March 19, 2014

George Dondero
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, California 95060

Dear Mr. Dondero:

NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is providing comments on the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission’s (Commission) draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (2014 RTP). The 2014 RTP provides guidance for transportation policy and projects through the year 2035 using economic, environmental, and equity ratings (STARS- Sustainable Transportation Analysis and Rating System). Individual projects in the 2014 RTP will undergo separate design and environmental review, and implementation will depend upon funding availability. The 2014 RTP will be incorporated into the Monterey Bay area Metropolitan Transportation Plan along with Monterey and San Benito County plans. A description of potential effects of the 2014 RTP is included in the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and Regional Transportation Plans for Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The 2014 RTP was provided to NMFS for review on February 12, 2014. NMFS’ comments are not inclusive of the entire document but highlight some issues of concern.

Federally endangered Central California Coast (CCC) coho salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch), threatened CCC steelhead (O. mykiss) and South-Central California Coast (S-CCC) steelhead are present in Santa Cruz County watersheds. Santa Cruz County also contains coho salmon and steelhead designated critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Pacific salmon. The 2014 RTP includes minimal discussion of these listed salmonids and habitats. Infrastructure projects and design elements that could improve designated critical habitat and EFH are largely omitted from 2014 RTP (e.g., reduction of impervious surfaces, decommissioning of roads, remediation of fish passage and habitat barriers, etc.). Additionally, we recommend the Commission review recently completed recovery plans for CCC coho salmon (NMFS 2012) and S-CCC steelhead (NMFS 2013) for information on important watersheds, threats, and restoration actions that could be incorporated into future projects. We believe these recovery plans can provide important guidance to the Commission to ensure future actions contribute to the recovery of these listed species.
Please incorporate the aforementioned projects, design elements, and recovery recommendations into future drafts of the 2014 RTP. The impacts to listed salmonids and habitats discussed in the EIR are primarily associated with construction activities. Please discuss the potential combined effects of the 2014 RTP on listed salmonids and their habitats (e.g., anticipated net changes in habitat quantity, quality, or accessibility) in future drafts of the EIR.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2014 RTP. If you have questions or concerns regarding this letter, please contact Jonathan Ambrose at (707) 575-6091.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Irma Lagomarsino
California Coastal Area Office

cc: Melissa Farinha CDFW, Yountville, CA
    Jon Jankovitz, CDFW, Yountville, CA

References Cited


Dear SCCRTC Commissioners and Staff,

This is a short email but it follows a careful review of your proposed long range plan (the RTIP).

First of all, I appreciate the balance shown in the plan. It clearly supports all modalities and includes some excellent bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

For me to actively support the plan and the subsequent tax measure(s) to fund it, I would have to be convinced that a sufficient amount of money was being allocated towards the rail trail to build the spine of the project along the rail corridor, keeping in mind that not all of the money for this purpose will come via the SCCRTC.

Thank you for your careful work on this document,

Micah Posner
Santa Cruz City Council

Dear Mr. Posner,

Thank you for your comments on the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The Regional Transportation Commission will consider comments to be included in the Final 2014 Regional Transportation Plan at their May 1 meeting and plans to adopt the final plan on June 26.

The comment period closes on April 8.

Please visit the 2014 RTP page of the SCCRTC website for information: http://www.sccrtc.org/rtp.html.

Thank you,

Cathy Judd, Administrative Assistant
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue | Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Main Office 831.460.3200 | Watsonville 831.768.8012

Follow our social networks for the latest RTC news
April 3, 2014

Mr. George Dondero
Executive Director
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: City of Capitola Comments on the Draft 2014 Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Mr. Dondero:

The City Council for the City of Capitola appreciates the efforts of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission in completion of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and your presentation to our Council on March 27, 2014. Based on Council and staff’s review of the plan, and input received at the council meeting the City of Capitola has the following comments on the draft plan.

1. The City supports the active development of the rail corridor as a ped/bike facility. Independent of the establishment of potential rail services, we encourage the commission to seek ways to make this corridor open for pedestrians and bicycles. Additionally, the City encourages the commission to establish partnerships with local jurisdictions to help expedite development of the rail trail.

2. The single biggest factor affecting vehicular congestion in the City of Capitola is capacity along the Highway 1 corridor. The City’s data shows that afternoon traffic is diverted onto City streets as drivers avoid Highway 1. This leads to an imbalance of traffic on Park Avenue and other city streets where each day there are more than 1,300 more trips in the eastbound direction as compared to the westbound direction. The Highway 1 auxiliary lane projects completed on the portions south of Highway 17 have proven successful and the City supports the next phase of this project from Soquel Drive to 41st Avenue.

3. Consider modifying the RTP to emphasize the need for Metro bus services to be equitably distributed County-wide
The City of Capitola recognizes the joint efforts required by our local agencies to maintain and improve our transportation systems and look forward to working with your agency in the future to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the 2014 RTP.

Sincerely,

Sam Storcy, Mayor
City of Capitola
April 8, 2014

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTIP)

Dear Madam or Sir:

The City of Watsonville has the following comments concerning the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan. The City requests that the County of Santa Cruz allocate additional constrained funding for the following projects.

Freedom Blvd – Freedom Blvd at the City limits has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 12,254 and no pedestrian facilities. The County has allocated $0.75M in constrained funds for a multimodal project (ID# CO-P11) that extends over six miles from the City limits to Bonita Drive. Additional constrained funding is needed.

Harkins Slough Rd – There are no funds for the County portion of Harkins Slough Rd. Improvements are needed at this location as it is the only access to Pajaro Valley High School (PVHS) for automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians. Constrained funds are needed to improve access to PVHS.

Lee Rd – There are no funds for the County portion of Lee Rd, which could be a secondary access to PVHS. Constrained funds are needed to improve access to PVHS.

West Beach St – West Beach St at the City limits has an ADT of 7,445 and no pedestrian facilities. The County portion of the road is in poor condition. The County has allocated $0.3M in constrained funds for a project (ID# CO-P26b) that extends four miles from the City limits to Pajaro Dunes. The project description includes roadway and roadside improvements, but not reconstruction of the failing roadway. Additional constrained funding is needed to reconstruct the roadway.

The City of Watsonville requests that Caltrans provide funding for improvements to those portions of State Route 129 and State Route 152 that are within City limits. The RTIP indicates that $128M in constrained funds are set aside for State Highway Preservation (ID# CT-P45) for various SHOPP projects but does not call out the locations. Constrained funds are needed to maintain and improve existing State Highway facilities within the City.

Yours truly,

Murray A. Fontes, Principal Engineer
Public Works & Utilities Department
April 8, 2014

George Dondero, Executive Director  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC)  
1523 Pacific Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Dondero:

DRAFT 2014 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN COMMENTS

Thank you for the opportunity to review your agency’s Draft 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). We value our partnership with SCCRTC in strategically planning, financing, and achieving long-term goals for the region’s transportation system. The Plan’s focus on sustainability aligns effectively with Map-21 planning factors as well as the Caltrans Mission, Values, and Goals.

We recognize SCCRTC’s dedication toward collaborative goal setting within the county as well as surrounding region. We commend your agency’s efforts toward involving the entire community within the RTP development process as well as your participation in the AMBAG’s Metropolitan – Sustainable Community Strategy Working Group Committee. Overall, we commend the SCCRTC for identifying long range needs for all transportation modes and users, and developing goals, policies, and performance measures that incorporate environmental, economic, and social equity concerns.

We look forward to working in partnership with your staff on several key regional planning activities throughout the RTP timeframe, including the State Route 17 Access Management Plan, Caltrans Transportation Concept Reports, California Transportation Plan 2040, California Freight Mobility Plan, District 5 Bicycle Mobility Plan, and others. We expect these upcoming partnership planning activities to help further the goals of the RTP and advance the safety, mobility, and efficiency of the transportation system for people and freight.

Based on our review, we offer the following attached comments and suggestions for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Brandy Rider at (805) 549-3970 or Brandy.Rider@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

AILEEN K. LOE
Deputy District Director  
Planning and Local Assistance

Attachment-Caltrans Detailed Comments

*Caltrans provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability*
Attachment-Caltrans Detailed Comments on Draft Regional Transportation Plan

General Comments:

- **Consistency with AMBAG, TAMC, and SBtCOG:** The RTP would be strengthened by a discussion of the relationship between the RTPs of SCCRTC, TAMC, and SBtCOG (as well as the relationship between the SCCRTC RTP and the AMBAG MTP). In addition, SCCRTC should include some assurance that the growth projections, policies, and project lists other plans in the region are consistent with those found in SCCRTC’s RTP.
- **Demographics:** The RTP is missing key demographic information that would allow a reader to ascertain the prevalence, makeup, and location of its disadvantaged populations. Demographic and geographic data are needed to support SCCRTC’s social equality goals, especially the targets under Goal 3.
- **RTP Checklist:** The checklist should reference item locations in the body of the RTP and give page numbers wherever possible.
- **Housing needs:** The RTP should acknowledge that the AMBAG MTP will address housing needs for the Santa Cruz region.
- **Climate Change:** Since Santa Cruz is geographically situated so as to be vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the discussion of climate change impacts and adaptation is appropriate. SCCRTC should continue to coordinate with State and regional partners to develop and program projects that address these impacts.
- **Appendices:** The appendices to the SCCRTC RTP are essential, and should be available wherever the RTP is assembled in its complete form. Also, items appearing exclusively in the appendices should be discussed at some point in the body of the RTP, where the Appendix can be included by reference.

Specific Comments:

- **System Preservation, Pages ES-1, 1-2, Chapter 4:** The system preservation challenges in the region, specifically pavement and transit system maintenance, are thoroughly discussed in the Sustainability Chapter. The discussion on preservation could be expanded in the policy section (Chapter 4). System preservation appears as targets (3A & 3B) in Chapter 4 and appendix C, yet there does not seem to be a specific policy to support the target.
- **Environmental and Public Health, Page 1-6:** Consider expanding the discussion on Healthy Communities. Language could include the California Transportation Plan’s (CTP) 2040 Goal of “Fostering Livable and Healthy Communities and Promoting Social Equity.”
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Key Considerations, Pages 1-7; 4-4:** Please add the following information on Senate Bill 391 following the discussion of SB 375:
  - Senate Bill 391 (SB 391, 2009), the California Transportation Plan, requires the California Department of Transportation to prepare the California Transportation Plan (CTP), the long-range transportation plan, by December 2015, to reduce GHG emissions. This system must reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels from current levels by 2020, and 80 percent below the 1990 levels by 2050 as described by AB 32 and Executive Order S-03-05. The upcoming CTP 2040 will demonstrate how major metropolitan areas, rural areas, and state agencies can coordinate planning efforts to achieve critical statewide goals.

"Caltrans provides a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability"
- **Obesity, Page 1-9:** Consider adding language on multimodal travel choices/options such as walking and biking. Can cite new data from the California Household Travel Survey that shows a dramatic increase in walking trips [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/paffairs/news/pressrel/14pr021.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/paffairs/news/pressrel/14pr021.htm)

- **Transportation Network, Chapter 2:** Consider adding section(s) discussing major system needs for each mode and how needs will be addressed through the policy and action sections.

- **State Highways, Page 2-2:** The RTP does not include SR 35 within any sections regarding State Highways.

- **Highway 1 Corridor, Page 2-3:** Consider adding a note about SR 1 being a designated scenic byway.

- **Highway 17 Corridor, Page 2-5:** Consider adding information about the upcoming access management study.

- **Rail Corridor, Page 2-10:** Consider including a discussion on the rail preservation and maintenance needs.

- **Bike Network, Page 2-15:** Consider adding information on bicycle/truck compatibility issues and the planned study/campaign aimed at addressing this within the Mission Street Corridor.

- **Figure 3.4, Page 3-3:** This chart could also show employment data by year to better substantiate the projected increase in jobs.

- **Travel Patterns, Page 3-8:** The RTP should include additional information on the arterials mentioned here, such as congestion and reliability data.

- **Goods Movement, Page 3-12:** Consider adding section discussing major system needs for goods movement and how needs will be addressed through the policy and action sections.

- **Goods Movement, Page 3-12:** Add upcoming AMBAG freight/US 101 study. Goods movement in Santa Cruz and the surrounding region will be studied in the upcoming AMBAG US 101 Corridor Freight Study. SCCRTC will be partnering with other regional agencies to study short and long-term alternatives to improve freight mobility and transportation operations.

- **Goods Movement, Page 3-12:** Re: congestion - Even small percentages in truck volumes have can create bottlenecks on some roads, especially in mountainous areas where the differences in speed between trucks and cars are even greater.

- **Goods Movement, Page 3-13:** Re: air freight - The flower industry often ships via air cargo due to time-sensitivity. Many of these businesses are strategically clustered around Watsonville Municipal.

- **Goods Movement, Page 6-6:** The investments do not include/discuss specific projects addressing goods movement.

- **Policies, Chapter 4:** The detailed policies included in Appendix C are a necessary part of the Policy element, as required by CA Government Code 65080 (b)(1), and should be included in the body of the RTP. These policy statements should be clearly conveyed along with an explanation of how the policies were developed, any significant changes to these policies from previous plans, and why these changes may have occurred. In addition, this element must include objectives that link to both long and short-term goals or horizons. The RTP checklist references the project list for long and short-term strategies, but in fact, long and short-term horizons are not addressed.

- **Social Equity and Environmental Justice, Page 4-6:** Suggest adding information regarding policy language from the CTP 2040 policies, in particular, “integrate health and social equity in transportation and planning and decision making.”

- **SHOPP funding, Page 5-2:** The 2014 SHOPP includes $88 million for Santa Cruz. It is unclear how the anticipated SHOPP funds through 2035 are calculated.

"Caltrans provides a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"
- **Financial Projection, Page 5-3:** State and Federal Regulations require the RTP to identify both the cost of implementing the plan and a list of readily available revenues with which to fund the improvements therein. While SCCRTC lists several reasons to anticipate the passage of a sales tax and vehicle license fee measures at some point in the future, there is no indication that the measures will be complete by 2016, or that the public will vote to enact it. In addition to the information listed in the financial element, SCCRTC must list strategies to ensure that new funding sources will be available at the time indicated (23 CFR 450.322 (10)(iii)). If not, The RTP should include a funding scenario that does not include sales tax measure funding.

- **Regional Mitigation Planning, Page 8-2:** Please include discussion on relationship between regional mitigation and project-specific mitigation and the positive effect on wildlife connectivity. Preserving habitats at the regional scale makes project-specific connectivity projects more effective.

- **Appendix D, Page D-1:** The Assumptions/Source Notes for the STIP – Regional Share Santa Cruz project is not clear/needs update.

- **Appendix E:** Consider including expected dates of completion in the project list. Without project dates, it is impossible to gauge the “year of expenditure” for cost purposes. Providing the project completion dates will also better establish project priorities for the life of the plan.
April 8, 2014

GEORGE DONDERO
Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

SUBJECT: DRAFT 2014 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Dear Mr. Dondero:

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works has reviewed the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and we have the following comments:

Chapter 1 - Why Sustainability?

In order of discussion in the Draft (RTP), Public Works agrees with the importance of Sustainability with regard to the prioritization of the items as discussed in this chapter. It is critical that we continue to pursue Federal, State, and local funding for System Preservation (roads, bridges, bike lanes and sidewalk), improve safety for all users of the roadway system, improve the congestion management program, and ensure good environmental and public health policies. As the Draft RTP states, State gas tax revenues that local agencies receive annually have remained essentially unchanged since 1993, and in this time we have lost approximately 38 percent of the purchasing power to maintain our roadway infrastructure due to inflation. This inflation translates directly to the local agencies’ continuing difficulty in maintaining public transportation infrastructure. The County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works strongly encourages the Regional Transportation Commission to pursue every means possible related to developing local funding measures and supporting State and Federal legislation for roadway System Preservation.

Chapter 2 - Transportation Network

The County of Santa Cruz supports a regional multimodal system. In addition to the importance of System Preservation above, we also believe that pedestrian improvements throughout the County (in particular where significant Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements can be accomplished) should also be a priority for funding purposes.
Chapter 3 - Travel Patterns

It is worth mentioning, that in addition to a high number of commuters on Highway 17, Highway 1, Highway 9, and Highway 236, that County roadways are also carrying a significant amount of commuters, as well as local traffic. Most County roadways (many arterials as well as collectors) that parallel a State highway are seeing high traffic volumes due to motorist bypassing these State highways. These County roadways also serve as bypass routes for motorists when the State highway system is closed for emergency situations, road work, etc. It is critically important that these County roadways remain a priority with the Regional Transportation Commission for System Preservation.

Chapter 4 - Vision For: 2035

In reviewing this chapter, it appears that System Preservation (in particular to the roadway system) has been left out of the 2035 Vision statements. In looking at the various roadways' pavement condition index ratings (Santa Cruz County and Cities), it is clear that as a whole we are not investing sufficient funding into the roadway network (includes roadways, bike lanes, sidewalks, etc.) for long-term sustainability. It seems that a Vision statement for year 2035 from the Regional Transportation Commission should clearly set a priority recommendation for roadway System Preservation.

Chapter 5 - Funding Our Transportation System

As stated in this Chapter, “33 percent of Counties representing 84 percent of the State’s population are self-help Counties benefitting from increased locally sourced transportation revenues.” These revenue sources are most often associated with a sales tax measure that supports the local transportation network in System Preservation, future capital improvement projects, and local match funding for State and Federal funding. Realizing that the present State and Federal gas tax program has not kept up with inflation and the new technology of fuel efficient vehicles, the County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works strongly believes that the Regional Transportation Commission should greatly expand its role in supporting local funding measures such as a vehicle license fee and a sales tax measure, as well as supporting new alternative funding measures at the State and Federal level for transportation programs.

Chapter 6 - Transportation Investments

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works supports the proposed Action Element and prioritization of the project list. We anticipate working with Regional Transportation Commission for purposes of adding additional County projects, as necessary.
Chapter 7 – System Performance

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works strongly supports the three goals as outlined in this chapter.

Chapters 8 and 9 – Environmental and Air Quality Review and What’s Next

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works has no comments on these chapters.

Yours truly,

JOHN J. PRESLEIGH
Director of Public Works

JJP: mh
Copy to: County Administrative Office

RTC Trans Plan.doc
April 8, 2014

Ginger Dykaar  
Transportation Planner  
1523 Pacific Ave  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Ms. Dykaar:

I’m writing on behalf of the Bicycle Committee of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to provide comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan.

The RTC Bicycle Committee serves to assist in the development and maintenance of a complete, convenient and safe regional bicycle network. As such, the Committee reviews projects, on-road conditions, preliminary designs or policy related initiatives and makes recommendations as needed. An Ad-Hoc Committee was formed to review the Draft Regional Transportation Plan and provide recommendations related to bicycle issues. At the Bicycle Committee meeting of April 7th, 2014, the Ad-Hoc Committee’s recommendations were endorsed by the full Bicycle Committee with changes reflected herein. The recommendation and supplemental references are attached for your consideration.

The Bicycle Committee appreciates your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact the RTC’s Bicycle Coordinator and staff to the Bicycle Committee, Cory Caletti at (831) 460-3201 or by email at ccaletti@sccrtc.org, for this and any other Bicycle Committee related matters.

Sincerely,

David Casterson  
Bicycle Committee Chair

cc: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission’s Bicycle Committee

Attachments: Bicycle Committee comment letter and attachments

\Rtserv2\shared\bike\Committee\CORR\BC2014\DraftRTPcomments.docx
Dear Commissioners:

The Bicycle Committee appreciates and supports the general direction of the 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It presents an excellent strategy to enhance the County’s transportation system’s effectiveness in achieving sustainability and we are especially pleased that it promotes bicycling and endorses many projects that contain bicycle components. Due to the projected financial resources gap, it is clear that bicycling projects augmenting the effectiveness of our existing transportation system are paramount. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Commission, its staff and participating jurisdictions as part of this planning process; committee members have technical, vehicle code, and extensive relevant experience. While we would like to reserve the opportunity to work with staff in reviewing individual projects as they advance, we offer the comments below on the RTP’s narrative.

First and foremost, the Bicycle Committee places a high priority on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network project (and rail trail spine) and hopes that the entire network will be constructed within the RTP’s time frame. The Bicycle Committee requests that additional funding be allocated to the constrained MBSST Network project list should such funding become available.

Regarding the narrative, more specific policy direction for bicycling is needed and the performance analysis methodology for Target 1Dii: (“Improve multimodal level of Service”) needs modification to be effective. Also, please include the results of the Bike Committee’s recent project list review. These are shown as Attachment 2.

VISION, POLICY AND TARGETS

We support the RTP’s general goals, policies and targets and are particularly pleased that bicycling is a prominent component of the document. Policies to “Improve multimodal access to and within key destinations” and “Ensure network connectivity by closing gaps in the bicycle, pedestrian and transit networks” are most welcome. Also, an increase in bicycling -- a goal that was explicit in past RTPs (a goal of five percent of all trips and 20 percent of all work trips by bicycle) -- seems implicit in the policy promoting mode shift.

This RTP should be refined to more directly support making bicycling safer, convenient and more accessible. The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) awards Bicycle Friendly designations to those communities that demonstrate a serious commitment to the 5 E’s (see Attachment 2 detail):

1. Engineering: Creating safe and convenient places to ride and park
2. Education: Giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride
3. Encouragement: Creating a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling
4. Enforcement: Ensuring safe roads for all users
5. Evaluation & Planning: Planning for bicycling as a safe and viable transportation option.

We also welcome programmed non-facility projects which help fulfill these objectives, such as Traffic Safety Education, Countywide Bicycle Route Signage. Other programs deserving funding
are Expanding Bikes on Buses, Bike Parking Subsidy Program and Bike-Activated Traffic Signal Program.

Past RTPs contained many more specific policies that promoted these objectives. Previous Bicycle Advisory Committee input requested further improvements and additions to those policies. Examples of past policies missing from this RTP include:

- Improve bicyclists’ safety by eliminating impediments along bikeways, conducting regular street sweeping, bike lane repainting and implementing bicycle traffic signal detection.
- Whenever feasible, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities should be incorporated in all capital projects (e.g., complete streets).
- Support allowing bicycles inside buses under specified conditions.
- Ensure the public is informed about safe bicycling routes and options.
- Support programs which deter bicycle thefts.

This RTP takes a more broad-brushed approach and we would like to see the above included. We also urge you to add following wording in italics:

1. Include a vision statement for cycling. Although the RTP is supportive of more bicycling and Chapter 4 is entitled Vision for 2035, there is not a specific vision statement applying to cycling; we suggest adding:

   **Vision:** Make Santa Cruz County an exceptional bicycling location for people of all ages and abilities by growing a culture where motorists respect cyclists’ right to the road, cyclists follow the rules of the road and ride their bicycles with confidence & competence. Develop and sustain a comprehensive network of bike facilities providing access to all natural and urban destinations as well as connections to other regional systems. Significant increases in active transportation will go a long way in meeting a majority of this RTP’s targets, moving to a cleaner more sustainable environment, increased personal and economic benefits and a healthier community.

2. Include a policy supportive of further bike planning:

   **Comprehensiveness:** Support updating local bicycle plans to reflect RTP goals, policies and targets; assure coterminous county and cities plans are coordinated; help implement Complete Streets; address Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation; all of which will lead to achieving bicycle-friendly community status.

RTC’s local jurisdictions currently have bicycle plans, which essentially are facility plans complying with State Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) funding requirements. With the elimination of the BTA and consolidation into the Active Transportation funding mechanism, the RTC via or in addition to the RTP needs to have (by encouragement or mandate) each jurisdiction develop consistent Active Transportation Plans (with their bicycle component) which can be folded into a countywide Active Transportation Plan. These will enable a rational and defensible basis for determining and assessing project priority in the RTP, STIP, etc. How else
will the countywide needs and relative project merits be equitably judged and assessed by their contribution to meeting RTP targets. Remember that 65% of this RTP’s targets involve bicycling. A comprehensive countywide Active Transportation Plan will provide the RTC a mechanism to achieve its goals, help implement Complete Streets and encompass the 5 E’s.

3. Beef up Target 1Dii.

*Target 1Dii. Significantly improve multimodal level of service (MMLOS) for walk and bicycle trips to and within key destinations, by improving facilities that do not meet standards and adding new quality facilities.*

Most of the targets are written in a quantifiable manner (e.g., increase by some percentage). However Target 1Dii simply says “Improve (multimodal level of service for walk and bicycle trips to and within key destinations”), and Appendix C indicates that virtually any improvement would result in the target being met. At its most absurd level this would mean that adding a short bike lane or path disconnected from any another facility would be sufficient to meet the target. We support a more robust target, however, first there needs to be an agreeable metric that will provide a means of target assessment.

We do note that Appendix C suggests a way to score multimodal level of service, but as discussed below, we question whether this scoring system really indicates a significant improvement; thus we do not recommend using it for this target.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

We support including performance analysis in the RTP. As noted, one of the components of the 5 E’s for receiving a ‘bicycle-friendly’ designation is evaluation. To that end, we are pleased that the RTP supports evaluating how its targets are met. Bicycle system modeling provides an exciting new opportunity to advance bicycling planning in Santa Cruz County. In particular, modeling the network as described for Target 1A in Appendix C shows promise, but the methodology for analyzing Target 1Dii needs to be changed (see Attachment for our detailed concerns).

**Recommendation:**

Replace the specific methodology for Target 1Dii described in Appendix C with the following outline of a more useful, realistic approach and work with the consultants and the bicycle committee to perfect the methodology:

- *Plot location of key destinations or concentrations of destinations (e.g., public facilities, shopping centers in a community).*
- *Determine whether a bicycle facility can be used to access each destination.*
- *Determine whether the bicycle facility is adequate or significantly deficient (what is most important is not the type of facility but whether it meets standards – is it wide enough,*
appropriately marked and signed, is the road surface in good shape, are there conflicts with parked cars. This exercise can be done by the Bike Committee or surveying cyclists.)

- Determine whether there is adequate access from the street or pathway entrance to the destination entrance (e.g., can bikes safely navigate parking lot, is there adequate bike parking?)
- Calculate the community’s percentages of key destinations accessible by bike facility, accessible by adequate facility and with adequate on-site accessibility.
- Determine measurable targets that will result in significant improvement and possibly combine into an overall rating.

We request that the bicycling targets be more ambitious and that the results inform future bicycle planning and project selection, as these analytical measures are perfected, in line with our above remarks. For example, the evaluation for Target 1A is 79% of the County’s population could bicycle on dedicated lanes and paths to key destinations within 30 minutes, if the facilities were available. Yet, for Target 1A to be met (which it is not met by 2035 under the current RTP project list) only 75.9% of the County’s population needs to be able to cycle on a dedicated network. Thus, meeting this target will not result in a complete bicycle network. Therefore, the target should eventually be raised in order to result in 100% bicycle network connectivity to key destinations; just as is available for motor vehicles. Consistent with other RTP targets these can be staged as year 2020 interim and year 2035 for full achievement. Correspondingly, the RTP project list should contain all the projects necessary for this to occur.

