

**AGENDA:** May 4, 2017

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission  
**FROM:** George Dondero, Executive Director  
**RE:** Director's Report

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**THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

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**Hwy 9/SLV Transportation Corridor Plan Open House - May 31**

The RTC is seeking community input on transportation along the Highway 9 Corridor through San Lorenzo Valley (SLV) at an open house at **Felton Community Hall** (6191 Hwy 9, Felton) on **May 31** from **5:30-7:30pm**. Building upon past community input on transportation in San Lorenzo Valley (SLV), the RTC, in partnership with Supervisor Bruce McPherson, Caltrans, the County of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) and the consultant team of Kimley-Horn and TrailPeople, is preparing an action plan for the Highway 9 corridor through San Lorenzo Valley to make it safer and easier for everyone to get around, whether they are walking, biking, driving, or taking transit. The RTC invites the community to identify priorities for Highway 9 between Felton and Boulder Creek, learn about upcoming projects, and participate in development of this action plan.

Measure D, which was approved by voters in November 2016, includes \$10 million specifically earmarked for transportation projects along the Highway 9 corridor. Priorities for those Measure D and other state, federal, and local revenues will be identified through this collaborative plan. Additional information about the plan is online at: [www.sccrtc.org/projects/streets-highways/hwy-9-plan/](http://www.sccrtc.org/projects/streets-highways/hwy-9-plan/). A "virtual" online open house will also be available online later this Spring for those unable to attend the May 31 event.

**CALCOG**

The CALCOG Directors Meeting was held April 25 in Sacramento. Most of the agenda focused on legislation. We took a deep dive into understanding Senate Bill 1, the transportation funding package just recently signed into law by Governor Brown. (see below). Other bills discussed included SB 150, AB686, AB 1324. The Air Resources Board is working on setting new targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, with draft targets expected this summer and adoption in October. There is a disconnect between setting lower targets and funding to achieve those targets. ARB is organizing a workshop on how to meet the funding challenges in July.

## **Senate Bill 1: State Transportation Funding Package**

On April 6, 2017 the California legislature approved a transportation funding package SB 1 (Beall) aimed at fixing local roads, state highways and bridges, and investing more dollars toward transit and safety projects. It also approved ACA 5 (Frazier), which will place a constitutional amendment on the November 2018 ballot to firewall the resources from being diverted away from their intended use. Governor Brown signed SB 1 on April 28, in combination with bills that designate some of the revenues to specific projects in other areas of the state.

Once fully implemented, SB 1 is anticipated to generate about \$5.2 billion per year. Based on preliminary estimates, \$7-9 million per year will be distributed to local cities and the County of Santa Cruz for local road repairs . Approximately \$3 million per year will be available to Santa Cruz METRO and the RTC for transit projects. The RTC's share of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds might increase by \$600,000 per year, however this is still much less than historic averages. SB1 also includes a significant increase in funding for state highway repairs through the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) and designates funding for several competitive programs, though some of those funds are expected to be only available to large metropolitan areas. SB 1 generates revenues from a combination of state gas taxes (which have not been raised since 1994), diesel taxes, and vehicle registration fees.

Several state agencies have cautioned that the actual revenue amounts are likely to be lower than initial estimates. Staff will provide additional information on the bill and updated distribution estimates following release of updates in the Governor's revised budget proposal ("the May Revise").

## **State Passenger Rail Summit**

I attended this annual event in Sacramento April 18-19. Several panels provided updates on rail corridors around the state, including the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) which is expected to begin operation "very soon". This single track commuter line parallels the highly congested US 101 corridor, and includes the construction of a bicycle path next to the tracks. Service between San Rafael and Santa Rosa is initially planned, with extensions to Larkspur and Cloverdale in the final phases. AMTRAK ridership is up, showing a record year in 2016. California hosts 70 AMTRAK operated trains daily. The Sacramento region is installing a bike-share program, with many bikes planned to be located near rail stops as a complement to rail service, providing an option for the first/last mile mobility that passengers often need. Cost to the user will be similar to that of a bus ticket. There are now 55 bike-share systems in the U.S. Some electric bikes will be included in the program.

## Comments from the Public on Agenda Item 15

**From:** Stanley Sokolow

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 03, 2017 1:56 PM

**To:** info@sccrtc.org

**Subject:** Comments on agenda items for May 4 2017 meeting of the RTC

Dear Commissioners:

I will offer the following comments at the Thursday May 4 meeting.

