

# Review of Options to Improve Transportation in Santa Cruz County

## **Background**

In the 2002 United Way survey, Santa Cruz County residents ranked traffic as the number one issue that detracts from the quality of life in this county. Despite efforts to encourage people to use alternative transportation, the automobile continues to be the primary mode of transportation in this county and many residents feel that local officials have failed to provide the leadership required to improve transportation. An example of this lack of leadership is the failure to widen Highway 1 (Hwy 1). County residents are demanding that transportation be improved and that after 50 years of service the current Hwy 1 must be widened.

There are several government agencies in Santa Cruz County responsible for transportation including:

- Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (Transportation Commission)
- Santa Cruz Metro Transit District (METRO)
- Santa Cruz County Public Works Department
- Public Works Departments of the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville
- UCSC Planning Department
- California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)

These organizations are involved in defining transportation policy, pursuing and allocating funds, operating the bus service and constructing and maintaining local roads. The major transportation policy and funding decisions are the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission.

The Transportation Commission was created in 1972 by state law and serves as the regional transportation planning agency for the County of Santa Cruz. The commission has twelve members: five members of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, one member from each of the incorporated cities (Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville) in the county, and three members appointed by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Board. The State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) serves as a non-voting member of the Commission. The purpose of the commission is to:

- 1. Set priorities for major capital improvements to our transportation infrastructure, including highways, major roads, rail and alternative transportation facilities.*
- 2. Pursue and allocate funding for all elements of our transportation system.*

3. *Adopt policies to improve mobility, access and air quality.*
4. *Plan for future projects and programs to improve the regional transportation system while improving the region's quality of life.*
5. *Inform businesses and the public about alternatives to driving alone and the need to better manage our existing transportation system.*
6. *Conduct programs to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes.*

*Source: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission web site ([www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org)).*

The commission generally meets the first Thursday of each month in the County Board of Supervisors Chambers and has several committees that meet throughout the month. The commission has a staff of 15 people including administrators, policy analysts, and engineers. The commission maintains an extensive web site at: [www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org).

## **Scope**

The Grand Jury focused its investigation on the following transportation topics:

- A. Highway 1 Corridor
- B. Highway 17 Corridor
- C. Passenger Rail Service
- D. Express Bus Service
- E. UCSC and Harvey West
- F. 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Highway 1 Intersection
- G. Transportation Commission Membership

## **Fieldwork**

During the course of the investigation, the Grand Jury:

1. Conducted eight interviews with transportation officials in the county.
2. Reviewed numerous public studies, reports and surveys.
3. Reviewed numerous web sites and newspaper articles.
4. Conducted driving surveys of roads and Park and Ride facilities.

A complete list of sources and field work is in Appendix A.

## **A. Highway 1 Corridor**

### **Introduction**

The most significant transportation issue in Santa Cruz County is congestion on Hwy 1. After many years of debate, the Transportation Commission is moving forward with multiple projects to widen Hwy 1. The first project, known as the Hwy 1/17 Merge Lanes project, will improve the Fish Hook by adding additional merge lanes to the intersection and a third lane in each direction on Hwy 1 from the Fish Hook to Morrissey Boulevard. This project is approved, funded and construction will begin in the fall of 2004. The remaining Hwy 1 Widening Projects are expected to be funded by the proposed half cent sales tax increase that will be on a ballot measure in the November 2004 election.

### **Findings**

1. Widening of Hwy 1 has been a topic of discussion before the Transportation Commission since 1986.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

2. In a 1999 Transportation Commission survey of county residents, 72 percent of those surveyed supported widening Hwy 1.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
GENERALLY AGREES**

*The SCCRTC administered public opinion polls of likely voters in 1999 and 2002. Both polls asked how much need likely voters felt there was for widening and improving Highway 1. The 1999 poll found that those expressing a "great need" and "some need" combined equaled 76%. Those categories for the 2002 poll equaled 79%.*

3. In the 2002 United Way Community Assessment Project, Santa Cruz County residents ranked traffic as the number one issue that takes away from the quality of life in this county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

4. The Transportation Commission has ranked the Hwy 1 Widening Project as the number one priority for the commission.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

5. Construction on the current Hwy 1 was started in the 1950s and was completed in the early 1960s.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The section from Freedom Blvd. to Airport Blvd. was improved to state highway standards and widened to add climbing lanes in 1972.*

6. The population of Santa Cruz County in 1950 was 66,534 and by 2000, increased by 284% to 255,602, almost 4 times the number of people.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*The population in 1960 was 84,209.*

7. Hwy 1 and Hwy 17 experience average daily traffic volumes of 110,000 and 66,000 vehicles respectively. This traffic includes trips originating or ending in the county, not just trips within the county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
GENERALLY AGREES**

*These figures represent Caltrans 2001 average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts at the most heavily traveled section of the highways: for Highway 1 this section is between Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard and for Highway 17 between Highway 1 and Pasatiempo.*

*Average annual daily traffic is the total volume for the year divided by 365 days. The traffic count year is from October 1st through September 30th. Very few locations in California are actually counted continuously. Traffic counting is generally performed by electronic counting instruments moved from location throughout the State in a program of continuous traffic count sampling. The resulting counts are adjusted to an estimate of annual average daily traffic by compensating for seasonal influence, weekly variation and other variables that may be present.*

8. Under the current proposals construction on the first phase of widening Hwy 1 (aka Hwy 1/17 Merge Lanes) will start in 2004, 50 years after the start of construction on the current Hwy 1.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
GENERALLY AGREES**

*Current State fiscal constraints may affect funding availability for many transportation projects statewide, including the Highway 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes project.*

9. Elected officials in the City of Santa Cruz consider the Mission Street Widening Project a success.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The City of Santa Cruz can confirm this finding.*

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

*Additional landscaping, street lighting, and utility undergrounding are underway to improve the aesthetics and safety.*

10. The Water Street/Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive corridor extends from Mission Street in Santa Cruz to Aptos Village and parallels Hwy 1. The lane configuration varies from 2 to 4 lanes in numerous places along the route, has numerous stop lights and stop signs, has right lanes that force the driver to make a right turn, and a confusing intersection at Morrissey Boulevard, Soquel Avenue, and Water Street which is called the “Weave.” The City of Santa Cruz and the County of Santa Cruz have made improvements in numerous sections on this corridor in the last few years.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors AGREES**

*The County agrees with this finding as it pertains to its own jurisdiction, but cannot comment on those portions that pertain to other jurisdictions.*

11. Santa Cruz County and the cities in the county have a backlog of hundreds of unfunded transportation projects.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*The 2001 Regional Transportation Plan includes over 225 projects identified by local jurisdictions and agencies which could be constructed only if new funding sources become available.*

12. The Transportation Commission currently plans to put a measure on the November 2004 ballot to approve a 30-year, half cent sales tax increase to support transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
GENERALLY AGREES**

*It is not yet determined which agency will actually sponsor the ballot measure, the SCCRTC or the County Board of Supervisors.*

13. The half cent sales tax increase is expected to generate over \$1 billion in revenue over 30 years, \$506 million for the Hwy 1 Widening Project debt service and \$580 million for other transportation projects.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*The Preliminary Financial Plan assumes an accelerated schedule for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV project and passage of the November 2004 ½ cent sales tax measure.*

14. For the first 12 to 15 years of the sales tax increase, the current proposal is to apply 90% of the sales tax increase to pay the debt for the Hwy 1 Widening Projects. The remaining funds will be used for other transportation projects in the County.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

15. The Transportation Commission is debating an alternative proposal to end the half cent sales tax increase after 15 years when the debt for the Hwy 1 Widening Project will be paid, instead of the proposed 30 years.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY DISAGREES**

*The County Administrative Office has determined that 15 years would not be enough time to generate sufficient funds for the Highway 1 project and pay off the bond debt. An alternative Financial Plan scenario under earlier consideration was to reduce the sales tax rate from 0.5 cents to 0.375 cents in 2017 and to 0.25 cents in 2025; this scenario would leave few if any funds for other projects. The full term of the declining tax would still be 30 years. The Preliminary Financial Plan for the proposed tax measure will be finalized in 2004.*

16. The current schedule and cost estimates for the Hwy 1 Widening Projects using the Accelerated Schedule from the Transportation Commission are:

	Hwy 1/17 Merge Lanes	Hwy 1 Widening HOV Lanes	Hwy 1 Widening Extension to Larkin Valley/San Andreas Roads
Cost Estimate	\$52 M Fully Funded	\$263 M Not Funded	\$89 M Not Funded
Construction Begins	Spring 2004	2007	TBD
Construction Complete	2006	2010-11	2015-16

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
GENERALLY AGREES**

*The beginning construction date for the Hwy 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes project is currently scheduled for Fall 2004, although as mentioned earlier, this date may be affected by California's fiscal crisis; construction is estimated to take three years. Costs for all projects are in 2002-03 dollars, not escalated costs based on the year of construction. One of the first tasks for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV project environmental review consultants will be to develop information regarding the cost and timing for improvements beyond State Park Drive.*