The Target 1A methodology analyzes connectivity while the Target 1Dii methodology purports to analyze the quality of the bicycle and pedestrian network. Target 1Dii is to “Improve multimodal level of service (MMLOS) for walk and bicycle trips to and within key destinations.” However, by admittedly offering a simplified approach so it can be easily used, the Target 1Dii methodology only evaluates the presence of three categories of facilities. For example, while all bike routes are weighted the same, there could be a vast difference in quality and utility between unsigned bike routes and those with sharrows and “bicycles may use full lane” signs. Similarly, while all bike lanes are weighted the same, there could be a vast difference between a minimum 4 foot wide bike lane next to parked cars, in the door zone, with potholes and a wider bike lane next to the curb (no parking). Thus, the methodology actually ignores distinctions in quality. If this methodology is applied, it can frustrate the cause of improving the quality of the bicycling network.

Another problem is the methodology does not account for locations needed to access key destinations. For example, a bike lane on an arterial that fronts a key destination (like a school or shopping areas) can never score as high as a bike path that does not front a key destination. If a cyclist cannot get conveniently from the bike path to the key destination, then the target, which speaks to “bicycle trips to and within key destinations” cannot really be met. Although broad connectivity is addressed in Target 1A, specific access to key destinations must be factored into the analysis of Target 1Dii as well.
In conclusion, improving the environment for bicycling and thereby significantly increasing ridership will require a multi-prong approach, of which facilities are an important, but not exclusive component. Education, encouragement and enforcement are as important. Evaluation must consider quality and context.

The RTP certainly supports such initiatives, but does not provide detailed direction to achieve comprehensive bicycle-related improvements. We request that, at a minimum, the RTP be revised to incorporate the above thoughtful and considered recommendations. It is important that the RTC and its partner jurisdictions and organizations take future steps to ensure bicycling in all its manifestations be promoted and supported. We trust the RTC continues to rely on dedicated and giving individuals with a full range of relevant expertise and ‘on road’ experience to provide specific knowledge about what is best for all of Santa Cruz County, including the cycling community. Thank you for the opportunity to be of assistance.
Attachment 1: Specific Concerns with Target 1Dii

The Target Development indicates that, “Bicycle paths that are separated from automobile and truck traffic and bike greenways on low speed and low traffic volume roads will attract more people bicycling more frequently.” While this might be true, it is not all that is needed to achieve the target of “Improve multimodal level of service (MMLOS) for walk and bicycle trips to and within key destinations.” Increasing utility cycling between home, commercial, and other destination, in terms of facilities, require complete connections. Since most key destinations are on major streets, these streets and the destinations have to be part of the equation.

Thus, under the Forecasting Methodology the critique, “The most recent version of the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) (Transportation Research Board, 2010) includes a MMLOS for pedestrian and bicycle facilities but this method …also is influenced heavily by speed, traffic volume and at times minimizes or negates the benefits in investments in active transportation infrastructure that provide a buffer from the higher speeds and volumes.” Again, the fact of the matter is that key destinations are likely to be on streets with higher speeds and/or traffic volumes. Thus, unless speeds and/or volumes are accounted for, bicycling level of service will not be optimal. Unless a separated bicycle path or bike greenway passes by key destinations, allows cyclists to exit to the key destination and addresses safety at all intersections, including the driveways to key destinations, it will not be sufficient in terms of achieving the target.

Additionally, this critique implies that high speeds and motor vehicle volumes are here to stay, so cyclists must go elsewhere to their separated facilities. This neglects another way to make streets useful for all modes – slow and/or reduce the motor vehicle traffic. Recently in the news was the study Watsonville was going to perform to determine whether to shrink the number of travel lanes on Main Street and calm the motor vehicle traffic. The methodology should account for this option as well.

Similarly incomplete is the statement, “As projects are implemented through 2035, the quality of the bicycle network improves through addition of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, Pajaro River Levee Trail and the Watsonville Slough trails, as well as a number of bicycle lane improvements along the roadways.” This is no doubt true in a general sense – more facilities are better – but again does not address accessing key destinations.

Under Bicycle Network Quality, the statement is made that some streets may not be appropriate for cycling. And under the example, these are streets without existing or planned facilities per the Watsonville Bicycle Plan and RTP project list. First, the fact that a street is not in the Plan should not be a determinant of quality. Instead, the analysis should determine whether a street is appropriate for a facility. Maybe some streets should be added to the network in order to achieve the target. Furthermore, and more importantly, bicycles are allowed on every street; this statement insinuates that they are not. And, in order to access key destinations, all streets probably have to be used to some degree by bicycle. Under Complete Streets principles, all streets should be made appropriate for all modes, with rare exceptions.
Figure C.22 – Bike Score: Bicycle MMNQ Score is too simplistic. Higher ratings are given for bike lanes over bike routes where speeds are over 30 MPH and then buffered or separated trails over both, especially where speeds are over 40 MPH. Here are some examples where this scoring does not make sense in terms of achieving the target objective. The best rating (green) is available if a separated trail is built on a local street. However, these streets are generally slow speed, low traffic without key destinations. The best treatment on a local street is traffic calming. The worst rating (red) is given to a bike route on an arterial street. However, if one lane in each direction were painted with sharrows and signed “Bikes May Use Full Lane,” that would be an improvement that might be the best solution in a particular situation.

An additional flaw with Figure C.22 – Bike Score: Bicycle MMNQ is that it does not distinguish design or quality differences within classifications. For example, it notes that a Bike Route may not even be signed (not sure how that can be a bike route). However, a bike route could have marked sharrows and be signed “Bikes May Use Full Lane.” Similarly, bike lanes and paths can be of vast different designs. Substandard or minimum width bike lanes next to parked cars should not receive the same rating as wider bike lanes next to curbs. Similarly, bike lanes or paths with smooth, maintained surfaces should not receive the same ratings as those with potholes and other impediments. And, buffered or separated bike trails that do not allow easy access on and off to key destinations should not be most highly rated, no matter how pleasant they might be to ride on.

Figure C.24 – 2035 Scenario of Bicycle Network in City of Watsonville with MMNQ Score* demonstrates the unacceptable result of using this rating system. In general, the worst routes are the major streets that contain key destinations. The best routes are the separated bike paths that do not contain key destinations. Thus, applying this rating system ensures long-term unequal and inferior treatment for bicyclists. It implies that bicyclists can have nice separated pathways and side streets to ride on, but are not so welcome on the main streets; in other words it is geared more toward recreational than utility trips. Thus, the objective of better infrastructure for bicycle trips to and within key destinations will not be achieved.
Attachment 2: The 5 E's

Engineering: Creating safe and convenient places to ride and park

The most visible and perhaps most tangible evidence of a great place for bicycling is the presence of infrastructure that welcomes and supports it. Survey after survey shows that the physical environment is a key determinant in whether people will get on a bike and ride. The most advanced Bicycle Friendly Communities and Universities have a well-connected bicycling networks, consisting of quiet neighborhood streets, conventional and protected bike lanes, shared use trails, and policies to ensure connectivity and maintenance of these facilities. Secure, convenient and readily available bike parking is also a key component. For Bicycle Friendly Businesses, great bike parking in addition to showers and locker facilities are vital to promoting bicycling both in the workplace and wider community.

Education: Giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride

Offering a lot of ways for people to get the skills and confidence to ride is key to building great places for bicycling. At the community level this begins with bicycle-safety education being a routine part of public education. Communities, businesses and campuses can offer options for adults looking to improve their biking skills with everything from online tips, brown bag lunch presentations and in-depth on-bike training opportunities. The League’s Smart Cycling program, and more than 2,000 League Cycling Instructors around the country, are a great resource in delivering high quality education programs. It is also vital to make motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road through public education campaigns that promote the Share the Road message.

Encouragement: Creating a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling

Communities, businesses and universities play a critical role in encouraging people to ride by giving them a variety of opportunities and incentives to get on their bikes. This can be done through the celebration of National Bike Month and Bike to Work Day, producing community bike maps, route finding signage, bicycle-themed celebrations and rides and commuter challenges. Many places are investing in public bike sharing systems and internal fleets, which are a convenient, cost effective, and healthy way of encouraging people to make short trips by bike.

Enforcement: Ensuring safe roads for all users

Basic laws and regulations need to govern bicycling and the rules of the road to ensure safety for all road users. With a good set of laws and regulations in place that treat bicyclists equitably within the transportation system, the next key issue is enforcement. Law enforcement officers must understand these laws, know how to enforce them, and apply them equitably to ensure public safety. A good relationship between the cycling community and law enforcement is essential; for example, a police representative can participates on a Bicycle Advisory Committee
to increase awareness on both sides. Similarly, having more police officers on bikes helps increase understanding of cyclists’ issues. On college and university campuses, theft prevention is a huge undertaking. Having law enforcement partners and great policies in place is essential to promoting bicycling.

**Evaluation & Planning: Planning for bicycling as a safe and viable transportation option**

Metrics are essential. A comprehensive bicycle master plan, in combination with dedicated funding and active citizen/organizational support is the foundation of a great bicycling-friendly community, business or university — indeed, progress without it is difficult. A successful plan focuses on developing a seamless cycling network that emphasizes short trip distances, multimodal trips and is complemented by encouragement, education and enforcement programs to increase usage. A dedicated Bicycle Program Coordinator and an effective Bicycle Advisory Committee can play an important role in helping decision makers create, implement, and prioritize those bicycle programs and policies.
Attachment 3: January 14 Bike Committee Projects Review

(From the January 14, 2013 Bike Committee minutes (committee member recommendations in italics; current RTP in plain text)):

2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan Project prioritization - Ginger Dykaar, RTC Transportation Planner, summarized the staff report, the need for a Regional Transportation plan and Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the process and timeline, as well as the value and methodology of project identification and prioritization. She referenced the current draft list of projects with bicycle components identified for inclusion in the 2014 RTP that was supplied as part of the staff report and also provided a replacement page for project page #17, on which a project had been incorrectly omitted. Bicycle Committee brainstormed project prioritizations and individual members recommended certain projects be amended as follows:

- **Raise the priority level for the Bike to Work program** -- $1,100,000 funding in the "Constrained" (higher priority) category and $2,400,000 funding in the "Unconstrained" (lower priority) category

- **General increasing of ranking to certain type of projects with high value**, such as Safe Routes to School efforts - The RTP contains the following program, Bicycle and walking safety education and encouragement programs targeting K-12 schools in Santa Cruz County including Ecology Action's Safe Routes to School and Bike Smart programs. Provide classroom and on the bike safety training in an age appropriate method. Provide a variety of bicycle, walking, busing and carpooling encouragement projects ranging from bike to school events, to incentive driven tracking, and educational support activities" with $1,850,000 funding in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category and $1,850,000 funding in the “Unconstrained” (lower priority) category

- **Raise the priority level for King St bike improvements** - this is now in the "Constrained" (higher priority) category.

- **Raise the priority level for bike facilities on Seabright Ave** - this is now in the "Constrained" (higher priority) category.

- **Raise the priority level for the San Lorenzo river crossing by the boardwalk** - this is lumped into the total funding for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail with $40,000,000 funding in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category and $80,224,000 funding in the “Unconstrained” (lower priority) category

- **Increase the priority level for Sharrows and Bike Activated Traffic Signals** -- sharrow funding is split with $250,000 in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category and $250,000 in the “Unconstrained” (lower priority) category; bike activated traffic signals are in the the “Constrained” (higher priority) category for $1,000,000
- Add the Bike Smart! project that is administered by Ecology Action — included, see above

- Increase the priority level given to Mission St Bike/Truck Safety Campaign -- this is now in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category.

- Increase funding for the bicycle parking subsidy program — this is now in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category for $700,000

- Increase the priority given to the Mar Vista bike/ped overcrossing -- this is now in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category

- Add an Open Streets project — there is now an Open Streets project

- Keep the priority rating for Arana Gulch multiuse trail at priority 1 — this project is under construction and so is no longer listed; the RTP does include “Bike and Pedestrian multi-purpose trail from Agnes to the Arana Gulch N-S Trail” in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category

- Raise the priority level for the Pajaro Valley High School bike/ped connector trail — this is now in the “Constrained” (higher priority) category
April 8, 2014

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTIP)

Dear Madam or Sir:

The City of Watsonville has the following comments concerning the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan. The City requests that the County of Santa Cruz allocate additional constrained funding for the following projects.

Freedom Blvd – Freedom Blvd at the City limits has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 12,254 and no pedestrian facilities. The County has allocated $0.75M in constrained funds for a multimodal project (ID# CO-P11) that extends over six miles from the City limits to Bonita Drive. Additional constrained funding is needed.

Harkins Slough Rd – There are no funds for the County portion of Harkins Slough Rd. Improvements are needed at this location as it is the only access to Pajaro Valley High School (PVHS) for automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians. Constrained funds are needed to improve access to PVHS.

Lee Rd – There are no funds for the County portion of Lee Rd, which could be a secondary access to PVHS. Constrained funds are needed to improve access to PVHS.

West Beach St – West Beach St at the City limits has an ADT of 7,445 and no pedestrian facilities. The County portion of the road is in poor condition. The County has allocated $0.3M in constrained funds for a project (ID# CO-P26b) that extends four miles from the City limits to Pajaro Dunes. The project description includes roadway and roadside improvements, but not reconstruction of the failing roadway. Additional constrained funding is needed to needed to reconstruct the roadway.

The City of Watsonville requests that Caltrans provide funding for improvements to those portions of State Route 129 and State Route 152 that are within City limits. The RTIP indicates that $128M in constrained funds are set aside for State Highway Preservation (ID# CT-P45) for various SHOPP projects but does not call out the locations. Constrained funds are needed to maintain and improve existing State Highway facilities within the City.

Yours truly,

Karina Cervantez
Mayor

cc: Zach Friend, Second District Supervisor
    Greg Caput, Fourth District Supervisor
It seems to me that a bridge across the freeway to Good Shepard School and Soccer Fields would be safer for the Children then the proposal to go up Chanticleer. That is an industrial area and they will have to go out to Soquel and ride along the busy road to get to where they are going. The Mattison Ln bridge would be more direct, much safer and more pleasant for them.

From: cbjazz <cbjazz@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 17, 2014 at 12:34 AM
Subject: Will there smarter solutions than the present huge, but empty buses, laying down thick blankets of unburned diesel, along our rural routes?
To: streetsmarts@santacruzsentinel.com, info@sccrtc.org

Dear Street Smart, Ginger Dykaar (Transportation Planner ) the commission on Public Transportation, and whomever else this may concern

After reading the public transportation plans as detailed by Karena Pushnik in the Streetsmart section of the Santa Cruz Sentinel, I felt disheartened that it contains absolutely no mention of a smarter public transportation system. There has got to be a way for buses to know when there is a rider waiting, and to justify the detour for, say, bus #34 into Forest Lakes. This is a 5 mile and very steep detour, for a bus that runs just twice a day, only on week days, for a somewhere between 7 and 8 am stop, and a somewhere between 3 and 4 pm. Since this time interval neither serves a trip to the store, nor a work day, let alone a doctor's appointment, ridership is predictably non-existent. (I yet have to see a passenger get off, or on bus #34 here yet in 2 years.) So why couldn't an eventual rider perhaps push a call button or, better, make a phone call ahead of time? Or be allowed on the SLV school bus, or the private school bus that both closely follow (or precede sometimes) bus #34 at these same times?

And could this be done with smaller buses, ones a better fit for our centuries old, residential, and largely private rural roads? Lighter buses could better manage the climb without burning quite so much oil. And most importantly: when can we look forward public or school buses that could pass the same EPA standards that cars have to pass, so we can stop having to live in fear an asthma attack when a bus has chugged its way past?

I would love to be able to take a bus to town myself, as I am not getting any younger, but with this timetable and these routes, I would spend all day riding, having to change buses 3 times, going over Scotts Valley during both worst commute periods, so I would have no time to get off the bus before having to catch the bus back.

With all this technology today, can't buses on seldom-used routes be on demand somehow? And do buses need to be such extreme polluters? The trip down back to Hwy 9 is even worse, as they barreling down the grade, breaking the speed limits on the descend, brakes screaming, and can't stick to their side of the road. And, please be aware that the thick noxious sooty exhaust does not disperse readily in our deep canyons, as oily smoke hugs the ground, and paints our windows and walls black. Not to mention being forced to observe the daily waste of our already so painfully high taxes....

Thank you,
Christina Barauskas,
109 Madrona Rd. Felton, 95018
Hello Christina Barauskas –

Thank you for your comments on the **Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan** and the Street Smarts article posted/published on 2/16/14. The article contained a brief overview of the main types of transportation projects included in the plan. For more detail, I encourage you to look at the document which lists transportation projects prioritized to receive potentially available funding. Here’s a link to the Draft Plan on the RTC website: [http://www.sccrtc.org/funding-planning/long-range-plans/rtp/2014-plan/](http://www.sccrtc.org/funding-planning/long-range-plans/rtp/2014-plan/)

By copy of this email, your comments have also been forwarded to the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, the agency responsible for running the bus system. They would be the best entity to answer your questions about smarter public transit.

That said, there are a few projects listed in the RTP that might address your comments:

- **MTD-P06 Transit Technological Improvements**: Automatic Vehicle Locator system on all METRO buses. Real Time bus arrival/departure displays at stops. Information technology software and hardware upgrades for scheduling, customer service, planning systems
- **RTC-P58 Real Time Transit Info**: Develop and maintain distribution channel for disseminating real time transit arrival and departure information to Santa Cruz Metro users. To be developed in coordination with Santa Cruz Metro.
- **RTC-P34 511Travel Information System**: Centralized multi-modal traveler information system available via phone, computer, and mobile device. Provides timely transportation about real-time roadway conditions, incidents, transit, carpools, biking and emergency notices.
- **MTD-P43 Deviated Fixed-Route Pilot Program**: Pilot project allowing buses to make minor route modifications to address needs of senior and disabled riders (this project is not on the priority list)
- **MTD-P15 Bus Rapid Transit**: Construct park & ride lots, transit centers and grade-separation where feasible to operate bus rapid transit to reduce congestion on Highway 1.

Your comments on the plan will be considered in the development of the FINAL 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan. Additional comments are welcome and will be accepted until April 8.

Thank you.

Karena Pushnik, Senior Planner/Public Information Coordinator
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Santa Cruz Office (main) 831.460.3210 | Watsonville 831.768.8012
1523 Pacific Avenue | Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Follow our social networks for the latest RTC news

---

**From:** Bill [mailto:william.delaney@gmail.com]
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2014 3:02 PM
**To:** Karena Pushnik
**Subject:** 2014 Plan

Hi, Karena! I see you have been busy. The 2014 Plan had not been delivered to my branch yet but I look forward to reading it soon. I notice there is an DEIR as well. That prompts this request for your help in educating me.
I have been reading two Capitola documents, the General Plan update and a DEIR. In Capitola’s DEIR the consultants note that later in the process EIRs will be required for specific projects. So if I understand the process correctly it sounds like the DEIR is for information only and consultants will not do any more work in responding to public comments about that document. I have many technical questions about data, models etc. based on concerns about specific traffic forecasts for 2035. If that is the case, I am wondering if it is worth my time writing up detailed questions. If you can enlighten me I would appreciate it.

Also the goals, policies and actions in the General Plan do not track consistently with how the topics are treated in the DEIR. The General Plan does not even reference the DEIR. Nor does it present a clear list of assumptions about growth and projects in the city that drive the 2035 numbers developed by the consultants.

Also, a 2011 RTC traffic count database is cited as the source of a traffic flow map [Fig. MO-2 at page MO-5] of "Existing Traffic Volumes". The figure has about 50 ADTs each of which is annotated by the year of the count in parentheses. My question is this: are those ADTs the same numbers as in the earlier traffic count [i.e. unadjusted] or has RTC adjusted them to a 2011 level, a perfectly sound way of developing estimates?

Last questions: are there comparable RTC estimates of future traffic levels and if so for which forecast years?

Thanks for your help!

Regards

Bill

******************************************************************************

Hello Bill Delaney –
I’m glad to hear you’ll be reading the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Draft EIR (DEIR) at your local library! They should be there already. Please let me know if that is not the case. This program-level DEIR covers not only the Santa Cruz County RTP but also the RTPs for Monterey and San Benito Counties, as well as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the tri-county region which includes the state-required Sustainable Communities Strategy.

In regards to the City of Capitola General Plan and EIR, questions would best be sent to Capitola staff.

In general, program-level Environmental Impact Reports provide an overview assessment of the projects included as a whole. When the individual projects move forward, a project specific EIR can also be required. I believe Capitola staff is required by CEQA to respond to public comments on the DEIR of the Capitola General Plan even when the EIR is a program-level document. The website says that today is the last day to provide comments/questions on the Capitola General Plan and the DEIR.

To answer your question about traffic counts, the counts listed in the map are the counts from the year they were taken. RTC has not adjusted the counts to 2011. Also, RTC has not estimated future traffic counts. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) runs the Regional Travel Demand Model (RTDM) which provides forecasts of traffic levels at a regional scale. Forecasts years that AMBAG has been running are 2020 and 2035. I do not think the RTDM can provide the detail of traffic counts to compare with the Figure MO-2 in the Capitola General Plan but you can contact AMBAG (copied) to find out what level of traffic forecasts are available from the RTDM.

********************************************************************************

Karena Pushnik, Senior Planner/Public Information Coordinator
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Santa Cruz Office (main) 831.460.3210 | Watsonville 831.768.8012
1523 Pacific Avenue | Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Follow our social networks for the latest RTC news

___________________________________________
From: Bryan Largay [mailto:Bryan.Largay@LandTrustSantaCruz.org]
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 12:01 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comments on the draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan.
Dear Ginger Dykaar,

I write on behalf a community group based in the San Lorenzo Valley which was formed to advance the San Lorenzo Valley Trail with an emphasis on safe routes to the schools along Highway 9. This letter provides comments on the draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan.

Over 1700 children attend the six schools co-located there. Between 2001 and 2012 over 174 traffic accidents occurred on the section of Highway 9 in front of the schools, with over 94 injured victims.

Community support is overwhelming. Over 250 residents, by signing petitions and at community meetings, have expressed strong support for safer biking and walking facilities along Highway 9 to the school campuses north of Felton.

A modest start on the San Lorenzo Valley Trail from the town of Felton to the campuses would cost perhaps $300,000 and make the trip to school much safer for the hundreds of students within an easy walking or biking distance. This project would also substantially reduce the terrible congestion for commuters caught in school traffic.

We urge you to keep the San Lorenzo Valley trail on the project list with a constrained funding designation.

We also request that you program engineering design for the portion of the project that includes the segment from Clearview Drive to the school campuses on Highway 9.

An engineering design and cost estimate would position Santa Cruz County to apply for grant funding in 2015 for implementation.

Sincerely,

Bryan Largay
160 Farmer Street
Felton CA 95018
Automated Transportation Network Design Initiative
March 2014

The International Institute of Sustainable Transportation (INIST) invites cities, industries and universities to collaborate with INIST to design, develop, and establish a public transportation system: an elevated network of small automated vehicles which are economical, efficient, powered by renewable energy, high capacity, and available on demand.

Introduction

Silicon Valley and many other communities are facing unprecedented commercial sector growth. New construction is moving rapidly, creating serious challenges especially for transportation infrastructure needs. Any new office building is a private initiative, but the streets are part of the commons and not the direct responsibility of building owners or occupants. As such, cities are obliged to adapt their streets to continued growth with inadequate and often antiquated tools. Well-intended planning initiatives are handicapped by regulations which preclude consideration of unproven innovative alternatives. We must ask the question, “Is the automobile, even if automated, the upper limit of human creativity for mobility?”

Cities and other local governmental agencies

Recognizing the need for technological innovation and energy independence, a group of elected officials and city staff representatives have recently created the Automated Transportation Network Association (ATNA). INIST has been conducting visioning meetings with this group to carefully establish the viability of solar powered automated public transportation options. Through this convening, officials have strengthened their shared interest and are discovering new approaches to meet their transportation challenges.

Academic Research

To establish solid technical, urban design and economic foundations for these new approaches, INIST has been fostering centers of excellence for research and development of solar-powered automated transportation networks (“ATN” / “Podcar”) – at Delft University, San José State University, Uppsala University and others since 2011. In October 2013, the San José State “SuperWay” team won the $5,000 first place award and the Uppsala team took the $2,500 second place in INIST’s Solar Skyways Challenge at the annual international Podcar City Conference in Washington, DC.
Industry

Industry participants have two potential ways to benefit from automated public transportation opportunities:

1. As *users*, achieving lower costs and a less stressful commuting experience for their workforce.
2. As *producers*, creating and selling a game-changing solution to the rest of the world, becoming leaders of innovation in the global marketplace.

For example, to capture the imagination of local industry to participate in this emerging marketplace, the Transportation Department staff at the City of San José coined the term ATN (Automated Transportation Network). Opportunities to supply the "A" in ATN means new markets for Silicon Valley companies established in electronics, software, control systems, networks, power electronics, sensors, etc.

INIST Academic Projects Framework

Given the significant resources required for a full scale test track (daunting even for large transportation vendors), INIST has taken a three-pronged approach to iterating through the key pertinent design challenges. INIST is working with academic teams at San José State and other universities on operating scale models, critical component designs, and urban design projects.

Cities: Urban Design—Virtual 4D Modeling

The Urban Planning Department at San José State and technology partner Encitra are collaborating with INIST to create 4D models for advanced transportation alternatives in San Jose, Mountain View and Sunnyvale. Selecting appropriate sites, this 4D modeling is a way to communicate possibilities with a visual tool that goes far beyond the usual 2D or 3D images. With the Encitra platform, you interact directly with all possibilities of a development project such as visual impact, noise, sound, light and traffic around you.

Participants in the model can interact with social media – Twitter, Facebook, Google+, blogs and more. Online surveys, movies, slideshows and even meetings between stakeholders can be integrated into the model.
Technology: Control System

SJSU's scaled model completed last year allows visitors to see a suspended podcar system and get a feel for the concept of off-line stations. The six student team working on controls this academic year is enhancing this model to use as their test bed. To accomplish this, Cory Ostermann, a Mechatronics senior, led a team to redesign the drive system and make necessary changes to the track. With the second controllable drive nearly assembled, the controls team at SJSU will begin to test the routing and control software during the spring semester. On-board controllers get directions wirelessly from a routing controller and, in addition to controlling the actuation of the motors driving them, are constantly monitoring on-board sensors for object detection, acceleration, velocity, and position awareness.

In parallel with this development, an Industrial Design student group has designed a fare-box application for smart phones. Imagine scheduling, ticketing and navigating with your phone, avoiding lines to feed money or credit cards into a cantankerous machine as the train rolls up.

Technology: Guideway-Bogie-Switch

The refinement of certain pieces of the podcar puzzle are on the critical path to a full test track. The switch in ATN systems is quite different than an ordinary train switch. ATN systems need to move many cars through a branching in the track at short headways. Traditional train switches would thus need to flip back and forth every few seconds, a mechanical nightmare. ATN switching is implemented in the drive train of each podcar, allowing for the mechanical locking of the direction choice long before the switch is traversed.

In fall 2013, student teams vetted various guideway, switch, and drive systems. A student team led by Mechanical Engineering student Cormac Wicklow built a wooden prototype over the holidays and is finishing design and beginning construction this spring. This will include a small section of track and the bogie (chassis and wheels).
Technology: Cabin

During the 2013 Fall semester, four student teams from the SJSU Industrial Design Department built mock-ups of three podcars and one simple station. Their design work inspires and sets the stage for a functional full scale podcar Cabin to be combined with the Prototype Switch component to demonstrate more of the key components to the podcar system.

The Business Case: Public-Private Partnerships

In anticipation of public-private financing, governments and industry want to understand the potential revenue, capital costs and operating expenses of an ATN system. Students from the Presidio Graduate School are assisting cities and industry with a comprehensive economic analysis to demonstrate revenue and capital recovery potential for ATNs, through innovative policy instruments, appropriate subsidies, fare-box and other sources of revenue.

