

Plan C: Community Needs, Choice, Corridor Mobility and Climate Protection

(A Plan offered by the Campaign for Sensible Transportation)

The intent of this Plan is to work toward a Transportation System for Santa Cruz County that includes both private and public transportation modes serving all segments of our community, with the goal of increasing mobility throughout the county and beyond. The system we envision is also designed to reduce the need for and use of the single-occupant vehicle as the primary transportation mode. If we can create such a system we can take pride in doing so.

We are keenly aware that the current functioning of Highway 1 between Santa Cruz and Watsonville is not effective. The route is congested. To deal with this situation we suggest a multifaceted approach, which includes projects directly related to the Highway 1 corridor, including the modification of intersections and on-ramps to include metering and bypass lanes, institution of transportation demand management (TDM) and transportation systems management (TSM) programs, and the provision of increased support for short distance travel by pedestrians and bicyclists.

The total cost for this Plan is approximately \$340 million.

It could be funded by a half-cent sales tax lasting 20 years.

Other funding mechanisms, such as a 10-cent per gallon gas tax or an increase in the vehicle license fee could prove more palatable, but we do not yet have sufficient knowledge to make a recommendation, so we are not recommending any particular funding strategy. No doubt there will be polling related to this topic.

A principal feature of this Plan is that it does not include adding traffic lanes to Highway 1 between Santa Cruz and Watsonville. There are several reasons leading us to this approach:

1. If the addition of traffic lanes to Highway 1 (whether HOV or not) is included in a ballot measure, there will be significant opposition to the measure, and the measure is not likely to gain the necessary 2/3 vote.
2. Any project that would add lanes for the full distance is too costly for the available resources of our small (and not overly wealthy) county. To devote the bulk of our resources to the widening of Highway 1 is likely to mean that other projects, such as those described in this Plan, will end up short-changed. This is what is happening now. We are also aware that construction costs for typical Highway 1 widening projects are very likely to increase with time, perhaps dramatically, owing to the increasing cost of the energy required to produce and deliver the asphalt and concrete needed for construction. Therefore we may expect cost overruns.

3. A significant result of adding lanes (which would increase the capacity of the highway) will be to increase both the number of vehicles on our local streets and the need for additional parking spaces. This will be especially true at the north and south ends of the widened highway.
4. There is a large opportunity cost resulting from the inclusion of the project that would add lanes to the highway, since this project, once constructed, cannot be easily undone. If the widened highway fails to solve our transportation problems, what then?

Therefore, we drop the project that would add lanes to the highway, and work instead to develop less expensive and possibly more effective measures to enhance the mobility through the corridor and to meet perceived community needs. We discuss projects that seem worthy of consideration and analysis in the following paragraphs, in the same order as they appear on the attached spreadsheet.

Local road maintenance (\$70 million)

Every community in the county currently lacks sufficient funds to maintain its local streets. These needs are now well-documented. In addition to focusing on local streets in each community, attention could also be given to enhancing mobility on routes parallel to Highway 1 (*e.g.*, Soquel Drive and frontage roads) through improved signal timing, appropriate turn lanes and elimination of bottlenecks, similar to treatment recently given to Capitola Road.

Highway 1 projects (\$74.2 million)

- Allocate funds to rebuild Highway 1 on-ramps, in order to incorporate ramp metering and on-ramp bypass lanes for access by buses, emergency vehicles and carpoolers.
- Conduct origin/destination studies so as to define particular mobility bottlenecks and problems. For example, how many commute from the South County to jobs in the North County (or vice-versa), or how many commute to jobs over the hill, or what fraction of Highway 1 users travel for only short distances? Our Regional Transportation Commission has yet to conduct comprehensive origin/destination studies within the Highway 1 corridor and so cannot answer these crucial questions. The knowledge of such data will allow our transportation planners to design particular remedies that could draw from other items on this list.
- Provide for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Systems Management (TSM) programs. Such programs might include rideshare and van pool incentives, car-share programs, parking cashout and telecommuting, and might focus on large employers such as UCSC, Dominican Hospital, Cabrillo College and various government entities.
- Pedestrian and bicycle bridges spanning Highway 1 at key locations. Currently those wanting only to cross the freeway at locations between interchanges must either use

a car or travel an inconvenient distance to do so. Improving pedestrian and bicycle access through bridge construction would reduce the need for auto use.

