



**Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission's
BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING AGENDA

Monday, June 14, 2020

6:00 pm to 8:30 pm

NOTE: TELECONFERENCE

Join the online meeting to see presentations:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81970750348?pwd=S2VpeHk1N0tmN3F4VVlwRERqenFyZz09>

Online meeting ID: 819 7075 0348

Password: 685947

Dial-in: +1 669 900 9128

Members of the public may not attend this meeting in person. Comments and may be shared with the Committee through teleconference audio in real time, or by prior written submission to ttravers@scrtc.org.

This meeting is being held by teleconference in accordance with the Brown Act as currently in effect under the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19, and the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, which allow local board and committee members and the public to participate and conduct meetings by teleconference, videoconference, or both. [View full executive order.](#)

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Member

Scott Roseman
Kathleen Bortolussi
Peter Scott
Anna Kammer
Rick Hyman
Paula Bradley
Matt Farrell
Richard Masoner
Murray Fontes
Amelia Conlen, Chair
Leo Jed

Alternate

Corrina McFarlane
John Hunt
Sally Arnold
Liz Hernandez
Theresia Rogerson
Mike Moore
Grace Voss
Vacant
Drew Rogers
Matt Miller
Vacant

Representing

District 1
District 2
District 3
District 4
District 5
City of Capitola
City of Santa Cruz
City of Scotts Valley
City of Watsonville
Ecology Action/Bike To Work
Comm. Traffic Safety Coalition

The majority of the Committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions

3. Announcements – RTC staff
4. Oral communications – members and public

The Committee will receive oral communications during this time on items not on today's agenda. Presentations must be within the jurisdiction of the Committee and may be limited in time at the discretion of the Chair. Committee members will not take action or respond immediately to any Oral Communications presented, but may choose to follow up at a later time, either individually, or on a subsequent Committee agenda.

5. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

CONSENT AGENDA

All items appearing on the consent agenda are considered to be minor or non-controversial and will be acted upon in one motion if no member of the Committee or public wishes an item be removed and discussed on the regular agenda. Members of the Committee may raise questions, seek clarification or add directions to Consent Agenda items without removing the item from the Consent Agenda as long as no other committee member objects to the change.

6. Approve draft minutes of the May 10, 2021 Bicycle Advisory Committee special meeting
7. Accept summary of hazard reports
8. Accept letter from ad-hoc subcommittee providing Committee comments on the Mt. Hermon Road bike lane striping project to County Department of Public Works

REGULAR AGENDA

9. Recognition of Jim Langley for service on Bicycle Advisory Committee – Tommy Travers, RTC Transportation Planner (oral update)
10. Proposal for e-bike incentive program by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District – Alan Romero, District staff
11. Highway 1 – State Park to Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project & Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Professional Engineering Services Contract Award & Addition of Interim Trail Alternative – Sarah Christensen, Sr. Transportation Engineer
12. Capitola Trestle Update, Interim Trail Alternative, and Amendment to Professional Engineering Services Agreement with RailPros Inc. – Sarah Christensen, Sr. Transportation Engineer
13. Updates related to Committee functions – Committee members (oral updates)
14. Adjourn

NEXT MEETING: The next Bicycle Committee meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2021 from 6:00pm to 8:30pm **via teleconference.**

HOW TO REACH US

*Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
phone: (831) 460-3200 / fax (831) 460-3215*

email: info@sccrtc.org / website: www.sccrtc.org

AGENDAS ONLINE

To receive email notification when the Bicycle Committee meeting agenda packets are posted on our website, please call (831) 460-3200 or email info@sccrtc.org to subscribe.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. This meeting location is an accessible facility. If you wish to attend this meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact RTC staff at 460-3200 (CRS 800/735-2929) at least three working days in advance of this meeting to make arrangements. People with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format. As a courtesy to those person affected, Please attend the meeting smoke and scent-free.

SERVICIOS DE TRADUCCIÓN/TRANSLATION SERVICES

Si gusta estar presente o participar en esta junta de la Comisión Regional de Transporte del condado de Santa Cruz y necesita información o servicios de traducción al español por favor llame por lo menos con tres días laborables de anticipo al (831) 460-3200 para hacer los arreglos necesarios. (Spanish language translation is available on an as needed basis. Please make advance arrangements at least three days in advance by calling (831) 460-3200.)

TITLE VI NOTICE

The RTC operates its programs and services without regard to race, color and national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Any person believing to have been aggrieved by the RTC under Title VI may file a complaint with RTC by contacting the RTC at (831) 460-3212 or 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, 95060 or online at www.sccrtc.org. A complaint may also be filed directly with the Federal Transit Administration to the Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Building, 5th Floor-TCR, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20590.



**Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission's**

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**SPECIAL MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES**

**Monday, May 10, 2021
6:00 pm to 8:30 pm**

Teleconference

This meeting was held by teleconference in accordance with the Brown Act as currently in effect under the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19, and the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, which allow local board and committee members and the public to participate and conduct meetings by teleconference, videoconference, or both. [View full executive order.](#)

1. Call to Order: Chair, Amelia Conlen called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Introductions

Members Present:

Amelia Conlen, Bike-to-Work, Chair
John Hunt, District 2 (Alt.)
Peter Scott, District 3
Sally Arnold, District 3 (Alt.)
Anna Kammer, District 4
Liz Hernandez, District 4 (Alt.)
Rick Hyman, District 5
Theresia Rogerson, District 5 (Alt.)
Paula Bradley, City of Capitola
Richard Masoner, City of Scotts Valley
Murray Fontes, City of Watsonville
Drew Rogers, City of Watsonville (Alt.)
Leo Jed, CTSC

Staff:

Tommy Travers, Transportation Planner
Amy Naranjo, Transportation Planner

Guests:

Piet Canin, Bike-to-Work/Ecology Action
Gina Gallino Cole, Bike Santa Cruz County
Scott Roseman, pending committee nominee
Corrina McFarlane, pending committee nominee
Grace Voss, pending committee nominee
Janneke Strause, member of the public
Kathy Jaggi, member of the public

Unexcused Absences:

Excused Absences:

Kathleen Bortolussi, District 2
Michael Moore, City of Capitola (Alt.)
Matt Farrell, City of Santa Cruz
Matt Miller, Bike-to-Work (Alt.)

Vacancies:

District 1 – Primary
District 1 – Alternate
City of Santa Cruz – Alternate
City of Scotts Valley – Alternate
CTSC – Alternate

3. Announcements – Staff announced that the Committee member and alternate for District 1 were removed at the April RTC meeting.

4. Oral communications – Amelia Conlen expressed thanks to Grace Voss and Janneke Strause for their service representing Supervisorial District 1 on the Committee and shared information about Bike Month events. She also announced upcoming County Public Works bicycle demonstration projects, as a part of the development of the County Active Transportation Plan, to be located on Green Valley Road beginning May 28 and on Portola Drive beginning June 25. Theresa Rogerson announced a major County bicycle education and encouragement project for children is positioned well for a potential supplemental round of funding from the state Active Transportation Program.
5. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas – none

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion (Jed/Masoner) was made to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with members Conlen, Hunt, Scott, Kammer, Hyman, Bradley, Masoner, Fontes, and Jed voting in favor.

6. Approved draft minutes of the February 8, 2021 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting
7. Accepted summary of hazard reports
8. Accepted letter from Committee in support of grant application for Coastal Rail Trail Segment 7 Phase 2
9. Accepted letter from ad-hoc subcommittee providing Committee comments on the Caltrans District 5 Active Transportation Plan
10. Approved recommendation to the RTC of nomination of new Committee members – Scott Roseman and Corrina McFarlane introduced themselves, and committee members discussed having very brief education sessions at multiple future meetings for newer members covering Committee function-related topics.
11. Approved recommendation to the RTC to approve Ecology Action’s Transportation Development Act (TDA) allocation request for \$60,000 for the Bike to Work/School Program
12. Approved recommendation to the RTC to approve the county Health Services Agency’s TDA allocation request for \$130,000 for the Community Traffic Safety Coalition (CTSC) and the Ride N Stride (RnS) Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Program – Grace Voss commented that there be more data reporting from the CTSC and RnS programs.

REGULAR AGENDA

13. GO Santa Cruz County demonstration – Amy Naranjo, RTC Transportation Planner, provided an overview of the new countywide GO Santa Cruz County web or app platform, which assists anyone to plan their commutes and travel by bicycle, foot, transit, or by finding a carpool or bikepool. Participants also get financial rewards for manually logging or automatically connecting their travel alternatives to driving

alone. There will also be additional outreach and events for participating large employers. She provided a live demonstration in a web browser to show the features of the platform. Committee members inquired about the RTC's outreach methods to get more people using the platform, inquired about transit incentives, and expressed a strong desire to prioritize rewards for shopping at local businesses.