Next Steps

INIST welcomes cities, other governmental agencies, and industry to participate in the development of this advanced transportation solution. Cities and local governmental agencies are encouraged to join ATNA. Contributions received by INIST for our Academic STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) initiatives not only help to create the next generation of skilled professionals, they also create answers to real problems. Bringing multiple sectors together, INIST offers a great way to leverage your giving power.

For more information contact:

Pete Christensen
Development Director
INIST
147 South River Street, Suite 207
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
tel +1 408-448-6356
petechris23@comcast.net
From: howard sosbee [mailto:hfs@sosbee.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 09, 2014 6:32 PM
To: santa cruz
Subject: Passenger rail with hike and bike trail

On Sunday, three Aptos High students advocated removing the tracks from the Union Pacific corridor to make room for a “rail trail.” It is hard to imagine a more shortsighted and downright stupid move the county could make. It rivals in foolishness the crime committed by General Motors in the 1950s when they tore up the streetcar tracks throughout the Los Angeles basin and replaced them with General Motors buses. The bus system could not even come close to matching the speed, comfort, and convenience of the streetcars. This anti-rail-passenger type of thinking is what gets in the way of better things being considered. For example, it is certainly within the realm of possibility through public-private partnerships, and possibly even a small scale public offering, for Santa Cruz County to have a superb rail passenger system serving the entire County, not simply the hikers and bikers. Imagine small streetcars running regularly up and down the entire 32 miles of the railroad tracks. And imagine small jitney’s picking up passengers along the streets which feed the streetcars. Imagine workers and shoppers headed for 41st Ave, and downtown, students to the many schools scattered throughout the county, surfing and whale watching excursions to the north, hikers and bikers sharing the right-of-way as they do in other countries the world over. This is all possible. But if you remove the tracks, none of it could ever happen. The cost would simply be off the charts, as Los Angeles is learning as it tries to rebuild its passenger rail system.

Howard F. Sosbee
1400 Weston Ridge Road
Scotts Valley CA, 95066
hfs@sosbee.com

From: K Mueller [mailto:k.mueller@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 11:07 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Transportation

Dear Commissioners,

Please help make our community a model of livability and sustainability by making transportation investments in walking and biking.

Thank You,

Karsten Mueller, Ph.D.
greenelixer.com
vibrant health for people and the planet

-----Original Message-----
From: Kent Strumpell [mailto:kentstrum@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 2:16 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: RTP comments

Re: RTP; need for more bikeways

Dear Commissioners,

I am grateful for our county's investments in biking infrastructure. Where these have been implemented, it has really helped me make trips by bike that I previously would have made by car.
But there are still many places that are hazardous to get to for cyclists, especially outside of city limits where I live. We need to keep expanding our bicycle transportation network to make it an inviting, viable option to driving.

Clearly, many people in our region want to bike more, as demonstrated by the success of existing bikeway improvements. But this untapped potential will not be realized if we don't provide sufficient resources to bring safe bike routes to a lot more people.

Expanding bicycle use is one of the most cost-effective and sustainable transportation choices we can make, fulfilling many of our goals for improving mobility, health and safety while reducing fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions. I urge you to fully fund ambitious goals for expanding our region's bikeway network into more communities.

Thank you,

Kent Strumpell
848 Redwood Dr.
Santa Cruz

From: Steve Lustgarden [mailto:slustgarden@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2014 5:18 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Please support investments in bicycle and walking infrastructure in the Regional Transportation Plan

Thank you,
Steve Lustgarden
Susan Kauffman
28 Hanover Court
Santa Cruz, CA
95062
Some time ago I joined the "Smart Driving Cars" email chat group at Princeton University. I thought at the time that it might somehow merge with automated transportation Network concepts but, I don't see that happening. Frankly I've never been convinced that this "smart-car" idea, standing by itself, has a place in near-future sustainable transportation.

In many ways, the trendy conversations about the "robo-cars" are the unmistakable emblems of what we are doing NOW in our "planning" of transportation systems. It really boils down to more of the same. Or, keep things as they are...A current transportation plan in my County uses the word "Sustainable" no fewer than 37 times but it means virtually nothing. Their entire plan is said to be sustainable but, nowhere in the plan do they even define what that is.

The trendy conversation about automated cars has been going on for years. I call it trendy because some of my IEEE acquaintances are fond of the topic and it's popular in their social discussion and luncheon groups. But, from an insider employee whom I know personally, I'm told that an automated car in the retail marketplace is unlikely before the year 2020.

In the meantime, I'm concerned about what we are doing (and NOT doing) as a society to address our need for transportation in an era of rising energy costs, growing scarcity of fossil fuel resources, and a sort of "race" between climate change and peak oil, to see which issue first breaks our fuel-based society. I should probably concede that it may not affect you and me. I was shaken by a serious 2-day conversation on the syndicated Thom Hartmann radio program last week. It was suggested that total breakdown from the issues I mentioned above may not cause a general catastrophe in our society for as long as 30 years. Of course, during the decade leading up to such a collapse, there would be economic chaos as prices spiral upwards and average people would find life as we know it increasingly unsustainable.

So, I ask you, is trendy conversation about smart cars an activity that will avert a general calamity starting perhaps 20 years from now? Possibly sooner..... If we were facing a mass extinction, would it matter whether or not we drove smart-cars to the event?

You could easily counter, if things have already gone this far, shouldn't we use our remaining time to smell the roses? Perhaps so. Or, if I take the advice of Voltaire, I will tend my garden.....

But, what if it is possible to retain a slight technological edge while overhauling our world society and economy such that it is sustainable? Is such an idea possible? Shouldn't we be chatting about this? It's a big order but, surely, we owe it to ourselves, to our children and grandchildren, and to our human heritage. Surely human society has some net worth that merits preserving.

So, what shall we do in our discretionary time? I propose the following: If human society is to undergo a major overhaul with the cheap energy economy being stripped away, then, perhaps one or more of its most valuable features still might be preserved. It is our trained engineers who could cause such change.

I take something of a jog on our road here.

I go back to the first beginnings of this technological age. The single biggest thing that made the later part of the industrial age possible is mobility. Mobility of people; mobility of goods. It was the invention of steam power, railroads, steam ships, and
eventually cars and trucks that gave humans the mobility to make all of this possible.

In today's construct, if you take away cheap energy, fossil fuel, and all the excesses that go with it, society is, AT BEST, unceremoniously back into a horse and buggy world and a global population of just about 1 billion people in the year 1800. That was when the ideas of large-scale coal burning and steam power were just emerging.

So, if we are dropped back to the year 1800 in our Way-Back machine, and we can bring along some smart transportation, then it should be solar powered and very low cost.

I suggest to you that solar powered automated transportation networks ARE the only idea on the horizon that will provide mobility without requiring fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. We MUST build such systems using the momentum of the industrial age before it stalls. In other words, we need to act on these ideas with alacrity!

IF we can deploy substitute transportation in place of today's wasteful systems, there is hope to salvage much more of our society. Of course, we still must stop the spiraling carbon emissions. If we continue to accept the lies about topics like "clean coal" and "fracking" to deter us, then it is back to the "smell the roses" plan for our near future.......

I wrote this because I feel urgency. I hope readers will agree with me and, if you see a dramatically different future, I would like to know what it looks like.

But, I am dissatisfied with conversations about more methane powered busses and automated automobiles because that quite simply ignores the major challenge looming before us. Let us imagine that we quickly get the deployment of automated Google or Toyota cars into our current system. For a few years, the automated cars will be stuck in the very same gridlock that is stopping our gas guzzlers. Then, as fuel becomes more expensive and supplies decline, the automated cars will suffer the same issues as today's cars. They are unsustainable and can be driven fewer and fewer miles, until they must be parked or abandoned.

We say we are developing a plan. Here it is today!

But, I'm sad to say, the plan appears to have written with the help of blinders. The use of the word "sustainable" A real plan would contain provision for solar powered automated transit systems. Such systems would be in the plan NOW, not 30 years from now.

I can only pause, and hope you care, and act....to put REAL hope into this plan. Make some germane comments at least!
Recent scholarly publications about climate change warn that the forces at work as we warm the planet and particularly the oceans are far more serious than was thought even 10 years ago.

The Worry: Crystalized Methane Hydrate deposits on and under the deep ocean floors are warming and boiling up to the surface.

Methane hydrate Warming of the Methane Hydrate only requires a few degrees to release it.

LAST NIGHT I watched a presentation that showed all of the Methane Hydrate sources that have recently been activated and are now POURING torrents of methane into our atmosphere.

The map looked much like the view of the earth you have all seen, at night with lights in all the cities.

In other words, there are ALREADY tens of thousands of these methane geysers that have only recently appeared.

This VERY sort of METHANE release is widely accepted as the cause of the Permean mass extinction some 250 million years ago.

Humans would most certainly be gone after such a mass extinction!

We (The City of Santa Cruz) have a climate change plan. Our own plan S A Y S that we will achieve a 30% reduction of car trips in town.

But

The RTP says that VMT for Santa Cruz County is expected to decrease by 2% by 2035

THIS IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

Several of us here in Santa Cruz have been asking the City to seek out solar powered automated transit systems.

We've been saying this since the mid 1990's

This type of transit will make the 30% greenhouse gas reduction possible.

IT SHOULD BE IN THIS PLAN!

I'm reminded of an idea where we know that the mass extinction is certain, so we decide to write our history in stone, so that future beings might know of our huge mistake. And one line might say, "they knew about it, but there was a 3 minute time limit, so they didn't talk about it enough"
Hello Ginger, George and RTP Staff,

Thank you for the presentation Wednesday evening at the SCC Commission on the Environment meeting. I was impressed by the presentation and by what I learned of the Regional Transportation Plan.

I would like to focus my comments on one aspect generally missing from the plan, and that is transportation project stormwater management to decrease pollution impacts in streams, wetlands and coastal waters (and to improve water supply through groundwater recharge).

The County and the cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Capitola and Watsonville are all now regulated under new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements. The MS4 permit, issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board under the US Clean Water Act, requires cities and counties to implement management practices that decrease impacts of urban pollutants by reducing pollutant concentrations and stormwater flows to waterbodies of the state, including the San Lorenzo River, various creeks, and the ocean.

It will become increasingly costly for the cities and county to deal with stormwater pollution, either through delaying installation of systems to capture and treat stormwater runoff, or through paying future fines for permit violations. The RTP should include design provisions to slow, spread, infiltrate, and filter stormwater from roadways to help the cities and county manage these permit requirements.

I recommend that the plan identify transportation-related maintenance, repair, replacement and new construction projects that could incorporate Low Impact Development features to manage stormwater flow and quality.

The Central Coast Low Impact Development Initiative (http://centralcoastlidi.org/Central_Coast_LIDI/Home.html) was created with support from the Regional Water Quality Control Board to assist cities and counties with tools, advice, and design information for building stormwater treatment practices into other infrastructure projects. I’ve attached a diagram from one of their projects as an example. LID practices usually involve targeted use of pervious pavement and/or the diversion of water to vegetated areas for infiltration and vegetation-mediated treatment.

I strongly recommend that the RTC staff contact the Low Impact Development Initiative or other experts and that the Regional Transportation Plan include stormwater mitigation practices as designed components of RTP projects.

Thanks again for your very informative presentation and for considering these comments.

John Hunt
COE Commissioner, 2nd District
PUH--LeeZE. The same old story from our local RTC. Their first priority is not for improving the flow of traffic and improving roads for motorists. See this Grand Jury assessment:

http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/grandjury/GJ2003/Content/2-1Transportation.htm

Go here to put in your comments, not that your opinion matters:

http://www.sccrtc.org/funding-planning/long-range-plans/rtp/

And, Santa Cruz does not have a Greenhouse problem to alleviate:

"Santa Cruz County does not have a big greenhouse gas problem, contributing very little to the state’s overall emissions and having already met its state-mandated emission reduction goals when Cemex closed its Davenport plant in 2010."


And, they are trying to sneak in the additional $10 Vehicle Registration Fee. The VLF/DMV added fee is based on SB 83 (2009). It stipulates that not more than 5% be used for administrative costs. However, this 5% does not include the cost of initial programming and set-up costs which must be borne by the county. Also, it stipulates that at LEAST 15% of fees collected be used for NON-road maintenance projects: pedestrian, disabled, and cycling improvements. The RTC is holding their breath for simple majority to pass any new tax/fee slated to be voted on this coming Fall.

Our local RTC in Santa Cruz County tried to institute a $10 DMV fee last year. It didn't get on the ballot because it gave the sole authority as to how these funds would be used to specific agencies. This means that close to 100% of the fees collected could be used for non-road and non-highway maintenance and improvements as it superficially intended. Last year, Governor Brown "borrowed" $492 Million from the DMV/CHP fund to help balance his still-deficit budget. The DMV/CHP fund had a surplus of over $500 Million. So much for this fund needing more money. BTW, this will probably not be paid back, as often happens in budgetary shenanigans.

Measure H was passed in Santa Cruz city a few years ago. These monies were supposed to target fixing local roads. It was diverted into the General Fund by the language of the proposal so that it needed just a simple majority. Once it went into the General Fund, it was diverted to other expenses that had nothing to do with the original intent.

Also, the "sunset clause" in many of these proposals does not mean that the tax/fee is rescinded by a certain date. It only means that there will be a review to see if the program still fulfills the specified need. Too often, the tax/fee is allowed to continue with the funds diverted to other programs, unless someone points out the misuse of funds.

Shoot! Our local RTC can't even administer a car pool program effectively. Our only way to fight this is not elect those who are against any kind of meaningful improvement for motorists; to not elect those whose primary platform is to increase alternative infrastructure. Santa Cruz has already received a Silver Award for being bike-friendly and access. Isn't that enough? Also, to not vote for any increase of taxes or fees that would feed the same (watch out, for it is often hidden in the language of the proposals). It is time to clean out the retired eco-terrorists on this board whose agenda is some pie-in-the-sky hippie dystopia.

Fool me once, RTC, Shame on you. Fool me twice, RTC, shame on me.

Yours,
Don Honda

-----Original Message-----
From: Bart Coddington [mailto:bikerbart@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 4:56 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Hwy 1 merge lanes
Hello,
Who is the contact for input on future projects on Hwy 1?

Regards,
Bart Coddington
3025 Arlington Dr

04/02/14

Hello Bart,
The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for regional transportation planning in the county. That planning process is conducted through the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) which is required by state and federal legislation as the process by which transportation projects are first identified and latter funded for the initiating the project development process. Per the notice below, we are in the midst of accepting input on the Draft 2014 RTP which includes future projects on Highway 1. Submitting comments to the RTP would be the most effective method of providing input on major projects on Highway 1.
If your comment pertains less to a major infrastructure improvement project and more to operational issues on the highway I recommend contacting Susana Cruz, Caltrans Public Information Officer at susana.z.cruz@dot.ca.gov or call her through the local Caltrans office at 831-423-0396, and she can direct your ideas to the proper person. Alternatively, please feel free to call or send me an email message to discuss your ideas and recommendations.

Regards,
Kim

Kim Shultz, Highway 1 Project Manager/Senior Planner
Regional Transportation Commission

From: Karen Kaplan [mailto:kaplanks@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 10:47 PM
To: Transportation Comm. - Cathy Judd
Subject: Request for EV Infrastructure, etc.

Dear Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commissioners:

Please increase Electric Vehicle infrastructure by installing more electric charging stations and consider personal rapid transit (PRT) trains or gondolas to be solar powered electric for maximum greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Thank you for your consideration.
Karen Kaplan

From: Sawhill Bruce [mailto:bksawhill@cnsp.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 10:59 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Cc: Sawhill Bruce
Subject: Re: RTC: Final Week for Comments on the DRAFT RTP for Santa Cruz County

Hello RTC folks;

Here is a document detailing a vision for the future of the branch rail line.

Cheers,
Bruce Sawhill
GREEN LINE VISION 2014

Friends of the Rail Trail (FORT) believes that the most beneficial near term use of the corridor would be to construct a "rail with trail" system that provides a bicycle and pedestrian path connecting the most densely populated parts of the county to each other. The corridor also passes close to a large number of important and frequently visited destinations including schools, shopping districts, parks, and beaches. We are encouraged in this view by the successful development of over 200 rail with trail projects across the US.

A trail would not interfere with the possible use of the corridor for passenger rail, perhaps in the form of an electric tram running alongside and fenced off from the trail. We believe this double tasking of the corridor would greatly enhance the economic, environmental, and social benefits of public ownership of the rail corridor.

A “starter” rail system might consist of a lightweight, efficient, electric streetcar type vehicle running between the Cabrillo College area and the Westside of Santa Cruz. Access to Cabrillo might at first be via a pedestrian undercrossing under Hwy. 1 and later a dedicated rail station on campus with a rail bridge over Hwy. 1. A transfer station could also be built at Bay St. to connect and coordinate with buses traveling up to UCSC. The two colleges are used by almost 1/5th of the population of the County and currently generate an enormous amount of traffic. An example of a suitable vehicle is the Alstom Citadis Spirit, now manufactured in North America to satisfy rapidly increasing demand. Two vehicles, each completing a round trip of the course in 40 minutes at an average speed of 20mph (and requiring one passing siding to do so) would provide transit times competitive with driving and superior in cases of difficult parking at the endpoints, such
as is the case with UCSC.

Other future rail service could involve trips to Watsonville running at a lower frequency, perhaps initially hourly trips at morning and afternoon commute times. Connecting to transportation options outside the County is also a possibility, as the Capitol Corridor train that runs between San Jose and Sacramento is undertaking a planned extension to Salinas, due to start service in 2018. This train could be met at Pajaro Junction, where the Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) is working to build a station. Amtrak is considering a new north-south train to augment the Coast Starlight between Seattle and Los Angeles, it would run from the Bay Area to Los Angeles and be called the Coast Daylight and pass through Pajaro. If the California High Speed Rail (HSR) is ever built, a coordinated connection to the nearest station at Gilroy could be implemented. Even if the HSR is never built, it is likely that the current Coast Starlight route would be upgraded as an alternative, further increasing the value of a Santa Cruz County connection at Pajaro.

The vision described above is not a pipe dream. Even though Santa Cruz County is on average not very densely populated, the coastal plain that the rail corridor runs through between Santa Cruz and Cabrillo College is very dense, having between 7,000 and 10,000 people per square mile according to the 2010 Census. These are densities more characteristic of urban environments such as Berkeley, Oakland, or Seattle and at least twice as dense as typical suburban environments such as Palo Alto or Fremont. In addition, half of the county’s population lives within a mile of the rail line and 30%
within a half-mile, a ten minute walk. A density of 4,000 people per square mile is generally considered the minimum for effective public transit, about the average density of Portland, Oregon, a city with extensive rail transit. A density map of SC County is shown below.

The trail would also provide a protected and level path for children and novice cyclists and encourage the replacement of car trips with bike and walking trips. Providing safe routes to school is a significant weapon in the battle against childhood obesity. For trips less than a mile one-way, 88% of children walked or bicycled to school in 1969, that figure is now 16%. In addition, picking up and dropping off children at school and other activities now generates double the car trips that commuting to work does. Many of these trips are ideal candidates to use a rail trail, providing a triple benefit of reducing traffic, increasing health, and reducing environmental impact. As any visitor to the North Tahoe or Yosemite Valley areas can observe, a pedestrian/bicycle path free of cars is a huge draw for commerce and ecotourism.

Most American personal car trips are short, from 1 to 5 miles, and our area is no exception. Many freeway users are only using Highway 1 for "short hops" within the County to avoid congestion on surface streets. Based on data from similar systems in similarly dense areas, we believe that a passenger rail with trail system could absorb up to half of a freeway lane’s worth of traffic in each direction on Highway 1, as well as significantly reducing traffic on local streets, making it easier for everyone to get around regardless of their mode of transportation. At the same time it would contribute to mandated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, as well as promote personal health and the livability of our neighborhoods.

Even conservative Monterey County has already purchased their rail corridor (2003) and is proceeding with plans for a very similar type of rail/trail system linking Marina to
Monterey and ultimately connecting to a future Capitol Corridor extension at Castroville. A well-used and loved bicycle and pedestrian trail is already in place extending between Castroville and Monterey. Our trail could also ultimately connect to Monterey’s, providing an unbroken link spanning Monterey Bay. Tourist trains might also eventually span Monterey Bay.

This document describes a future that embraces sustainability and quality of life. It is well within the realm of possibility given the social and political will to realize it.

Bruce Sawhill  
Chair, Friends of the Rail Trail
Dear Sirs/Ms:
In reviewing Chapter 2-Rail, there is a need for an objective business plan. What is the breakeven load factor for passengers for the train? Normally all business plans have a calculation and chart showing fixed costs, operating costs and then revenues starting at the bottom-left of the chart, running up and crossing the fixed costs and then the operating cost lines. That shows the breakeven load factors.

Until these calculations are completed, there is no way to assess whether the rail line is economically viable, and whether the tax payers will be holding the bag--or not.

Sincerely,
Dan Chauvet

Dan Chauvet
831 724-8256
147 Mesa Verde Dr
Watsonville, Ca 95076
From: David T. Hodgin [mailto:Pathfinder@pacbell.net]
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2014 1:56 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comments on DRAFT 2014 Regional Transportation Plan

I don't presume to be well informed on transportation issues. However I have long wondered if target goals might be achieved more easily by a fresh look at the overall issue.

1. What would happen if bus usage would be free of cost to passengers?
2. If all fare collection and accounting were eliminated, what would the net change in cost be as a percentage of the overall budget?
3. Could a larger fleet of smaller low emission busses serve the expanding ridership, increasing frequency and hence practicality of using the bus?
4. Would the likely increased ridership rapidly achieve goals of reducing car traffic with related reduction in pollution, while eliminating need for highway expansion, another major cost?

You may have already studied these possibilities and discovered insurmountable problems. If not, I hope you will consider these thoughts as a realistic way to get a much larger group of people out of their cars and into group transportation fairly quickly.

Best wishes,
Dave
David T. Hodgin, CMC

-----Original Message-----
From: Bart Coddington [mailto:bikerbart@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2014 4:18 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: 'Bart Coddington'
Subject: Draft RTP Comments

Hello,
I would like to comment on the Auxilary Lane projects, specifically between Soquel and Park and the impact of what I call the Soquel Hump under the (Capitola Ave bridge). I have lived off Park for the past 10 years.

The backup going south is well know. Most evenings the flow improves greatly once the hump has been crested. The cause is the steepness of the hill, particularly the merging vehicles entering from Bay/Porter.

My thought is eliminating the hump may do as much for traffic flow as will the next project - Soquel to 41st. This would have to be done like Hwy 17 after the Loma Prieta Earthquake, crews working 24/7 (I lived off Summit & 17 at the time). Advertising well in advance and outreach will be needed to keep people from trying to drive as usual.

Northbound eliminating the hump would cut down on the amount of skid marks and car parts on the road as well as the slowdown.

Regards,
Bart Coddington

From: Don Honda [mailto:don_honda@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2014 4:20 PM
To: SCCTC
Subject: comment on 21014 draft plan

The decisions you made were based on the "multitude" of auto identical emails sent in by several vocal alternative transportation groups, especially the Rail/Trail crows. They do not speak for the majority of Santa Cruz County residents. If you at all interested in you stated priorities of reducing Greenhouse gas emissions, then you would favor maintaining and widening Hwy 1 now, before any work done on alternative projects. We have already received a silver award of bike friendly and accessibility. Your own survey and studies show that the majority will not bike for a longer than half hour trips, or wait/take a bus for the same time. The majority of residents have multiple tasks to do every day with different out of county areas and this can not be done by alternative means.
Please go against your status quo and entrenched positions of catering to select special interests and help motoring traffic flow better and more safely. Otherwise, we will still experience congestion and more accidents (including those with cyclists and pedestrians) on surface streets. This will further create impact on neighborhoods.

BTW: You DO know (of course you do, you're the RTC) that our area does not have a Greenhouse gas emissions problem when Cemex plant closed down. We are well within the State's guidelines. Please don't pretend that your ludicrous 30% reduction is even attainable or possible. We know that the RTC is using this as an excuse to impose social engineering to change people's habits because of some feel-good philosophy which has strangled and will continue to do so, business, tourism, livability, and quality of life here.

Face it. More people live here, more people have to move around easily to maintain the barest of acceptable levels of standard of living. I hope that the RTC will finally realize this and fix the motoring problems that have been exacerbated by your commission’s inaction and obstructiveness. The inherent problems will not go away because you wish an unattainable hippie utopian idea.

You can and will be replaced.

Don Honda
While I agree that a regional long range transportation plan is a necessary thing, I disagree with what has been presented. Here are some observations:

1. There is a fundamental bias against automobile use. The fact is the automobile is the mainstay of the transportation in the county and no increase in trails, bike paths, commuter railroads, etc. is going to change that picture. The gradual shift in automobile technology will have the affect of reducing emissions. It has also been shown that cars moving at highway speeds reduce the localized pollution, so traffic jams should be eliminated to the extent possible.

2. Hy 1 has been, is and will continue to be an embarrassment. Since tourism (including "day at the beach" visits) is a major revenue source, having visitors face the congestion on Hy 1 is criminal. And, of course, we residents of the county who pay taxes also are penalized for this Eisenhower-era highway and it’s daily congestion. The extension from the fishhook to Morrissey only kicked the roadblock down the highway a short distance (as predicted by many of us when it was being proposed). Auxiliary lanes be damned .. a third lane each direction is the only real solution and I didn't see it in the Plan.

3. The highway infrastructure continues to be a victim of deferred maintenance. I understand this amounts to over $100 million. Although commonly recognized by the RTC, available funds were wasted on the purchase of the Santa Cruz branch line. Further, the justification for the purchase was bogus. The financial analysis of the revenue vs. cost is badly flawed. The right-of-way in many sections is unsuitable for a rail-trail. And the RTC's own studies show that any commuter train service between Watsonville and Santa Cruz will have no measurable affect in reducing Hy 1 traffic. Now that this property belongs to the county, I challenge you to publicly post the revenue/expense accounting. Just how much of our money is going to subsidize this useless railroad?

4. The rail-trail is a force-fit insisted on by the bicycle community that seems to have a disproportionate influence on the RTC. The cost of the rail-trail with the number of bridges, narrow right-of-way sections, etc. is in the millions of dollars per mile based on RTC studies. And the population served has never been estimated. Adopting the Field Of Dreams philosophy (if we build it, they will come) is an unprofessional was of doing planning. How much of the budget will be spent on trail building? With a limited budget, where does this project sit on the priority list?

Scarce funds should be applied to projects that serve the most people. I see no assessment in the Plan of the ratio of $ vs. population served. I’ll end with a frustration. In my prior years of dealing with the RTC I’ve found that these public comment opportunities are merely a way to make the public feel it is a party to the process. In fact, the RTC has already adopted this Plan and any comments from myself or any of my fellow taxpayers will go unheard.

Robert Jones
Aptos
Please explain top line of Appendix D. Thank you. Somebody better know. Forward to whomever is competent to answer the question.

Libby

Looking at Appendix for revenues, how does total local revenue go from 86 (million I believe) to 1545 from 2014 to 2015? Top line on appendix.

Libby

Hello Libby –
Thank you for reviewing the Draft RTP. The Regional Transportation Commission will consider comments to be included in the Final 2014 Regional Transportation Plan at their May 1 meeting and is scheduled to adopt the final plan on June 26.