17. Successful ballot initiatives to raise taxes for transportation projects, like Measure K in San Joaquin County, Measure B in Alameda County and Measure A in Santa Clara County required extensive voter education campaigns. Currently, there is confusion among residents of this county concerning the Hwy 1 Widening Projects and organizations opposing the project have begun campaigning against it.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The RTC oversees an ongoing broad public information program for its major projects and programs, including Highway 1 projects. Transportation planning and programming processes and decision-making are complex. Public agencies, by state law, are prohibited from participating in ballot measure campaigns, or from expending public resources for campaign purposes. The SCCRTC intends to provide informational material on the proposed ballot measure consistent with state and federal law, including the RTC's position on the measure and factual information.*

## **Conclusions**

1. Hwy 1 is the only major corridor between the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville and congestion on Hwy 1 has negatively impacted the quality of life for a large percentage of county residents for almost two decades. Traffic on this corridor includes south bound trips that continue on to Watsonville and Monterey County and north bound trips that continue on to Santa Clara County.
2. Drivers would use the Mission Street/Water Street/Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive corridor as an alternative to Hwy 1, if the route was more convenient, had fewer stops, and had two lanes in each direction with left turn lanes.
3. Today, more funding is needed for the backlog of transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.
4. The half cent sales tax increase, if approved, will generate an enormous amount of money (\$1.1 billion over 30 years) for transportation projects which could be used to fund the backlog of projects in the county. The ballot measure is significant and will require extensive voter education to be successful.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Hwy 1 Widening Projects should continue to be the Transportation Commission's highest priority project.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation continues to be the policy of the RTC.*

2. The City of Santa Cruz and the County of Santa Cruz should improve Water Street/Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive. The improvements should include expanding the streets to be two lanes in each direction with left hand turn lanes where possible, no stops signs, limited stop lights and eliminate right lanes that force the driver to make a right turn. The improvements on Water Street/Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive should be from the intersection of Mission Street/Chestnut Street to Aptos Village. The improvements to this corridor should be started as soon as possible to help alleviate additional congestion during the Hwy 1 Widening Project. The City of Santa Cruz should approve and fund the project to improve the "Weave" intersection on Soquel/Water Street before construction begins on Hwy 1. The City should promote Soquel Avenue as an alternative to Hwy 1.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The SCCRTC supports operational improvements to major arterials to improve mobility for all modes of transportation, including completion of the bicycle lane network along Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive. It is the purview of the City and County of Santa Cruz, and other cities for their areas, to propose improvements on local streets and roads for funding, consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan. At this time, due to state and federal budget constraints and the RTC's policy of Highway 1 Widening priority, few funds are available for programming to new projects.*

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council**

*The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The existing traffic pattern was implemented approximately 15 years ago and improved the operation and safety of that intersection four-fold. A master plan for the eastside has been completed and addresses further improvements in the future as funding becomes available. Soquel Avenue does act as an alternative to Highway 1 as congestion increases on Highway 1.*

**Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

*This recommendation is being implemented. See attached memo dated August 1, 2003, from the Department of Public Works.*

3. The ballot measure sponsored by the Transportation Commission should keep the half cent sales tax increase for the full 30 years and use all of the funds for transportation projects in the county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will be considered by the RTC during its deliberations on the proposed tax measure, Expenditure Plan, and Financial Plan. The RTC will make a determination on the final Financial Plan for the proposed measure in 2004.*

4. The Transportation Commission should immediately begin to educate the public on the Hwy 1 Widening Projects and the proposed half cent sales tax increase.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*See response to Finding A-17 above. This recommendation will be implemented once the expenditure plan of priority projects is developed and approved by the RTC.*

***Responses Required***

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-17	1-4	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
Santa Cruz City Council	9-10	2	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)
County Board of Supervisors	10	2	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)

## **B. Highway 17 Corridor**

### **Introduction**

The Hwy 17 corridor is the major commuter route to the Santa Clara Valley during the week and the tourist route to the Santa Cruz area on the weekends. Hwy 17's route through the Santa Cruz Mountains presents many challenges to CalTrans and local transportation officials but because of the volume of traffic, improving Hwy 17 must be a priority for CalTrans and local transportation officials.

### **Findings**

1. 66,000 vehicles per day travel on Hwy 17 and 110,000 vehicles per day travel on Hwy 1.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*See response to A-7. Caltrans reports an average annual daily traffic (AADT) of 60,000 vehicles on Highway 17 at the Santa Cruz-Santa Clara County line for the year 2002.*

2. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 20% of Santa Cruz County commuters commute to a job outside of Santa Cruz County.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*According to the 2000 Census, this percentage has not changed appreciably in the past decade.*

3. Most of those who commute to Santa Clara County commute over Hwy 17. The primary modes of commuting over Hwy 17 are single occupancy vehicles, car pools, and the Hwy 17 Express Bus Service. Other alternative modes of commuting like biking, walking, commuter train, and light-rail are either impractical or do not exist.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

4. Prior to seeking funding for major transportation projects, government agencies are required by the state of California's Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) to conduct a Major Transportation Investment Study (MTIS). In 1998, the Transportation Commission released the Major Transportation Investment Study (MTIS) for the Watsonville to Santa Cruz Corridor. The MTIS evaluated several transportation alternatives in the corridor

including rail transit, bus service expansion and widening Hwy 1. The Transportation Commission selected the Hwy 1 Widening Project as the preferred alternative to improve transportation in the Watsonville to Santa Cruz corridor.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY DISAGREES**

*ISTEA was legislation enacted by the federal government, not the state of California. Current federal statutes do not require major investment studies. The outcome of the 1998 MTIS was a list of preferred projects including (in order of approved funding amounts): Bus service improvements to fund a 15-year growth plan at approximately 4% per year, local road improvements, widening Highway 1 with high occupancy toll/vehicle lanes, acquiring the Union Pacific rail right of way, establishing a bicycle/pedestrian path along the rail right-of-way, constructing priority bicycle projects' and an electric bicycle program to encourage use by those who commit to drive less. The Highway 1 Widening/HOV project was determined to be the SCCRTC's highest priority project as an outcome of the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan.*

5. In the mid 1990s, the Transportation Commission conducted an operational study to improve Hwy 17. This study looked at improving Hwy 17 with enhancements to the road including additional turn outs and left turn lanes, truck climbing lanes, improved enforcement by the CHP, and enhancements to the bus service. This study was not as extensive as an MTIS study.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*Other studies which have been conducted of Highway 17 over the past decade include: Intelligent Highway System Project Study Report, Truck Climbing Lane Project Study Report (PSR), Highway 1/17 Interchange PSR, Highway 17/Granite Creek Road Interchange PSR, Highway 1/9 Intersection PSR, Highway 17 Transportation Study, Highway 17 Rail Study and the Highway 17 Task Force List of Operational Projects. Initiatives implemented over the past fifteen years to improve the safety on Highway 17 include: increased CHP enforcement, SAFE Call Box System, Freeway Service Patrol, Vanpool Incentive Program, Rideshare Program, Don't Drive 1 in 5 Campaign, Highway 17 Safety Campaign, the Highway 17 Express Commuter Bus Service, Traffic Operations System Oversight Committee for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and the installation of Changeable Message Signs and other ITS improvements.*

6. In the early 1990s, the Transportation Commission conducted a study of rail service between Santa Cruz and San Jose. The study estimated that building train service to San Jose would cost from \$370 million to \$640 million. At that time, the Transportation Commission determined that the project was too costly.

Previous estimates to reestablish rail service were \$55,000 in 1940 when the rail line was destroyed by mud slides and \$50 million in 1971.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*In 1977, Caltrans released a report entitled Feasibility of Railway Service: San Jose-Santa Cruz. This report estimated construction costs of \$37 million, not \$50 million.*

*The Santa Cruz-Los Gatos Rail Corridor Feasibility Study, prepared for the Joint Policy Board (Santa Clara County Transit District, SCCRTC & SCMTD) in 1995 presented five separate alternatives for passenger rail service over the Santa Cruz Mountains. The lowest capital cost estimate for any of the alternatives, in 1994 dollars, was \$370.9 million. The highest estimate was \$646.2 million. In addition to cost, impacts to mountain residents and lack of political will precluded further consideration of the proposed service.*

*It should be noted that these studies looked at the ‘over the hill’ corridor between Santa Cruz and Los Gatos/San Jose, rather than the ‘around the hill’ route through Watsonville and Gilroy to San Jose. No information is available to the SCCRTC regarding a 1940 rail cost estimate.*

7. Federal and State grants are available to fund capital projects for rail service. These grants can cover up to 50% of the cost of a rail project.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*While Proposition 116 funds require a 50% match for non-intercity rail projects, other funding sources require a 20% match, or no match. For some federal funding grants, state funding can be used as a match. Most available state and federal funds are programmed by the RTC for projects in Santa Cruz County.*

8. The Transportation Commission is proposing a half cent sales tax increase over 30 years that will generate \$1.1 billion for transportation projects. The Hwy 1 Widening Project debt service will use \$508 million of the \$1.1 billion revenue from the sales tax increase.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*See response to A-13.*

9. The 2001 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan list of goals states “Support Park and Ride lot development where appropriate, including links with

express bus service to key employment and education centers and other alternative transportation modes.”