Regarding item "Measure D - Public Outreach and Communication Consultant" by Director Dondero, I feel that spending \$40,000 on a public relations firm to prepare fancy communications explaining what has been done with Measure D funds and when projects will be completed is an unnecessary and extravagant expenditure. The Director asks for these funds to communicate "transportation projects to be delivered with Measure D funds, when projects can be expected to be completed, and how the funds were used to leverage additional state and federal funds. While the RTC does not have an in-house graphic, art or marketing department, staff has some skill in these realms and limited graphics software access." Those objectives can be met by the RTC staff simply by posting on the RTC's website, issuing press releases, and/or interviews with local news media. The money is better spent on actual transportation projects. I urge that the Commission NOT APPROVE the funds for an outside consultant for this communication.

Regarding the email sent to the Commission by "ML" on April 23, which suggests that the Commission look into the guided bus rapid transit technology known as "O-Bahn", I would like the Commission and the public to know that the Campaign for Sensible Transportation will be putting on a free public forum about "Visions of Public Transit on the Rail Corridor" on Saturday June 3 in Santa Cruz and again on June 17 in Watsonville. I will be speaking on Bus Rapid Transit, and will explain the O-Bahn and other BRT technologies. There will also be a presentation on a commuter train. Details are on our Facebook page called "The Campaign for Sensible Transportation".

Regarding the UNIFIED CORRIDORS STUDY (UCS), I notice that the scope of work in the UCS RFP does not mention parking demand or the need for additional parking in the central business districts or elsewhere. The various scenarios should include an assessment of their impact on the need for parking.

Finally, the proposed Measure D 5-year project expenditures plan includes \$540,000 for "ongoing maintenance, repair and rehabilitation of railroad track infrastructure and signage." This is in addition to the cost of railroad bridge repairs, railroad drainage repairs, and storm damage repairs. This is not an appropriate time to rehabilitate tracks that the passenger train feasibility study said should be completely replaced with modern tracks for passenger service. It would be okay to do drainage repairs that fix and prevent erosion, but the tracks and electronic signal devices and track siding switches should just be left alone for now. The passenger train study also said that 1/3 of the ties need to be replaced when the tracks are replaced, 1/3 could last 10 more years, and 1/3 could last 20 more years, but it's more economical to replace them all before new tracks are laid on them rather than replacing them under the tracks later while the trains are running, so the consultant recommended complete replacement of the ties and rehabilitation of the gravel bed (ballast) in the project to replace the tracks. Moreover, the UCS study hasn't yet been done to evaluate alternatives to the trains, such as a BRT busway on the corridor, so it's premature to rehabilitate the existing tracks and associated railroad infrastructure.

Sincerely,  
Stanley Sokolow

## Comments from the Public on Agenda Item 28

**From:** Gail McNulty

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 03, 2017 12:30 PM

**To:** [info@scrtc.org](mailto:info@scrtc.org)

**Cc:** [patrick.mulhearn@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:patrick.mulhearn@co.santa-cruz.ca.us); [allyson.violante@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:allyson.violante@co.santa-cruz.ca.us)

**Subject:** Unified Corridor Study

Dear Commissioner Friend:

Santa Cruz County has an opportunity to take a leading role in the active transportation movement by transforming our coastal corridor into the backbone of a safe and scenic active transportation network. We hope that you and your fellow commissioners grasp the magnitude of this potential and let go of the unrealistic and unwise thought of keeping the tracks in place for a train we have little chance of funding. Instead, let's put our energy into transit solutions that can and should be implemented along the Highway 1 corridor.

You and Patrick Mulhearn have given your assurance that the Unified Corridor Study will include a wide trail-only Bike and Pedestrian Trail as one of the scenarios considered. The public expects this since it was clearly indicated in Measure D promises, wording, and law.

An RTC analysis that does not consider trail-only but only looks at "Rail" and the "MBSST Trail," will not have fulfilled the spirit or the letter of the law or the promise made to the voters of Santa Cruz County.

It is important to note that continuing work on any segment before the "best use" analysis is completed is not consistent with seeking a "best use" and will likely be a waste of public funds. In order to build the best solution for our entire county, the RTC should listen to the needs of various stakeholder groups (i.e. the disabled community and the North Coast farmers) and give special consideration to plans that present the most workable solution for business owners and trail users.

In addition, to be a meaningful and effective comparison of the options, the Unified Corridor Study must show:

- A comparison of the cost of building a trail-only to the cost of building a rail-with-trail solution
- A comparison of the environmental impact of building a trail-only to that of building a rail-with-trail solution
- How many people could be taken off the freeway if we went all in on active transportation, including e-bikes with a trail-only solution?
- Examples of how other communities have reexamined their community values and rethought their transportation systems to make cycling a safe, viable transportation option (i.e. Portland, OR; Minneapolis, MN; Philadelphia, PA; Amsterdam; Copenhagen)
- How might a modern and appealing bus transit solution be implemented along the Highway 1 corridor in conjunction with the widening process?
- How might incentives to change people's behavior (i.e. carpooling, flexible work time with major employers, working from home, etc.) improve traffic on the freeway?