I believe you are asking about the shaded line at the top of Appendix D that indicates the type of revenue. If that is correct, this shows the subtotal for that type of funding (i.e. local, regional, state, federal transit, federal highway, FAA Airport).

If you are referring to the very top line, it shows the projected LOCAL revenues in the base year (typically fiscal year 2012/13 or FY13/14, though in some instances is actually a rounded/annual average), the total unescalated for the 22 year time frame in the Regional Transportation Plan (2014 – 2035), followed by a column with the total if it was escalated 1.75% per year through 2035 and then columns with the estimated escalated amount for each fiscal year (i.e. 2013/14, 2014/15, etc.).

You asked specifically how the local revenue went “from 86 (million I believe) to 1545 from 2014 to 2015.”

- $86,082,000 is the average annual amount the region typically receives from those fund sources, taking into consideration amounts available in the base year 2012/13, historical averages, or a fixed percentage of the average statewide totals for formula funds.
- Using the base amount and historical averages, we project there to be $1,854,811,000 in local revenues for the 22 year time frame from 2014 – 2035. (this is generally the base amount x 22, except in some instances where specific sources are not available all 22 year (e.g. sales tax and vehicle reg fees) or some carry over funds from prior years have not yet been spent but have been committed to specific projects that are listed in the plan (e.g. the SHOPP, carryover federal earmarks, STIP, etc.)
- Escalating the that amount 1.75% per year for that timeframe would bring that total to $2,219,605,000. This exercise is helpful to try to take into account price increases and inflation.

I hope this is helpful. Chapter 5 provides additional information on the revenue projections and methodology used. Notably, these projections were based on figures available in January, and the state and local agencies do have some updated estimates for a few sources which will be reflected in the final document.

Please let me know if you have further questions or suggestions for amendments to the document.

Karena Pushnik, Senior Planner/Public Information Coordinator  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
Santa Cruz Office (main) 831.460.3210 | Watsonville 831.768.8012  
1523 Pacific Avenue | Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
Follow our social networks for the latest RTC news

---

From: pleasure_point_1@yahoo.com  
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2014 2:52 PM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Transportation Plan

I suggest that a bridge from Mattison area to Good Shepard School would be a better, more user friendly location then Chanticleer.  
A bridge from New Brighton to Cabrillo College would be good for students using the Rail Trail.  
If full clover leaf exits are not being used at Soquel or 41st overpasses, new Murry type exits could be added at Chanticleer and So Rodeo Gulch. An exit to 17th Ave would be an improvement.  
Opening streets at 40th Ave and through the neighborhoods from Capitola Rd to the Frontage Rd, at the top of 30th Ave would help traffic flow in this highly used area.

The Use of Green Streets/Shared Streets would calm traffic and provide safer walking, in areas that can model the Pleasure Pt and Carmel streets-capes.

Following the EPAs Best Management on Stormwater would help to save our rain and not pollute the ocean. Porous Pathways for people and the environment would be a better use for Transportation Funds and be safer and more easily maintainable then concrete which heaves and breaks as well as more expensive for property owners to maintain for reference see http://www.epa.gov/oaintrnt/stormwater/best_practices.htm

Thank you  
Charles Paulden

---

From: Peter & Jan Stanger  
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2014 8:25 PM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Draft RTP Comments  

Dear RTC members,

I implore you and staff to get the bike and pedestrian trail along the MBSST built on a much more expedited pace than has been scheduled. The least expensive way to get some vehicles off Highway 1 is to build a bicycle alternative. People want the freeway gridlock dealt with yesterday! Sure, you can build a mile of freeway for another 20 million dollars, or you could build the ENTIRE LENGTH of the bicycle and pedestrian trail for that amount or less. The standing proposition by the RTC members and staff that it will take more than 20 years is unacceptable. Let people have an alternative, safe method to get to their destinations. BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME. Twenty years waiting is poppy-cock nonsense.

Respectfully,  
Peter Stanger
Hi,
In general I support the draft plan. However I would prefer the following changes:

de-prioritize:
Addition of Auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 between State Park Drive in Aptos and Soquel Ave and prioritize:
rail service between Watsonville and Santa Cruz.

Make:
Target 1B - Reduce per capita fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by 1 percent by 2020 and 5 percent by 2035.
more aggressive:
reduce emissions by 3 percent by 2020 and 10 percent by 2035.
Also be more specific on actions to increase bicycle commuting and usage more safe and widely used.
thanks,
Russell Weisz
russweisz@baymoon.com

-----Original Message-----
From: Frank Remde [mailto:verandavineyard1@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2014 9:02 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Bike Map Request and Response to the Draft BMP

REGARDING BIKEWAYS:   The DRAFT BMP addresses bikeways, and the need to improve them, and mark them. What it doesn't address is the need to supervise and control those who use them. Bike rider groups seem to like to travel in large numbers, and that can be troublesome for the riders and the automobiles that are forced to meander through and around them. I would suggest that the numbers be limited and that the biking groups be assigned to designated routes. That for the safety of all concerned. I am not sure they need to travel on highways, including 152. They do. As a matter of fact, do they need to bike in the mountains at all? Certainly that is problematic. I also suggest that the bikeways be marked with yellow or a different color than white as that color is not vivid enough. Also, bike lanes should be of a minimum width to provide a safe margin from traffic and the rough ground beside the roadway. Also, motor vehicle drivers need more schooling on the interrelationship with bicyclists. That education could be provided by testing questions on the auto exams required by the DMV. Santa Cruz County could lead in the education of Bike Transport Safety. Thank you for giving consideration to my ideas. Frank Remde

-----Original Message-----
From: Patti Brady [mailto:patrizia2@pacbell.net]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2014 11:12 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comments to RTC "draft"

To: Regional Transportation Commission:
Greetings: I appreciate the opportunity to give input/make observations regarding our area’s transportation needs (Action Element). My concerns pertain to bus schedules – bus access:

- Currently – SCruz Co:
  - Roads are clogged; we have few direct routes to go across town or the like
  - Bus stops are spread blocks and streets apart
  - Most bus schedules are basically "milk train"
- Bring SCruz Co. buses to the people
  - Provide county–wide combinations of "milk train" (buses with regular runs with lots of stops) and "express" (buses with very frequent runs; less stops between point A to L to Z).
  - Our SC buses used to be crowded then "new thinking prevailed" reducing schedule frequency and availability of bus stops eliminating a host of riders including me.
I believe SCruz Co. can do a lot better to make this wonderful community more available/accessible to everyone. Example: San Francisco

- Express buses are enjoyed day/night with riders of all ages, capabilities and economic levels (overalls to gucci)
- Milk runs are also fully utilized per the many stop-off points
- Access of places to buy the monthly "ticket" is easy; ticket prices make it "smart" not to drive a car
- From block to block bus stops are marked - easily available
- It's great to get where you want to go without a hassle, to not be frustrated by driving in traffic or have parking hassles

- Revised bus scheduling, more bus stops, great prices could make riding the bus in SCruz Co. "way cool"; make money via increased ridership, free up street traffic, reduce street maintenance costs and engage in important "green" activity.

Sincerely,
Patti Brady

In 2005, I worked in Moldova; sadly Moldova's citizen bus use even shows up SCruz Co.'s activity: as poor, poor a country as it is - lots of buses in the cities, towns around the country – makes getting around inexpensive, easy to access and used by everyone.

---

From: pall marten [mailto:seeshore@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2014 1:31 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Pathetic conditions on ...

Ocean st. from Broadway to San Lorenzo blvd.  Hello , I live on San Lorenzo bv. and during my 45 years here I've never seen repaving on Ocean st. along that area.  Drive down that stretch and see if you don't agree.  Thanks for what ever can be done , remember , this the main entry into our fair City .
pall marten

Hello Pall Marten –
Thank you for your comments on the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The Regional Transportation Commission will consider comments to be included in the Final 2014 Regional Transportation Plan at their May 1 meeting and is scheduled to adopt the final plan on June 26.

The comment period closes on April 8.

Please visit the 2014 RTP page of the SCCRTC website for information: http://www.sccrtc.org/rtp.html

As a follow up on your specific comment, the 2014 Draft Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan includes 4 projects submitted by project sponsor, the City of Santa Cruz, on Ocean Street.  Please see the first four projects on page 8 of Appendix E in the plan.

- Ocean Street Pavement Rehabilitation, Water to Hwy 17/Plymouth, SC-48
- Ocean Street Streetscape and Intersection, Plymouth to Water, SC-P86
- Ocean Street Streetscape and Intersection, Water to Soquel, SC-P84
- Ocean Street Widening from Soquel to East Cliff, SC-P66

In addition, the city of Santa Cruz has maintenance, repair and operation projects on local streets that are ongoing. This is listed as a lump sum on page 6 in Appendix E as project SC-P06. Please note that this plan includes projects through the year 2035. For more details about the project and potential construction dates, please follow up with the city (also copied by this email).

Thank you.

Karena Pushnik, Senior Planner/Public Information Coordinator
Hello,

Please see attached for People Power's comments on the 2014 Draft RTP.

Best,
Amelia Conlen, Director
People Power of Santa Cruz County
703 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
April 1st, 2014

Dear Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commissioners,

People Power of Santa Cruz County appreciates the balanced approach to all forms of transportation in the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Bicycling and walking are key components in our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and projects on the RTP’s Constrained Project List such as the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, Mar Vista Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge, and Countywide Signage Program will help to make bicycling and walking a safe and comfortable form of transportation for more County residents.

We ask that the Draft RTP be amended to include plans for sufficient funds to build the entire Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail. While we understand that some of the cost will come from grant funds and private donations, we would like to see a reasonable estimate of the remaining funds needed included in the RTP’s Constrained Projects List.

This trail will have a transformative effect on our community, giving residents and visitors of all ages a safe way to access major destinations on foot or by bicycle. The trail will connect North and South County and will run within one mile of 42 local schools, 88 parks and 50% of our county’s population. Bike facilities that are separated from vehicle traffic have been shown to dramatically increase bicycle ridership, and this facility will go a long way towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic on Highway 1 and our local streets and roads.

We want residents of all ages to be riding on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail by 2025, and we would support a tax measure that brings us closer to that goal. Please amend the RTP to include a plan for full funding of the trail, and help make this dream a reality.

Sincerely,

Amelia Conlen, Director

Ron Goodman, Steering Committee Member  Micah Posner, Steering Committee Member

Gary Milburn, Steering Committee Member  Peter Whitford, Steering Committee Member

Connie Wilson, Steering Committee Member
To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I have read through the draft RTP, after having attended and contributed to a workshop in Live Oak some months before. I was disappointed then, that there was little or no serious discussion, much less sincere consideration, of Personal Rapid Transit (PRT), among options to address community goals for the transportation “future we’d like to have” (to paraphrase something I heard several times at the workshop). I left numerous post-it notes on the walls of that workshop, urging the consideration of PRT and suggesting how it might achieve transit goals that we were asked to ponder and discuss during the workshop. I am at least as disappointed now to see no mention of PRT in the draft RTP, although hopes and plans for various flavors of rail in Santa Cruz County still seem front and center, along with Bus Rapid Transit, bicycles, and motor vehicle road improvement.

For a document that purports to describe a plan that will see us through to the year 2035, the present draft RTP pays a remarkable amount of attention to transportation modes that have been available since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and practically none at all to even as much as speculation about what future transport in 2035 might resemble. Just ten years ago, Personal Rapid Transit networks were essentially the stuff of fantasy. Earlier attempts had been made, and much study had been undertaken in the intervening years, but there was no actual modern PRT system serving passengers on a daily basis. Now there are two and a third to open very soon: Heathrow Pods at London’s Heathrow Airport; the Masdar City system in Abu Dhabi; and the Vectus-built “Sky Cube” system in Suncheon Bay, South Korea. The first two have been in service for several years, and the third opened for testing in conjunction with the Suncheon Bay International Garden Exposition in September, 2013; it will have a formal opening on April 19th, 2014. Each system has undergone extensive testing, including trial runs, with and without passengers. The Heathrow and Masdar systems have proven very reliable and popular, as they are comfortable, convenient, and thrifty with passenger travel time, not to mention energy-efficient. Passenger experience with the South Korean system has so far shown that it, too, is well on the way to winning general popularity, for most of the same reasons as its predecessors did. These systems were constructed relatively quickly, each in just a handful of years. It is quite reasonable to think that a Santa Cruz PRT system, based on any one of them as a model, could be established in ten years, allowing five years for planning and route selection, and another five years for construction and testing. Perhaps, with political will, we could create a PRT system here in fewer than ten years. It is also possible that another, better PRT system approach than the ones we know now will appear and serve as the basis for a real-world system within the next decade. In any case, it does not stretch credulity to think that Santa Cruz, city or county, could have a fully working and much utilized and appreciated PRT system by the year 2035, perhaps much sooner. Thus, the lack of serious discussion about PRT in the draft RTP is puzzling, and all the more so because PRT, arguably better than any other alternative, seems to support many of the plan’s key sustainability policies, as listed in Figure 4.2 of the draft RTP:

1. Transportation Infrastructure:
   a. Improve multimodal access to and within key destinations: An intelligently designed PRT system route can ensure that multiple “Stops” serve each “key” destination in the service area. PRT vehicles can hold several passengers along with bicycles, wheel-chairs (as well as other small, personal mobility vehicles), and luggage. Each “Stop” serves a small area (perhaps one-quarter mile square), in which all points of origination or destination are within easy walking distance. In particular, several Stops can be sited near each Metro Center, park-and-ride lots, and large parking lots or structures, allowing easy mode-shifting for passengers, wherever they enter or exit the PRT system, regardless of where they start or end their trips.
   b. Ensure connectivity by closing gaps in the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit networks: PRT is an ideal “go-between” to close gaps in and smoothly interconnect those other networks. You can enter the PRT system at any access point, and travel directly to any other access point, with no need for intermediate stops, traffic delays, or transfers.
   c. Design system to reduce the potential for conflict between bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles: The typical PRT system approach uses an elevated guideway, supported on sturdy (but, to mitigate high winds or earthquakes, appropriately flexible) poles. In Masdar City, PRT operates on its own level below ground, while pedestrians and other traffic use surface streets. PRT traffic thus does not interact with ground-level traffic, neither impeding or endangering, nor being impeded or endangered by, bicyclists, pedestrians, and street vehicles. This is possible because electric PRT vehicles themselves are so small and light, just large enough to hold 3-6 passengers and their gear (including some bicycles and luggage, as mentioned above). Elevated guideways and offline “Stops” allow all trips to be “direct service,” during which the vehicle travels almost completely at full system speed. To the
extent that the PRT system takes passengers out of street-level traffic, the streets themselves become less crowded and safer for all who use them, especially bicyclists and pedestrians.

2. Safety
   a. **Prioritize funding for safety projects and programs that will reduce fatal or injury collisions:** Not being at street level, PRT cannot contribute to collisions that cause injury or death. No PRT vehicle collisions have ever occurred (and this includes the paleo-PRT system – now considered as GRT, “Group Rapid Transit,” – established at the University of West Virginia in Morgantown in the 1970s and still operating today). As most PRT vehicles operate at speeds of between 25-40 mph, the chance of serious injury from even full collisions between vehicles or other elements of infrastructure, and even in the absence of seat belts or air-bags, is minimal. PRT and its immediate forebears (such as Morgatown GRT) share a safety record that would be the envy of any rail- or street-based transit system.
   b. **Encourage projects that improve safety for youth, vulnerable users, and transportation disadvantaged:** PRT systems are well lit, Stops (and even vehicles, though I disapprove of using the latter for reasons of passenger privacy) can be equipped with cameras, and vehicles are completely private to the occupants from the time they start a trip until they exit at their destination Stop. (Multiple) PRT Stops can be sited very near to popular points of origin or destination for both youth and other vulnerable users, so that, on the occasion that the safety of a PRT vehicle is needed, the nearest Stop is close at hand, and a vehicle is very likely to be waiting. Windows cannot be opened en route. The vehicle cabins are roomy and comfortable. Disabled passengers can enter, ride in, and exit PRT vehicles without leaving their wheelchairs. Within the service area, "transportation disadvantaged" passengers, especially the disabled, elderly, and children, will always be no more than a short walk from comfortable, speedy, private transportation, which charges only a modest fare (similar to bus fare) to go directly to the desired destination. This may allow many such passengers to use PRT as their primary mode of transportation, at least for trips that start and end within the system’s service area.

3. Emergency Services
   a. **Support projects that provide access to emergency services:** An intelligently planned PRT system will ideally include one or more stops at each provider of emergency services within the system service area. For emergency trips that involve transportation only (and not the need for special medical equipment or attention), PRT can provide direct, non-stop transport between a point of origin and an emergency services center. This can potentially allow for better response and transit time, even than employing ambulances, personal cars, and/or taxicabs. Also, by helping to reduce street traffic in general, PRT can assist traditional emergency response vehicles, helping them to avoid traffic congestion or other related street-level impediments. Finally, it is possible to have “ambulance” PRT vehicles, which could launch from various locations, carrying paramedic staff and some amount of medical equipment and medical supplies, then speed directly to a Stop at the closest or most appropriate emergency services center, without affecting or being affected by street traffic at all.

4. Cost Effectiveness and System Maintenance
   a. **Maintain and operate the existing transportation system cost-effectively and in a manner that adapts the current transportation system to maximize existing investments:** PRT would be a new infrastructure, but it could be used to make the existing infrastructure and investments more effective and last longer. For instance, by siting system access “Stops” near Metro Centers (e.g., between Front and lower Pacific in Santa Cruz), we can enable far-flung passengers to ride Metro Express buses to and from the Metro Center, while using the PRT to proceed to/from anywhere within the core Santa Cruz service area. This could also free buses and drivers to serve outlying routes that were abandoned in previous years, instead of running buses in street traffic within the central city. (Furthermore, this opportunity speaks to goal 2b, above.) Finally, by minimizing the need for heavy bus vehicles within its service area, PRT can dramatically reduce the need for and expense of street maintenance. To the extent that PRT would reduce both automobile and bus traffic in its territory, it would contribute “twice” to keeping the roadways in good condition, lowering expense for motorists and taxpayers alike.

5. Coordination
   a. **Improve coordination between agencies in a manner that improves efficiencies, and reduces duplication (e.g., paratransit and transit; road repairs; signal synchronization; TDM programs):** Although establishing PRT would seem to create yet another organization to co-ordinate with those that already exist, it would present a perfect opportunity to further streamline the payment of fares, through a “universal transit pass” mechanism (or improvement of the existing FastPass approach) that could be introduced in connection with the PRT system. Other opportunities for co-operation and inter-operation between agencies will doubtless present themselves.

6. System Financing
   a. **Support new or increased taxes and fees that reflect the cost to operate and maintain the transportation system:** Of all available modes of transit, PRT (depending upon scale of the system and potential ridership in the service area), is able to recoup costs of operation, maintenance, and construction from ordinary operating revenues, without need for tax subsidy. Liability and personnel
costs are drastically lower than in traditional, non-automated systems. Not only will a properly planned and implemented PRT system not require controversial tax increases to build, operate, maintain, or extend, but it could potentially deliver a surplus that could be diverted, at least in part, to supporting the rest of the regional transportation system, reducing the need to increase taxes or fees generally.

7. Equity
   a. **Demonstrate that planned investments will reduce disparities in safety and access for transportation disadvantaged populations:** Whether one’s “transportation disadvantage” stems from not having a personal automobile, needing to use a wheelchair, only owning a bicycle, not living near any convenient bus route, being blind or otherwise disabled, or whatever the source, Personal Rapid Transit can help. Within its own service area, a well-designed PRT system will provide system access. Stops within one-quarter mile of any desired point of arrival and departure, as well as connections to all bus routes that overlap the service area. System access. Stops and vehicles are designed to accommodate wheelchairs and bicycles, as well as be generally accessible under ADA guidelines. Trips are direct, non-stop: there are no transfers to miss, no delays while loading or unloading someone else’s wheelchairs, bicycles, or luggage, and no long waits (potentially in bad weather) for a connecting bus or train. Trip fares are similar to those charged for bus rides. PRT is easily used, safe, economical and comfortable for the young and old, the disabled, the well-to-do as well as people on fixed or low incomes, those who need to minimize their transit time to and from work or appointments – virtually anyone who may need transit.

8. Ecological Function
   a. **Deliver transportation investments in a way that increases tree canopy, where appropriate, improves habitat and water quality and enhances sensitive areas:** By virtue of its relatively low operating speeds and electric motors, PRT is so efficient that most or all of the system’s power requirements can be satisfied via solar panels, either built into the system as awnings and shade panels, or via a separately-sited solar farm that compensates the power grid for the electricity drawn by the system. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions at the source are eliminated, and GHG emissions overall, as a result of system operation, are significantly reduced from those expected from equivalent systems and vehicles powered directly by gasoline, diesel, or natural gas. The pollutants produced by fossil-fuel-based transit are not generated by PRT systems, to contaminate the air and water in the service region. PRT installations are quiet, owing both to the electric nature of the vehicles, and the light weight and small footprints of the vehicles and system infrastructure. PRT can be designed to travel above any existing tree canopy, or allow room for new canopy to form beneath. PRT offers a great opportunity to improve habitat, especially in sensitive areas, because a typical system can carry traffic equal to that of several busy road lanes, on a single guideway that can have the ground footprint of a narrow bicycle path, and sharper turns and curves than a standard public road. Much of the land, which might otherwise be used by paved roads and parking areas in neighborhoods served by PRT, could be used for other purposes: buildings, parks and playgrounds, crops, “greenbelt,” paths for pedestrians and bicycles, etc.

9. Public Engagement
   a. **Support broad public input on all aspects of regional and local transportation plans, projects and funding actions:** For many years, I have been a witness, and sometimes a participant, as the Santa Cruz PRT organization has presented the idea and concepts of PRT to a variety of audiences: young school children, college and university students, business leaders, community members encountered in formal meetings as well as on the street, attendees at Earth Day festivals and other appropriate events, and many more. Almost invariably, the response has been along the lines of “Sounds great, tell me more!” or “So why don’t we have it already?” Criticisms or reservations usually center around funding, anticipated fare charges, or potential disruption of the environment or privacy within neighborhoods. Opportunities for PRT in our area should be seriously considered and carefully studied to find fair answers to critics and others who may have concerns or questions. Opportunities for citizens to have an important effect on the system as it develops and matures – e.g., in the aesthetic design and decoration of vehicles or guideway, in the designation of routes or the siting of system-access stops, in the naming and branding of the system itself, to mention only a few possibilities – should be seized as often as possible.

A PRT system can also help meet the draft RTP performance goals, as given in Figure 7.2:

i. **Access and Environment**
   1. **Increase the percentage of people that can travel to key destinations within a thirty-minute walk, bike, or transit trip by 20 percent by 2020 and 40 percent by 2035:** In simulation of a PRT system that conforms to the most commonly proposed “core” layout for Santa Cruz, the nonstop, direct trips usually take from 5 to 10 minutes each. This leaves 20 minutes to walk or bike to the initial Stop
from the point of origination, and then walk or bike from the terminal Stop to the point of destination. In a well-designed system, Stops are no more than one-quarter mile away from any point of origination or destination within the service area. The traveler can walk or bike as slowly as 1.5 MPH and still satisfy this transit goal using PRT. Even if, in some places, the Stops are spread out a bit more than optimum, travelers need to move only slightly faster to and from Stops, in order to keep their total trip times under 30 minutes. The larger the service area, and the more the Stop density approaches optimal, the more people will have access to the desired level of performance. Travelers coming from or going to places outside the service area need to be able to travel between the external point and a system Stop within 10-15 minutes. If the desired points of origination and destination both lie outside the service area, then the total time to travel between those points and the nearest Stops to each must be 20 minutes or less. One possibility is that the buses that are freed from having to serve downtown areas can be repurposed as express buses between the Metro Centers and currently unserved or underserved outlying areas. By a combination of building out the system and using express “collector/distributor” vehicles, the total “30 minute trip” area can be enlarged to benefit an increasing percentage of the population.

b. **Reduce per capita fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by 1 percent by 2020 and 5 percent by 2035:** Actual figures from the operation of ULTra’s “Heathrow Pods” system indicate vehicle fuel efficiency of 0.55 MJ per passenger kilometer (ppkm). This converts to 148.8 passenger miles per gallon (pMPG). This compares well against traditional rail (between 1.5-2 MJ ppkm), transit buses (between 2.5-3 MJ ppkm) and personal cars and trucks (2-2.5 MJ ppkm). To the extent that PRT conveniently serves a large enough geographical area, as to often be a more attractive option than personal vehicles for the people in that area, it can drastically improve the “vehicle miles traveled” situation here, especially in terms of fuel consumption (minimal) and greenhouse gas emissions (none at point of service and reduced at point of electricity generation).

c. **Re-invest in the local economy $5 million/year by 2020 and $10 million/year by 2035 from savings resulting from lower fuel consumption due to a reduction in vehicle miles traveled:** These savings would be more easily achieved, to the extent that local bus service could be minimized or eliminated within the PRT service area. Note also that $15 million now purchases a single (linear) mile of PRT extension. Over ten years, the PRT service area could be doubled, bringing convenient transit to many more people, by investing just $15 million towards expansion per year (not counting right of way acquisition). The point of doing this would be not just to extend PRT coverage to more people in the County, but to enlarge the system to the point where farebox revenue streams and other typical sources of operating income can generate a surplus, which can be used both to finance continued system expansion, as well as to invest in the projects and initiatives contemplated by the draft RTP.

d. (i) **Improve travel time reliability for vehicle trips:** To the extent that PRT replaces street vehicles for a significant number of trips, the roads will be less congested generally and PRT passengers will be able to rely on a short trip time to their destinations – a dual benefit.
(ii) **Improve multimodal network quality for walk and bicycle trips to and within key destinations:** By placing Stops no more than one-quarter mile from points of origin and destination, and being designed to quickly and easily accommodate bicycles, PRT actually enables a convenient multimodal transit network, far better than buses or light rail, for example. The key to making multimodal transit work is to minimize (ideally, to eliminate) the difficulties and delays that the passenger encounters when switching modes (or when his or her trip is affected by someone else switching modes!). PRT is noteworthy in its ability to act as “glue and gasket” between various transit modes.

e. **Decrease single-occupancy mode share by 4 percent by 2020 and by 8 percent by 2035:** This goal obviously refers to personal vehicle occupancy: cars and trucks. Single occupancy on a motorcycle is a good thing, viewed in the context of our current situation, and so is single occupancy of a PRT vehicle (though multiple occupancy is even better). To the extent that PRT is the preferred choice over a personal car or truck for a large number of trips, that is a victory in keeping with this Plan goal. The fuel efficiency of PRT is so great that four single-occupancy PRT trips would use no more energy than one high-occupancy car-pool trip. As long as the PRT system is reliable, convenient, and serves a large enough area to include
many key destinations, it could make a huge positive contribution to the attainment of the Commission’s goal.

ii. Safety
2. Reduce transportation related fatalities and injuries for all transportation modes.
   a. Reduce injury and fatal collisions by mode by 20 percent by 2020 and by 50 percent by 2035: PRT itself has a stellar fatality/injury score. Since the Morgantown and Heathrow systems were built, for example, there have been no fatalities or injuries, either for passengers, or for local pedestrians or motorists. Reasons for this include:
      · Automatic operation of the systems, minimizing the potential for human error, and optimizing separation and travel speeds of the several vehicles on the guideway;
      · Separation of street traffic and potential trespassers from PRT guideway, which is either fenced off, elevated above grade, carefully routed away from public roadways, or a combination of all three; and
      · Relatively slow vehicle speeds, relative to typical speeds of vehicles on highways and major thoroughfares.