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

**Response: City of Scotts Valley AGREES**

10. The Scotts Valley Park and Ride facility is poorly located in the middle of Scotts Valley which is inconvenient for Santa Cruz commuters wanting to pick up passengers. As a result, residents in and near Scotts Valley have a hard time joining car pools from Santa Cruz and mid-county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*This site is also a Highway 17 Express Bus stop and Scotts Valley transit center, which serves many Highway 17 commuters. Sustained RTC efforts to establish a park & ride lot at the Mt. Hermon Road interchange have not been successful. The SCCRTC agrees that the current location is not optimal for carpool/vanpool connections and the Commission will continue to seek alternate park and ride locations..*

**Response: City of Scotts Valley PARTIALLY AGREES**

*This finding should be directed to the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD). The SCMTD did an extensive search of vacant properties in and around Scotts Valley when they established the park and ride currently located within the City limits of Scotts Valley. Extensive public hearings were held and the location was chosen as the most appropriate. The property was purchased, constructed, and is operated by SCMTD. The location is a balance of inconvenience for those riders coming from San Lorenzo Valley and those riders coming from the Santa Cruz area. Locating the park and ride closer to the freeway would require SLV riders to pass all the way through Scotts Valley. The current location requires Santa Cruz residents to enter the City of Scotts Valley.*

*The Park and Ride facility on Blue Bonnet Drive and Kings Village Road provides a multi-modal facility for car poolers and bus riders. The site is centrally located in the City and near shopping centers, our library, senior center and post office. This facility is also located near our planned new Town Center project at the old Skypark Airport site. Therefore, the site functions well for many users and also their access to services in the City. For Highway commuters, your report points out that the Highway 17 Express has high rider-ship. Many people use the Park and Ride facility in Scotts Valley for this route.*

11. Many commuters find the Hwy 17 Express Bus Service inconvenient and some trips can take as long as two hours door to door. In spite of this, the Hwy 17 Express Bus ridership is greater than the industry standard for similar commuter bus services because there are no alternatives for people without cars.

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District DISAGREES**

*The travel time on the Highway 17 Express bus ranges from 1 hour and 5 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes depending on the time of the day. These running times are subject to traffic conditions. If METRO buses delayed, motorists in their cars would be similarly delayed. VTA buses and light rail serve destinations in Santa Clara County. Travel time from someone's house to his or her ultimate destination is beyond our ability to control.*

12. The Transportation Commission has a Bicycle Committee and an Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee. The Bicycle Committee reviews proposed bike projects and legislation, provides input on existing roadway/bikeway conditions and promotes cycling projects and programs. The Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee is a group of transportation providers, social service agencies and members of the public who meet to determine planning, funding and policy for specialized transportation to serve Santa Cruz County's seniors and people with physical and/or economic disabilities.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The advisory committees provide information and recommendations to the Commission, rather than make final determinations. The SCCRTC also has an Interagency Technical Advisory Committee comprised of staff from public works and planning departments at all five local jurisdictions, Metro, Caltrans, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, UCSC and the Transportation Management Associations (business associations).*

## **Conclusions**

1. A significant number of Santa Cruz County residents commute to Santa Clara Valley over Hwy 17 and improving this corridor should be a priority for local transportation officials.
2. The commute alternatives from Santa Cruz County to Santa Clara Valley are limited.
3. The Scotts Valley Park and Ride lot is poorly located for maximum participation.

4. Even though the Hwy 17 Express Bus Service is inconvenient, it is heavily used because there are no other alternatives for people without a car.
5. Given that there are State and Federal grants available for rail projects that cover up to 50% of the cost and the cost could also be shared with Santa Clara County, passenger rail service could be a financially viable alternative on the Hwy 17 corridor.
6. The government agencies in Santa Cruz County have spent significantly more time, effort and money improving the commute along the UCSC – Watsonville corridor than they have on the Hwy 17 corridor.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Transportation Commission should conduct a Major Transportation Investment Study of the Santa Cruz County to Santa Clara Valley corridor, similar to the 1998 MTIS of the Santa Cruz to Watsonville corridor. The study should look at alternatives for improving both commuting and general transportation in the corridor. One of the alternatives to be studied should be commuter train service between Santa Cruz County and Santa Clara County.

#### **Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The numerous studies and projects referenced in our response to Finding B-5 identified improvements to Highway 17 and the feasibility of re-establishing rail service 'over the hill.' The SCCRTC has this information available to them and has selected alternate transportation priorities. Caltrans is currently proposing to review the status of Highway 17 safety and operational improvements as part of a proposed major highway rehabilitation project.*

2. The City of Scotts Valley should install a Park & Ride near Hwy 17.

#### **Response: City of Scotts Valley PARTIALLY AGREES**

*Scotts Valley has identified some parking opportunities off La Madrona Road adjacent to Highway 17. With some striping and signing, we could immediately provide approximately 12 parking spots. Longer term, as development occurs in that area, we will be cognizant of exploring park and ride opportunities with the development of properties in that area. However, as commercial development occurs in this area, business owners will undoubtedly complain of all day parking on streets in front of their businesses.*

*We have partially implemented the recommendation by adoption of a policy in the Gateway South Specific Plan which governs development at the Mt. Hermon Road*

*interchange to consider provision of a park and ride facility in private development sites, where feasible. However, the cost and availability of land has proven that private developers are unwilling to provide extra on site parking for such a facility. City funding for such a project is also infeasible at this time. The City of Scotts Valley would be willing to work with the Regional Transportation Commission on a grant funded park and ride if funding becomes available. We have also approved a provision to increasing on-street parking in the La Madrona Drive area, and will be improving parking when development occurs in that area.*

3. The Hwy 17 Express Bus service should coordinate schedules with the Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA) to reduce the overall commute time for people who use the Hwy 17 Express Bus.

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District PARTIALLY AGREES**

*Santa Cruz METRO operates the Highway 17 Express Bus with the Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). While Santa Cruz METRO operates the buses, the planning and funding of the service is provided and split equally by both agencies. The JPA requires that both parties meet to plan the operation of the service. The nature of the service is that there are two (2) connections in Santa Cruz County, Dominican Park & Ride Lot and the Scotts Valley Transit Center. In Santa Clara County, there are similarly two connections that are desired, Diridon Station for CalTrain, and downtown San Jose for the VTA Light Rail and Buses. The time required to travel over Highway 17 is a fixed unit of time. There are times when a connection is workable on one side of the hill but ceases to be viable on the other. As of late, with both VTA and Santa Cruz METRO making service cuts, connections have proven more difficult to maintain. Additionally, CalTrain has made schedule changes without informing Santa Cruz METRO, breaking the connections that were established. Santa Cruz METRO will continue to work towards efforts to maximize connections and reduce travel times for the Highway 17 Express, subject to the above constraints.*

4. The Transportation Commission should form a Commuter Committee, similar to the Bicycle and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committees, to focus on improving commuting to Santa Clara Valley and within the county, and to improve local road conditions.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation is not warranted and will not be implemented. An evaluation of the SCCRTC committees in 2001 considered and rejected this suggestion. The majority of Regional Transportation Improvement Program funds, which includes all funding sources allocated by the SCCRTC, are designated for state highway projects and projects on local streets and roads*

*(65%). Street and road advocates include most local residents, businesses, city and county public works departments, and Caltrans. These latter public entities and others form the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee which advises the SCCRTC on funding allocations.*

**Responses Required**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-10,12	1,4	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
Santa Cruz Metro District	11	3	90 Days (Sept.30, 2003)
City of Scotts Valley	9-10	2	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)

## **C. Passenger Rail Service**

### **Introduction**

For over 80 years, passenger train service was available in Santa Cruz County with a route to the north through the Santa Cruz Mountains and from the south along the coast on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The Santa Cruz Mountain route was destroyed by mud slides in 1940 and passenger service ended on the southern route with the end of the Sun Tan Special in 1959. Freight service still continues on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. This section of the report will examine the current alternatives for passenger rail service using the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

### **Findings**

1. A 1999 Transportation Commission survey of Santa Cruz County residents found that 70 percent of those surveyed supported rail service in the county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

2. The Transportation Authority of Monterey County (TAMC) is working with CalTrain and Amtrak to offer passenger rail service in Monterey County with stops in Salinas, Monterey, Castroville, and Pajaro. The current plan is to offer three types of train service – commuter service operated by CalTrain, passenger service operated by Amtrak and intercity Service operated by TAMC. Under the current proposal, CalTrain commuter service could start as soon as 2007. The CalTrain commuter service would stop in Salinas, Pajaro, and Gilroy and continue north to San Francisco. TAMC expects 1,000 passengers per day will use CalTrain to commute from Monterey Bay to Santa Clara County. TAMC also estimates that 300 to 400 of those passengers will depart from the Pajaro train station and 80% of the Pajaro passengers will be from Santa Cruz County. The startup costs for the extension of CalTrain service to Salinas are estimated to be \$32 to \$46 million with a significant portion of the capital funds coming from State and Federal grants. TAMC is purchasing the Monterey Branch Line from Union Pacific and expects to complete that acquisition by the end of 2003. TAMC is working with Amtrak and the state's Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) to add a new daily train between San Francisco and Los Angeles with stops in Monterey County. The final proposed train service establishes inter-city rail service between San Francisco and Monterey County. The service would have 2-3 trains daily with an anticipated fare of \$25 for a round trip. This service is expected to start operating two years after the CalTrain commuter services starts.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*TAMC has been coordinating with Caltrain and Amtrak on three separate and unconnected passenger rail scenarios for Monterey County:*