14. San Lorenzo Valley/Highway 9 complete streets progress - Report from April 28, 2021 public meeting – Rick Hyman provided an update to the Committee on implementation of several priority elements of the San Lorenzo Valley/Highway 9 Complete Streets Corridor Plan, including design concepts for new bike lanes in several towns along Highway 9. He shared a concept for Highway 9 at Graham Hill Road as an example. Committee members discussed aspects of the concept and discussed strategies for providing input for these projects as well as generally countywide.
15. Updates related to Committee functions – Murray Fontes announced that Segment 18 Phase 1 of the Coastal Rail Trail is tentatively scheduled for a grand opening event on June 5. Theresia Rogerson reported back to the Committee that three members met with county staff to review a recent buffered bike lane modification on Mt. Hermon Road, and requested the Chair write a letter to the County calling for fixing the recent painting to provide narrowed vehicle lanes, a minimum 2-foot painted buffer with diagonal hatching that could accommodate potential future bollards to separate the bike lane, and a minimum 5- or 6-foot bike lane. No Committee members expressed opposition.
16. Adjourn – 8:05 pm

NEXT MEETING: The next Bicycle Committee meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2021 from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. The meeting will be held **via teleconference.**

Minutes respectfully prepared and submitted by:
Tommy Travers, Transportation Planner

Bicycle Hazard Reports June 4, 2021

Date	First Name	Last Name	Location	Cross Street	City	Reported Hazards	Additional Comments	Forwarded To	Forwarded Date	Response
05/06/21	Michael	Rios	Soquel Ave	Roberts on St	Soquel	Bike: Debris on shoulder or bikeway	Significant amounts of broken glass forces bicyclists into vehicle lane.	DPW	05/06/21	5/6/21 Dorothy Morgan: Good Afternoon SCCRTC, Thank you for your email about the debris in the bike lane. I have included our Road Maintenance Dispatch who will review your request and respond to you directly. 5/6/21 Road Maintenance Dispatch: Service request issued 21-000820 (DPW Dispatch Phone # 831-477-3999)
04/30/21	Elliot	Campbell	4975 Cliff Dr	N/A	Capitola	Bike: Plant overgrowth or interference, Debris on shoulder or bikeway	Vegetation is growing into the bike lane along the 200 ft. strip of vegetation on the north side of Cliff road between 4975 Cliff Dr and the city parking lot at the top of the hill. This is a narrow section of road and many kids have surfboard carriers so hazardous conditions. On the south side of Cliff Dr (also called Stockton Ave) there is sand in the bike lane (but not in the main part of the road). This makes for slippery conditions for bike riders, especially in a congested zone where erratic movements of cars and pedestrians make it important for a bicycle to stop quickly.	Steve Jesberg, Kailash Mozumder	05/06/21	5/7/21 Kailash Mozumber: Both items identified in this report were addressed by our public works team on Thursday May 6th, 2021. 5/13/21 Road Maintenance Dispatch: POTHOLE REQUEST ISSUED 21-000865 (DPW Dispatch Phone # 831-477-3999)
04/29/21	Michael	Andalora	30445 Highland Way	N/A	Los Gatos/S cott's Valley	Bike: Rough pavement or potholes, Pavement cracks, Lighting problem	This Road is a mindfield of pot holes combined with shadows from the trees it's no wonder no one has been severely injured or worse. This is a highly treasured road taken by cyclist from around the world and it's sad to see such neglect.	DPW	04/29/21	4/29/21 Dorothy Morgan: Good Afternoon SCCRTC, I am forwarding your request to the Road Maintenance Dispatch. They will review and respond to you directly. 4/29/21 Road Maintenance Dispatch: Service request issued 21-000774 (DPW Dispatch Phone # 831-477-3999)
04/26/21	Laurie	Radovan	2299 Delaware Ave	Natural Bridges Dr	Santa Cruz	Bike: Vehicles or objects blocking sidewalk	There is a motorhome parked with their living room opened up into the bike lane. The pop out is blocking part of the bike lane. Our city streets are not an open campground. And I also don't see a license plate on this trailer.	Officer Garner	04/29/21	5/5/21 Dan Estranero: Good Morning, The video detection for the green bike box has been expanded. Cyclists should now be detected once pulled up to the bike box.



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911 • (831) 460-3200 FAX (831) 460-3215 EMAIL info@sccrtc.org

June 8, 2021

Russell Chen, Traffic Division
Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works
701 Ocean Street, Room 410
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Chen,

As discussed recently, the Regional Transportation Commission's Bicycle Advisory Committee was concerned about recent pavement re-striping on Mt. Hermon Road. First, we are very pleased to learn that you acknowledged a problem, halted the work, and will have the striping redone. Second, we appreciate that you will pass along our subcommittee's suggestions as related to you by Theresia Rogerson to the project engineer, namely:

- 1) Making the bike lane itself, not counting the buffer, up to 6 feet wide, and in no case less than 5 feet, especially because some of the bike lane is often covered with sand and hence not safe to ride in.
- 2) Adding bike lane stencils on the pavement and installing bike lane signage.
- 3) Making the buffer at least 2 feet wide, which would result in more comfortable cycling and be sufficient width to allow for erecting bollards within in the future.
- 4) Striping parallel, diagonal hash marks in between the inner and outline lines demarcating the buffer, to help motorists understand its purpose.
- 5) Commensurately narrowing the travel lanes to allow more room to accomplish the above buffer and bike lane suggestions and also as a traffic calming measure.