Having said that, we believe the Coastal Corridor needs to be used as soon as possible—and allowing the property to sit as a vacant lot until 2025 is a waste of a valuable community asset.

Thank you for your continuing efforts to improve transit and make Santa Cruz County a safer, greener, and more convenient community.

Sincerely,

Gail McNulty, Executive Director

[The Great Santa Cruz Trail Group](#)

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Sincerely,  
Stanley Sokolow

**From:** William Menchine  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 03, 2017 2:31 PM  
**To:** Ginger Dykaar  
**Cc:** Cory Caletti; George Dondero  
**Subject:** UCIS, rail corridor uses, E-Bikes, Velocars, etc.

Hi Ginger,

I am writing to get some clarification on the how the transportation mode scenario data is developed for the UCIS modeling process. From what I can determine by studying the pdf documents on the SCCRTC site, it appears that there are a number of software tools that have been developed to test for specific travel mode, purpose and time queries. My question is: How is a mode proposal or scenario "constructed" or modeled for testing?

As an example, say I am interested in getting a better understanding of how BRT might reduce the use of personal automobile use in the Hwy 1 corridor. It seems to me that in order to test one particular mode over another, there would be many assumptions that would need to be input to make comparisons or to understand dependencies on other parts of the transportation system. Does the program prompt for the necessary inputs to satisfy the required parameters or is there a table or other guidelines as an adjunct to the program's GUI? Pardon my lack of knowledge on this, but is this sort of software analytical modeling considered the "last word" in generating reports for understanding and quantifying competing transportation scenarios? Am I correct in assuming that this is primary function of the "Travel Mode Users Guide" is designed for? Please advise.

The reason I ask is related to a potential use of the rail corridor as a possible commuter and utility bikeway. The ultimate design of the path will have a profound effect on the level of service, comfort and safety of both bicyclists and pedestrians. As you know, the current plan treats the trail as a recreational amenity with a shared or "multi-use" path. Another option would be to optimize the trail design for active transportation by providing separate paths for pedestrians and bicycles and to increase the width of each path. An optimized or "hybrid" trail designed for transportation would have a Class IV separated Bikeway for conventional bikes, E-Bikes and a new class of pedal assist "Velocars", while maintaining a dedicated path for wheelchair users, walkers, skate boards and other low speed wheel enhanced vehicles (strollers, scooters, etc.).

My contention is that new "Pedelec" vehicles have dramatically increased the viability for bicycles to provide a solution for the "last mile" as well as enabling 2 to 5 mile travel distances for a class of users, that until now, would not have considered riding a bicycle for transportation or "utility" use. This development is due to the combination of pedal assist technology coupled with lighter, more nimble and purpose built commuter and utility oriented "E-Bikes". This new generation of bicycles has extended the travel range and shifted the demographics of new bicycle users. In Europe and Asia the shift toward the use of pedal assist bikes has resulted in large increase of riders, most notably among women. Additionally, the development of separated Bikeways and safer bicycle infrastructure in general has proven to be responsible for increasing the number of new bicyclists, especially women.

To the best of my knowledge, RTC Staff has not attempted to analyze how an "enhanced path option" would stack up against other potential transportation uses of the rail corridor. I believe that it is incumbent upon Staff to study and quantify the potential for Active Transportation as a viable transportation option as compared to the proposed passenger rail or BRT in the rail corridor scenarios.

Regarding BRT. Is there a plan to evaluate the development of a BRT system in the freeway corridor? If so, will the evaluation attempt to identify where the most logical locations for multi-modal transit hubs would be? If not, can you provide any information on what will be studied with respect to BRT in the Highway 1 and Soquel Ave/Drive corridor?

Lastly, I want to share three links that I feel are seminal in understanding the future direction of Pedelec vehicles, particularly Velocars. Each of these examples are either entering production or in the prototype refinement stages of development. All of these vehicles are classified as E-Bikes and would be legal in California as pedal assist vehicles to operate in Bike Lanes, shared roadways and Class 1 & Class IV, Bikeways or Cycle Tracks. These vehicles are game changes and warrant a fresh look at how the rail corridor might better serve more people if repurposed as an innovative hybrid Bikeway and Pedestrian facility designed primarily for Active Transportation.

### **Links to YouTube videos of Velocars**

Note: The URL's below should "auto launch" but you may need to choose to "cancel" at the end of each video or YouTube will "auto select" the next video on the page, not necessarily the ones listed below. If the links do not launch, you can copy and paste in any browser window.

