

SERVICE AUTHORITY
FOR FREEWAY
EMERGENCIES
(SAFE)

Rich Krumholz
Caltrans District 5 Deputy Director
Planning and Programming
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

December 1, 2005

RAIL/TRAIL
AUTHORITY

Re: Comments on the Draft Transportation Concept Report for State Route 17

COMMUTE
SOLUTIONS

Dear  Mr. Krumholz,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Transportation Concept Report (TCR) for State Route 17. The Draft TCR for State Route 17 supports the 2005 Regional Transportation Plan goals and policies. RTC staff would like to submit the attached comments for your consideration.

TRANSPORTATION
POLICY WORKSHOP

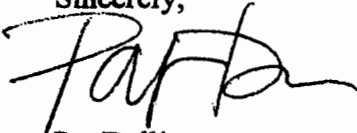
We apologize for needing more time to fit the review of this draft into our staff work schedule. We appreciate your flexibility. In the future, we hope you can provide us at least four weeks to review and comment on a draft Transportation Concept Report.

BUDGET &
ADMINISTRATION
PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE

We look forward to seeing the revised draft. If you have any questions, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at (831) 460-3219.

INTERAGENCY
TECHNICAL
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Sincerely,



Pat Dellin
Acting Executive Director

BICYCLE COMMITTEE

cc: Commissioner Mark Stone
SCCRTC

ELDERLY & DISABLED
TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Staff Comments on the Draft Transportation Concept Report for
State Route 17
(December 2005)**

1. Given the limitations for capacity expansion on State Route 17 (Route 17), staff supports the Draft TCR concept of optimizing transportation demand management programs, including transit service, and emphasizing Transportation Operations System (TOS) improvements on this corridor to manage travel demand and planning for acceptable levels of service.
 - a. Ridesharing is a key transportation demand management tool. The RTC's Commute Solutions Program provides ridematching services and commute alternative information for commuters traveling to, from or within Santa Cruz County. Approximately 26% of commuters travel from Santa Cruz County to locations outside of the County. Many of these commuters utilize Route 17 as an interregional commute corridor. There is a high incentive for ridesharing on Route 17 corridor due to the travel distance and roadway geometry. Two Commute Solutions ridesharing signs are posted on Route 17 to alert travelers of Commute Solutions services. RTC staff recommends that Caltrans add "Maintain and enhance the Commute Solutions services" to the recommendations for Route 17 (page 16).
 - b. The Route 17 Traffic Operation Systems (TOS) Project Study Report, completed by Caltrans in 2001, identifies a range of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and related vehicle equipment including vehicle detection loops, highway advisory radio alerts, fixed and changeable message signs and closed circuit cameras to make more effective use of the existing TOS system and improve safety and operations on the highway. RTC staff recommends that the TCR discuss the findings of this PSR and note the importance of integrating ITS infrastructure components identified in the PSR into every Highway 17 safety, improvement and/or construction project.
 - c. Traffic Monitoring Stations are a key ITS element on Route 17 and provide an important traffic management tool on this corridor. Accordingly, traffic monitoring stations have been installed in strategic locations on Route 17. At this time, data collected by monitoring stations on the Santa Cruz County side of Route 17 cannot be viewed by the Traffic Management Center (TMC) in Oakland in real time. Software upgrades are required to facilitate viewing of monitoring station data from Santa Cruz County by the Oakland TMC in real time. RTC staff requests that the TCR include the need for software upgrades to effectively utilize the existing ITS components and that software upgrades and any other improvements which enable monitoring stations located in Santa Cruz County to be seen by the Oakland TMC in real time be included as a recommendation for State Route 17 (page 16) of the TCR.
2. RTC staff would like to request that the TCR mention that Route 17 is designated as a Safety Corridor by the California Highway Patrol in its discussion of the Safe on 17 Task Force (page 7). RTC staff would like to thank Caltrans for recognizing the effectiveness of the Safe on 17 Task Force helping to improve the safety of the Route 17 corridor.
3. RTC staff would like to recommend that the TCR include a discussion regarding the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program as a cost-effective safety and mobility program on Route 17. Santa Cruz County's *2005 Regional Transportation Plan* identifies FSP service on Route 17

during the next 25 years as part of safety and congestion management on this corridor. Therefore, staff recommends that maintaining the Freeway Service Patrol Program be included in the Recommendations for State Route 17 (page 16).

4. In 2000-2001, Caltrans and the Commission explored the feasibility of adding a 1.1 mile truck-climbing lane on northbound Route 17 near the summit. The Draft TCR states that Caltrans deprogrammed this project because it was determined that the project was not cost-effective (page 11). RTC staff recommends that the TCR note all of the reasons for the deletion of this project including operational issues and environmental impacts. Additionally, RTC staff recommends that the retention of a climbing lane concept be removed from the TCR (page 16). The truck-climbing lane concept was rejected by Caltrans and the Commission and is not included in the *2005 Regional Transportation Plan*.
5. The Route 17 corridor serves as a critical interregional goods movement and commute route between Santa Cruz County and the San Francisco Bay Area. The combination of these interregional transportation uses on this corridor presents safety and congestion challenges due to Route 17's unique geometry, the lack of alternative routes and peak hour congestion. Although Caltrans and the Commission deleted the truck-climbing lane proposed to alleviate some of the interregional travel conflicts on Route 17, joint interregional uses continue to present mobility and safety issues. In order to address this deficiency, RTC staff requests that the TCR separate the Goods Movement and Commuter/Recreational Travel discussions under Part Two: Sub-Corridor Analysis and Detail: Corridor and Interregional Concerns. An explicit discussion of these issues will allow for thoughtful consideration of the goods movement, personal travel conditions and associated mobility and safety issues (page 11).
6. RTC staff would like to request that the TCR provide more information regarding its support of the new interchange between Mt Herman Road and Granite Creek Road in Scotts Valley (page 16). We are glad this project is included, since this project appears in the *2001 Regional Transportation Plan*. Please mention which operational and/or safety issues this project would respond to. Also, please include a Park and Ride lot adjacent to the interchange to the scope of this project.
7. RTC staff recommends that the following be added to the list of Recommendations for State Route 17 (page 16) and to Appendix B: Segment Sheet Data where appropriate.
 - Software upgrades to allow for Route 17 Monitoring Station data to be transmitted to by the Oakland Traffic Management Center in real time (see Comment #1).
 - Maintain Freeway Service Patrol Program (see Comment #3).
 - Maintain Commute Solutions Services (see Comment # 1a)
 - Continue to coordinate with District 4, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and SCCRTC on planning, programming and service provisions and operation issues.
 - Continue participation on the Safe on 17 Task Force and the Traffic Operations System Oversight Committee.
 - Maintain increased California Highway Patrol enforcement.
 - Maintain the motorist aid call boxes on Route 17.
 - Consider development of a new Park and Ride lot at or adjacent to the interchanges between State Route 1/17 Interchange and Granite Creek in Scotts Valley.
 - Additional Dynamic Curve Warning Signs at appropriate locations.