At the Committee's meeting on May 10, 2021, where the subcommittee briefed the Committee on these welcome refinements, two other suggestions emerged that we hope you will also consider:

- 6) Sandblasting or grinding out the incorrect stripes (instead of using black paint) before painting the new ones, because over time the black paint can fade and it can become difficult to distinguish the old and the new markings.
- 7) Adding green paint and/or other treatments in the conflict zones at intersections or merge lanes, such as at the Covenant and Lilac Lanes intersections; the latter is especially challenging because a cyclist has to cross the uphill merge lane to get back over to the right hand side of the road.



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911 • (831) 460-3200 FAX (831) 460-3215 EMAIL info@sccrtc.org

And, as long as we are writing and related to this last point, we want to again thank you for already adding dashed bike lane markings on Mt. Hermon Road through the intersection with Conference Drive. We hope that this will help alleviate the tendency that some motorists exhibit to start their passing maneuver before getting through the intersection and hence to squeeze out cyclists. This would also be a location to paint the crossing green. Also, if upon monitoring this intersection an unsafe situation still persists, we recommend considering additional measures to ameliorate it.

Please feel free to discuss any of these points further with us.

Again, thanks so much for your responsiveness and concern for cyclists. We thank you for the opportunity to communicate on this important project. You can contact the RTC's Bicycle Advisory Committee staff person, Tommy Travers, at 831-460-3208 or by email at ttravers@sccrtc.org, for this and any other Committee related matters.

Sincerely,

Amelia Conlen
Chair, RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee

TO: Bicycle Advisory Committee

FROM: Tommy Travers, Transportation Planner

RE: Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) proposal for e-bike incentive program

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Committee receive a presentation on MBARD's proposed e-bike incentive program and provide input.

BACKGROUND

The Monterey Bay Air Resources District is responsible for air monitoring, permitting, enforcement, long-range air quality planning, regulatory development, education, and public information activities related to air pollution, as required by the California and the federal Clean Air Acts. MBARD's governing board generally meets ten times per year and currently includes the following elected officials from Santa Cruz County: Ryan Coonerty, Zach Friend, Jack Dilles, and Stam Storey. A board member recently requested that District staff develop a proposal for a program to provide rebates to members of the public for the purchase of an e-bike.

DISCUSSION

MBARD staff has developed a proposal for a program to provide rebates for the purchase of an e-bike. The purpose is to incentivize purchases of zero-emission electric motorized bicycles which have the potential to replace motor vehicles for transportation purposes for users.

The following web resource provides a helpful definition of e-bikes under California law: https://www.calbike.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/AB_1096_-_Info_for_Agencies-1.pdf

MBARD Planner Alan Romero, who also serves as an ex-officio member of the RTC's Interagency Technical Advisory Committee, will give a presentation about the program. It is planned to provide a modest rebate for all residents of Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties, as well as a double incentive for low-income qualified residents. The program will begin after July 1, 2021.

The MBARD Board will consider authorizing the program at its June 16 meeting.

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the Committee receive a presentation on MBARD's proposed e-bike incentive program and provide input.

TO: Bicycle Advisory Committee

FROM: Sarah Christensen, P.E., Senior Transportation Engineer and Guy Preston, Executive Director

RE: Highway 1 – State Park to Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project & Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Addition of Interim Trail Alternative

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) review and provide input on the proposed approach to add the interim trail alternative to the Highway 1 – State Park to Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project & Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project (Project).

BACKGROUND

In 2020, RTC entered into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans and a professional engineering services contract for the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA/ED) component of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project between the State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard Interchanges, which includes Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail (Project). The Project improvements include the complete replacement of the mainline Highway 1 bridge over Aptos Creek and the two railroad bridges spanning over Highway 1, which are necessary to widen the freeway. The project also includes the entire 1.25-mile Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail, which extends from State Park Drive to Rio del Mar Boulevard along the Santa Cruz Branch Railroad Line (SCBRL), including four trail bridges (over Highway 1, over Soquel Drive and Aptos Creek, over Soquel Drive and Valencia Creek, and over Highway 1 again). The Project’s environmental phase is funded by Measure D Highway Corridors and Senate Bill 1 (SB1) Local Partnership Program (LPP) formulaic funds.

As set forth in previous decisions by the Commission to adopt the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Master Plan, accept the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS), and accept the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Regional Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS), the SCBRL should be used for both an active transportation and a public transit corridor, with electric passenger rail being the locally preferred alternative for transit. As indicated in the TCAA/RNIS Business Plan, there are many risks associated with a rail transit project, including funding. Although RTC’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) includes passenger rail, it is on the unconstrained funding list, due to unidentified funding needs.