   To the extent that the PRT system lures passengers away from being part of street traffic, it can markedly reduce the likelihood of transportation-related injury or fatality: The PRT passengers will enjoy one of the safest transportation modes ever, and street traffic will be less congested and chaotic.

   b. Reduce total number of high-collision locations: The main early contribution of PRT in this area would be to reduce road congestion in general, as well as to reduce the number of people who are "in a hurry" on the roads, especially the faster freeways and associated intersections. In the future covered by the draft RTP, however, it is possible to envision the renovation of existing "key destinations," or the establishment of new ones, which are served primarily (or most conveniently) by PRT, and do not accommodate high-speed or wide-load traffic at all.

iii. Maintenance and Equity
3. Deliver access and safety improvements cost effectively, within available revenues, equitably and responsive to the needs of all users of the transportation system, and beneficially for the natural environment.
   a. Increase the average local road pavement condition index to 57 by 2020 and 70 by 2035: To the extent that it attracts ridership, PRT would contribute to this goal by removing traffic from the roads, especially bus traffic in the PRT service area.

   b. Reduce total number of high-collision locations: The main early contribution of PRT in this area would be to reduce road congestion in general, as well as to reduce the number of people who are "in a hurry" on the roads (especially those using the freeways to shave a few minutes off of trips to nearby local destinations). In the future covered by the draft RTP, however, it is possible to envision the renovation of existing "key destinations," or the establishment of new ones, which are served primarily (or most conveniently) by PRT, and do not accommodate high-speed or wide-load traffic at all. By reducing the number of high-risk (large, massive, and/or high-speed) vehicles in a particular area, the likelihood of collisions at all (not to mention those causing injury or death) will also be greatly reduced.

   c. Increase the percentage of people who are transportation disadvantaged due to income, age, race, disability, or limited English proficiency that are within a 30-minute walk, bike, or transit trip to key destinations by 20% by 2020 and 40% by 2035: The simplest way to use PRT to help attain this goal would be to build out the system steadily, to serve the largest possible population, most extensive geographic area, and greatest number of "key destinations" within the service area by 2035. Depending on system size, PRT is designed to allow charging a low fare with low or no taxpayer subsidy. For individuals who qualify for fare subsidy, however, the drain on public resources will be minimal. The vehicles are roomy, comfortable, secure, climate-controlled, ADA-compliant, and can accommodate varying combinations of passengers, wheelchairs, bicycles, and luggage. There is no inherent potential for discrimination by race in this automated system, and instructions on viewscreens inside the vehicles or at the Stops can easily be provided in many languages, or even non-verbally. Stops are no more than one-quarter mile away from any point of origination or destination within the PRT service area. Perhaps as important, the direct, nonstop nature of PRT trips ensures that nobody can "miss the Stop" or get off at the wrong Stop, which is sometimes
a problem for the cognitively impaired, and those with certain disabilities or learning differences, not to mention the sleeping or distracted.

d. **Ensure transportation services (and impacts) are equitably distributed to all segments of the population:** Unfortunately, a PRT system covering all of Santa Cruz city, much less all of Santa Cruz County, cannot suddenly appear overnight, or be provided through a single effort. Any real PRT system must be built in stages, and while it is growing, some areas (and any geographically-tied “population segments” in those areas) will need alternative transportation services. Responsible parties must balance two important drivers of PRT development: The need for the system to be self-sustaining and the need for the system to equitably serve ever more people as it grows. Fortunately, the lightweight infrastructure and correspondingly low construction and operation costs of PRT mean that it can be installed and used to good advantage, with minimal disruption to the local area, almost anywhere: wealthy business districts, poor residential neighborhoods, college campuses, ethnic or artistic enclaves, industrial areas, and high-density, mixed-use neighborhoods, as well as (to a point) lower-density suburban or semi-rural areas. PRT is a highly decentralized system, so benefits and impacts are, inherently, widely and equitably distributed. Mention was made above about the potential for PRT to free up buses, vans, and other transit vehicles now being used in our cities, to provide service to outlying areas that may have lost transit service in the past, or could use more frequent service.

e. **Maximize participation from diverse members of the public in planning and project implementation activities:** When the PRT idea is put to members of the public, the reaction is rarely lukewarm. PRT activists routinely encounter instant boosters, those who just as quickly dismiss the idea, intractable opponents of longstanding, lifelong fans and followers of the technology, and ordinary citizens who are inspired by the concept to ask thoughtful questions or provide constructive criticism, regardless of their levels of support of or opposition to particular proposals. To meet this goal, PRT should have been included among the seriously considered options in recent outreach workshops and other events related to the crafting of the current draft RTP. Once PRT is on the menu, numerous sub-projects and events can involve the public in picking the aesthetic design scheme, a name and mascot to establish the “personality” of the system, locations for the Stops, the key operational qualities and benefits of the infrastructure and vehicles (so as to inform the choosing of vendors or the drafting of requirements put to them), etc.

**Description of a typical PRT system**

The previous points assume that the reader already has some knowledge of the PRT concept, but for those who do not, I include below a description of a typical PRT system, in terms of the key characteristics of modern PRT. I cannot overemphasize that those characteristics are complementary in nature and mutually reinforcing: significantly tinkering with or eliminating any one of them (for instance, making the vehicles larger to hold more people, putting guideway at street level – or underground in an already settled area, or significantly increasing typical vehicle speed) would yield a system that has serious deficits in several areas, and which may not ultimately prove competitive with existing modes of transit, especially the private automobile. The modern PRT concept has evolved to occupy a “sweet spot” in the transportation landscape, so that it can be attractive and useful enough for a broad enough segment of the public (even those who own and generally prefer to use their own cars), that it can at least closely approach – and ideally, significantly exceed – the threshold for self-sustainability as an economic enterprise.

PRT (also known as Automated Transport Network, or “ATN”) is a system of small, automatically driven electric vehicles that travel throughout a dedicated network of interconnected guideway loops, between “System Access Stops” (from now on, just “Stops”) that are distributed around the network about one-half mile apart in any direction. The guideway is separated from street-level traffic and is, ideally, elevated. “Stops” are offline, meaning that a side-path splits off to the Stop from the main guideway for passenger loading and unloading, while a complementary side-path leads from the Stop to rejoin and merge into the main flow of traffic. The offline Stop approach is similar to one commonly used with rest stops on public highways. Depending on the specific proprietary PRT approach in question, maximum vehicle speeds tend to range from 25-45 MPH, and maximum vehicle occupancy ranges from 2 to 4, usually including room for some combination of wheelchairs, bicycles, and luggage. These are very brief general specifications, but from them flow many desirable benefits, including, but not limited to:

- **On-demand travel:** The self-driving vehicles can relocate automatically to areas of high demand, or remain distributed around the system, parked in vehicle bays at offline Stops. In most normal cases, a vehicle will already be waiting for a passenger, so can be boarded and go on its way immediately. In times of high system
usage, the wait for a vehicle should rarely exceed a minute or two – similar to the wait for an elevator in a tall
building. If a vehicle is, for some reason, unsuitable for a particular passenger (damaged, vandalized,
malodorous, containing trash, just exited by someone with a clearly communicable disease, etc.), the
passenger can elect a new vehicle from the ones already waiting, or summon a different one from nearby.
“Rejected” vehicles drive themselves to a depot for cleaning and maintenance.

- **Personal travel:** Like a taxicab, the PRT vehicle is dedicated to your trip. It goes where you want it to go,
carrying you, and friends or family traveling with you, in comfort and safety.

- **Direct, Stop-to-Stop travel:** Because Stops are offline and PRT vehicles drive themselves, you proceed
directly from any Stop to any other Stop without need for pausing for stop signs or traffic lights, picking up or
dropping off other passengers, transfers, or dealing with traffic congestion. This is like having a taxicab which
can always travel down empty streets, taking a short-cut to your destination.

- **Conveniently accessed travel:** Because of the layout of the guideway network and the distribution of Stops,
any particular point of trip origination or destination will ideally be, at most, one-quarter mile from a Stop.
Some PRT approaches allow for more closely-spaced Stops to be cost-effective. The use of electric vehicles
means that Stops can be situated within buildings. The use of small vehicles means that guideway and Stops
can be routed into areas that cannot support full-size lanes for road traffic, including floors above ground-level
in downtown buildings. PRT vehicles and Stops to be used in the USA are designed to comply with the access
provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **Effectively rapid travel:** Even though vehicle speed may never exceed 45MPH, direct, unencumbered travel
routes enable PRT to whisk you to your destination faster. In most situations, than even automobiles or high
speed “rapid” transit systems. In the San Francisco Bay area, for example, BART’s average system speed is
33MPH, despite the fact that its trains can exceed 80MPH. This is because BART trains generally must pause
at every station to load and unload passengers. The large, heavy trains are always accelerating, decelerating,
and stopping, which substantially limits the average system speed (and decreases fuel efficiency). In contrast,
a PRT vehicle spends most of the trip moving at its full speed, allowing a PRT system’s average speed to
approach or exceed that of other, so-called “Rapid” Transit systems! Within the typical PRT service area, most
trips will last around 5 minutes, with the longest ranging from 7-10 minutes. Even in good roadway traffic
circumstances, PRT’s performance usually shaves at least a minute or so off even the shortest, most direct,
most unobstructed automobile trips, especially when time to park, or to walk to or from a parking location, are
considered in a “door to door” analysis. In normal or bad traffic situations, PRT can offer a much shorter trip
time, as well as a safer trip, than any other reasonable means of transport.

- **Safe travel:** Low occupancy vehicles allow you to travel alone or with people you know and trust. Cameras
can be installed at Stops to allow system operators to see and respond to people or circumstances that might
pose dangers to you. Lower-speed cars enable you to ride, safely and comfortably, without the need for seat-
belts or other restraints. Small, lightweight, relatively low-speed vehicles can be engineered to better protect
you in the event of collision or other sudden stop. Vehicle doors automatically open and close securely, and
windows cannot be opened (the climate is controlled inside the cabin), for the protection of both system
passengers and people waiting at Stops or on the ground below the guideway. Depending on climate or
geographic circumstances, PRT systems can be built to protect passengers – and to continue operating,
reliably and robustly – during bad weather, earthquakes, floods, street-level fires, or other calamities. For
instance, every PRT design includes a method of getting passengers to safety, in the event that a vehicle
stops at an inappropriate time, or whenever a portion of guideway becomes blocked or otherwise impassable.
Every PRT design includes a way for the system to dynamically adapt traffic flow, in the event that one
particular section of guideway becomes too congested or even unusable (as might be the case, for example,
during an earthquake or after a bad collision between a ground vehicle and a guideway support pylon). Note
that this same adaptability allows various sections to be taken out of service for routine maintenance, or
system expansion, whenever necessary, with little or no impact on system performance. The various
approaches taken by the several available PRT vendors offer different mixes of strengths and weaknesses in
the area of safety features, so this is something that needs careful study, that we may identify and choose the
best vendor and approach to suit Santa Cruz’s particular situation and requirements.

- **Environmentally responsible travel:** The lightweight guideway requires a smaller right-of-way “footprint” on
the ground than some footpaths. Efficient electric power minimizes the energy needed to transport you, thus
also minimizing the net emission (at the generation plant) of GHGs and other pollutants. Especially because of
its “light footprint” design, fewer resources (sometimes, MARKEDLY fewer resources) are necessary to
construct and operate a PRT network than an equivalent system based on buses, rail, or automobiles.

- **Cost-effective travel:** PRT systems ranging in size from medium (10-20 miles of guideway) to large may be
able to recoup their construction, operation, and improvement costs through the collection of reasonable fares
(comparable to bus fares) and other customary operational revenues (e.g., advertising). Smaller systems may
need subsidy, but will tend to need appreciably smaller subsidy than bus and light rail systems that might
serve the same territories or similar sized populations. The Morgantown PRT (see below), a prototype built
with Federal sponsorship in the 1970s, was extremely bulky in its infrastructure and costly to construct, by
today’s standards of PRT. Nevertheless, the current annual operation costs for that system, which today
serves some 15,000 riders on an average day, and has provided reliable, safe service for decades, is only $5.5
million.
 Fun travel: Let's face it – the overhead tram at the Boardwalk has persisted for so many years because people LIKE to travel along and look down (or all around) from above the roofs and treetops. It's a pleasant and convenient way to get from one end of the park to the other – or, for that matter, between any two points, A and B. Such height provides the perfect vantage point, from which to get your bearings, clear your head, and take in the immense natural beauty of our area. We would miss a huge opportunity, if we didn't take advantage and make the most of this very positive aspect of elevated travel, perhaps to the point of evoking or perhaps even replacing (or at least running parallel with) the Boardwalk tram in the design and routing of Santa Cruz's PRT system.

Public accounts of PRT, other sources information, and vendor websites

Morgantown, WV

Morgantown's 1970s version of PRT was a lot "heavier" and more expensive than modern PRT designs. Nevertheless, it has proven safe, sturdy, dependable, and inexpensive to operate. Most importantly, it has not only served its original purpose – of alleviating university-related gridlock on local streets and roads – it has also facilitated treble-growth in the university enrollment, including substantial geographical growth of the campus, all while preventing gridlock. This admirable, long-term success has recently inspired Texas Tech, in Lubbock, to consider installing PRT or something like it, so as to enjoy the same benefits as West Virginia University.


To put Morgantown PRT(GRT) in proper perspective, in comparison with modern PRT, the 8.65 mile, 5-station system was budgeted at $125M, circa 1970. That is the same as approximately $756M in 2014 dollars, and the project ran over budget, besides. Nothing like the Morgantown system had been built before, or (because of the perception of "boondoggle"-level costliness) has been built since. Morgantown was seen then, and is still considered, as exorbitantly expensive to construct, a flaw that has been mitigated somewhat, over the years, by the excellent performance and longevity of the system, its success in meeting its goals, and its low operating cost. Today, using information about the actual costs to build the modern Heathrow and Masdar systems, we can estimate that each mile of PRT guideway, including System Access Stop infrastructure and rolling stock, costs between $15M-20M to build. If the Morgantown system were to be built today, as true, modern PRT, it might cost up to $173M ($29M in 1970 dollars, saving almost $100M from the original construction budget!). Informal planning for a roughly 10-11 mile PRT "starter system" for Santa Cruz, connecting the University of California campus to the Boardwalk via downtown, the Metro Center, and the sports arena, suggests that construction today might cost up to $220M. We might expect operating costs for the automated system to be similar to Morgantown's actual $5.5M – I like to err on the side of caution and use $10M as a target.


Heathrow Airport, London, UK

The "Heathrow Pods" have been in continuous operation at the main airport in London since May of 2011. This article assesses how well the system has met expectations and goals in that time:
http://www.ultraglobalprt.com/arupaviationnewspieceonprt/.

Here is an interview with one of the principals of ULTra Global, concerning the Heathrow Pods system (BlogIT-003):
http://www.advancedtransit.org/newsroom/viewpoint/

The vendor, ULTra Global, maintains this website: http://www.ultraglobalprt.com/

Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Masdar PRT was the world’s first "modern-design" PRT system to go into routine passenger service in November, 2010. It was designed and implemented by 2getthere (see their website, here: http://www.2getthere.eu/). A change in Masdar City management, and a revision of the ecological mission for the City (including the prospect of allowing conventional motor vehicle traffic on surface streets), led many to believe that the spotlight was being pulled from the PRT system, and that it would be frozen in its current state. But comments made by City management in the last year suggest that Masdar PRT will instead be expanded in the near future.

Sky Cube (former name: Vectus PRT), Suncheon Bay, Republic of South Korea
Vectus, backed by South Korean steel producer POSCO, has operated a test track for its proprietary PRT system in Sweden for many years. Recently, they installed their version of PRT in Suncheon Bay, in connection with the International Garden Exposition there. The system, recently renamed “Sky Cube,” has proven popular with passengers, and, having completed passenger testing during the Garden Expo, will open formally on April 19, 2014.

Vectus maintains a website here: http://www.vectusprt.com/EN/, including a section devoted to the Suncheon Bay project.

Basic Information

The best vendor-neutral website I have found for basic information about PRT, technically and historically, is “Get On Board,” at http://kinetic.seattle.wa.us/prt.html. They also maintain a news page, which provides items and links to news about the most recent developments in PRT, as well as related activities and events. Locally, the Santa Cruz PRT organization maintains a website at http://www.santacruzprt.com/, as well as a page on Facebook. The latter, in particular, is a very good resource for those who wish to follow the ongoing development of PRT around the world.

In closing...

One of the reasons I was so disappointed, to see no coverage of the PRT alternative in the workshop I attended or the Draft RTP, is that one of the important goals of these efforts is to inform citizens about transportation options they have, and elicit both their input and support in making decisions and selecting options, as well committing resources toward implementing those options. PRT is a reasonable option for people to consider now, as many other communities around the world are doing. Fair examination of it (and potentially other options that were not mentioned in the draft RTP, such as the accommodation of self-driving vehicles on the regular roadways) belongs in any forward looking process to produce a plan that addresses the timeframe covered by this RTP.

As I reviewed the draft document, I couldn’t help but think that the plan described within wouldn’t have been controversial in the 1960s and 1970s – a time when many people fully and reasonably expected “transportation” in the 2030s to include such things as flying cars, underground, transcontinental bullet trains, moving sidewalks, suborbital rocket shuttles, and even commercial spacecraft to the moon and Mars. How let down our parents and grandparents would have felt, to receive this plan from the future, and realize, upon reading it, that the great “things to come” by 2035 would only involve minor adjustments to what they already had or expected in their own era. Of course, there’s little point in changing what already works well, but the fact is that, here in our region, at least, traditional “mass-transit” hasn’t worked very well at all. In such circumstances, true leaders keep looking for better solutions: innovative approaches that can be implemented in the coming years to substantially improve life in the future. More importantly, true leaders keep looking until they find things that actually work. What this draft RTP seems to be missing is evidence of any process to facilitate that ongoing search. The leaders need to discover alternatives, vet them for feasibility, and then present the feasible concepts to the people for further consideration. I must admit that it is hard to give any credibility, much less respect, to a multi-decade “long-range plan,” which is so deficient in this key aspect of planning. I hope the RTC will remedy that deficit at the earliest possible opportunity, perhaps during the next revision cycle in four years.

As an ordinary citizen, in writing the above, I couldn’t and didn’t intend to provide an in-depth, comprehensive, fully-cited overview of PRT, nor a specific system proposal for Santa Cruz, city or county. There is a wealth of information out there, covering both the ideal and theory of PRT, as well as numerous anecdotes of encounters with, and practical lessons learned from, the four operating PRT systems I have mentioned here. My purpose was to provide an entrée to PRT for those reading this comment: to suggest how PRT might satisfy, or at least make substantial contributions to the attainment of, key goals in the draft RTP. I also sought to provide a few resources to help the reader start assessing the feasibility and suitability of PRT for Santa Cruz, including its potential costs and benefits, so that this idea can be “on the official radar” for consideration by the RTC and the public in future planning cycles, especially the plan revision that is scheduled to be drafted four years from now. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information, clarification, or other assistance. For instance, if anyone undertakes serious study of the topic, I can provide citations to corroborate facts and “extraordinary statements,” as well as to support estimates given here. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

James A. Merritt (Santa Cruz County resident since 1990; Santa Cruz City resident since 1997)
533 Broadway #1
Santa Cruz CA 95060
Comments on the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan

From: Bill Malone

Consider this: if people don’t have any viable alternative to using their car or the bus system to get around the county then they will continue to only use their cars and/or the bus more! That’s self-evident.

Most of this plan focuses on facilitating automobile transportation and bus transportation and the problems of traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. If you only provide “solutions” that result in additional automobile and bus usage then, obviously, you are going to increase traffic congestion and increase greenhouse gas emissions.

What is the solution? Provide people an attractive, reliable alternative: passenger rail service. In Santa Cruz County we are fortunate to have a good rail line that runs through the major population density areas of the county.

Passenger rail service is very successful in many states and in many countries around the world.

Passenger rail service in Santa Cruz County will accomplish several major RTC goals:

It will help decreased traffic congestion on Highway 1

It will help get cars off local roads

It will help decrease greenhouse gas emissions

It will provide locals and visitors a pleasant way to travel in the County.

Certainly passenger rail service will not get all the traffic off the freeway - nothing will. But it will help a bit as residents and visitors find that passenger rail service is convenient for some of their local trips in the County.

The RTC should set a goal to have a passenger rail service pilot project up and running ASAP - within a couple years. A pilot project could provide passenger rail service between the Cabrillo College area at one end and near Swift St in Santa Cruz City at the other end. This covers a densely populated area that also includes many businesses.

Perhaps we could have two trolley cars operating on the rail line. Either by building a short passing track somewhere in the middle of the system, or by having the two trolley cars each just handle half the rail line and meet at some point in the middle to transfer passengers from one trolley car to the other so passengers can continue their journey. This could be a quick, short-term solution to our problem of only having a one track rail line.

Santa Cruz County has a good bus system - passenger rail service could supplement the bus system. Eventually it could work the other way: the bus system would feed passengers to the passenger rail service at various stops along the rail line.

If the RTC is truly serious about reducing traffic congestion on the freeway, getting cars off local roads and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the County; then the RTC should make a top priority of providing passenger rail service and have the service up and running as soon as possible.

Continuing to spend more money on more projects that encourage and facilitate automobile usage is counterproductive to the RTC’s goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic. The more money the RTC spends now on automobile usage will just create bigger problems the RTC will have to fix later – and it will cost the RTC and taxpayers much more money in the future.

Change RTC’s course now: spend your (taxpayers) money now to provide alternatives to automobile usage so people can get around Santa Cruz County without using their cars. It makes good sense and is good policy.
From: Alex Grillo [mailto:grillo.aa@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 1:40 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Cc: zach.friend@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
Subject: Comments to the Regional Transportation Plan

Please find attached my comments to the Regional Transportation Plan.
Alexander Grillo
Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission

Dear RTC:

I am deeply disappointed but not at all surprised by the new Regional Transportation Plan. The logic, if one dares to call it that, is completely opposite to what any rational plan would employ. What I mean, of course, is that HOV lanes for Highway 1 from the fishhook to at least Aptos if not all the way to Watsonville should be at the top of the list of projects instead of completely left out.

The plan calls to increase carpool ridership and public transportation ridership but the most obvious way to increase both would be to provide the incentive of an HOV lane. Is it any wonder why the funds that were available to increase carpool usage over that past several years was returned unused? How many more people would carpool if they could cut their commute time in half by using an HOV lane?

The plan calls to improve the safety of bike riding. One reason bike riding is so dangerous in our country is because there are so many drivers frustrated by being caught in the gridlock of highway 1 darting in and out of surface streets looking for alternate routes to what should be the main transportation corridor. Neighborhood streets are equally impacted with extra traffic for the same reason making them less safe for children. The County’s solution to these issues is to create speed bumps and barricades to impeded traffic flow further heightening frustration on streets that shouldn’t be involved in commute traffic in the first place.

While the county surface roads are in serious need of better maintenance, this issue is also aggravated by the added traffic they bear because of the gridlock on highway 1.

The one potential help to highway 1 in the plan is the addition of so-called auxiliary lanes. Such lanes do help traffic flow when it is flowing. When traffic is heavy but flowing, these auxiliary lanes do help cars to merge into or exit from through-lanes without significantly slowing the main flow of traffic. However, when the highway is in gridlock, these auxiliary lanes only provide extra parking spaces for all the cars that cannot move. There is clear evidence of this at the Soquel Drive exit to southbound highway 1. On days when traffic in this area is gridlocked, roughly three or four days each week, the auxiliary lane just fills up with cars looking for a spot to merge in between the cars stopped in the lane to their left. These auxiliary lanes would be a help after the HOV lanes are built but not before.

And I must also point out the misconception of including the whole rail-trail project in the Regional Transportation Plan. This project will someday be a wonderful recreational project, but it has little to do with transportation. A leisurely bike ride along this right-of-way will be just
great for a sunny day in the County, but anyone who thinks a large percentage of people now commuting between Watsonville or Aptos to the City of Santa Cruz will choose to bike that distance need to review their process of rational thinking. In addition to the distance issue, this right-of-way makes no sense for commuting by bike or some future light rail because the route does not pass close enough to the major destinations of the commuters, namely UCSC, Cabrillo College, Harvey West Industrial Park, etc.

It has been obvious for years that the main goal of traffic engineering in the City of Santa Cruz is not to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion but rather to maximize congestion holding to the myth that if congestion becomes bad enough, people will either revert to bicycles or better yet, move away. The best example of this is Mission Street. There are several intersections without a left turn lane. Instead of outlawing a left turn at these intersections forcing the few people who live on those streets to make 3 right turns, they allow traffic to back up for blocks during commute time waiting for one car to make a left turn. It is too bad that the Regional Transportation Commission has adopted the same objectives for the entire region.

Sincerely,

Alexander A. Grillo

cc: Zach Friend, Supervisor County of Santa Cruz
Thanks so much for helping facilitate the RTP process.

Please note our request for the following two revisions:
1. Chapter 2, Page 9: Lift Line does not currently provide bed-to-bed medical transportation. Lift Line medical rides are provided door-to-door.
2. Appendix B, Page 6: Community Bridges Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 6:00pm. Our phone number is 831/688-8840.

We are also attaching Community Bridges' letter of support for the Regional Transportation Plan.

Thank you for all you do to support efficient and accessible transportation for all Santa Cruz County residents.

Best regards,

Anna Vaage
Executive Assistant
Community Bridges
236 Santa Cruz Ave.
Aptos, CA 95003
www.communitybridges.org

“Karena Pushnik“ <kpushnik@sccrtc.org>

Hello Community Bridges Transportation Director Kirk Ance –
I just wanted to check in before the end of the comment period and make sure Community Bridges has reviewed the project lists for your agency.

Here is the link to the document: http://www.sccrtc.org/funding-planning/long-range-plans/rtp/2014-plan/
And here is the link to the Appendix that lists specific projects including the estimated total project cost and the amount that is constrained (within projected funds through the year 2035) and the amount that is unconstrained (new funding sources are needed): http://www.sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/App-E-FULL.pdf Community Bridges/Consolidated Transportation Service Agency projects are on webpages 15 of 36, and show one project to provide Countywide Specialized Transportation (CTSA-P01) with partial funding identified. Please carefully review the description of this project and the costing assumptions (shown in annual costs), keeping in mind that the cost columns on the right side are for a 22 year time period through the year 2035. The other three CB/CTSA projects on the list don’t have projected funding.

You and your agency may also want to review and comment on the Target 3C to reduce travel times and increase travel options for people who are transportation disadvantaged due to income, age, race, disability or limited English proficiency by increasing the percentage that are within a 30-minute walk, bike, or transit trip to key destinations by 20% by 2020 and 40% by 2035. Information about this target is in Chapter 7.

All comments are due on the draft plan by April 8 and will be accepted at the E&D TAC meeting that day, however earlier comments are very welcome 😊.

Thank you.
April 7, 2014

Mr. George Dondero, Executive Director  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1523 Pacific Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911

Re: 2014 Santa Cruz County Draft Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Mr. Dondero:

Community Bridges is pleased to support the 2014 Draft Regional Transportation Plan. We applaud the impact and inclusiveness endeavored in the planning process and target goals, and we look forward to supporting the Commission with the plan implementation activities.