- *Intercity Service between Monterey and San Francisco;*
- *New Amtrak frequency between San Francisco and Los Angeles (Coast Daylight);*
- *Caltrain to Salinas.*

*There is no proposal for TAMC to serve as the operator of any of these three potential passenger rail programs.*

*Caltrain Commuter Service would stop in Salinas, Pajaro and Castroville, meeting existing Caltrain service in Gilroy. TAMC expects that 900 passengers per day will use Caltrain to commute from the Monterey Bay area to Santa Clara County and 274 of those passengers will depart from Pajaro Station.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District**

*Santa Cruz METRO sees no finding for the agency to respond to.*

3. The Transportation Commission is in the process of purchasing the Santa Cruz Branch Line from Union Pacific to preserve it for future transportation uses which could include passenger rail service, recreational rail service and a bike trail. In 2000, the Transportation Commission allocated \$10 million for the acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Line. The Transportation Commission is also applying for \$11 million in Proposition 116 funds to acquire the rail line. Proposition 116 was passed in 1990 and authorized a \$1.9 billion bond for rail projects. Applications for Proposition 116 funds must include a proposal for passenger rail service. To meet the application requirements, the Transportation Commission is considering a recreational rail service from Capitola Village to Seascape on the weekends. This service would be operated by a private company and not receive funding from the county. Two private recreational rail companies have expressed an interest in providing the service. If the Transportation Commission does not use the Proposition 116 funds by 2010, they will lose the funds to another county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The Coastal Rail Trail will be for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Also, the recreational rail service is proposed to operate during weekdays and weekends for approximately three months/year (120 days maximum).*

4. The Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) is a commuter train service from Stockton to San Jose. ACE was created using \$117 million of startup capital with 51% of the capital coming from Federal and State Grants. In May of 1997, San Joaquin Railroad Commission (SJRR), the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA), and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) created the ACE Joint Powers of Authority (JPA). ACE started train service on Oct. 19, 1998 with two trains and today operates three trains running from Stockton to San Jose. In Fiscal Year 2001, the ACE carried an average 1,800 to 2,000 passengers per day and passenger revenues covered 51% of the \$8.3 million in operating expenses.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

*ACE service began in October of 1998 with 2 daily round trip trains, and continues today with three round trip trains. Service is Monday through Friday. In FY 00/01, the ACE carried an average of 1,800 to 2,000 round trip passengers per day. In FY 01-02, the ACE carried twice as many, or 3,600 to 4,000 passengers.*

5. Prior to the start of the ACE train service, residents living near the train track publicly stated concerns about potential noise problems. After the start of the train service, the residents found the train noise to be negligible.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*ACE can confirm this finding.*

6. The Transportation Commission has conducted at least two studies that looked at rail service along the Hwy 1 corridor – the 1998 MTIS for the Watsonville to Santa Cruz Corridor and the 1998 Around the Bay Rail Study.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

7. The 1998 Major Transportation Investment Study on Alternatives for the Watsonville to UCSC corridor included passenger train service in three of the alternatives in the study. The least expensive rail alternative was a light-rail train service from Watsonville to Harvey West that included 18 train stations from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. The study estimated that this service would cost \$292 million to implement. Transportation officials in Santa Cruz County believe that the consultants should have evaluated other rail alternatives more appropriate for Santa Cruz County.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission PARTIALLY AGREES**

*All MTIS alternatives included capital costs for bus service and transportation demand measures; therefore the cost estimates are not only for rail improvements. The consultants performed the analysis of rail and other MTIS alternatives at the direction of the SCCRTC.*

8. The 1998 Around the Bay Rail Study looked at proposals to combine the independent efforts of Santa Cruz County and Monterey County to bring rail service to the Monterey Bay area. At the time of the study, each county was pursuing intercity passenger rail from San Francisco/San Jose to Santa Cruz and Monterey. Santa Cruz County desired a seasonal weekend passenger rail service that linked to the San Francisco Bay area through existing CalTrain, Capitol Corridor and/or ACE train services. Monterey County desired an extended weekend train service that linked to the San Francisco Bay Area by direct service from CalTrain's San Francisco station. The study recommended that the two counties work together on a combined passenger rail project and create a Joint Powers Authority to run a passenger train service.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

9. Santa Cruz County has not implemented the recommendations of the Around the Bay Rail Study.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

10. The ACE train service and the CalTrain Extension to Salinas projects are two recent examples of passenger rail projects in the Bay Area. The ACE train is in operation and the CalTrain Extension to Salinas is being implemented by Monterey County and CalTrain. The actual and estimated costs for these projects are:

	Altamont Commuter Express (Actual)	CalTrain Extension to Salinas (Estimate)
Rail Line (miles)	75	25
Stations	9	3
Startup Capital	\$117 M	\$32-\$46 M
State/Federal Funding	54%	TBD
Annual Operating Costs	\$8.5 M	TBD

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission PARTIALLY AGREES**

*ACE has 86 miles of track and 10 stations. TAMC can confirm the Caltrain extension findings.*

11. A project to extend train service from Pajaro to the City of Santa Cruz would be similar to the ACE and CalTrain Extension to Salinas project. All three of these projects have similar issues related to cost of upgrading the rail line, acquiring the rail line, building the train stations, acquiring trains and operating the train service.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission PARTIALLY AGREES**

*Costs for passenger rail service between Pajaro and Santa Cruz would depend on the type of service proposed, number and design of stations, and the type of rail technology used.*

12. The Transportation Commission conducted several train demonstrations using the Santa Cruz Branch Line in 1996. The ACE train service has offered to lend Santa Cruz County trains for demonstrations.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

13. The Transportation Commission has a Bicycle Committee and an Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

**Conclusions**

1. ACE was able to quickly create a successful train service that serves close to 2,000 people a day.

2. Monterey County is leading the Monterey Bay area with commute alternatives that will benefit residents of both Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. Monterey County is funding most of the project.
3. Train service could be implemented based on the proposals in the 1998 Around the Bay Rail Study.
4. The 1998 MTIS Study's cost estimate for a stand-alone light-rail service in Santa Cruz County was an order of magnitude (10 times) higher than the actual and estimated costs for building an intercity rail service in the area that has a limited number of stops in the county and is connected to other train services in the San Francisco Bay Area (i.e. CalTrain, ACE and the Capitol Corridor). The actual costs for building and operating an intercity train service in Santa Cruz County that is connected to rail services in the San Francisco Bay Area are closer to the costs associated with the ACE and CalTrain Extension to Salinas projects.
5. All passenger rail projects on the Santa Cruz Branch Line would have some common tasks including acquisition of the rail line, improving the rail line to passenger rail service levels, building train stations and acquiring/leasing trains. So rather than making a commitment to a particular train service, a commitment could be made to passenger rail service and to making the improvements required for any type of passenger rail service.
6. The interest and support level in the Santa Cruz County for rail service is as high as support for the Hwy 1 Widening Projects and should be a priority for the Transportation Commission.

## **Recommendations**

1. The Transportation Commission should financially support the efforts of Monterey County and CalTrain to bring commuter train service to Pajaro.

### **Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*Funding for the Pajaro Rail Station is currently on the list of projects under consideration for the 2004 ballot measure expenditure plan. The RTC is planning to hear a presentation from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County at its November 2003 meeting regarding the status of TAMC's rail line acquisition and rail planning efforts.*

2. When CalTrain commuter service begins at the Pajaro station, the METRO should offer Express Bus service from multiple locations in the county including Santa Cruz, Capitola and Aptos to the train station in Pajaro.

