transformative climate change-centric infrastructure measures aimed at reinforcing resilience across large transportation corridors"

Zero Emission Vehicles: President Biden issued an executive order mandating federal agencies switch to carbon pollution-free electricity and clean zero-emission vehicles. The order includes installation of 500,000 charging stations across the nation's highway systems by

2030. Although less than 1% of cars on U.S. roads today are electric, General Motors Co. announced it will sell only zero-emission models by 2035, joining Ford Motor Co.'s similar pledge last year. Those industry announcements are "game changers" in the push for VMT fees because an increasing number of vehicles won't need to pay the gas tax and that could lead to fairness issues, said James Burnley, former transportation secretary and now a partner at Venable LLP.

The Electric Bicycle Incentive Kickstart for the Environment Act (E-Bike Act): Congressman Jimmy Panetta and Blumenauer have introduced a bill that would provide a tax credit of 15% (with a cap at \$1,500) to individuals who purchase an electronic bike for personal use. A qualified electric bike: class 1, 2, or 3; e-motor of 750 watts or less; "the original use commences with the taxpayer"; purchased in the US for personal use. (Electric cars and motorcycles already have federal tax incentives.)

Autonomous Vehicles: President Biden has put the brakes on rules regarding autonomous vehicle safety and low volume replica car manufacturing announced in the final days of the Trump administration. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on Jan. 14 posted an update to the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards that included new crash safety rules for fully-autonomous vehicles designed without steering controls that would allow for street legal vehicles to be built without a designated "driver's" seat and its unique safety equipment or any passenger accommodations at all.

Federal Mask Mandate: One Executive Order (<http://bit.ly/2LX9YUL>) instructs the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Transportation to take immediate action to require masks on all forms of public transportation, trains, ferries, intercity buses, and in airports, commercial aircraft, with language specifically prohibiting the preemption of state and local measures that are more protective of public health than federal measures.

Earmarks: When Republicans took control of the House in 2011, they instituted a rule that banned the practice of spending for specific projects in legislation. This ban on congressionally-directed spending (or "earmarks") was also agreed to by the Senate. Democratic leaders in the House and Senate are reportedly planning to end the earmark ban. Earmarks are federal monies requested by lawmakers that are added onto congressional spending bills for special local projects in their districts/state. The RTC has benefitted from earmarks in the past

for projects such as Highway 1 improvements, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, and purchase of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. If earmarks do return, they will likely be fewer in number and smaller in size, and in some cases, the additional requirements that come with federal funding in these instances may not be worth the small federal investment.

Democrats have not specified what restrictions they will put around earmarks, however, Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-Connecticut), who Chairs the Appropriations Committee, is expected to make an announcement in the coming weeks.

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