

Item 20: Highway 1 Widening: State Park Drive to Freedom Boulevard

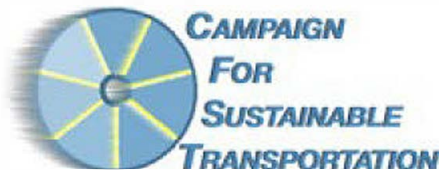
Friends of the Rail and Trail has the following comments on tomorrow's agenda.

We support staff's recommendation of "... Strategy 1, Caltrans/RTC Hybrid, with Caltrans being the implementing Agency for construction of Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Should portion of the project ... (including the two pedestrian overcrossings and the two **rail bridges**) and the RTC being the implementing agency for the construction of the Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 portion of the project." We support this recommendation because it focuses on the strengths and experience of each team member. While there will be some increased staffing and support costs, they appear reasonable. We also appreciate that the two rail bridges are within Caltrans scope of work. Are all the project elements, including the replacement of the two rail bridges, part of the \$200 million project construction cost estimate?

Sincerely,

Matt Farrell
Board Chair
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT)

From: [Rick Longinotti](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission;](#) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Questions for Item 20 Auxiliary Lanes
Date: Sunday, November 2, 2025 7:34:08 AM



Rick Longinotti, Chair

To: Regional Transportation Commission
Via email

Dear Commissioners,

On Item 20 of your November 6th meeting discusses the construction of auxiliary lanes from State Park Dr. to Freedom Blvd, as well as Segment 12 of the rail trail. I hope you will take this opportunity to ask some questions about the project.

1. What is the Purpose of the Project?

Linda Wilshusen, Emeritus RTC Executive Director (1985-2005), commented on the Draft EIR for this project: “The data in the DEIR/EA itself demonstrates no sustained traffic-relief benefit from this Project. The Project does not accomplish the stated Purpose and Need”.

Given that voters were told in 2016 that Measure D would provide relief from traffic congestion, and that the Caltrans EIR finds no sustained relief, shouldn't the RTC re-evaluate this project?

The State Park to Freedom auxiliary lanes were not part of the Measure D Expenditure Plan that voters approved in 2016. The RTC voted to add this section to the Measure D Expenditure Plan several years later. Since that time, this project has moved forward without a clear “Yes” from the Commission. At our urging, the RTC voted in February 2024 to direct staff to "bring the final environmental impact report (EIR) for the Highway 1 Bus-on-Shoulder and Auxiliary Lane from Freedom Blvd. to State Park Drive and Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail project at the appropriate time to make findings.” Yet the Final EIR has never been put on the RTC agenda. Hence the Commission hasn't had the opportunity to consider comments like those of Ms. Wilshusen that discuss the failure of the project to meet project goals.

We urge the Commission to evaluate the auxiliary lanes under construction for their performance in reducing congestion before committing to this project.

2. What Is the Cost of the Project?

There are conflicting reports on the cost of this project.

- The staff report states, "The current estimated construction cost (capital + support) of the entire Project is **\$200 million**, with about 70% to 30% split in cost between the Highway and the Trail, respectively."
- The [Fact Sheet on the RTC website](#) states that the project will use \$106.8 million in Measure D funds and \$137.3 million in grant funds, for a total of **\$244 million**.
- The Measure D 5-year plan in your current agenda packet (p324) states that the project will use \$129 million in Measure D funds. (This is \$5 million more than in [last year's Measure D 5-year plan](#).) Adding the grant funds of \$137.3 million results in a sum total of **\$266.3 million**.

3. What Is the Impact on Measure D Funding?

According to your current agenda packet (p 339) if the RTC adopts the staff recommendation to take charge of the rail trail construction, this will add a cost of between \$12-15 million.

What are the impacts to Measure D funding of this additional expenditure?

4. What Is the Scope of the Project?

The current scope of the project includes demolition and replacement of two railroad bridges, involving purchase of additional right of way. If the RTC decides not to proceed with passenger rail, would the rail bridges need to be replaced? Additionally, the project assumes the construction of the "ultimate trail", when the RTC has not yet determined whether to proceed with the interim trail.

Thank you for your consideration,
Rick