Segment 12 Interim Trail Alternative

On June 3, 2021 the Commission terminated the professional engineering services agreement with the consultant for the Project. Staff made the decision to re-procure a new consultant because the scope of services changed significantly since the original procurement occurred. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released and the Commission awarded a new professional engineering services agreement on June 3, 2021.

DISCUSSION

According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must describe a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the proposed project's significant effects. Additionally, a "No Project" alternative must be analyzed.

Currently, the Project's preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for the trail includes one build alternative with a trail adjacent to the existing railroad tracks and a no-build alternative. The 12- to 16-foot-wide trail is proposed on the inland side of the railroad tracks. In addition to the proposed four trail bridge spans, there are several proposed trail retaining walls, up to 20-foot in height, needed for the trail-adjacent-to-rail alternative. It is anticipated that the trail-adjacent-to-rail alternative will require acquisition of right-of-way, relocation of utilities, and mitigation of environmental impacts (removal of trees and potential temporary impacts to creeks for new bridge construction). Many of these costs were not captured in previous planning-level studies.

Since electric rail transit along the SCBRL is a longer-term investment, it would be prudent to analyze an interim trail alternative, as a way to potentially deliver the basic project objectives related to a trail while likely lessening the proposed project impacts as required by CEQA. Adding an interim trail alternative for consideration as part of the Project would not be a decision to select an interim trail as the preferred alternative, but an opportunity to do a side-by-side analysis of the current build alternative.

Staff recommends that an interim trail alternative be of similar width and material (paved riding surface with unpaved shoulders) as the trail adjacent to the existing rail line. The concurrent analysis of these two alternatives could potentially provide insight on how RTC could efficiently configure the corridor to include all future uses. Considering that a future transit rail line will likely require horizontal and vertical adjustments, the addition of passing sidings and at least partial re-construction of the ballast, ties, rail, and many structures, it may not be advisable to assume that the existing rail line will remain in its current location with all existing infrastructure in place.

To potentially minimize impacts and reduce initial cost, an interim trail would assume that the existing railroad track and ties could be temporarily removed and bridges could be temporarily repurposed, if the SCBRL is railbanked in the future. However, only the Surface Transportation Board (STB) could authorize the

Segment 12 Interim Trail Alternative

temporary removal of track and ties by means of a railbanking order. The Staff Report from February 2021 that includes additional information about railbanking is included as Attachment 1. An interim trail would be considered an infeasible alternative without railbanking. However, it is premature to assume that railbanking is infeasible since Progressive Rail, the current freight operator, provided notification of their intent to file for abandonment. Progressive Rail has withdrawn their intent to file for abandonment at this time but has retained their right to do so at any time without additional notification to the RTC.

A railbanking agreement would provide for future potential re-activation of freight rail on the SCBRL and would also allow for future passenger rail service on the line, consistent with the MBSST Master Plan, UCS, and TCAA/RNIS. Therefore, an interim trail alternative would not preclude future freight or passenger rail service on the SCBRL in accordance with any potential railbanking agreement and RTC long-range plans.

Thus, at the June 3, 2021 meeting, the Commission unanimously approved a new contract with a scope of work that includes an interim trail alternative as part of the Project's ongoing preliminary engineering and environmental analysis efforts. Doing so will allow more flexibility to the RTC in choosing a preferred alternative and would include public engagement for both alternatives to be done as part of the anticipated outreach associated with the current environmental analysis.

The proposed project does not include passenger rail transit. Future passenger rail is contemplated as a separate proposed long-range project. Nonetheless, the selection of the preferred alternative on this project should not be made solely on which build alternative has the least initial cost. It is expected that building an interim trail on the roadbed and then relocating the trail as part of a potential subsequent rail project would eventually add to the overall cost of the Commission's long-term goal of adding rail transit to the line. One could assume that the added cost could be as much as the full cost of the interim trail. This assumes that the cost of building a future rail and trail project to replace the interim trail would be the same as the cost of building the trail adjacent to the existing rail and adding passenger rail improvements later. A more reasonable assumption would be that the added cost would be somewhat offset by efficiencies gained by future decisions to make the best use of the branch line's limited right-of-way by adjusting the rail and trail alignments, as noted above. There could also be efficiencies gained by constructing a future rail and trail project as part of a single construction contract.

Nonetheless, this added cost would only be realized if the future freight and/or passenger rail service on the line is determined needed, funded, and approved sometime in the future. The analysis of an interim trail alternative should consider whether the alternative could attain most of the basic project objectives while avoiding or substantially lessening any of the proposed project's significant environmental effects, over the probable period of time that the trail would be used in the interim condition.