### **Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The RTC agrees that connecting bus service should be provided to and from the future Pajaro Station; however, its implementation is under the purview of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District DISAGREES**

*Santa Cruz METRO staff has been actively involved in a planning effort with agencies from both Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties regarding the planning for commuter rail service to Pajaro Station. As part of these efforts, Monterey Salinas Transit, the transit provider for Monterey County, has committed to provide connecting service from Pajaro Station to the Watsonville Transit Center. Express Service to Watsonville has been a high priority for Santa Cruz METRO, and with a major generator such as a rail station in Pajaro, it would be expected that demand would increase. Santa Cruz METRO will evaluate the economics of added service that will service passenger rail service to Pajaro Station, at the time a commitment to provide rail service is made.*

3. The Transportation Commission should work with TAMC and CalTrain to implement the recommendations of the 1998 Around the Bay Rail Study.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation requires further analysis. TAMC's priority is to implement intercity passenger rail service between San Francisco and Monterey, as well as the extension of CalTrain to Salinas. The SCCRTC is currently working to acquire the Santa Cruz Branch rail line for future transportation purposes. It may be feasible and desirable in the future to consider this recommendation.*

4. The Transportation Commission should begin to perform the tasks common to any passenger rail service including acquisition of the rail line, improving the rail line to passenger rail service levels, building train stations and acquiring/leasing trains.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*A portion of this recommendation is currently being implemented. The SCCRTC is negotiating with Union Pacific for the acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and hopes to complete the acquisition in 2004; a draft Project Study Report for recreational rail service has been completed; and an environmental impact report has been initiated for the proposed recreational rail segment between Capitola and Aptos/Seascape. Union Pacific has recently made improvements to the tracks which will facilitate existing freight operations as well as future passenger rail/rail transit service. The SCCRTC will work with local jurisdictions to identify potential future rail station locations and transit oriented development opportunities in general plan updates.*

5. This service should have a limited number of stations and the proposed stations should be Santa Cruz (Harvey West), Mid-County Area and South County Area. The stations should also serve as Park and Ride facilities.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation requires further analysis and is not within the scope of the currently proposed recreational service. As noted in the response to Finding C-11, the number of stations depends on the type of rail service, technology used and purpose of the service (commuter/transit, recreational, etc.). In general, more stations make rail service accessible to more users; fewer stations allows for more express service between fewer destinations.*

6. The Transportation Commission should work with the TAMC, CalTrain, and ACE to determine which passenger train services could be implemented based on rider interest, economics, availability of trains and existing projects currently underway. Priority should be given to working with TAMC and CalTrain to bring CalTrain service to Santa Cruz on a daily basis. This project could piggyback on the work of TAMC and CalTrain to bring CalTrain service to Pajaro.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will not be implemented at this time. Santa Cruz county residents will have adequate access to the proposed CalTrain service at Pajaro.*

7. The Transportation Commission should create a rail set-aside fund dedicated to rail projects in the county. A portion of the revenue from the half cent increase sales tax increase should be put into the rail set-aside fund. This portion should be at least 5% or \$50 million over the 30 year life-time of the sales tax increase. The rail set-aside fund, combined with matching Federal and State grants, could generate \$100 million for rail projects in Santa Cruz County. The rail set-aside fund should be included in the 2004 ballot measure for the half sales tax increase.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The SCCRTC will consider this recommendation as it develops the Expenditure Plan for the proposed transportation sales tax measure.*

8. The Transportation Commission should conduct additional train service demonstrations within the next 12 months. The demonstrations could be conducted using equipment borrowed from existing commuter train services like CalTrain or ACE.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation cannot be implemented without the consent of Union Pacific, current owners of the rail property. Recent efforts to bring the Colorado Railcar's new Diesel Multiple Unit to Santa Cruz County were not successful due to Union Pacific policies.*

9. The Transportation Commission should create a Passenger Rail committee similar to the Bicycle and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committees. This committee should examine how Santa Cruz County can support CalTrain service to Pajaro and how to extend passenger train service to Santa Cruz County.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will not be implemented at this time. See response to Recommendation B-4. In the past, the RTC had a Rail Oversight Committee, which later became the MTIS Oversight Committee, and which then became the current Transportation Policy Workshop of the RTC. This monthly RTC Workshop reviews a range of issues pertinent to major projects such as Highway 1, rail planning and related tasks. If consistent with its planning programs, the RTC may consider such a committee in the future.*

**Responses Required**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-13	1-9	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
Santa Cruz Metro District	2	2	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)

## **D. Express Bus Service**

### **Introduction**

The METRO bus service is always looking for ways to improve service and increase ridership. More efficient trips would make the bus service appealing to a larger group of riders. This section looks at alternatives for improving Express Bus service.

### **Findings**

1. The METRO operates bus service throughout the county, as well as administers Paratransit service for those with disabilities.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*The METRO funds and oversees the Americans with Disabilities Act-mandated paratransit program called ParaCruz. This and other paratransit programs are operated in Santa Cruz County by Lift Line/Community Bridges.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

2. According to the Transportation Commission's 2001 Regional Transportation Plan, "Nearly one third (32 percent) of Santa Cruz County residents – notably children, the elderly, disabled, and low income individuals and families who cannot afford a car (including college students) do not drive a personal vehicle."

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

3. In a survey of interest in alternative transportation, 15.1% of respondents said they would use the bus if it was more frequent and convenient.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The SCCRTC cannot confirm this finding (survey not identified).*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

4. The METRO currently has a route (#91) that runs between Santa Cruz and Watsonville and stops at the major shopping areas and educational institutions.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*Route 91 serves downtown Santa Cruz, Cabrillo, and downtown Watsonville, but does not stop at UCSC or the Capitola Mall.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

5. There are several factors that determine the duration of a bus trip including, the number of stops, traffic congestion, and the duration of the stops. More stops on a bus route lengthen the duration of a bus trip. Also, the process of boarding a bus and paying the fare extends the time of the stop. These factors combine to make trips on the bus very long and inconvenient for riders.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The latter part of this statement is subjective.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District PARTIALLY AGREES**

*All of the factors discussed in the finding are relevant, but in order to serve a large number of people, the bus must stop and board riders. Each stop makes it more convenient to riders (shorter walk distance), but also adds to the length of the trip (travel time). Santa Cruz METRO is interested in exploring low-cost Transportation Systems Management approaches to reduce travel time in congested corridors. Yield-to-Bus is one of these type approaches.*

6. The city of Curitiba, Brazil, has created a hybrid system that combines the features of rapid transit with buses. Curitiba has built bus stops that are similar to rapid transit stops. Customers pay their fee before boarding the bus and the bus stop platform is level with the floor of the bus. This allows people in wheel chairs to wheel straight on to the bus without having to have the bus kneel down for boarding. This greatly reduces the amount of time at a stop.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

*The city of Curitiba is an excellent example of a city which implemented, over course of 25 years, a fully coordinated regional approach to land development and provision of transportation and community services. The success of Curitiba has been attributed to strong, visionary, and sustained leadership by the City's Mayor, combined with a comprehensive application of progressive urban and regional planning principles.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District PARTIALLY AGREES**

*While this type of approach does have a positive impact on reducing the time to board a bus, it does greatly increase the capital expenditures for a bus route. Secure platforms need to be constructed with fixed fare gates to control access. Each transit stop would require multiple fare collection devices. The bus stops themselves would need to be*

*elevated in order to allow for direct access to buses. The stations would need to have wheelchair ramps and or elevators so disabled individuals could get to the platforms. As discussed in the recommendations section, METRO is not in a position to construct this type of system.*

7. Most residents in the county use single-occupant vehicles as their primary mode of transportation.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

8. The county has a limited number of Park and Ride lots that are primarily used for commuting to work.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

*Many of the park and ride users are also students.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

9. The Hwy 1 corridor between Santa Cruz and Watsonville is the most traveled corridor in the county.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District AGREES**

10. Congestion on Hwy 1 is occurring at various times during the day, not just at commute times.

## ***Conclusions***

1. The roads in the county, particularly Hwy 1 are congested and increased use of the METRO Bus Service would decrease congestion.
2. To reach a new segment of ridership, the METRO could create Express Bus Service similar to the Curitiba system that has fewer stops and quicker stops. Curitiba style bus stops could be used as train stops in the future.
3. The Express Bus Service route could be along UCSC – Santa Cruz – Capitola Mall – Cabrillo College – Watsonville corridor with Park and Ride lots along the route. Passengers could walk, bike, ride a feeder bus or drive to the Park and Ride lot.

## **Recommendations**

1. The METRO should create new Express Bus Service or modify existing Express Bus Service, similar to the Curitiba system in Brazil. This would involve building Curitiba style bus stops and running a service with limited, shorter bus stops.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The additional lane in the Highway 1 Widening/HOV project will be used by carpools, vanpools and buses (high occupancy vehicles) during peak commute periods. Amenities to facilitate express bus service will be considered during project design and while some of these may be feasible, others may not. Converting existing arterial street lanes to exclusive bus use will cause significant additional traffic congestion unless a large proportion of car drivers decide to stop driving and shift to other modes. It will be challenging if not impossible to develop a Curitiba type of rapid bus system in Santa Cruz County without the associated full coordination of transportation, service, and land use planning at a regional level (See also response to Finding D-6).*

2. The first route the METRO should consider for the Curitiba style of service should be the UCSC – Santa Cruz – Capitola Mall – Cabrillo College – Watsonville Corridor.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*See response to Recommendation D-1 above.*

3. These new stops should also serve Park and Ride lots located between major destination stops. The METRO should create Park and Ride lots located between the major destination stops so that car drivers do not enter congested areas.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation requires further analysis as part of the Highway 1 Widening/HOV project. Park and Ride lots are generally developed on vacant land adjacent to freeway interchanges and require approval by local jurisdictions.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District**

*Santa Cruz METRO disagrees with these recommendations.*

*The Curitiba System in Brazil has been a big success. It was designed as a bus system that acts like a light rail system. Fares are prepaid using stops that are like train stations. Fares are paid to enter the platform and then entry and exit from the vehicles is not constrained by the payment of fares. This system has its own right-of-way in the center of a major street in Curitiba. It does not serve Park-and-Ride lots and it is a service that operates in a dense corridor that warrants frequent service beyond that of a traditional bus route, but below that of light rail. There is a large capital cost to build the infrastructure (not as large as Light Rail), which at this time has no funding source*