As the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency for Santa Cruz County, Lift Line works to ensure the efficiency and accessibility of transportation services for low income elderly and disabled individuals. Of the 657 unduplicated Lift Line clients, 35% (229) live in Watsonville, 36% (238) are Latino, and 28% (184) are monolingual Spanish speakers.

Half of Lift Line participants have an income of less than $900 per month, while nearly all our participants have a disability and/or are over age 60 and are unable to utilize traditional public transit due to cost or inaccessibility. Community Bridges Lift Line supports Plan Target 3C seeking to increase travel options for people who are transportation disadvantaged due to income, age, race, disability or limited English proficiency.

As an agency, Community Bridges serves over 24,000 Santa Cruz County residents. Of those, 15,516 participants live in South County, and 1,641 live in the San Lorenzo Valley. Two-thirds of Community Bridges participants (17,596) are monolingual Spanish speakers.

Community Bridges strongly supports Plan Target 3D, seeking to ensure transportation services are equitably distributed to all segments of the population, and Target 3E, seeking to maximize RTC planning and project participation from diverse members of the public.

On behalf of Lift Line and Community Bridges, we thank the Commission and its staff for their continued support of efficient and accessible transportation for all county residents.

Thank you,

Raymon Cancino  
Community Bridges CEO

Kirk Ance  
Lift Line Program Director
-----Original Message-----
From: Theresa [mailto:theresakloepfer@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 8:05 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Walking path

To whom it may concern,
I've lived here for forty years and appreciate the beautiful place we live. I feel this walk / bike path us a wonderful opportunity to promote good health and exercise. Family time and enjoying the out doors . We need this path there is no safe place to walk in this area besides the beach. I vote yes on the walking path.
Theresa Kloepfer

Sent from my iPhone

----Original Message-----
From: Frank Remde [mailto:Verandavineyard1@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 1:30 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Improvements to Highway 152 from Summit to Casserly Road Intersection, Highway 152 at Holohan Road
Intersection , Paulsen Road and Hazel Dell Road

Highway 152 from Summit to Casserly Road Intersection: There are no passing lanes and double lines this entire segment. Notification of this fact and the availability of a turnout ahead could prevent people from dangerous illegal actions to pass if they knew there were turn-outs ahead. Signage is what is needed. And, the line marking on the Santa Clara side is significantly better for no apparent reason, other than preferential treatment.

Intersection of Highway 152 and Holohan Road: This intersection is horrible and deplorable . . . and has been for way too many years. If it can't be fixed entirely, do it in parts and make the residents of the Pajaro Valley believe that the Transportation Commission know that their concerns are at least being addressed somewhat . This should be a priority project, but I don't even see it mentioned on the project list!

Paulsen Road: The entire length of Paulsen Road is dangerous and long overdue for improvement. It is being proposed that College Lake be dredged in part and the sediment from it be deposited along Paulsen Road to alleviate some of the dips and meanderings of Paulsen Road. This is a long-term project but the Transportation Commission needs to initiate discussions with the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency and the Fairgrounds Board towards the possibility of cooperative benefits of improving and extending access to Paulsen Road.

Hazel Dell Road: The washouts on Hazel Dell Road have not been corrected in 5 years and it is time to do so.

----Original Message-----
From: keight fahey [mailto:rynfay@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 6:35 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: trail rail

My husband and I are residents of Aptos. We own a home here with a growing family of 5 (so far). We'll love to see the railroad tracks converted to a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016.

David and Kathryn Tofig of Aptos, Ca

-----Original Message-----
From: EPorter95@aol.com [mailto:EPorter95@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 3:26 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comments from Ed Porter on the RTP

Grace Blakeslee
Transportation Planner

Please find my comments on the RTP attached.
Best regards,

Ed Porter
eporter95@aol.com
Comments regarding revisions to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
Comments submitted 04-07-2014 by:
Ed Porter, 105 lighthouse Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 831 427-0836 eporter95@aol.com

This plan needs to include suggestions that have been submitted for years to our RTC and to other local jurisdictions. I’m talking about solar powered and automated transportation networks (ATNs, aka PRT). I have been making such suggestions and I personally know at least a half dozen others who have made similar suggestions at every opportunity. Its beyond my understanding why our suggestions do not appear in draft plans like this one.

A new association of several cities has recently formed in our region. It’s called the Automated Transportation Network Association (ATNA). The group seeks to further the access of its member communities to ATN systems. ATNA enjoys the support and participation of the Hon. Rod Diridon, Sr., Executive Director of the Minetta Transportation Institute. It also has participants representing 7 Silicone Valley cities as well as Santa Cruz. It makes sense that the Santa Cruz County RTC should send one or more observers to meetings of ATNA and consider joining ATNA.

Apart from solar ATN systems, no other transportation modality enjoys the compelling banner of sustainability. This type of transportation was previously characterized as Personal Rapid Transit (PRT). The special value of combining PRT with solar power is that it can be operated almost entirely without the use of fossil fuels.

We desperately need to take advantage of this green alternative if we want to cut our GHG emissions to needed levels. If we do NOT reduce GHG emissions in such a manner, this plan will simply NOT be sustainable as it advertises so loudly and the consequences will be dire.

=====

I want to reference the comments submitted by James Anderson Merritt, submitted to you, Sent: Saturday, April 5, 2014 5:41 PM Mr. Merritt’s has prepared his comments in an exhaustive and professional manner and I endorse them entirely.

=====

For many years, PRT proposals have been presented to the RTC, the TFTF, The City of Santa Cruz, the County of Santa Cruz, and UCSC. But no process has been evidenced to follow through on such proposals.

Sponsorship: A new proposal

Recently, I had a long conversation with a SCCRTC staff member. We talked about the frustrating experience of presenting ideas for solar powered ATN / PRT systems over many years. As we delved deeper into the question of what was missing in the picture, the idea of a required Project Sponsor was brought up. While its probably well known to City and RTC staff and RTC Board members, the necessity of any project requiring a Project Sponsor is NOT otherwise well known.

What if a project is highly desirable but does not get the sponsorship by any local government agency? It currently seems to mean that such a project cannot be considered.

What if NO CITY in the RTC region feels it can be a project sponsor? Does that mean no such project can ever happen? Perhaps that’s presently true. But, this reality should be changed.
What should happen? The RTC wants to see worthy proposals such as this but it may be impossible to bring such projects forward. There may be a simple remedy. The RTC should include a remedy to this problem in the new RTP. The remedy should be that the RTC will entertain proposals that the RTC ITSELF may decide to sponsor. The RTC should issue a request for proposals for small, solar powered transportation projects. A small fund should be set aside for RTC staff to do basic evaluation of such proposals. The RTC could choose or not choose to further consider the submitted proposal(s).

Under this concept, the RTC would act as the initial Project Sponsor. That could change as the RTC involved other agencies into a partnership for the proposed project. The RTC might or might not choose to also be the projects fiscal sponsor. In ongoing conversations, the RTC would work with the appropriate local jurisdiction(s) to determine whether or not the project concept merits ongoing consideration. The RTC would basically act as an initial project broker in furtherance of potential projects that no city could, by itself, be a sponsor.

The following is a concept for a Santa Cruz Solar Powered ATN (or PRT system).

Note that the concept relies on Metro buses to make up a complete system. A video providing an overview of this proposal can be seen by visiting http://www.youtube.com/ website and then searching for “What’s Moving Santa Cruz? 2012 version”.

UCSC

Bus Link
PRT Link
A more modest proposal, for Cabrillo College students, faculty, and staff.

Santa Cruz County has a very valuable rail corridor that was recently acquired by the RTC. It would be ideal if students could use transportation in the rail corridor to get to and from Cabrillo College. However, the location of the rail line features the formidable barrier of State Highway 1 between the rail line and the campus. But a solar powered PRT / ATN system could solve that problem and provide complete a very green system for Cabrillo students, faculty, and staff.

This illustration features a loop of about 1.5 miles of PRT guideway.

But, if an even more frugal plan were desired, it could feature a single north and south bound pair of guideways on the route shown. This plan would require ONLY one mile of guideway!
Back to the RTP

I note several deficiencies both in the process of the preparation of this plan and also in the process of obtaining comments and addressing them. The first is that there was a significant effort conducted in this community not that long ago called the Transportation Funding Task Force or TFFT. The group had 90 members representing business, neighborhood, environmental, health and community based organizations. In addition, there were many “ex-officio members and also several additional members of the public who attended most of the meetings. The task force met for over two years and certainly developed a respectable compilation about what residents of our County would like to see in a transportation plan. Was that substantial data base used as the starting point to prepare the new RTP?

There are no fewer than 74 unique and distinct links to files that are a part of this RTP package. That is, 74 downloads to have everything in the package. I find it amazing that I must download 74 different documents and THEN combine them with Adobe Acrobat JUST to get to the point of being able to search the entire plan package for a word or phrase. One would be tempted to conclude this organization is an effective effort of Obfuscation.

It will take me hours of work to combine all this into a single document. Because of that barrier alone, I should have abandoned my effort to provide meaningful comments.

But, this matter is far too important to ignore. Here’s why:

The “More of the same character of this draft RTP reminds me of the current fad of watching Google cars and chatting about when they will become a part of mainstream transportation. Some time ago I joined a "Smart Driving Cars" email chat group. I wanted to know more about it and to evaluate the popular notion that a shift to these “smart cars” would resolve our greenhouse gas emissions problem. Also, I thought at the time that “smart cars” might somehow merge with arguably smarter solar powered automated transportation Network concepts but, I don’t see that happening. Frankly I've never been convinced that this “smart-car” idea, standing by itself, has a place in near-future sustainable transportation. “Smart cars” simply require energy off the electrical grid instead of out of a gas tank. They do NOT avoid GHG emissions.

In many ways, the trendy conversations about the “robo-cars” are the unmistakable emblems of what we are doing NOW in our “planning” of transportation systems. It really boils down to more of the same. Or, keep things as they are...

A current transportation plan in my County uses the word “Sustainable” no fewer than 37 times but it means virtually nothing. All of the plan is said to be sustainable but, I did NOT find in the plan ways that cities will need to behave in order for the plan to actually be sustainable. It really looks like more lip-service.

The strategies in this draft plan are amazingly similar to a list of strategies I watched go into the 1992 writing of the City Santa Cruz General Plan. I was a participant. We came to believe that, if we put a list of similar strategies into the plan, we would be able to hold the number of SOV trips constant during the life of the plan. As it turned out, this was a fantasy. The number of trips grew steadily over the next 15 years.
So, I ask, what has changed? If we document all these strategies now, **how will it be any different than our experience of the previous plans?**

There has been a so much conversation about sustainable strategies, and clever alternatives going on for years.

In the meantime, I’m concerned about what we are doing (and NOT doing) as a society to address our need for transportation in an era of rising energy costs, growing scarcity of fossil fuel resources, and a sort of "race" between climate change and peak oil, to see which issue first shatters our fuel-based society.

I should probably concede that it may not affect many older adults. It depends on whether or not we live that long...

But, I was shaken by compelling reports published in the last few weeks. It was suggested that total breakdown from warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions may cause a general catastrophe in our society in just 30 years! This was in both a UN report and a NASA report within the past month! Of course, during the decade leading up to such a collapse, there would be economic chaos as prices spiral upwards and average people would find life, as we know it, to be increasingly unsustainable.

So, I ask you, is this plan any different from the plans of previous years? If so, how is it different? **Where is the assurance that GHG emissions will definitely and certainly be reduced** to published goals?

The draft RTP is NOT the solid plan that will avert a general calamity starting perhaps 20 years from now. If we were facing a mass extinction, would it matter whether we drove smart-cars or methane powered buses to the event?

But, what if it is possible to retain a slight technological edge while overhauling our world society and economy such that it is **sustainable**? Is such an idea possible? Shouldn't we be making our plan about this?

It’s a big order but, surely, we owe it to ourselves, to our children and grandchildren, and to our human heritage. Surely human society has some net worth that merits preserving.

So, what shall we do? I propose the following: If human society is to undergo a major overhaul with the cheap energy economy being stripped away, then, perhaps one or more of its most valuable features still might be preserved. Our plan must address these huge changes!

Here is another perspective from which to consider this problem.

I go back to the first beginnings of this technological age. The single biggest thing that made the later part of the industrial age possible is mobility. Mobility of people; mobility of goods. It was the invention of steam power, railroads, steam ships, and eventually cars and trucks that gave humans the mobility to make all of this possible.

In today's construct, if you take away cheap energy, fossil fuel, and all the excesses that go with it, society is, AT BEST, unceremoniously back into a horse and buggy world and a global population of just about 1 billion people in the year 1800. That was when the ideas of large-scale coal burning and steam power were just emerging.

So, if we are dropped back to the year 1800 in our Way-Back machine, and we can bring along some smart transportation, then it **should be solar powered and very low cost**.
So, I urgently suggest to you that solar powered automated transportation networks **ARE** the only idea on the horizon that will provide mobility without requiring fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions. We MUST build such systems using the momentum of the industrial age before it stalls. In other words, **we need to act on these ideas with alacrity!**

IF we can deploy such substitute transportation in place of today's wasteful systems, there is hope to salvage much more of our society. Of course, we still must stop the spiraling carbon emissions. If we continue to accept the lies about topics like "clean coal" and "fracking" to deter us, then we face an ominous future.

==========
A note about the intent of these comments: They are directed at the Plan itself, **NOT** the EIR. I do not think the DRAFT Plan sufficiently addresses our need to definitively curtail our carbon emissions to the established goals. The plan needs to be revised to do that.

All too often I have seen consultants address comments about draft plans and associated draft EIRs. They almost always use a reply such as “noted”. A comment such as this should not be permitted. If the plan is not sufficient, then it needs to be revised. No set of consultant replies to comments will accomplish that.

Please, revise and improve this plan!
Comments submitted by:
Ed Porter, 105 lighthouse Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 831 427-0836 emailer95@aol.com
From: Ron Swenson [mailto:rbs@ecotopia.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 8:07 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: From Ron Swenson :: Comments on 2014 Draft Regional Transportation Plan

2014 April 8

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

The new Regional Transportation Plan ("RTP") is all about "sustainability." In fact, the term "sustainable/sustainability" appears over 150 times in the document (not counting chapter headings).

But this RTP, intended to consider conditions 20 years into the future, is not about sustainability. It is about sustaining business as usual. That is not going to work.

**What is happening "beyond our borders?"**

_Last month, the IPCC warned world leaders that significant alterations to the Earth's weather patterns are real. This has generated vigorous discussions. To skeptics, Tom Friedman put it this way: if we invest in sustainable energy but the alarm over "climate weirding" proves false, we'll still end up with a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable world. What's to lose?_

Two numbers (1% and 5%) in one table on page 4-7 capture the essence of this flawed and irresponsible "plan" (actually, a convoluted and lengthy apology for the lack of a serious plan).

Page 4-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS</th>
<th>PEOPLE</th>
<th>PROSPERITY</th>
<th>PLANET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1:</strong> Improve people’s access to jobs, schools, health care and other regular needs in ways that improve health, reduce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TARGET 1A:</strong> Increase the percentage of people that can travel to key destinations within 30-minute walk, bike or transit trip by 20 percent by 2020 and 40 percent by 2035</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TARGET 1B:</strong> Reduce per capita fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by 1 percent by 2020 and 5 percent by 2035</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 21st century, in California no less, this meager commitment to improvement is an utter embarrassment. Reiterating the IPCC's warning, 1% sooner and 5% later are targets completely out of touch with the emerging reality. We need to lower GHG emissions drastically to mitigate climate change.

**What is at the core of this lack of vision for a sustainable future?**

What is holding us back?

Page ES-1
This 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (called the "2014 RTP") is the RTC’s comprehensive planning document that provides guidance for transportation policy and projects through the year 2035. The RTC voluntarily adopted a sustainability framework for the 2014 RTP using the Sustainable Transportation Analysis and Rating System (STARS) to identify the goals, policies and thus the projects and programs to achieve a more sustainable transportation system. **Sustainability is defined as balancing economic, environmental and equity interests.**

No. Sustainable development was defined well by the Brundtland Commission, very simply as: *"the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brundtland_Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brundtland_Commission)

**Shifting the balance**

A "balancing" act has nothing to do with the common definition of sustainability. Rather, sustainability is about **shifting the balance** -- away from short term gratification to conscientious preparation for the long term -- for solutions, not cover-ups and wishful thinking.

**As if climate change weren't enough**

Thankfully the RTP acknowledges the rapid depletion of hydrocarbons as fuels.

Page ES-2

- **Energy** – Transportation relies heavily on fossil fuel which is a finite commodity. It cannot be assumed that fossil fuel will be abundant and inexpensive into the foreseeable future. The International Energy Agency (IEA) 2012 World Energy Outlook states that *"the world is still failing to put the global energy system onto a more sustainable path."*

But this acknowledgement then stands in stark contrast to the evidence on page 4-7 (as above) which confirms that this RTP as written completely ignores that carefully worded but ominous warning from the IEA.

Reliable evidence from geological science, in plain English, clearly demonstrates that the USA's oil industry is sadly scraping the bottom of the barrel. No oil company would be seeking oil and gas from such extreme environments as the Arctic Ocean and risking irreversible contamination of groundwater if there were more convenient options.

Basing this community's future transportation system on hydrocarbons as fuels is folly. A gradual shift will put us at great risk of future disruptions.

**Shifting Modes**

That tell-tale table is reminiscent of a similar table in AMBAG's "2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan" which is similarly focused on "sustaining" the status quo.

**Table G-1: Performance Measure Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Performance Measures</th>
<th>2010 Existing</th>
<th>2035 No Build</th>
<th>2035 MTP/SCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and Mobility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Trips Within 30 Minutes (percent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive Alone</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The RTP puts it this way:

Page ES-2
The 2014 RTP endeavors to work toward a sustainable transportation system that addresses these challenges and results in safer, healthier and more efficient travel choices that provide improved **multimodal** access to opportunities such as jobs, education, and healthcare for our residents.

Making timid investments in public transit while bulking up and patching up a moribund so-called private transportation system that is in fact completely dependent upon expansive inequitable public expenditure is not **multimodal**. It is the old mode cloaked in catchy buzzwords.

The performance of the 2014 RTP has been analyzed to determine how well the constrained list of transportation projects and programs advance the goals and targets of the RTP. Utilizing the Sustainable Transportation and Analysis Rating System (STARS) and AMBAG’s scenario planning effort, **it is evident that a balance of project types is best able to advance the plan’s performance targets**.

No. Our challenge is not to "balance" modes. Our challenge is to **shift** modes, from the dangerous, inefficient, heavily publicly subsidized "private" automobile to functional public transportation.

**Efficiency?**

Only about a fifth of the energy that is used for transportation is converted into useful energy that moves your vehicle down the road, the rest of the energy is lost to engine and driveline inefficiencies and idling.28 The potential to improve fuel efficiency with advanced technologies is enormous. Major energy consuming nations have announced new measures for improving energy efficiencies in the automobile including the fuel economy standard of the U.S. but a significant amount of the potential for improved efficiencies still remains untapped.29

It’s even worse. Most of that "fifth" of energy is used to move 1-2 tons of metal, typically carrying 100-200 lbs of ridership, for a net efficiency of 20% * 5% = 1% efficiency. Even the battery-operated electric vehicle suffers from this grotesque inefficiency. Reiterating,

The potential to improve fuel efficiency with advanced technologies is enormous

No. The upside potential will only be realized by getting rid of **fuels** altogether. We can't burn our way out of climate change.

We need a radical about-face in our thinking. This RTP has been framed in a bubble of wishful thinking and empty platitudes.

Are there workable alternatives? Possibly. Several groups around the world are working on transportation systems based on solar energy. An system designed for Sweden (at the latitude of Anchorage, Alaska) has been demonstrated to provide sufficient energy for several thousand trips per day, averaged over the course of a year:
Interestingly, the pattern of direct solar energy very closely matches the pattern of transportation energy use:

**Typical trip patterns closely match the pattern of sunshine, with evening extension**

If the new Santa Cruz RTP is to be responsive to global conditions and the potential of its own community, it needs
major rethinking by a different team of people who are not entrenched in wishful thinking, based upon business as usual. We are in serious trouble, and we need serious help from experts who understand humanity’s precarious conditions and are prepared to look for viable alternatives with fresh minds and the spirit of innovation for which our community is so well known.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Swenson

-----Original Message-----
From: Neil Waldhauer [mailto:neil@blondey.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 8:14 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Santa Cruz Train

This message is intended to be a comment on the Regional Transportation Plan.

I've read a lot of passionate letters in the paper about whether to run a train in Santa Cruz County. I don't know a lot about the plans for setting up a train in Santa Cruz, but I do know my own trips. I live in Santa Cruz about two blocks from the tracks.

If train service were to run from my neighborhood, I'd be able to ride from my house to the supermarket, to the downtown/boardwalk area, to Sea Bright, to Live Oak, to 41st Ave, Capitola and New Brighton beach. The train could cut out most of my trips on Highway 1.

I realize that for many people, the train really wouldn't serve them, but I don't think it has to. If people like me didn't use the highway, congestion would be reduced. Even if we do widen Route 1, I think it would be good to run a local rail service. New passenger rail equipment is pretty quiet compared to the old Christmas train using the track now or the freight trains using it a few years ago.

I have read in the Regional Transportation Plan that the cost for completing the third lane of Route 1 from Santa Cruz to Watsonville will exceed $600 million dollars. I expect that making the train fully usable (two tracks, no at grade crossing) would cost a lot, but since the entire right of way already exists, perhaps not more than completing that final lane.

If the extra expense were taken for the improved tracks with no at-grade crossings, and double track, then the capacity of the railroad is equivalent to between six and eight highway lanes. In my work for the New York City Subway, I've seen that some subsidy is needed to run mass transit. Even with that subsidy, the overall cost for transporting a lot of people is quite a bit less than supporting all-highway transit.

The rail is a nuisance to people near it. It would be less so with a fully improved rail line. Train whistles to signal approach crossing would be eliminated. Electric drive plus quiet rolling stock would eliminate a lot more noise. Having no at grade crossings would improve safety, and impact on traffic would be eliminated.

The feel of a place that has been paved over to transport people through it isn't good. The highway may be a nice place to be if you're driving on it, but its not so nice for people who live next to it. Making it wider makes it less nice. It's louder and slightly nearer, too. At some point, we'll need to widen the Mission St. corridor and that will be far more expensive per mile than current widening. Long term, it saves a lot of money and improves the quality of life to add rail to the transit mix instead of only widening highways.

best regards,
Neil
--
Neil Waldhauer, neil@blondey.com
Dear RTC,

Over a year ago, I sent in some plans that included constructing a recycled water pipeline on the railroad corridor, which would significantly impact the cost of constructing a bike path, and solve the County’s serious water issues during drought. The pipelines would carry recycled water and have injection wells spaced 1/2 mile apart, and go all the way to Watsonville and connect to PVRMA’s recycled water treatment and distribution system.

I recommend that the tracks should be removed and salvaged from the Boardwalk to Watsonville, because you do not have a viable business plan for either a freight, commuter train, or tourist train in this section. The over 125 million of taxpayer that is planned for building a parallel bike path is basically being invested on something that cannot financially sustain itself. This picture is not pretty. Bicyclists on the parallel bike path will probably look over to empty tracks and ask the question your complete lack of common sense of creating this economic drain.

The alternative is an economic boom. The tracks could be immediately be removed, salvaged for a profit and graded for a path for public use.

Recycled water pipelines, one a purified water and a standard recycle. Open invitations for any other utilities and perhaps even solar panel structures which would allow the County to take over power generation from PGE and power these injection wells. The pipelines would attach to and utilize all of the existing bridges. Without having this water, this County would be devastated in a long term drought. The economic implications of lack of water are huge.

The Advanced Recycle treatment plant would be built at Delaware Ave and Natural Bridges Dr and pipe the water to the RR Corridor. The parallel bike path could be paid for by a pipeline(s) from this area from West Santa Cruz to Davenport.

Although I also think the tourist train to Davenport will also lose money and those tracks should be removed also, perhaps this could be saved and allow some relief from the bad legislation of prop 116 which wrongly, (may even be illegally), forces taxpayers to use their money to use a train, or we will take it away from you and use it somewhere else.

Sincerely,

Bill Smallman, P.E.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frank Remde: Watsonville
Anne Bonner: Watsonville
David C. Rosenow: Watsonville
Douglas Feinsod: Watsonville
Cherie Bobbe: Aptos
Rich Persoff: Watsonville

From: Linda Wilshusen [mailto:l-j-w@pacbell.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 10:56 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Comments on the DRAFT RTP for Santa Cruz County

Please see my comments, attached.

Thanks, Linda Wilshusen
April 8, 2014

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Comments on the Draft 2014 Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft 2014 RTP. This document reflects a huge effort on the part of the RTC, its staff, and consultants, and is hopeful in its proposals and project lists.

General Comment

Although the Draft RTP highlights sustainability and proposes greenhouse gas reductions in the transport sector consistent with SB 375 (2008), increasingly robust climate science indicates that current efforts to slow global warming are severely inadequate. A few days ago, new information released from scientists working on the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) focused on the increasingly serious risks of rapid climate change to human and natural systems. It summarized already-occurring and projected-future impacts of climate change in various parts of the world; the vulnerability of human society and all manner of ecosystems to atmospheric and ocean warming; and the urgent need to implement both mitigation (reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (‘how can we live with this?’) strategies. Within the next week, the IPCC is expected to release a third report focusing on mitigation actions (‘what we need to do, sooner rather than later’).

The National Academy of Sciences, the World Bank, and other organizations representing an unprecedented consensus of the world’s scientific community have recently published similar overviews of our current understanding of the risks and costs of rapid climate change. This consensus indicates that to avoid calamitous impacts, global warming must be limited to not more than +2 degrees Centigrade (as calculated from about 1900); some prominent scientists forecast that this “threshold into environmental ruin” will be crossed by about 2036¹. Furthermore, climate scientists estimate that to avoid this calamitous threshold, an 80% reduction in the production of greenhouse gases (GHG) is needed over the next three decades. A significant portion of this massive reduction in the use of fossil fuels will need to occur within the timeframe of the 20-year 2014 Regional Transportation Plan.

Governmental policy has not yet been able to integrate this recent, more alarming information from IPCC climate models and the world’s scientific community. Nonetheless, this information is available for our Santa Cruz County community to consider, and to act on. An assertion of note in the most recent summary report is that “local governments and the

¹ Michael Mann, “False Hope”, Scientific American, April 2014.
private sector are increasingly recognized as critical to progress in adaptation [to the risks and costs associated with climate change].

While GHG reductions are anticipated in this Draft RTP, the proposed goals are weak compared with the need as understood by current climate science. For example, this Draft RTP achieves zero GHG reductions by 2020, and the goal by 2035 is a mere minus 5%. The total GHG reductions for 2035 described in Appendix C of the Draft RTP are estimated at about minus 16% (based primarily on a projected 17% decrease in vehicle miles traveled) - a hopeful improvement from 2014, but itself a dubious forecast considering the constrained project list and associated funding assumptions.

While many objectives in the Draft RTP are supportive of moving in the direction of reducing reliance on fossil fuels, the Draft Plan doesn't reach far enough, and lingering projects from what we will come to understand as the GHG-oriented era continue to be emphasized and recommended for future funding and construction. Conversely, projects that can offer progress toward an increasingly robust and environmentally sustainable transportation system are minimized, and/or not fully funded on priority lists.