Rail-related projects (\$74.5 million)

Provide for projects related to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, including needed safety improvements to the rail line, starter passenger rail service, recreational use of the rail line, support for the Pajaro Station (which will provide access to CalTrain and Amtrak), and design of the long-planned rail trail network. Funding is already available (approximately \$20 million) to acquire the rail corridor, and the acquisition is currently being negotiated with Union Pacific. It is expected that these rail corridor negotiations will be successful. Also included in this category is a small amount (\$0.5 million) to study the feasibility for the use of PRT (personal rapid transit).

Bus system projects (\$68 million)

Provide for capital improvements to our heavily used but underfunded (Metro) bus system, such as additional buses and the needed space to park them. Focus might be given to the most overtaxed routes, such as those serving UCSC, the San Lorenzo Valley and those traveling between Santa Cruz and Watsonville. Additional funding is also suggested to provide for the expansion of our school bus fleet.

Specialized transportation modes (\$55 million)

- Provide for the needed Mobility Management Center to benefit the specialized transportation facilities serving the elderly and disabled.
- Provide for a Safe Routes to Schools program, with particular focus (at least 75%) on capital infrastructure projects that would include sidewalks, bicycle lanes or paths and other projects that would benefit those traveling to schools. Special focus should be given to routes in the San Lorenzo Valley and Scotts Valley.

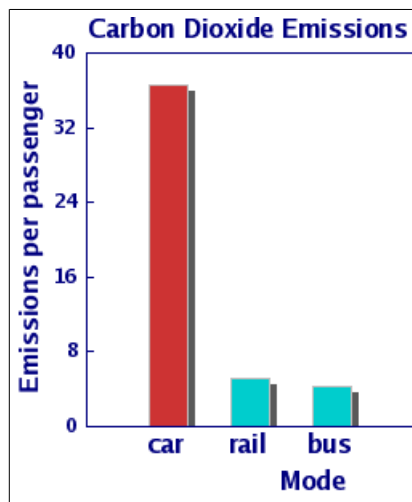
Special programs (\$2 million)

This program would require cooperative transportation and land use planning among Santa Cruz County, its four cities, and transportation agencies, in order to create a balanced, safe and efficient transportation system and to manage the impacts of growth. It could be patterned after policies now in effect in Contra Costa County (included in their successful transportation sales tax measure passed in 2004—see <http://www.ccta.net/EXTENSION/TEP/TEP.pdf>).

The item amounts suggested in the above list (which now sum to a total of approximately \$344 million) are necessarily just suggestions, intended to be modified

through further analysis of each item (or possible addition or subtraction of items from the above list).

Finally, each project undertaken should include an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and impacts on global climate change. Such analyses will become increasingly mandated in California and throughout the country. The City of Santa Cruz already requires CEQA analysis of global warming impacts. The bar graph is from George Monbiot's *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning* (Doubleday, 2006). Forty percent of carbon dioxide emissions currently originate from private automobiles.



This is not meant to constitute a detailed Expenditure Plan for a ballot measure. Instead it is a more fluid approach, since (a) we do not have sufficient data to define our transportation problems in detail, and (b) there will be sufficient time prior to November 2008 (the next opportunity for voter input) to develop a well formulated ballot measure.

A spreadsheet summary of Plan C appears on the next page.

- May 2, 2007

Project	Plan C	
Local road maintenance		
Road maintenance and repairs	70	
Sub total		70.0
Highway 1 projects		
Ramp metering and ramp bypass lanes	50	
Origin/destination study	0.2	
TSM/TDM efficiency programs	14	
Pedestrian/bicycle bridges	10	
Sub total		74.2
Rail-related projects		
Pajaro Station	10	
Rail line upgrades and starter passenger rail service	48	
Rail trail network	16	
PRT feasibility study	0.5	
Sub total		74.5
Bus system projects		
Metro bus service expansion	40	
School buses	28	
Sub total		68.0
Specialized transportation modes		
Mobility management center for elderly & disabled	15	
Safe routes to schools (75% infrastructure)	40	
Sub total		55.0
Special programs		
Transportation/Land use cooperative program	2	
Sub total		2.0
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Grand total		343.7
Years at \$17 million per year: 20.2		
See text for a more detailed discussion of the above projects.		