The "Pod Car" is a prototype 4 wheeled mini "Velocar" with a fully enclosed, weather tight cab. Commercial production is expected later this year. ~2:30 in length.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IKq1fGtXFM>

VeloMetro's "Veemo" has been designed as a "shared use" Pedelec vehicle and is currently in prototype trials. ~2:45 in length.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUrpkoX-r4Q>

The "Bio-Hybrid" is a concept prototype by Schaeffler Engineering, a well-respected manufacturer of E-Bike and EV components. It is a very refined Velocar with a sophisticated power assist system. Schaeffler recently committed to further development on a production model. ~6 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=037CAW4Yeug>

I would appreciate any answers or clarifications that you can provide to my questions above.

Please let me know your thoughts on these video examples of pedal assist vehicles.

Thank you and best regards,  
Will

## Comments from the Public on Agenda Item 29

**From:** Brian Peoples  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 29, 2017 3:38 PM  
**To:** Scrtc Info  
**Subject:** Fw: Trail Now Newsletter

The following is my response to the RTC Meeting on May 4th. Please ensure it is included within the package to RTC Commissioners.

Brian

**NORTH COAST FARMERS & PROPERTY OWNERS SUPPORT**  
Trail Now is working with the North Coast Farmers and property owners to develop a win-win solution for a rail-to-trail from Swift Street to Davenport. The railroad tracks that travel from Swift Street to Davenport travel through the middle of the farmland and is surrounded by high earth cutaways into the dirt, not providing any scenic views. Most people do not realize that over 50% of the railroad tracks are in these valleys and have limited ocean views. The farmers proposed plan diverts the trail to higher ground to the perimeter of the farmland that will provide more scenic views and eliminate any disruptions the trail may have on farming operations. Over 75% of the rail-to-trail will remain along the existing railroad tracks. The farmers' proposal will help RTC meet their timeline commitment to complete construction of rail-to-trail by 2020. We will be submitting the alternative plans to RTC and hope they are willing to work with the farmers and property owners for a better rail-to-trail. Stay tune for more information and we are asking the public to support the North Coast Farmers Rail-to-Trail Plan.



### **"ENVIRONMENTAL" ORGANIZATIONS PROPOSING TO DIVERT HIGHWAY TRAFFIC TO COASTAL CORRIDOR**

What is the real reason local environmental groups (Santa Cruz Land Trust, Ecology Action) are against using the Coastal Corridor NOW for active transportation? The truth is, they are trying to convert the Coastal Corridor into a road for buses. Even though the Coastal Corridor goes through some of the most environmentally-sensitive areas (beaches, wetlands, sloughs, rivers, harbor), these organizations want to convert the Coastal Corridor into a road and have over 60 buses a day (6 am to 9 pm) going from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. In the coming months, the Highway 1 improvement report will be released by Caltran that recommends widening to Larkin Valley Road and new HOV / Bus Rapid Transit (BRTs) lanes. The draft Highway 1 improvement report showed traffic delay would be reduced by 85% and BRTs would be a cost-effective transit solution for the County. We believe big, heavy transit vehicles should be on the highway corridor and not through our neighborhoods and community along the Coastal Corridor. Building a road for buses along the Coastal Corridor will not allow for a continuous trail to exist and is not the best use of this valuable transportation resource. Let's not allow these "environmental" groups to build a road for buses on the Coastal Corridor. If you know supporters of these groups, please tell them about the fact that these groups are stopping a rail-to-trail from being built NOW and want fossil-fueled buses running on the Coastal Corridor.

### **RTC MEETING ON MAY 4th**

The upcoming RTC Meeting (Agenda) on May 4th at the Capitola City Council Chambers is an important meeting. The topics covered will be 5-year plans for Measure D expenditures, North

Coast Rail-Trail, Unified Corridor Investment Study and Highway 1 improvements. Our goal is to ensure that a world-class rail-to-trail is built from Watsonville to Davenport NOW, without wasting taxpayer funds and in partnership with adjacent property owners. We encourage you to review this important agenda and participate in the public discussions. If you cannot make the meeting, comments can be made to [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org).

#### SIGN THE PETITION!

Have you signed the petition? We are almost at 2500 signatures. Please sign and ask your friends. <https://www.change.org/p/santa-cruz-county-rtc-help-build-a-world-class-rail-trail-in-santa-cruz-county-by-removing-train-tracks>

#### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Here are some easy things you can do to help build a world-class rail-trail NOW:

1. Donate to Trail Now (<http://www.trailnow.org/donate>) to help stop the train and build a trail NOW.
  2. On Facebook, "LIKE", and ask your friends to "LIKE" Trail Now. This is not just sharing, but inviting your friends to like.
  3. Sign up and invite your friends to sign up for our Trail Now Newsletter.
  4. Sign the petition and ask your friends to sign for a Trail Only  
<https://www.change.org/p/santa-cruz-county-rtc-help-build-a-world-class-rail-trail-in-santa-cruz-county-by-removing-train-tracks>
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