Waiting four years for the next planned RTP to update goals and assumptions is too long in light of what climate scientists are telling us. If a 2014 RTP needs to be in place due to state and federal requirements, I would suggest that this plan adoption be provisional and an early revision initiated.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Linda Wilshusen
RTC Executive Director, 1985-2004

---

2 IPCC Working Group II, Summary for Policymakers, March 2014
Hello RTC Staff and Commissioners -

Please find attached comments from the local Santa Cruz Group of the Sierra Club regarding the 2014 Draft RTP Document. Thank you!

Greg McPheeters
Group Chair
April 6, 2014

ATTN:
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Comments on the 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Each year, America invests more than $200 billion in federal, state, and local tax dollars on transportation infrastructure—bridges and highways, aviation and waterways, public transit and sidewalks. But too often transportation projects undermine the higher national and local goals of reducing oil consumption, increasing safety, improving public health, and saving local, state or federal government—and citizens—money.

Americans are struggling with the health, climate, and economic costs of our oil-centered transportation system. While new standards that double fuel efficiency of new vehicles to 54.5 mpg by 2025 and cut carbon emissions in half are essential to reducing our dependence on oil and its many consequences, our transportation investments should provide an opportunity to further reduce our dependence on oil, reverse climate disruption, and save money. Because transportation infrastructure lasts for decades, the impacts of transportation investments are felt for many years to come, with huge consequences for America’s ability to move beyond oil.

The transportation infrastructure we build today will either keep us stranded in our cars and at the mercy of gas prices—a situation that today drains too much from our economy every day to pay for foreign oil—or it can promote transportation choices that reduce our reliance on oil, curb air, water, and climate pollution, boost local economies, and improve transportation equity and public health.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan should support our county in leading the way on green, resilient transportation investments. The Sierra Club Santa Cruz County Group understands that the Regional Transportation Plan must balance the needs of diverse users and must work within highly constrained budgets. Acknowledging the constraints that the RTC staff and commissioners must operate within, we appreciate the 2014 Draft Regional Transportation Plan’s inclusion of community input via the STARS process, the triple bottom line approach of the plan, and many of the ambitious targets set by the plan. We also appreciate the RTC’s acknowledgement in this draft RTP that HOV lanes on Highway 1 are not a feasible or appropriate strategy at this time.
This being said, the Sierra Club Santa Cruz Group believes that the RTP can be improved in the following ways:

- Fund the entire Santa Cruz County spine of the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail. We should not be resigned to complete the main linkages of the 32 mile-long spine of the MBSST in more than 20 years as the RTP implies. While other entities may be seeking funding for the Rail Trail, it is up to the RTC to lead the way and set ambitious goals.

- Target 1B of the plan states that the RTP should meet AMBAG’s goals of a 0% reduction of GHGs by 2020, and a 5% reduction by 2035. If, as stated in the draft RTP transportation accounts for 60% of the GHG emissions in Santa Cruz County, the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation 0% by 2020 and 5% by 2035 will never lead us anywhere near an 80% reduction in GHG by 2050 based on 1990 levels, as mandated by Governor Schwarzenegger’s 2005 executive order and AB 32.

- Invest in Watsonville’s capacity to support active transportation projects to meet the RTP’s goals of “transportation equity and social justice.” Watsonville has the highest rates of childhood obesity in the region and 43% of the population is under the age of 24. This makes Watsonville a prime community for active transportation projects, yet they have relatively few listed in the RTP. At a minimum, we would recommend funding all the active transportation projects listed for the South County.

- The county expects a 178% increase in the number of residents over 70 by 2035, making it critical that we continue to invest in our transit systems and pedestrian facilities which are highly valued by this demographic.

We believe that completing the Monterey Bay Area Sanctuary Scenic Trail coupled with passenger rail service will be a transformative project for the region and will play a significant role in helping to exceed the currently meager goals for GHG reduction. Investing in our underserved communities and populations will further the plan’s stated goals of addressing social equity in our community as well as fostering active transportation in our younger generations.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

[Signature]

Greg McPheeters
Chair, Executive Committee

ventana.sierrclub.org/santacruz
From: Carol Thole [mailto:carolthole@yahoo.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 3:30 PM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Comments

In reviewing your plan, I find that this county is completely stepping out of bounds with regard to our rights. I do NOT and will NOT support such a disgusting plan to get us out of our houses and our vehicles. I do NOT believe in your contrived global warming scam and I have had it with this push to control us.

If you attempt to move forward with this, you can assume that I will no longer shop in or support this community. While I will continue to live here for a short time longer, I will withdraw all support here, including my business. I have already begun this and am easily able to focus my purchases outside of this county.

This plan has to be stopped now. I hope the people of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and the SF areas will stop this from happening. And further, I hope that tax money is withdrawn from you.

I am going to stand against this.

Carol Thole

From: Kevin Bell [mailto:baristabell@gmail.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 3:40 PM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: S.C. Rail Trail ~ Recommending it 20' Wide!

I Kevin Bell, recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks.

Picture of their plan to shift tracks for trail - costing $100M more than just pulling tracks.

*Shifting Train Expensive*

Thank you For Looking and Please Consider,  
Kevin Bell  
Aptos resident
Commissioners -

Attached is our comments on the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan. We submit it as part of the public record of this plan.

Thank you
David Kossack
Re: 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan. I respectfully submit the following comments and attachments for the public record.

- The Regional Transportation Commission is currently a signee and/or facilitator of the Scott Creek Bridge Replacement and Environmental Enhancement Project, Memo of Understanding (MOU). The implementation of this project has been ongoing for almost a year (see attached email from RTC, co-signer) however there is no discussion in the 2014 RTP of this project, the required replacement of both the Waddell and Scott Creek bridges on Highway 1 or the opportunity to restore the hydrology and geomorphology of two important watersheds for anadromous fish in Santa Cruz County (see attached letter from CalTrans and NMFS response). The nexus of these coastal streams and their ecological importance has been well documented (see attached P. Moyle letter), the need and opportunity has been recognized by the members of the Regional Transportation Commission (see attached SCz County Board of Supervisors Letter Dated 2007).

CalTrans identified the bridges on Highway 1 at Waddell and Scott Creek as requiring replacement at least 15 years ago. This is a singular opportunity to remove bridges and approaches from the floodplain of these creeks and restore coastal estuaries and the near-shore environment necessary for a wide range of native plant, fish and wildlife species. In place of the approaches and bridge presently in the estuaries of these creeks we would like full-span bridges that are out of the floodplain. CalTrans says that they can build Suspension Bridges at Waddell and Scott Creeks that would be out of the floodplain; we like that. We ask that the RTP commission a competent configuration and pricing for Suspension Bridges on Highway 1 at Waddell and Scott Creeks; we believe that a competent suspension bridge configuration could also provide a 'one size fits all' solution for other bridge replacements up and down the coast benefiting 5000 coastal streams, including Hwy 1/San Lorenzo Bridge Replacement (ID SC 38; Caltrans project ID - EA05-0P460).

This is an important mechanism for restoring these creeks as part of the bridge replacement(s) is SB857 (Kuehl) Fish Passage. SB857 requires CalTrans to address barriers to fish passage associated with their stream crossing where anadromous fish (e.g., coho, steelhead, green sturgeon, Pacific lamprey) occur or did occur for any new, repair or replacement project using state or federal transportation funds; SB857 identifies fish passage as a project cost, not enhancement or mitigation. We see anadromous fish under fish passage as a poster-child for protecting and restoring native habitats: restore the hydrology and geomorphology that these fish depend upon as provided by SB857 and you are restoring the ecosystems that other native species depend upon as well.
We oppose the development of a “North Entrance” to UC Santa Cruz. If UCSC’s expansion is resulting in a fire danger to the campus and the greater community then should constrain its development to self-contained and truly sustainable land and water use. The RTC should not fund projects that not consistent with their goal of sustainability.

Thank you

David Kossack

Founder and President
Hi Jim:

I will discuss with Brandy when she calls me. I have a call into her regarding the issues with the invite and follow-up.

Thanks!
Hi Paula and Julia,
I wanted to reach out to both of you to try to solicit your participation in a restoration project we are working on in Santa Cruz County. Previously we had been working with Cameron Johnson and Dominic Roques from your respective organizations. Somehow both of those representatives have transitioned out of their role in the process without passing the baton, and we are hoping that you are the appropriate contacts going forward.

You may already know a little bit about this project, but in the event that you do not, I will give you a bit of background.

Scott Creek lies at the southern extent of the coho salmon range. The watershed, designated by NMFS as critical to the recovery of both coho and steelhead, contains a relatively undisturbed watershed and a native fish hatchery. The lagoon, however, has been significantly altered by construction of the Highway One bridge in the mid-1930s. This bridge is nearing the end of its serviceable life.

At present, the lagoon habitat is constrained by the bridge crossing near the mouth of the lagoon, which limits habitat connectivity, potential for stream meandering, and the size and depth of the lagoon. The combination of the bridge crossing and related upstream levees has reduced the quantity and quality of the lagoon habitat and limited access to off-channel subtidal habitat. A replacement bridge discussion opens opportunities to improve the functioning and habitat of this critical lagoon and consider the long term affect of sea level rise and climate change.

There was a previous effort many years ago in which Cal Trans attempted to design a replacement bridge but the process was unsuccessful. This year, Cal Trans and the permitting agencies began a new effort to design a replacement bridge that would allow for better lagoon functioning and improved habitat. Your colleagues were initially involved in this process, but stepped out several months ago. We'd like to re-engage with you and have your input and participation.

At this point, five parties (Resource Conservation District, Regional Transportation Commission, Landowner Cal Poly SLO, Santa Cruz County, and Cal Trans) have signed an MOU committing to work together on creating a set of bridge design criteria. The MOU specifies that the regulatory and permitting agencies will constitute an Advisory Committee, and that the five MOU parties will consult, collaborate with, and seek information from the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will meet regularly with the Signatory Agencies, help in the preparation of the Report and the funding strategy.

We have also started moving ahead with the process of holding a series of workshops that will be the primary means for creating design criteria. The dates for these workshops are:

- Monday, December 2 – Entire group invited, experts to present current knowledge about the lagoon. 9:30am - 3:30 pm.
- Thursday January 23 – IWRP TAC only, time TBA
- Thursday February 13 – details TBA

All meetings will be held at Swanton Pacific Ranch in Davenport, at the Little Creek House Great Room.

We are sorry for the last minute nature of this request, but we are hoping that you may be able to participate.
If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me or Jim Robins jrobins@alnus-eco.com or (510) 332-9895.

Thanks,
Susan Pearce
Program Director
Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

--

Jim Robins, Principal/Senior Ecologist
Alnus Ecological
3725 Canon Avenue
Oakland, Ca 94602
c/ 510.332.9895
f/ 510.280.9214
www.alnus-eco.com
July 14, 2006

Patrick J. Rutten - National Marine Fisheries
Tami Grove - California Coastal Commission
David S. Kossack - San Andreas Land Conservancy
Harold Short - County of Santa Cruz, North Coast Reaches Advisory Committee

RE: Scott Waddell Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Regional Partners:

Thank you for your letters regarding Caltrans proposed project to replace the bridges at Scott and Waddell Creeks. Preliminary planning is complete and we are waiting on the availability of funds to begin formal environmental studies. No work will occur on the project until funds are allocated. At this time, we cannot predict when this will occur but our next opportunity for securing funds will be in the Spring of 2008.

During the preliminary planning phase, we received comments from the California Coastal Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service, a special county advisory group as well as private non-profit organizations. A common desire expressed in the letters was for Caltrans to build replacement bridges that are much longer than the current ones and remove all the existing embankments at the mouth of the creeks. The goal of such an approach would be to restore habitat that is vital to migrating fish and other wetland species.

Caltrans shares these values, but is constrained from funding a project of this size. The project qualifies for replacement funding because salt water has seeped into the concrete over the years and corroded some of the reinforcing steel. As corrosion continues to occur, the strength of the bridges will be impacted and the loading capacity of the bridges will gradually decrease. It is therefore imperative that a project be initiated now to plan for their eventual replacement. The projects' source of funding is limited such that only bridges of similar size can be built as replacements for the existing ones.

Our engineers have determined that it is possible to replace the bridges in a way that would allow them to be lengthened in the future if an outside funding source can be identified. This concept has been included in the approved PSSR (Attached).

Although it is indefinite when the project work will progress, we would like to work with you to discuss your concerns in more detail and resolve as many as possible prior to formal environmental studies. We are willing to explore ways to complete additional planning and environmental studies that would lead to a mutually agreeable approach to replacing the bridges and enhancing habitat.

We would like to meet with you in August or September of this year. Please call me with dates that you would be available. I can be reached at 805-549-3437.

Sincerely,

Steven R. DiGrazia
District 5 Project Manager


"Caltrans improves mobility across California"
Memorandum

To: R. GREGG ALBRIGHT
   District Director
   District 5

Date: October 25, 2005

From: J. MIKE LEONARDO
   District Director
   District 6 - Central Region

File: 05-SCr-1, KP 50.8/58.4 (PM 31.6/36.3)
      06220-OF990K
      RAS-HA21 Program

Subject: Approval Recommendation  Project Scope Summary Report

Attached herein is the Project Scope Summary Report for the Scott Creek and Waddell Creek Bridge Replacement. This report has been reviewed by the appropriated functional divisions and is ready for your consideration.

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"
On Route 1, at Scott Creek Bridge No. 36-0031 and Waddell Creek Bridge No. 36-0065 in Santa Cruz County

I have reviewed the right of way information contained in this Project Scope Summary Report and the R/W Data Sheet attached hereto, and find the data to be complete, current, and accurate:

SPIROS KARIMBAKAS
ACTING CHIEF, CENTRAL REGION, RIGHT OF WAY

APPROVAL RECOMMENDED:

STEVE DIGRAZIA
PROJECT MANAGER

APPROVED:

GREGG ALBRIGHT
DISTRICT 5 DIRECTOR

DATE

PROJECT SCOPE & TECHNICAL DATA ARE VALID THROUGH OCTOBER 2007.
COST & WORK PLAN MUST BE UPDATED PRIOR TO USE FOR PROGRAMMING AFTER THE 2006 SHOPP.
August 29, 2006

Mr. Steven R. DiGrazia
State of California, Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93401-5415

Dear Mr. DiGrazia:

The purpose of this letter is to provide NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) comments to your July 14, 2006, letter concerning the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Project Scope Summary Report (PSSR) for the Scott and Waddell Bridge Replacement Project. In your letter you reference prior correspondence from NMFS (letter dated September 5, 2003) and other agencies/organizations that expressed a desire to have Caltrans construct longer bridges on Scott and Waddell Creeks for U.S. Route 1 in order to facilitate restoration of lagoon and estuarine function for these watersheds. The Caltrans' PSSR rejected the longer bridge option due to funding constraints, and has proposed to construct new bridges for U.S. Route 1 with essentially the same spans as the original bridges. However, Caltrans' engineers did assess one bridge design option and determined "...that it is possible to replace the bridges in a way that would allow them to be lengthened in the future if an outside funding source can be identified."

Scott and Waddell Creeks are located in northern coastal Santa Cruz County, California, and maintain populations of listed Central California Coast (CCC) Distinct Population Segment steelhead (Oncorhynchus mykiss) and CCC Evolutionarily Significant Unit coho salmon (O. kisutch) pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended. CCC steelhead are listed as threatened (71 FR 834), and CCC coho salmon are listed as endangered (70 FR 37160). Critical habitat for CCC steelhead was designated on September 5, 2005 (70 FR 52488), and critical habitat for CCC coho salmon was designated on May 5, 1999 (64 FR 24049).

The estuaries in Scott and Waddell Creek have been adversely impacted by the existing bridges and their raised approaches. In Caltran's PSSR, it states "(i)mense ecological benefit could be obtained by lengthening the bridges at both locations. The highway fills and bridges severely inhibit estuarine functions at both locations. Both bridges severely constrict the flow of the creeks. The approach fills isolate meandering estuary channels." NMFS concurs with Caltran's assessment of the adverse impacts caused by the current bridges and their approaches.
Scott and Waddell Creeks are important habitats for both steelhead and coho salmon. During the drought of the late 1980's – early 1990's, the only creeks maintaining populations of CCC coho salmon in Santa Cruz County (which historically occurred in most coastal watersheds in the County) were Scott and Waddell Creeks. Today, these two watersheds maintain the largest remaining populations of coho salmon south of San Francisco Bay and are essential for maintaining their long-term persistence and eventually, their recovery. We believe Scott and Waddell Creeks serve as an anchor for these southern populations and act as a source by which other watersheds in the area have been slowly recolonized. Santa Cruz County is the southern extent of the range for coho salmon and as such, coho salmon are believed particularly sensitive to adverse environmental perturbations. In general, populations at the extent of their ranges are less resilient to perturbations than those at the center of their range. Conversely, we believe the CCC coho salmon populations in Scott and Waddell Creeks are important sources of evolutionary innovation due to their southern distribution and their persistence is essential to the conservation of the ESU as a whole (71 FR 14683). The long-term persistence of this species will be significantly facilitated through the restoration of estuarine function.

Estuaries are important rearing areas for many juvenile fishes and afford high growth potential and protection from predation. We believe restoration of estuarine function would result in significant benefits to populations of both CCC steelhead and CCC coho salmon that both migrate through and/or rear in these estuaries. In a recent study of the Scott Creek estuary, Bond (2006) found the majority (85 percent) of adult steelhead returning to spawn in this watershed reared in the estuary as juveniles. However, only between eight and 48 percent of the total juvenile Scott Creek population reared in the estuary which indicates a significant survival advantage over other rearing habitats. Bond (2006) also reported that while the Scott Creek estuary comprised less than five percent of the watershed area, it is critical rearing habitat, as estuary-reared juveniles made a disproportionate contribution to the adult spawning pool. Restoration of estuarine function would likely increase rearing habitat availability and subsequently increase the size of the steelhead spawning run in both watersheds.

The current proposed replacement of the existing structures likely affords the only realistic opportunity to restore estuarine function in Scott and Waddell Creeks within the foreseeable future. We strongly recommend Caltrans to reconsider their approval recommendation for the current PSSR and to include an evaluation of bridge lengthening at both locations. While NMFS is encouraged that Caltrans has considered the feasibility of lengthening the bridges after construction pending available funding, we fear that upon completion of the proposed bridge construction project, the likelihood of bridge lengthening solely for the purpose of improving estuarine function is unlikely due to diminishing economies of scale for design, permitting, and construction. Realistically, the only opportunity to restore both estuaries to their proper function is during the replacement of the existing bridges.

This project will require formal interagency consultation pursuant to section 7 of the ESA, between NMFS and the Federal Highway Administration. As you know, formal consultations determine whether a proposed agency action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. We are concerned, particularly with the recent
upgrading in listing status of CCC coho salmon from threatened to endangered, that the new bridge project, because it maintains ongoing conditions in these estuaries, may be difficult to authorize. We are encouraged that Caltrans has requested early coordination with NMFS as this project moves forward.

We suggest Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration seek out additional funding sources for these proposed bridge reconstruction projects. We believe these bridge replacements are not conventional projects but ones requiring a focused approach to identify additional funding mechanisms to improve conditions in Scott and Waddell Creeks. Additional funding opportunities may be found through the California Department of Fish and Game, the NOAA Restoration Center, and the California Coastal Conservancy to name just a few. These watersheds are essential for the long-term conservation of these listed salmonids and their designated critical habitats, and we believe restoration of these estuaries would help fulfill the Federal Highway Administration’s 7(a)(1) obligations pursuant to the ESA.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. We look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss the Scott and Waddell Bridges Replacement Project. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Mr. Jonathan Ambrose of my staff at (707) 575-6091 or via email at jonathan.ambrose@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Dick Butler
Santa Rosa Area Office Supervisor
Protected Resources Division

cc: Russ Strach, NMFS
J. Richard Capka, FHWA
Deborah McKee, Caltrans
R. Gregg Albright, Caltrans
Chuck Cesena, Caltrans
Serge Gluskoff, CDFG
Krissy Atkinson, CDFG
Tami Grove, California Coastal Commission
Harold Short, County of Santa Cruz, North Coast Beaches Advisory Committee
David S. Kossack, San Andreas Land Conservancy
References Cited


Federal Register Notices Cited


May 30, 2009

Richard Krumholz, District Director
California Department of Transportation. District 5
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5415

Re: Highway 1 Bridge Replacements at Scotts Creek and Waddell Creek (05-SCR-1,KP50.8/58.4 (PM 31.6/36.3), 6285/6220-0F990K, RAS-HA21 Program)

Dear Mr. Krumholz:

This letter is to encourage CalTrans to construct fish-friendly full-span bridge replacements at the mouths of Scott and Waddell creeks. As a scientist who has studied coho salmon and the causes of their decline in California for decades (some publications listed below), I can safely say that properly replacing these bridges will be a major contribution towards protecting the southernmost runs of the species. The populations are listed as endangered, a designation that is unfortunately well merited. The full span bridges will allow the creeks to escape from their present confined channels and help to re-establish better functioning estuaries/lagoons. Recent scientific studies demonstrated the extraordinary importance of these habitats not only for coho salmon but also for steelhead (listed as threatened) and tidewater goby (listed as threatened).

Thank you for your attention.

Peter B Moyle
Professor, Fisheries Biology

June 2, 2009

Professor Peter B. Moyle  
San Andreas Land Conservancy  
PO Box 268  
Davenport, California 95017

Dear Peter:

Thank you for contacting me recently regarding Highway 1 Bridge replacements at Scotts Creek and Waddell Creek. The issues which you mentioned are serious subjects that affect both our district and our nation as a whole. I sincerely appreciate your taking the time to send me a copy of your letter to Richard Krumholz, as these letters help keep me informed about what is happening in our area.

Again, thank you for keeping me abreast of some of the issues that touch people in our area. If there is anything I can do for you in the future, please feel free to contact me again.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

SAM FARR  
Member of Congress

Please be sure to visit my website at www.farr.house.gov.
Dear SCCRTC and AMBAG,

Please see the attached PDF for my comments and the 2014 Draft RTP. Thank you!

Steve Piercy
Soquel, CA
web@stevepiercy.com
Dear RTC and AMBAG,

The following are my comments for the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan.

**Vulnerable road users are getting killed and injured at steadily increasing rates.**
On Page 1-4, the "2011 Collision Facts" omit dramatic statistical trends in Santa Cruz County and California regarding the percentages of all fatalities and injuries in Santa Cruz County and California. The charts below indicate that the percentages of bicyclists and pedestrians killed or injured by motorized vehicles is drastically and steadily increasing.

---

**Percentage of People Killed from Collisions While Walking or Riding a Bicycle**

Data from SWITRS, League of American Bicyclists
Analysis by Steve Piercy, web@stevepiercy.com

---

**Percentage of People Injured from Collisions While Walking or Riding a Bicycle**

Data from SWITRS
Analysis by Steve Piercy, web@stevepiercy.com

---
To reverse these trends, the RTC must prioritize and fund projects and programs that improve safety for the most vulnerable road users above all other goals.

Additionally, when I compared the SWITRS data to the "2011 Collision Facts" on Page 1-4 of the RTP, I got very different counts and percentages. I'm not sure why there is such a wide discrepancy, but I would be glad to compare our sources of data to ensure that the reported numbers are in fact correct. I think your calculations for percentages may be in error, because I have the same raw counts as those in Figure C.25 on Page C-39 for the County.

RTP goal makes death acceptable.
The RTP sets Target 2A where half as many road users in 2035 get killed. Meanwhile, "Vision Zero" policies are being adopted by transportation entities across the country, most notably by New York City, where the goal is to have zero fatalities from motor vehicle collisions. A simple reduction by half is setting our sights too low, and we should target any fatality as being unacceptable. If we fail to set targets to zero fatalities, then we are saying that half as many people killed is OK.

Total weight of greenhouse gas emissions will increase.
GHG emissions from passenger vehicles will continue to increase by almost 2% by 2020 and 7% by 2035 when measured by total weight due to increased population projections. The per capita measure gives us a false sense of achievement. See the chart below.

To have an effective reduction of GHG and improve air quality, we must set goals for a significant reduction in the total weight of GHG emissions.
On Page 1-8, please verify whether the quantity should be "1 percent", not "0 percent", as the RTP target is 1% for 2020.

"For the Monterey Bay region, the California Air Resources Board established reduction goals for per capita GHG emissions from passenger vehicle use of 0 percent and 5 percent by 2020 and 2035 respectively relative to 2005 levels."

**Project fund distribution by mode needs clarification.**
On Page 6-9, there is a pie chart of project costs by transportation mode. For multimodal projects, how did you determine the allocation for each mode?

I’d suggest that the actual cost by mode by allocated by its respective weight: a two-ton vehicle does a great deal more damage to a roadway than a two-hundred pound person walking or biking.

Another fair measure would be to determine the historical dollar amount spent on erecting barriers to walking and biking, then provide equitable funding in the future to make human transportation safer and more feasible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Steve Piercy
Soquel, CA
web@stevepiercy.com
Dear Commissioners,

See the attached pdf of a letter...

Thanks,

-- Peter Scott, Paul Elerick and Jack Nelson,
The Campaign for Sensible Transportation
April 8, 2014

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the completed draft plan.

Applause is due

The Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan presents an innovative, generational shift in transportation planning for Santa Cruz County, and the Campaign for Sensible Transportation (CFST) would like to begin by commending this Draft as the smartest, most adaptive planning framework yet produced by the RTC. In addition, we offer here some suggestions for how this Plan might do better.

To begin with, the Draft RTP introduces sustainability and the “triple bottom line” (people, prosperity, and planet) as principles to help guide new approaches to meeting our county’s transportation challenges.

In its “Vision for 2035” (Ch. 4) this Draft Plan rethinks and reconceptualizes conventional transportation goals. Instead of a primary focus on just moving more cars around on more roadways, the plan sets three conceptual goals that begin with “improve people’s access to jobs, schools, health care and other regular needs in ways that improve health, reduce pollution, and retain money in the local economy.” We believe this is a much better definition of success.

The plan provides outcomes-oriented “sustainability policies” (Fig. 4.2) and identifies measurable outcomes, called targets (Fig. 4.3) that lead toward the conceptual goals.

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions receives more methodical attention than in past plans.

With all this, the Draft RTP provides an improved policy framework which, if used well to guide decision making, could result in better transportation projects, and outcomes that are a better fit to the future. When conditions change, having a good set of first principles is a good place to start from.
Complexities are the new normal

It has become harder to predict the future for transportation planning purposes, including when considering the long-term life cycle of transportation projects proposed in the 21 year timeframe of this plan.

The complex mechanisms of pending climate change are becoming better described by climate science. It is clear, change will be driven by our planet’s growing in-out solar radiation energy imbalance, with only temporary masking provided by the oceans, which have absorbed roughly 93% of the excess heat over the last 40 years.

Yet, human society’s response so far lags greatly behind what the climate scientists are saying is needed.

As a result there is a more profound risk to our economic future, with heightened risk of impacts to agriculture, water supply, employment, political stability, and human migration. Especially if society catches up with the science, and/or when further impacts such as weather extremes catch up with society, then transportation planning, transportation infrastructure, and transportation energy supply could be greatly affected or redirected by new regulatory actions, such as an incremental carbon tax or other additions to fossil fuel costs, and steeper, science-based GHG reduction mandates.

CFST advocates a greater response today, at much less ultimate cost, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lessen climate risk, and lead toward a sustainable transportation future.