Segment 12 Interim Trail Alternative

The Project is currently on schedule to complete the environmental document in 2022. The Project Development Team (PDT) consisting of Caltrans, RTC, the County, and consultants analyzed adding the interim trail alternative and concluded that it would only delay the overall project schedule by 2 to 6 months. There is no certainty of the SCBRL being railbanked nor the timing of such occurring, but having studied the interim trail alternative would provide information to decision makers on a trail alternative in as timely of a manner as possible.

The team also analyzed a scenario of not adding the interim trail alternative now, but instead conducting additional environmental analysis later, due to a potential future request to analyze an interim trail. This approach would add substantial risk and schedule delay to the project by having to re-do the environmental technical studies and environmental documentation as well as needing another public review process. Therefore, the approach to add the interim trail as an alternative at this time is preferred by the PDT, because it reduces the delivery and schedule risks to the project.

RTC was successful with securing a grant from cycle 2 of competitive SB1 funding, which resulted in \$107.2 million to fully fund construction of two Highway 1 Bus on Shoulder and Auxiliary Lanes Projects between Soquel Drive and State Park Drive, bicycle and pedestrian overcrossings at Chanticleer Avenue and Mar Vista Drive, and Complete Streets and Congestion Mitigation Improvements on Soquel Drive. Staff believes that information gained by including an interim trail alternative will be helpful in developing funding strategies such that the Project can be well positioned for the next cycle of SB1 competitive grant programs.

Although the guidelines for cycle 3 of SB1 competitive grant funding have not yet been developed by the California Transportation Commission (CTC), RTC anticipates that there will be a requirement to complete the project's EIR/EA by the end of 2022 to be eligible to apply for funding. Staff predicts that although adding an alternative at this time would result in a slight schedule delay, it would still allow for the EIR/EA to be delivered by the anticipated deadline for eligibility for cycle 3 funds.

Staff recommends that the Bicycle Advisory Committee review and provide input on the proposed approach to add the interim trail alternative to the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis of the Project.

SUMMARY

Staff recommends the BAC review and provide input on the proposed approach to add the interim trail alternative to the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis efforts for the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project which includes Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail.

Attachments:

1. Railbanking Staff Report from February 2021

AGENDA: February 4, 2021

TO: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Luis Pavel Mendez, Deputy Director
RE: What is Railbanking

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) receive this informational item on railbanking.

BACKGROUND

The RTC has continued to analyze the feasibility and possibility of transit rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL), which was purchased by RTC in 2012. The RTC completed a rail transit feasibility study in 2015 and a unified corridor investment study in 2019. Now the RTC has nearly completed a transit corridor alternatives analysis.

The RTC has also continued the development of the bicycle and pedestrian trail along the rail line next to the track. Close to 1.5 miles of the trail have been constructed in the City of Santa Cruz, there is construction currently underway in Watsonville and there are a number of segments of the trail in various stages of development.

DISCUSSION

As the RTC continues the operations, analysis and other work associated with the SCBRL right-of-way, railbanking comes up periodically. Staff is providing this informative report to provide a better understanding of railbanking.

The federal government has been regulating railroads since 1887, initially by the interstate Commerce Commission and presently by the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The common carrier obligation refers to the statutory duty of railroads operating freight service, in interstate commerce, to provide freight service on reasonable request. A railroad may not refuse to provide service merely because to do so would be inconvenient or unprofitable. A railroad may not discontinue freight rail service until the STB

issues a certificate of public convenience and necessity, or an exemption, authorizing abandonment.

Railroad rights-of-way are assembled through a variety of ways, including ownership in fee and easements for rail purposes. When rail lines or sections of rail lines are no longer needed for freight operations, railroads can seek authorization from the STB for abandonment, in order to free themselves of their common carrier obligation. Once lines are fully abandoned, underlying property can be sold, if the railroad owns the property in fee. In cases where the railroad only holds an easement for rail purposes, the land could revert to the underlining property owners.

Without a program for preserving rail corridors, the nation's rail system was at risk of becoming fragmented. In order to preserve the national railroad system, the federal government established railbanking in 1983 through the National Trails System Act (Rails to Trails Act). Railbanking is designed to prevent an interest in a railroad right-of-way from reverting under state law to an underlying fee owner after a railroad abandons service. The Rails to Trails Act provides an alternative to completely abandoning a railroad right-of-way by allowing a railroad to negotiate a trail use agreement with a prospective trail sponsor. To qualify under the Rails to Trails Act, the agreement allows the trail sponsor to acquire and use an out-of-service rail corridor until some future time when the railroad might be authorized to reactivate the rail line for rail service. The trail sponsor must assume financial responsibility for maintaining the corridor while it is held for rail banking. Any claims by easement owners regarding change in use of the corridor would be brought against the federal government based on the STB's authorization of interim trail use.