*available. The advantages of such a system would be seen if Express Buses used the Highway 1 HOV Lane and had stations constructed at key points along the Highway, rather than requiring the vehicle to venture far from the Highway.*

*Santa Cruz METRO is interested in other Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) strategies that can be used in corridors to speed up the travel of buses and give them priority over cars. These would include the construction of "Queue Jumpers", Bus Priority at traffic signals, etc. These low-cost improvements can show improvements in travel time, thereby making use of the bus more attractive. At this time, METRO is not in a position to construct Park and Ride Lots for this type of system.*

*Santa Cruz METRO will continue to look into low-cost strategies to move towards Bus Rapid Transit type approaches to deal with congestion, and to also work with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission to ensure that BRT type approaches continue to be evaluated as part of future transportation improvements.*

**Responses Required**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-9	1-3	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
Santa Cruz Metro District	1-9	1-3	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)

## **E. University of California Santa Cruz and Harvey West Area**

### **Introduction**

UCSC is the largest destination for people traveling in the county. The University is always working to improve transportation to and on the campus and to limit the use of single-occupant vehicles. The Harvey West area is a mixed use area of the City of Santa Cruz that is conveniently located near major transportation routes. For nearly 40 years the City, County and University have discussed an eastern access route to the University through the Harvey West area. In spite of the UCSC's effort, University traffic still has a major impact on parking, traffic congestion and noise on the westside of Santa Cruz.

### **Findings**

1. The Hwy 1 corridor from the westside of Santa Cruz to Watsonville has been improved or is in the process of being improved. CalTrans has completed the Hwy 1/Mission Street widening project. The Transportation Commission has approved and funded the Hwy 1/17 Merge Lane project to improve the Fish Hook area. The Hwy 1 Widening Project is the top priority project for the Transportation Commission. The only area along the Hwy 1 corridor that does not have an approved improvement project is the section of Hwy 1 from Chestnut Street to the Fish Hook in the City of Santa Cruz. The Transportation Commission has the Hwy 1/9 Intersection Project on its list of unfunded projects.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

2. The Hwy 1/9 Intersection is a bottleneck for people driving to businesses located in Harvey West and up Hwy 9 to the San Lorenzo Valley. Also, the Hwy 1 bridge across the San Lorenzo River is narrow and a congestion point. The Hwy 1/9 Intersection Project would improve the intersection and the bridge.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

*The City has worked with Caltrans to develop a project Study Report for this intersection that identifies improvements to the operation of the signal and widens the bridge. Prior requests to Caltrans to provide funding for this project have been unsuccessful. Unfortunately, it is a lower priority for Caltrans in relation to the other two projects mentioned above.*

3. The State of California owns land near this intersection that could be used as an off-ramp from Hwy 1 North to Hwy 9 North.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council DISAGREES**

*This property provides valuable economic support to the City as it is currently leased to Central Home Supply. It is the future home of a much-needed Park and Ride facility.*

4. The Metro Transit District office and the future bus depot are located in the Harvey West area.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District**

*Santa Cruz METRO notes this finding.*

*There is no finding for the agency to respond to, but METRO wishes to clarify that the project being implemented (MetroBase) is an Operating and Maintenance Facility, not a passenger facility. There are no plans to move Metro Center/Pacific Station from the downtown area.*

5. The Harvey West area is a mix of residential, retail, light-industrial, and commercial property. The City of Santa Cruz has identified the Harvey West area for future development and is proposing an Art Center in the old Salz Tannery building along the San Lorenzo River.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

6. The Santa Cruz Big Trees Branch Rail Line extends from the Beach Boardwalk, through Harvey West to Felton.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

7. An eastern access route to UCSC has been proposed through the Harvey West area for over forty years. The City of Santa Cruz and UCSC have signed an agreement on transportation issues. One of the clauses of the agreement states that UCSC will not unilaterally pursue an eastern access route until the next general plan for the City of Santa Cruz is developed which is expected to be in the 2012 to 2015 timeframe. The agreement also states that if UCSC pursues an eastern access route, the proposal must be put to vote of the residents of the City of Santa Cruz. A 1992 study found that an eastern access route to the University would reduce traffic on High Street by 47%.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

*However, the agreement states that the next General Plan is expected to be developed between 2015 and 2020, and does not include mention of a possible citywide vote on an eastern access route.*

8. Building an eastern access route to the University would require an easement through the Pogonip. The Cowell Foundation owned the Pogonip land and sold the land to the City of Santa Cruz in 1989. At the request of the University, an option was incorporated in the Purchase and Sale Agreement between the City and the Cowell Foundation, which allowed the University to build an eastern access route to UCSC over the Pogonip property. The agreement mandated that the option expire on January 1, 1999.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

9. The Pogonip does not have a well defined entrance. To use the Pogonip, people must walk, ride a bike, or drive to and park at the end of a residential street. There is inadequate parking serving the Pogonip and it is not handicap accessible.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council AGREES**

10. UCSC owns a piece of land known as Inclusion Area A, which adjoins the Moore Creek Preserve portion of the City of Santa Cruz Green Belt. The University has long range plans to develop this area for housing and/or academic buildings.
11. Traffic entering UCSC uses Bay Street or High Street to approach the entrances.
12. The intersection of Bay Street and Mission Street is a congestion point for university traffic. Bay Street between High Street and King Street is two lanes in each direction and between King Street and Mission Street but narrows one lane in each direction between King Street and Mission Street. During peak traffic times, congestion on Bay Street negatively impacts all traffic including the Metro Buses. The intersection of High Street and Bay Street does not have left turn lanes on High Street. Cars often pass other cars waiting to make a left turn which sometimes results in an accident.
13. UCSC has numerous programs to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips to the University including:
  - a. a student transit fee to pay for student bus passes.
  - b. high parking fees that fund alternative transportation to the university.
  - c. van pools.
  - d. freshman and sophomore students are not allowed to park on campus.
  - e. extensive traffic engineering studies.

## ***Conclusions***

1. The section of Hwy 1 from Chestnut Street to the Fish Hook is the only section of Hwy 1 that does not have an approved project for improvement. If not improved, congestion on this section will only get worse.
2. The Harvey West area has the potential to be a key multi-modal transportation hub in the City of Santa Cruz. A multi-modal facility that combined a train station, parking structure, Park and Ride facility and bus station could be built along the rail line in the

Harvey West area. This area could be made easily accessible to buses and cars via Hwy 1, Hwy 17, Hwy 9 and River Street. The state owned land near the Hwy 1/9 intersection could be used as an off-ramp to the Harvey West area.

3. Property in the Harvey West area could be redeveloped to better utilize the area for transportation, residential and commercial uses.
4. UCSC is doing an excellent job of providing alternative transportation to the campus. However, the University will continue to grow and traffic problems related to the University will only get worse unless something is done to improve access to the University. Improving the Bay Street/Mission Street and the High Street/Bay Street intersections and building an eastern access route to the University would significantly improve access to the University.
5. The size of the Santa Cruz Greenbelt could be preserved if the University traded Inclusion Area A for an easement through the Pogonip. If an Eastern Access to the University was built, a well defined entrance to the Pogonip with parking and handicap access could be built.

## **Recommendations**

1. The section of Hwy 1 from Chestnut Street to the Fish Hook should be improved. Improvements should include: creating two left turn lanes on Hwy 1 South turning to Hwy 9 North; widening or replacing the Hwy 1 bridge over the San Lorenzo River; and lengthening the left turn lane on North River Street at Hwy 1, so that it accommodates enough vehicles to meet the demand.

### **Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation has not yet been implemented due to lack of funding and priority status. Caltrans has prepared a Project Study Report for this project and the project is currently under consideration for inclusion in the Expenditure Plan for the proposed November 2004 transportation tax measure.*

### **Response: Santa Cruz City Council**

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented. Implementation is dependent on funding from the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and the State of California, and is not likely anytime soon.*

2. A multi-modal transportation center should be created in the Harvey West area and incorporate the Metro buses, a Park and Ride with a parking structure, a tourist shuttle, and a passenger train station.

### **Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The potential for a transit hub in the Harvey West area has been studied in the past and may be considered in the future if warranted by future conditions and policies.*

**Response: Santa Cruz Metro District PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The recommendation in this area was identified as number 3, but this involves the creation of a new entrance to the University using Encinal Street. Santa Cruz METRO has no jurisdiction over this recommendation. Recommendation number 2 involves the creation of a multi-modal transportation center to be created in the Harvey West area to incorporate METRO buses, a Park and Ride lot, a tourist shuttle and a passenger train station. Presently, Santa Cruz METRO has worked with the City of Santa Cruz in their plans to develop the Salz Tannery site. The City has been considering a project that would involve a Park and Ride lot and the possibility of a tourist shuttle. Santa Cruz METRO will continue to work with the City to explore the feasibility of a Park and Ride lot approach in this location.*

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council**

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented. The City supports such a project, but its realization is dependent on outside funding, property acquisition, and other things.*

3. A new entrance to the University should be created by extending Encinal Street to Glenn Coolidge Drive, the main road on campus. This entrance should also include an improved entrance to the Pogonip with parking and handicap access. The University and the City of Santa Cruz should discuss trading Inclusion Area A for an easement to create an eastern access route to the University.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will not be implemented. After the Phase I Summary Report by the Eastern Access Oversight Committee was completed in August 1992, future steps to create a new road in this area were deferred to UCSC and the City of Santa Cruz. The 1998 MTIS developed a feasible rail transit alignment between the Harvey West area and UCSC which may be considered in the future if warranted by future conditions and policies.*

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council**

*The recommendation will not be implemented. The City of Santa Cruz opposes the development of an eastern access to the University across Greenbelt lands.*

4. The intersection of Bay Street/Mission Street should be improved to have two left turn lanes from Bay Street to Mission Street south. The intersection of High Street and Bay Street should have left turns lanes.