As an example of a GHG reduction pacing informed by climate science, a recent scientists’ consensus report calls for GHG reductions of 5% per year, year following year, from now until 2050, in order to stabilize atmospheric CO2 at 450 ppm by 2050 and in so doing have a 50-50 chance of limiting global temperature rise to two degrees Celsius. This metric was presented in the May 2013 report, titled “Scientific Consensus on Maintaining Humanity’s Life Support Systems in the 21st Century: Information for Policy Makers”, signed by more than 500 scientists from 44 nations, which is available online at http://mahb.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Consensus-Statement-For-Web-6-02-13.pdf (This link is clickable.)

Meanwhile, the Draft RTP briefly explains the existing regional transportation greenhouse gas reduction target of 5% by 2035 relative to 2005, saying this was set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). However, several years ago this shamefully meager target was in fact proposed to CARB by the AMBAG Board of Directors in a largely political, non-science-based Board vote, stepping in after the preceding target setting process between AMBAG staff and CARB went off track and failed to set any reduction at all.

So, while it is somewhat an improvement that the Draft RTP is projecting a GHG reduction on the order of 16%, akin to the 15% target of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), we see this target as grossly inadequate compared to what the climate science findings are calling for.
Crucial choices lie ahead

CFST recognizes that the success of the 2014 RTP will depend on funding access plus funding decisions and similar decisions yet to be made at future meetings of the Regional Transportation Commission. The List of Projects in the RTP is somewhat like a menu, from which some hard choices will be made.

CFST continues to oppose allocation of funding for further widening of Highway 1, whether auxiliary lanes or through lanes. In the Appendix E Project List, we see the tens of millions of dollars per project for sequential auxiliary lane projects on Highway 1, on the constrained funds list. We consider it far better for cost-effective congestion relief to provide improved transportation alternatives, especially targeting the many short-distance solo-driver trips on Highway 1, which are most susceptible to mode switching.

The burden of proof before adding more Highway 1 lanes, should be on solidly demonstrating the evidence (we see none) that adding lanes on Highway 1 would provide cost effective long-term congestion relief and reduction in GHG emissions, in particular with long-term generated traffic taken into account, and when compared to other infrastructure investments.

A number of CFST members tell us they would find unacceptable, a sales tax ballot measure that includes in the potential uses any funds for widening Highway 1.

With the rail corridor now in public ownership by the RTC, the potential for transportation solutions stemming from this corridor is high, including to provide some alternatives to some driving trips on Highway 1. As anyone participating in the planning process for this rail corridor has seen, the public enthusiasm is impressively high also.

We have added to this letter a map showing the population densities in Santa Cruz County (based on the 2010 census data), on which is superposed the county’s rail lines. This map illustrates that our rail lines, especially the newly acquired 32 miles of rail corridor, link a number of highly populated census tracts—certainly one requirement for ensuring public use of passenger rail service.

We appreciate the incorporation of health and equity concerns into the RTP, and see projects that provide improved infrastructure for active transportation as a key to this. Please take note of the California travel survey (Fig. 3.15) which shows already significant mode share increases in the rates of walking and biking in California. We agree with the RTP’s localized findings from Fig. 3-17 showing mode share by city of residence, that “people’s travel preferences are influenced by the type of land use and transportation facilities that are available in their community.”

CFST urges the RTC to make good on the positive potential contained in the Draft 2014 RTP.

Sincerely,

Peter Scott, Co-chair     Paul Elerick, Co-chair     Jack Nelson, member

The Campaign for Sensible Transportation
April 8, 2014

To: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Re: 2035 Regional Transportation Plan

The most recent iteration the Santa Cruz Transportation Commission’s Regional Transportation Plan, assessing needs through 2035 and the RTC’s plans and opportunities for maintenance and new investments, made some significant improvements over the 2030 planning document, created five years ago. Simplifying the plan’s goals, explicitly including economic vitality as an objective, and proposing a realistic plan to obtain the funds necessary to do critically-need street and road maintenance and to continue improvement of Highway 1 measurably improve Plan.

Simplifying the Plan’s goals into three segments, Healthy Communities, Natural Environment, and Economic Vitality, and framing the plan’s mission as the “Sustainability” of all three segments proposes a melding of these complex issues and political vectors into a framework that is understandable to and inclusive of the entire community.

The Plan needs to be understandable and inclusive, because to do even the basic improvements and repairs proposed for the next 20 years, the RTC has to convince the community to support a ½¢ increase in sales tax and a $10 increase in vehicle license fees – by 2016.

The Plan highlights the opportunities created by effective transportation systems – including a projected annual savings of $335 per household ($38M per year County-wide) – which are fundamental elements in defining the quality of life and prosperity for the residents and businesses of the County. The plan recognizes benefits to neighborhoods provided by “complete streets” projects. It implements findings from its participation in the STAR evaluation process using meaningful metrics to evaluate the cost/benefit of alternative transportation measures on the environment and the community. It proposes ways to increase transit use and make it more economically efficient. And, the Plan invests in the improvement of the Monterey Bay Scenic Trail and the rehabilitation and use of the Union Pacific rail line acquired by the RTC.

These and other improvements provided for in the plan add value to both the local quality of life and our capacity to continue to improve the experience of visitors to our community.

However, the Chamber also has some reservations about some of the assumption contained in the plan and a recommendation for further consideration by the RTC:

- The Chamber recognizes generational-trends regarding reduced use of automobiles and a desire to work closer to home. We are also aware of both national and local trends making the location of jobs and especially blue-collar jobs more, rather than less, distant from workforce housing. This is especially
true in Santa Cruz County, one of the least affordable communities in the U.S. There is also evidence that Santa Cruz's tourism industry may grow in the emerging economy. If this is so, the Plan's goal of not permitting congestion to become worse is not likely to be met without modifications. We encourage the RTC to consider how it would adjust its plans under scenarios in which the assumed reductions in vehicle miles traveled are not attained.

- On the other hand, we continue to see encouraging research, new technologies, and more intense competition that could make electric vehicles much more efficient, the generation of electricity significantly less dependent upon CO2 fuels, and the replacement of older vehicles with newer, more efficient ones at a faster rate than projected in the Plan. While we believe conservative estimates are important with regard to achieving carbon reduction targets, we again encourage consideration of the opportunities and transportation requirements of a larger inventory of more efficient vehicles.

- The current rate of travel on Highway 1 during commute hours and pleasant weekends is unacceptable. The economic and quality of life impacts are serious constraints on residents and threats to the communities' economic vitality. We are also conscious of the existing burden of local taxes and fees and the political hurdles of obtaining the additional revenues to fund new transportation resources. The Chamber believes that the RTC and local governments should explore the addition of an HOV lane (in addition to the completion of the auxiliary lanes) through a grant of exception from state rules regarding lane and shoulder widths.

Finally, the Chamber is enthusiastic about the performance measures included in the plan and believes that these will significantly improve both evaluation of the Plan's assumptions regarding the transportation environment and future planning.

The Chamber commends the RTC on the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

William R. Tysseling, Executive Director
Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce
To whom it may concern,

A few comments on the 2014 RTP:

I love the complete street concept - the more the better!

Regarding the Hwy 17 Express Service Expansion, I would be really happy to see it include a stop at the San Jose airport. I have attempted public transportation to the airport in the past and found it extremely challenging.

I would love to see increased bus service to all schools. My children attend Pacific Elementary in Davenport where parents take turns chaperoning groups of younger children to school. The children then carpool home because the one afternoon bus route doesn't accommodate their let-out times.

I have biked, bussed and driven in Santa Cruz County for 22 years, but currently rely primarily on driving as the bus system is presently not quite sufficient to meet my needs. I live one property outside of Santa Cruz County in San Mateo County, but all my driving except on my driveway are in Santa Cruz County. I would love to be able to drive to Davenport, then take public transportation for the rest of my outings.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Hudson

From: Beverly DesChaux [mailto:bdchaux@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 08, 2014 5:01 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Input on the SCCRTC MTP2014

Thank you for your focus on Sustainability and for outreach and accepting input from the public.

Some of what I have offered at your outreach meetings and at the Commission on the Environment I will put into writing here for you.

Electric Vehicles have been reported to reduce GHG emissions in half in the dirtiest of grids, up to 4/5 plugged into cleaner grids, and 100% plugged into solar system. 1/3 to 1/2 of owners also have solar PV systems for 0% tailpipe emissions and are therefore a worthwhile investment. I would like to request increased Electric Vehicle charging stations to encourage their adoption. Also, encouraging fleets and school bus exchanges or conversions will go a long way to assist our area in reaching our AB32 goals. I suggest using models of charging stations that are high up, such as the one on the wharf to aid in adaptation to rising sea levels.

Thank you for the rail purchase and increasing safe passage for bicyclists and pedestrians. I would hope that the rail-trail will also be a corridor for mass transit that is electrified and powered by solar as the optimum means for reducing GHG emissions for mass transit and easing roadway congestion. We have been unable to reduce VMT/trips to Cabrillo. Hopefully, the safety of the corridor when it reaches there will increase bicycle ridership, and to have electric mass transit such as Smart Mass Transit and Personal Rapid Transit transport the 17,000+ students, faculty and staff that travel to Cabrillo each day will be a major emissions reducer that we have been unable to accomplish on the Climate Initiative Task Force any other way.

A solution that I think Berkeley may have that I highly recommend is expanding sidewalk widths to accommodate bicyclists instead of expecting bikes to have to be in the same physical space as dangerous vehicles. I have been knocked off my bike numerous times, once with a trip to the ER with long recovery time, and know many who simply will not bike due to safety concerns. The barriers near the Dream Inn are a start but hardly as safe as just moving the amount of roadway available up onto the sidewalk such as how pedestrians and bicyclists share West Cliff. I have
never heard of a pedestrian being killed or significantly injured by a bicyclist, which cannot be said of vehicles interacting with bicyclists.

Biofuels from waste are an excellent solution to encourage for fleets. Biodiesel is locally available from the Green Station and is made 100% from recycled oil which has the duel benefit of re-using waste. A project for ethanol from waste is underway in Watsonville and 50% can be used without adaptations to the engine. Small adaptors can be installed for any degree of gas or ethanol in the tank. I hope you will consider this transition which can be immediate, away from fossil fuels.

Unlike some, I do support the additional lanes on Hwy 1 so that vehicles are not left pumping out major emissions while stuck in traffic.

Thank you for all that you are doing to take care of our transportation needs,

Beverly DesChaux
President Electric Auto Assn of the Central
member Climate Initiative Task Force, Cabrillo

though these are my thoughts & do not reflect the opinions of the groups

From: Peoples, Brian C [mailto:brian.c.peoples@lmco.com]
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2014 4:33 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: Zach Friend (BDS022@co.santa-cruz.ca.us); patrick.mulhearn@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
Subject: comments to SCCRTC Transportation Plan

SCCRTC,

Please find attached two separate statements (Brian Peoples, Aptos Rail-Trail Club) to the Draft 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan.
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

The 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan should:

- Add High Occupancy Vehicle lanes along Highway 1 from Santa Cruz to Watsonville
- Add HOV lane Express Buses along Highway 1
- Add auxiliary on/off Ramps along Highway 1
- Add Metering lights along Highway 1 On-Ramps
- Cancel any plans for a passenger train
- Master Bike / Pedestrian Trail Plan
  - Iowa Pacific for Train-to-Christmas Town did not meet 2013 rider requirements and will likely not meet 2014 rider requirements and contract should be cancelled by end of 2014. SCCRTC charter is not to operate nor is it appropriate for taxpayers to fund a tourist business.
  - Remove railroad tracks along 32-mile Santa Cruz Railline
  - For Segments 17 (KOA) to 20 (Watsonville), remove tracks from middle of farmland, return property to property owners and improve San Andreas Road Bike lanes.
  - For Segments 15 to 16 (Manresa), remove tracks and construct bike/pedestrian trail. For section through Lakeside Organic Gardens farm, remove tracks from middle of farmland and construct trail on perimeter of farmland along bluff (adjacent to beach).
  - For Segments 14 to 8 (Seascape, Aptos, Capitola, Boardwalk) remove tracks and construct 20 to 30 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Seascape to Santa Cruz Boardwalk.
  - For Segments 7 through 6 (Alma, Swift Street), remove tracks and construct trail as best determined.
  - For Segments 6 to 4 (Wilder, Davenport), remove tracks from middle of farmland, return property to property owners and develop plans to construct improved bike lane adjacent to Highway 1.
- During Highway 1 Widening near Aptos, do not replace both Bike / Pedestrian Bridges – only replace with one bridge that crosses in centerline to Aptos Village, adding Bike / Pedestrian Trail along Westside of widened Highway 1
- Incorporate future vehicle technologies (cars, trucks, buses) into long term plans for highway and surface-street capacity studies and planning. Automobile companies are creating vehicle-2-vehicle communication systems that will increase the overall capacity of roadways.

Sincerely,

Brian Peoples, Aptos, California
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Last year, Aptos High School started a “Aptos Rail-Trail” club to find a cheap and quick approach to implement the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network. “We want a bike trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016.” We need to be responsible with our property, not only finding a cheap and fast way to build the trail, but also to keep our property clean and safe, help prevent drug use on it and clean-up graffiti. It would be so great to be able to ride our bikes from Aptos to the Boardwalk without the worry of getting hit by a car.

Trying to build a trail parallel to the tracks is adding millions of dollars because they need to construct 26 new bridges and it will cost over $126M. We really don’t think a new trestle will ever be built next to the Capitola Trestle. The removal of tracks and construction of trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch would be $12M plus we have to give back the $11M given to us by the State to buy the railroad. That is over $100M cheaper than building the trail parallel to tracks and the trail can be a lot wider (20 to 30 feet) than a trail next to the tracks (8 feet), so it would be safer. The State would probably think we are smart because they realized that the cheapest, fastest and best use of the property would be a bike trail, so the State would give us more money for future transportation plans.

We should look at how and why other communities are converting tracks into bike trails, how it increases tourism and improves travel for the area and the fact that raillines in communities like Santa Cruz are too expensive. Kirkland (suburb of Seattle) is a community that converted a railroad into a trail because it was the cheapest, fastest and best way to improve people’s ability to get around. In the process of removing the tracks and constructing a trail, they got paid $18,600 per mile from the recycling of the rails and ties, even after the construction of a trail. That would mean our railroad track is worth over ½ million dollars just from recycling. The cost for a new train would cost $130M and $4M/year to operate 4 trains from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. We don’t know where we would get all this money to pay for the train. According to the payment agreement with the State when we bought the railroad, we are not allowed to add new taxes or fees to the public to pay for a passenger train. When we bought the railline for a recreational train, Supervisor Ellen Pierre made it clear to the State that “we will not start a passenger train that we can not afford”.

Below are cost estimates for each of the segments for proposed alternative trail plan based on SCCRTC Master Plan estimates and actual salvage cost from other railroad removal projects:

![Cost Estimation Table]

Sincerely,

Aptos Rail-Trail Club
Isabel Crossen (President)
-----Original Message-----
From: Randall Nacamuli [mailto:nacamuli@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 7:50 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rails to Trail

I recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks.

The opportunity to create an outstanding outdoor resource cannot be missed.

- Randall

-----Original Message-----
From: Haston, Carma [mailto:carma.haston@plantronics.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 7:50 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Bike trail

I live right next to the tracks in Aptos and wanted to send my thoughts your way. We are an active family that would love a bike/walking path instead of the drug needle ridden path that it is today. I would love for my son to be able to walk to school but there is no way I would let him with the activity that is on the tracks today. Turning the tracks into a 20 foot wide activity path would also reduce the number of bike vs car accidents on the roads drastically.

I fully support the bike path from Manresa to Wilder by 2016

-----Original Message-----
From: Jeff and Linda Young [mailto:lindazebari@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 8:52 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Re:Trail

To whom it may concern:

I am a homeowner in the Aptos area, and I am writing to express my very strong support for a bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa beach to Wilder Ranch, with removal of the rails. This will be a fabulous enhancement for our coastal zone. It will attract tourists and contribute to the health and well-being of Santa Cruz residents. Thank you for considering this exciting possibility.

Jeff Young, M.D.
150 Bunker Hill Road
Aptos, CA

-----Original Message-----
From: Mark Ransler [mailto:markransler@comcast.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 9:44 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: 2014 Coastal Regional Transportation Plan

Hello-

My name is Mark Ransler, I live in Scotts Valley CA. I am writing in regards to the Santa Cruz County 2014 Regional Transportation Plan. I am all for a 20 a foot bike/pedestrian path from Daven Port to La Selva Beach. I believe this will add a safe and greater transportation/exercise pathway between Northern Santa Cruz County to Southern Santa Cruz County. This "old Union Pacific Line" should be converted to add a pedestrian pathway to reduce congestion on Highway 1. The other economic benefit is a tourist attraction for people/families/groups to bring bikes to Santa Cruz and view-enjoy the pathway along the Pacific Ocean. While in Santa Cruz, they could spend money at restaurants, shops, gas stations and hotels.

What does not make sense is to retain the old rail line tracks. The scrap metal could bring in additional revenue from the removed tracks. But leaving the old tracks could and would cause undue risk of injury and compete with open space. To make the project clean, please remove the tracks and provide a 20 foot wide pedestrian path.
Thank you,
Mark Ransler

From: Rose Filicetti [mailto:savgmom@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 10:16 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Aptos Rail Trail

I support a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks!

Rose Filicetti
, Capitola

From: Donald C. Schwartz, Esq. [mailto:triallaw@cruzio.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 10:45 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Public Comment - Draft 2014 County Regional Transportation Plan

Public Comment:

No one in Santa Cruz County has the money to run a railroad. Get out of denial, please.

By definition of the word "denial" you don’t know when you are in it.

The tracks lay dormant.

Let’s put the incredible public resource of the rail right of way to work - ASAP!

If you hit the lottery you then build the railroad and bike/pedestrian path so they work together.

Not even a wealthy community like Alamo - Danville could afford to run a railroad and crested the “Iron Horse Trail” instead

Have a great day.

Donald C. Schwartz, Esq.
Law Offices of Donald C. Schwartz
7960-B Soquel Drive, No. 291
Aptos, CA  95003

From: Adam and Ruthie [mailto:adamruthie@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 5:15 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: rail trail

Yes, yes, yes...rail trail. I recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016. This trail would travel along the rail route and be created by removing the train tracks. This will be an amazing attraction to our community that will be utilized by thousands every day. Allowing bicycles to safely travel across the county will also help with commuting (how amazing would that be). It seems to me to be an obvious project and so valuable. Yes, yes, yes...please!!!

-Ruth Yarme
346 Lee Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

From: Steve Lustgarden [mailto:slustgarden@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 6:36 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Comments on the RTP
I applaud the RTC for your commitment to economic, environmental, and equitable sustainability and reducing injuries and fatalities among all travel modes. Please continue to give the highest priority to bike and pedestrian projects. Thank you.

From: Scott Russo [mailto:scottot@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 8:57 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rails to trails

I am an avid bicyclist who has spent the last 20 years riding the roads of Santa Cruz County. In the past twenty years i seriously cannot remember a single time that I have not had at least a close call with a car while riding. In fact, today I was run off the road into a ditch on the side of the road by a motorcycle. The rails to trails project is long overdue in our area. I have spent many hours on both the trail in Monterey and the Coyote Creek trail out of Morgan Hill and the ability to ride free of worry is a thing that cannot be taken for granted. it is important that this project be completed and completed soon and more important that the trail be at least 20 feet wide with the removal of the train tracks. Please proceed with this project. I would love to see this done as soon as possible. A trail from Manresa to Wilder would certainly increase the safety of all cyclists in this area and would contribute in numerous other ways as well.

Scott Russo

-----Original Message-----
From: wegrich@att.net [mailto:wegrich@att.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 06, 2014 9:09 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Transportation Plan

Your attention please,
I am commenting in favor of the removal of the rail tracks and installing a full pedestrian/bicycle path in the right of way.
I live in Aptos and would cycle much more if there was a safe bicycle path for getting around the county. I feel the rail system would be much more effective as an elevated track or monorail down the center of Highway 1. In Aptos the rail trail would serve most of the residents and with the construction of the Mar Vista overpass would provide a safe connection to the Soquel commercial/institutional corridor for the residents as well as others coming into the area. State park visitors at Manressa, Seacliff and New Brighton would also have a safe alternative to getting in their cars or RVs to access Capitola and Santa Cruz. This project would really boost the local economy and create a true bicycle oriented community.

Mark Wegrich

-----Original Message-----
From: Hiltz, Thomas [mailto:Thomas_Hiltz@pvusd.net]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 8:01 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail-Trail

I recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks. Thank you,
Tom Hiltz, Principal
MacQuiddy Elementary School
330 Martinelli St.
Watsonville, CA 95076

-----Original Message-----
From: Kathleen M Bortolussi [mailto:kboraholussi@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 9:22 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Bike path on current rail line

To Whom it May Concern,
As a resident and property owner along the rail corridor I support a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016, by removing the tracks. This would be a benefit to our community, increase property values, and enable a safer mode of transportation.

The current space allocated for this rail line does not allow for a commuter train and a path, as it is not wide enough in some sections. The noise, pollution, and ability to exit my neighborhood would be severely impacted by a train, but not by a bike path.

I encourage you to make decisions towards this progressive and impactful community goal.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Bortolussi
Seacliff resident

---

From: rosewoodlove@gmail.com [mailto:rosewoodlove@gmail.com] On Behalf Of Rose Wood
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 12:28 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Support for Trackless Trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch

Hello,

I support removing the train tracks to create a bike/ped path from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016. It would provide a safe way for biking residents to commute to Santa Cruz and Aptos and keeps cars off the already crowded Hwy 1.

Thank you!!

Rose Wood

---

From: Ray Spinelli [mailto:RAY@fivecrows.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 1:04 PM
To: 'info@sccrtc.org'
Subject: We need a a Bike Trail

Hi SCCRTC,

I recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks.

I use to live in Fresno for 17 years and they turned there railroad tracks to bike trails and I used them all the time. It was super successful and an efficient way to get around town between Fresno & Clovis. Please look into converting the tracks and make them more useful to more of the population in the Santa Cruz/Aptos/Watsonville area.

Best regards,

Ray Spinelli

---

From: Ed Shapiro [mailto:ed.shapiro23@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 2:27 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: I'm in favor of a Bike/Pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks.

Hello,

I support a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ed Shapiro
431 coates Drive
Aptos, Ca.95003
Hello,

I am a longtime Santa Cruz county resident and business owner. I fully support initiatives that increase opportunities for healthy recreation of all kinds, for everyone.

I specifically would like to express my support of converting the railroad tracks to a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder. The county's main thoroughfares and Highway 1 are choked with cars. Providing safe transportation options for bicyclists to get from one end of the county to the other would encourage more people to commute on their bikes. This would also be a great way to connect communities along the tracks by getting families (and dogs!) out for walks and rides.

Best regards,

Michelle Thomsen
CFO
Soekris Engineering, Inc.
3600 Glen Canyon Road, Suite 1
Scotts Valley, CA 95066-4923

---

Hello -

I support removing the train tracks to create a safe path from Manresa to Wilder. I think this would be a great addition to the area and alleviate alot of congestion along the HWY1 corridor..

Thanks,
Keith Venes

---

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of building a 20' wide bike/pedestrian trail between Manresa State Beach and Wilder Ranch.

I have lived in La Selva and now reside in Rio Del Mar, I frequently ride my bike at Wilder Ranch and between Rio Del Mar and downtown Santa Cruz and I would greatly welcome a way to safely ride between those communities.

With best regards,

Gabi Estill

---

I am a resident of Aptos and live in the village. The train tracks running through our town create a great opportunity to provide a safe, clean way of getting from one part of the county to another by putting in a bike/walking path. My kids already use the rails as a way to get from one side of town to the other, it would be great if it was
made safer and allow bikes to use it without bouncing along the railroad ties. A train would be more noisy and not be used by locals as a way to get around. Maybe as a tourist train, but that does not seem feasible. I feel that pulling out the rail and ties and putting in a paved or gravel path would serve our community best!

Thank you,
Robin Cabak
621 Cathedral Dr.
Aptos, CA

From: David Giannini [mailto:davidgiannini@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 4:42 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No rail shift thank you!

I am writing to express my frustration with the plan to keep the rails in place on the coastal rail trail. A wide path would server cyclists and pedestrians. The expense to keep the rails is way too much. The ROI on the rail move has got to be infinite.

Thank you,
David Giannini
Santa Cruz, CA

-----Original Message-----
From: Cybele Candau [mailto:ccandau@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 6:15 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail trail

I fully support the removal of the tracks and the creation of a biking/walking trail. I live In Rio Del Mar on Sumner, and a maintained safe trail would be such a nice replacement to the current broken glass, graffitied space now. It would be safer for kids to get to school than along Sumner.

Please make this positive change to our community!
Cybele Candau

From: Calcagno Mail [mailto:calcagno@calcagno-mail.net] On Behalf Of seaire@drcalcagno.com
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2014 8:02 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail trail for our community

April 7th, 2014

To whom it may concern,

We feel that it would benefit our entire community to have a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016. If we start planning now, the tracks could be removed and the safety and investment of health for future generations would be improved immensely.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sue Ellen Calcagno

James C. Calcagno, DDS
4100 Portola Drive
Suite #2
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
To Whom It May Concern:
I am writing to recommend the construction of a 20-foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016. In my opinion, it is imperative that the tracks are removed to build a unique, beautiful, and useful trail to connect our county. As a homeowner whose home directly abuts the tracks, I am in full support of making our county more accessible. Please contact me for further information or clarification.

Sincerely,
Steve and Rebecca Hambright
135 Sandpiper Lane, Aptos, CA 95003

We are writing to recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the RR tracks. We live at 517 Spruce Street and have been walking our dog down the RR tracks for years already and would highly support making this a nice path or trail!!!

Aptos Residents
Scott & Holly Taylor

Dear sirs:
I have enjoyed walking on a pedestrian trail that was created from a railway right of way in Whittier, CA. I was impressed with this creative use of otherwise unused land.

The creation of a 20 ft. wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch (by removing the tracks) would inspire many more to enjoy the magnificent scenery in the area, and might help our health, as well. I hope that you will consider moving forward with this proposal so that by 2016 we might enjoy the resulting trail.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Bill Niemand

Hello. My name is Cheryl Johnson and I am a really responsible, forty-something year old woman. I live in Aptos. I am happily married with two kids. I was born and raised in Santa Cruz, went to college in San Luis Obispo, and have been back in this lovely part of the world for about 16 years. I live in Seascape, near "the tracks".

I have not been following any of the details of the proposed "Rail Trail". I have just been quietly waiting/hoping that this happens some day, because it make PERFECT SENSE. There are so many fitness enthusiasts in this town, so many people that want to take long walks and long bike rides, so many people that want to simply enjoy this beautiful town we live in. The tracks are old, dirty and completely UNSAFE. If would be really impressive if Santa Cruz actually
made this Rail Trail happen. This beautiful, ridiculously expensive town we live in has little to offer in terms of infrastructure. I would use the rail trail DAILY, like many others, and this will only result in HAPPY, HEALTHY people.

Thank you,
Cheryl Johnson

From: Pete Kinkead [mailto:pete@kinkead.name]
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2014 7:52 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: rail trail

I recommend a 20 foot wide bike/pedestrian trail from Manresa to Wilder Ranch by 2016 by removing the tracks