Railbanking takes place as part of the abandonment process. Short of full abandonment, the STB can issue a Certificate or Notice of Interim Trail Use (CITU or NITU) with a trail sponsor, who will assume financial liability to maintain the corridor. There is no requirement that the trail sponsor remove tracks or use the corridor for any particular purpose. However, the corridor must be maintained and held for possible reactivation to avoid the line being considered fully abandoned. The trail sponsor is not permitted to remove bridges and culverts, so that the line can be re-activated. The railroad or another potential freight rail operator can request that the line be re-activated if it can meet the STB requirements for reactivation; however, that party would need to acquire the corridor, assume financial responsibility including any reconstruction of rail line, and assume the common carrier obligations for the service over the rail line.

The STB views its authority under the Railbanking Act as both limited and ministerial. The STB will not issue a railbanking order where the railroad is not willing to negotiate. By the same token, the STB will not refuse to issue a railbanking order based on third-party objections about the desirability or appropriateness of trail use. The STB has authority to revoke a trail condition only if it is shown that the statutory requirements are not being met (i.e. the trail sponsor is not meeting its financial obligations for the property or allows the corridor to be severed from the national rail network so that rail service cannot be reactivated).

Railbanked corridors may be used for other transportation services, including trails, bus rapid transit, recreational rail service, rail transit service and/or to provide non-common carrier freight rail service. The essential obligation is to agree that the property is subject to reactivation for common carrier freight rail service and any other use may have to be removed, if it conflicts with the reactivation of common carrier freight service. If a track remains on a railbanked corridor and continues to be used for other rail purposes, infrastructure and operations will need to meet the applicable safety requirements of the appropriate regulatory state and federal agencies including the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

S:\RTC\TC2021\02\Consent Agenda\Railbank Info\SR Railbank Info 0221-Revised Final.docx

TO: Bicycle Advisory Committee

FROM: Sarah Christensen, P.E., Senior Transportation Engineer and Guy Preston, Executive Director

RE: Capitola Trestle Update & Interim Trail Alternative

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) review and provide input on the proposed approach for additional engineering analysis of the Capitola Trestle for a potential interim trail alternative on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

BACKGROUND

The RTC programmed \$50K in Measure D - Rail category funding for a feasibility study on the Capitola Trestle. The exact scope was generally understood to analyze the feasibility of modifying the 5-bridge complex known as the Capitola Trestle to accommodate both rail and trail.

The Capitola Trestle is made up of 5 bridges that span Capitola Avenue, Riverview Avenue, Soquel Creek, and Wharf Road in the City of Capitola. Details on each of the 5 bridges are below, from east to west:

1. Bridge 15.89a is a 3-span ballast-deck precast concrete box girder bridge that spans over Capitola Avenue.
2. Bridge 15.89b is a 15-span timber trestle bridge that spans over Riverview Avenue. Between the approximately 15-foot-long bridge spans, there are parking stalls leased by an adjacent business.
3. Bridge 15.89c is a 150-foot-long single-span open-deck wrought-iron bridge that spans over Soquel Creek. The bridge was designed in 1890 and may have been placed in service in its location 1910.
4. Bridge 15.89d is a 3-span timber trestle bridge that connects 15.89c to 15.89e, between Wharf Road and Soquel Creek.
5. Bridge 15.89e is a single-span concrete slab bridge that spans over Wharf Road.

On June 6, 2019 as part of the Measure D 5-Year Plan approval, the RTC allocated a total of \$4M of Measure D - Active Transportation category funds to the County for the preconstruction phase of MBSST Segment 10 and portions of Segments 11. This project will construct a trail from 17th Avenue in Live Oak to State Park Drive in Aptos, excluding a portion of the trail through the City of Capitola due to the complexities and expected cost of providing parallel bicycle and pedestrian access adjacent to the rail line at the Capitola Trestle.

As set forth in previous decisions by the Commission to adopt the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Master Plan, accept the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS), and accept the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Regional Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS), the SCBRL should be used for both an active transportation and a public transit corridor, with electric passenger rail being the locally preferred alternative for transit. As indicated in the TCAA/RNIS Business Plan, there are many risks associated with a rail transit project, including funding. Although RTC’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) includes passenger rail, it is on the unconstrained funding list, due to unidentified funding needs.

DISCUSSION

The RTC is under contract with RailPros, Inc. to perform annual inspections and load ratings on all 29 bridges located on the SCBRL, including the Capitola Trestle. The RailPros analysis assumes all bridges will continue to serve freight rail traffic. The Capitola Trestle has been designated Out-Of-Service (OOS) for freight trains due to structural deficiencies to both timber trestles (15.89 b and 15.89d) and the wrought iron (15.89c) bridge. Several other bridges on the SCBRL are also OOS for freight trains.