**Response: Santa Cruz City Council**

*The recommendation will not be implemented. These are meritorious ideas, but they are not even on the City's list of future projects. We hope someday to add them to the list.*

**Responses Required**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-2	1-3	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
Santa Cruz Metro District	4	2	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
Sana Cruz City Council	1-9	1-4	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)

## **F. 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Highway 1 Intersection**

### **Introduction**

The Capitola Mall and the adjacent retail corridor is a popular driving destination and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue is almost always congested.

### **Findings**

1. The 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Hwy 1 intersection is often severely congested and it can take several minutes and multiple red lights for someone to drive south on 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue from Soquel Drive to the Capitola Mall. In the 1999 traffic count on 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, 45,136 vehicles traveled on 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue below Gross Road in one day.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

**Response: City of Capitola AGREES**

**Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

*This intersection is not in the County's jurisdiction.*

2. The three traffic signals at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Highway 1 are controlled by CalTrans and not well coordinated.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

*There may be improvements which could be made to signal timing in this area; however, this would be the responsibility of the City of Capitola and Caltrans.*

**Response: City of Capitola PARTIALLY AGREES**

*The three signals are maintained and programmed by Caltrans. Given the complexity of this corridor, coordination of the signals is not possible without changes to the existing traffic plans.*

**Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

*This intersection is not in the County's jurisdiction.*

3. 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue once extended from Gross Road to Clares Street but was blocked off to reduce traffic in the residential neighborhood.

## **Conclusions**

1. Altering access to Gross Road and/or changing its traffic signal would relieve congestion on the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue overpass. Traffic solutions in this problem area will require the cooperation of three jurisdictions: the Capitola, the County of Santa Cruz, and CalTrans.

## **Recommendations**

1. The traffic signals at Gross Road and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue should be modified to improve traffic flow across the bridge. This could be accomplished by eliminating turn signals on 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, limiting access to Gross Road or opening 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue through to Clares Street.

### **Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation is under the purview of the City of Capitola, County of Santa Cruz and Caltrans.*

### **Response: City of Capitola**

*This recommendation requires further analysis. Response to this recommendation cannot be accurate without completing traffic congestion modeling of the area. While modifications of the 41<sup>st</sup> and Gross Rd. intersection may in fact improve the traffic flow along 41<sup>st</sup> through this intersection, it is likely that increased congestion will result along other streets and at other intersections. For instance, opening 40<sup>th</sup> Ave to through traffic would greatly impact the intersections of 40<sup>th</sup> and Clares St. and 41<sup>st</sup> and Clares St. Restricting left hand turning movements off of 41<sup>st</sup> on to Gross Rd. would have secondary impacts on the intersections of 41<sup>st</sup> and Clares and along 41<sup>st</sup> Ave north of the City adjacent the K-mart shopping center.*

*The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Capitola is in the process of hiring an Engineering Consultant to conduct the required traffic congestion modeling along 41<sup>st</sup> Ave and develop a list of recommendations. The City RDA hopes to implement some of these recommendations with existing funding available. Other projects will be programmed as additional funding is available. The level of service concerns noted by the comment illustrate why there is value to having this area within the Capitola redevelopment project area. Tax increment financing may be a key source of funding to implement the recommendations of the traffic study.*

### **Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

*This recommendation is being implemented. See the attached memo from the Department of Public Works for specific information about the role of the County.*

2. The Transportation Commission must coordinate the improvements in the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue/Hwy 1 intersection. The City of Capitola, County of Santa Cruz and CalTrans should be involved in this improvement project.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*The SCCRTC would be happy to call a meeting to initiate efforts for improved signal timing and operations at this interchange. The City of Capitola, Caltrans, or the County would serve as the lead agency for any proposed project at that location.*

**Response: City of Capitola**

*This recommendation has not yet been implemented. The City of Capitola is willing to work with all agencies on this project. A key issue will be the identification of funding beyond what the City RDA can provide.*

**Response: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

*This recommendation is being implemented. See the attached memo from the Department of Public Works for specific information about the role of the County*

**Responses Required**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-2	1,2	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
City Council of the City of Capitola	1-2	1,2	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)
County Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz	1-2	1,2	60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003)

## **G. Transportation Commission Membership**

### **Introduction**

The Transportation Commission is the local agency responsible for transportation planning in the county and the composition of its membership heavily impacts the policies set by the Commission. The composition of the Transportation Commission was recently changed.

### **Findings**

1. In the past, the membership of the Transportation Commission was dominated by representatives from the City of Santa Cruz. At one point, five of the ten members lived in the City of Santa Cruz. Typically, the representatives from the City of Santa Cruz have opposed the widening of Hwy 1.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
DISAGREES**

*The jurisdiction of residency does not necessarily determine a Commissioner's position on issues and/or projects. Prior to 2002, membership of the SCCRTC included six representatives from local jurisdictions as well as three representatives from METRO and one from Private Operators. The METRO Board members selected their own members and the Private Operators representative was selected by the County Board of Supervisors.*

2. In 2001, the membership on the Transportation Commission was increased by two members to ensure all areas of the county are represented. The number of representatives from the County Board of Supervisors increased from four to five. Scotts Valley and Capitola now each have their own seat instead of sharing an alternating seat. The commission currently has twelve members: five members of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, one member for each of the cities in the county, and three members appointed by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Board.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
PARTIALLY AGREES**

*Membership changed in 2002. In the previous fifteen years, all cities alternated in the position of not having a directly-appointed seat, not just Scotts Valley and Capitola. Also, for the past few years, one of the Metro appointments had been a representative from the city which was not directly appointed that year. Then and now the Metro Board has non-elected representatives which may be selected as Regional Transportation Commissioners.*

3. The majority of residents in Santa Cruz County live in unincorporated areas. (135,326 out of a total of 255,602)

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

4. The current geographic distribution of the members, based on the members residence, on the Transportation Commission is as follows:

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	<b># of Representatives by Members' Residence</b>	<b>% of Representation by Members' Residence</b>
City of Capitola	4%	1	8%
City of Santa Cruz	21%	3	25%
City of Scotts Valley	4 %	2	17%
City of Watsonville	17%	3	25%
Unincorporated Areas	53%	3	25%

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
AGREES**

***Conclusions***

1. The recent adjustment to the Transportation Commission has equalized the representation between the four cities, but has diminished representation for those residents in the unincorporated areas. For instance Santa Cruz (54,593) and Watsonville (44,265) city residents each have one city council representative, one METRO representative and their supervisor for a total of three representatives. Only three of the members live in the unincorporated area of the county.

***Recommendations***

1. Membership on the Transportation Commission should be adjusted to give equitable representation to the residents in unincorporated areas. Representation on the commission could be balanced through the METRO and the Board of Supervisors appointments to the board. If this is not possible, additional legislation should be passed to adjust the commission membership.

**Response: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

*This recommendation will not be implemented because the SCCRTC just recently modified and expanded its Board composition in response to equity considerations.*

***Responses Required***

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Respond Within</b>
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	1-4	1	90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003)

## **Appendix A: Sources and Field Work**

1. Reviewed the Santa Cruz County United Way 2002 Community Assessment Project.
2. Interviewed the Executive Director and the staff of the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission (Transportation Commission).
3. Interviewed Board Members of the Transportation Commission.
4. Reviewed Transportation Commission Regional Transportation Plan.
5. Reviewed Transportation Commission documents on the Hwy 1 Widening Project.
6. Reviewed the Circulation Element of the Santa Cruz County General Plan.
7. Reviewed the Circulation Elements of the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville.
8. Reviewed the 1998 Major Transportation Investment Study for the Watsonville to Santa Cruz Corridor.
9. Reviewed the 2000 U.S. Census data related to Santa Cruz County.
10. Interviewed members of the Campaign for Sensible Transportation
11. Surveyed Soquel Avenue and Water Street.
12. Reviewed articles in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* and *Good Times*.
13. Interviewed the Executive Director and staff of the Altamont Commuter Express (ACE).
14. Reviewed budget and background information on the Altamont Commuter Express train.
15. Reviewed the Transportation Commission 1998 Around the Bay Rail Study.
16. Attended the May 1, 2003, Transportation Commission Public Hearing on Santa Cruz Branch Line Acquisition
17. Attended the March 30, 2003, TAMC Public meeting on the Pajaro Train Station.