RailPros indicated that the wrought iron section (15.89c) of the Capitola Trestle should be replaced to accommodate freight loading. This recommendation was based on the prior use, age, and challenges associated with structural welding to wrought iron. The two timber sections can be retrofitted to accommodate freight loading but would need to be replaced if the bridge’s use is expanded to include an active transportation trail adjacent to the rail line.

Under the Administration, Coordination, and License (ACL) Agreement with Saint Paul & Pacific Railroad (SPP), RTC is responsible for initial repairs to certain infrastructure, including bridges, in order to accommodate freight and recreational rail. Staff prepared planning-level cost estimates for the repairs/replacement of the bridges needed to meet the current freight needs, included below:

BRIDGE	ESTIMATED REPAIR COST
Timber trestle at Milepost (MP) 10.45 over Bush Gulch known as the Seascape Trestle	\$2.9M
The 15 span open deck timber trestle over Riverview Avenue at MP 15.89 (bridge 15.89b)	\$3.5M
The single span wrought iron bridge over Soquel Creek at MP 15.89 (bridge 15.89c)	\$15M to \$30M
The 3 span open deck timber trestle between Wharf Road and Soquel Creek at MP 15.89 (bridge 15.89d)	\$0.7M
The 22 span open deck timber trestle over Antonelli Pond at MP 22.29	\$3.5M
The single span open deck timber trestle over Wilder Creek at MP 23.47	\$0.6M
TOTAL	\$26.2M to \$41.2M

The cost to repair the bridges and other necessary repairs for freight and recreational rail is expected to exceed what is available locally by the Measure D Rail Corridor Program, which provides approximately \$50M¹ over 30 years (8% of Measure D) for infrastructure preservation over the 32-mile corridor as well as analysis of future uses. Staff has researched federal and state competitive funding programs that may be available to partially fund the necessary repairs for freight:

- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI). This federal program funds projects that improve safety, efficiency, and reliability of passenger and freight rail. In the past 4 years, the program has awarded between \$65M and \$320M annually to freight and passenger rail projects across the nation.
- Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP). This state program funds projects on federally designated Trade Corridors of National and Regional Significance, on California's portion of the national Highway Freight Network, as identified in the California Freight Mobility Plan and along other corridors with a high volume of freight movement. Approximately \$300M per year is available, with an expected 30% match.
- Short-Line Railroad Improvement Program (SLRIP). This one-time appropriation of \$7.2M was awarded to short-line railroad infrastructure projects statewide. The RTC was successful in securing \$285,000 to fund repairs to the Pajaro River Bridge at MP 1.06, one of two bridges actively being used by freight along the SCBRL. Although SLRIP was a one-time appropriation, similar programs in the future may be available.

Staff anticipates that the repairs needed for these bridges would not compete well for these funding sources, since there are no current freight customers and few prospective freight customers beyond Watsonville.

Feasibility Study

The County of Santa Cruz is the implementing agency for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 & 11, which proposes to construct a multiuse trail between 17th Avenue in Live Oak to State Park Drive in Aptos. The project includes a gap in the trail at the Capitola Trestle, which assumes the approximately ½-mile section will be developed as part of a separate project. The project is just beginning the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis.

County staff is considering including an interim trail alternative as part of the required project scoping, similar to the interim trail alternative that RTC is considering adding to the alternatives being studied for Segment 12 of the MBSST as part of the Highway 1 project (see associated staff report included in this BAC meeting agenda package).

On June 3, 2021 the Commission approved the \$50,000 in Measure D Rail funds programmed for the Capitola Trestle Feasibility Study be used for a structural

¹ Estimate in 2021 dollars based on current Measure D revenues of approximately \$20M/year

feasibility analysis to determine whether the Capitola Trestle could be retrofitted to accommodate an interim multiuse trail. This analysis would inform the County as to whether they should expand the scope of work for the Segment 10-11 to include the Capitola Trestle. It is anticipated that the analysis by the RTC on-call structural engineering consultant, RailPros, would cost \$37,531. Having the RTC on-call structural engineering consultant perform the analysis would be quicker and more cost-effective than if the County added the scope of services to their consultant contract because RailPros has built a model for the bridge, and has similar experience performing this type of analysis.

Staff recommends that the BAC review and provide input on the proposed approach for additional analysis of the Capitola Trestle and potential interim trail alternative being added to Coastal Rail Trail Project under development.

SUMMARY

An update on the Capitola Trestle and current development status of rail and trail projects (Segments 10-11) was provided, which included a summary of major investments needed on bridges to restore freight service on the SCBRL. The Commission recently approved performing additional structural analysis of the existing Capitol Trestle to determine if the bridge could be used as a multiuse path as an interim condition.

S:\Bike\Committee\Agenda Packets\BC2021\3. June\Staff Report_Capitola Trestle.docx