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18. Interviewed the Executive Director and staff of the Santa Cruz Transit District (METRO).
19. Surveyed the Park and Ride lots in Santa Cruz County.
20. Interviewed the Mayor of Scotts Valley.
21. Interviewed the Director of Public Works and Traffic Engineer for the City of Santa Cruz.
22. Interviewed the Director and Staff of the UCSC Planning Dept.
23. Interviewed the Director of the Capitola Public Works Dept.

## Appendix B: County Board of Supervisors Response

### COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

#### INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: August 1, 2003  
TO: Susan Mauriello, County Administrative Officer  
FROM: Department of Public Works  
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY INQUIRIES ON TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Public Works has been asked to provide responses to two transportation related items associated with the County of Santa Cruz Grand Jury 2002-2003 report. The items include an update on proposed improvements to the Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive corridor that parallels Highway 1, and potential improvements for the 41st Avenue and Highway 1 intersection.

#### Highway 1 Corridor - Parallel Route

The Grand Jury has identified the congestion on the Highway 1 corridor to be the most significant transportation issue in Santa Cruz County. Recent voter surveys undertaken by the Regional Transportation Commission had echoed that finding. The emphasis of the Grand Jury's recommendation is that the City and the County of Santa Cruz should improve the Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive corridor between the city of Santa Cruz and Aptos Village, since it serves as the parallel route to the Highway 1 corridor. These two street segments pass within the city of Santa Cruz and the unincorporated areas of Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos.

Because the widening of Highway 1 is anticipated to be several years away, the Grand Jury has determined that it would be beneficial to have this parallel route improved in order to provide some congestion relief from the Highway 1 corridor as soon as possible and for potential detours associated with the actual construction of the Highway 1 widening project. While the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) has not indicated that they expect to detour traffic onto local streets, it is likely that all of our local east/west arterials will be impacted. Accordingly, the Grand Jury has recommended several traffic operational improvements throughout this corridor with the main objective of having two travel lanes in each direction with left-turn lanes where possible, no stop signs, and a limited number of stop lights (traffic signals).

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The Department of Public Works anticipates several projects to be constructed within the next calendar year along this corridor including two traffic signals on Soquel Drive at the Winkle Avenue and Dover Drive/Mattison Lane intersections. These improvements will eliminate two existing stop-sign controlled intersections from this corridor. In addition, another traffic signal is proposed at the intersection of Soquel Drive at Fairway Drive to provide pedestrian and vehicular operational improvements. Each new traffic signal will have exclusive left-turn lanes and protected phases for Soquel Drive traffic. These three traffic signals are currently in design and are expected to be under construction by spring 2004.

Public Works will be coordinating traffic signal timing from the Highway 1/Soquel Drive interchange to 41st Avenue. Once the new traffic signals are constructed, the department will have a coordinated plan to accommodate morning, noon, and evening peak period traffic flows. The traffic signals in Soquel Village are already coordinated, as are the two traffic signals fronting Cabrillo College.

The two intersections located at Soquel Drive/Rodeo Gulch Road and Soquel Drive/Main Street are the only traffic signals along this corridor that presently cannot accommodate left-turn lanes. Traffic signal operations at these two intersections will be evaluated to determine if these movements can be modified to accommodate protected left turns during the evening and morning peak periods. There are significant physical constraints (the bridge over Rodeo Gulch and buildings in Soquel Village) that will not allow the addition of left-turn lanes at either of these intersections.

The Soquel Avenue/Soquel Drive corridor does have two lanes in each direction between the city of Santa Cruz and State Park Drive in Aptos, with the exception of westbound Soquel Drive in Soquel Village between Main Street and Daubenbiss Avenue. This segment of Soquel Drive only has one through lane westbound due to the physical constraints between Porter Street and Daubenbiss Avenue. It would be necessary to eliminate bike lanes and parking between Porter Street and Daubenbiss Avenue to provide the necessary width to accommodate an additional westbound through lane, but the overall performance of the intersection may not necessarily improve, and the Soquel Village community would not support such changes. The critical evening peak period direction of traffic flow is in the eastbound direction and Soquel Drive does have two through lanes in this direction.

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The only stop-controlled intersection that will remain along the four-lane roadway segment between the city of Santa Cruz and State Park Drive is the Soquel Drive/Robertson Street intersection just east of 41st Avenue near Soquel Village. This intersection has been identified in previous studies as meeting warrants for a traffic signal, but it is not currently scheduled for improvements. A significant amount of right-of-way would be necessary to accommodate a new traffic signal. In addition, a circulation study would be required to determine the extent of the improvements for Robertson Street, since this roadway has severe topographical constraints. The right-of-way and financial constraints associated with this overall improvement project have delayed any action to this point. It is anticipated that the Department of Public Works will be proceeding with preliminary studies for this area in the near future.

The roadway segment of Soquel Drive south of State Park Drive has only one lane in each direction. The historic bridge over Aptos Creek and the grade-separated train crossing at Spreckels Drive restrict the potential to increase the through lanes on Soquel Drive into Aptos Village. The Planning Department is currently in the community planning process to evaluate potential land uses in the Aptos Village core area. The Department of Public Works has hired a traffic engineering consultant to analyze the traffic impacts of alternative land uses. The conclusion of the traffic report recommended two additional traffic signals on Soquel Drive at Aptos Creek Road serving the County park and Nisene Marks State Park, as well as at Trout Gulch Road. The southbound Soquel Drive approach to Aptos Creek Road would also have to be widened to accommodate an exclusive left-turn lane. A left-turn lane on Soquel Drive at Trout Gulch Road already exists.

In conclusion, the Department of Public Works expects three additional traffic signals to be constructed on Soquel Drive within the next calendar year with significant enhancements to the traffic signal coordination throughout this corridor. In addition, the intersections of Soquel Drive/Rodeo Gulch Road and Soquel Drive/Main Street will be evaluated for modifications to initiate protected left-turn phasing. The remaining stop sign controlled intersection of Soquel Drive/Robertson Street will be evaluated in conjunction with future improvements to Robertson Street.

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### 41st Avenue and Highway 1 Intersection

The Grand Jury has made a finding that the above referenced intersection is often severely congested along 41st Avenue and it can take several minutes and multiple red lights for a motorist to drive south on 41st Avenue from Soquel Drive to the Capitola Mall. An additional finding indicates that the three traffic signals at this intersection are controlled by CALTRANS and are not well coordinated.

The Grand Jury recommends that the traffic signals be modified to improve the traffic flow across the bridge. According to the Grand Jury this could be accomplished by either eliminating turn signals on 41st Avenue, limiting access to Gross Road, or opening 40th Avenue through to Clares Street.

Although the County of Santa Cruz does not have any direct responsibility for this portion of 41st Avenue, the Department of Public Works took a lead role to pursue discussions with CALTRANS and the City of Capitola late last year to determine what, if any, improvements or modifications would be necessary to coordinate the traffic signals from the Highway 1 northbound ramps to Gross Road.

At our request, CALTRANS analyzed two alternatives to improve this segment of 41st Avenue. Both scenarios would entail modifications of the 41st Avenue/Gross Road traffic signal. The first alternative would improve traffic signal operations by converting Gross Road to a westbound one-way roadway. This would eliminate eastbound Gross Road traffic onto 41st Avenue. Left and right turns onto westbound Gross Road from 41st Avenue would still be allowed. This alternative would likely have significant traffic congestion impacts at the Highway 1/Soquel Avenue intersection since all existing southbound Highway 1 traffic now entering at 41st Avenue from Gross Road would have to enter at this one intersection.

The second alternative would leave Gross Road as a two-way street but eliminate eastbound left turns and through movements out of Gross Road onto 41st Avenue. Only right turns would be allowed. This means any northbound traffic from eastbound Gross Road (either entering Highway 1 or traveling north on 41st Avenue past the interchange) would have to turn right onto southbound 41st Avenue and eventually make a U-turn at an appropriate location. The most likely location to make a U-turn would be at the 41st Avenue/Clares Street intersection. This alternative, however, could drastically reduce the intersection Levels of Service at the 41st Avenue/Clares Street intersection.

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The City of Capitola and the County of Santa Cruz have had a common improvement project scheduled for several years that would improve Gross Road between Soquel Avenue/40th Avenue and 41st Avenue (the Capitola city limit line is halfway between Soquel Avenue/40th Avenue and 41st Avenue). The City of Capitola was expected to take the lead to design and construct the improvements, but due to limited funding the design has been delayed. The City of Capitola is proposing to retain civil and traffic engineering consultants later this year to analyze the 41st Avenue corridor including modifications to the 41st Avenue/Gross Road intersection.

The Grand Jury report also identified the removal of the 40th Avenue barricade between Gross Road and Clares Street as an additional possibility for improving traffic operations along the 41st Avenue corridor. The Department of Public Works does not recommend any changes to the circulation regarding the barricade due to the potential impacts to the residents on this street. The barricade should not be removed until all of the residential parcels on 40th Avenue have been converted to commercial uses. The Planning Department should be consulted regarding this land use issue.

Please contact me or Jack Sohriakoff, Senior Civil Engineer, if you have any questions or require additional information regarding these issues.

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THOMAS L. BOLICH  
Director of Public Works

JRS:mg

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