

RESILIENTSR37



STATE ROUTE 37 POLICY COMMITTEE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, November 8, 2018
Foley Cultural Center, Lakeside Conference Room
1499 N. Camino Alto, Vallejo, CA 94590

MEETING AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS** **Chair David Rabbitt**

- 2. OPPORTUNITES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

- 3. CONSENT CALENDAR**
 - 3.1. Minutes of the July 20, 2018 SR 37 Policy Committee Meeting **Anthony Adams, STA**
Recommendation:
Approve July 20, 2018 SR37 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

- 4. PRESENTATION**
 - 4.1. SR 37 Resilient Corridor Program **Ashley Nguyen, MTC**
Kevin Chen, MTC

- 5. ACTION ITEMS**
 - 5.1. MTC Regional Measure 3 Funding Plan **Suzanne Smith, SCTA**
 - Initial Program Requests as follows:

SPONSOR	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
STA	\$15 M	Segment C - Fairgrounds Interchange
SCTA	\$20 M	Interim Segment B - PAED and PS&E
SCTA	\$4 M	PAED for Highway 37/121 Improvements
TAM	\$3M	Segments A1 & A2 Levee Study
SCTA/TAM	\$58M	Segment A & B improvements

Recommendation:

Authorization to submit Initial Programing Requests to MTC

RESILIENTSR37

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

- 6.1. SR 37 Project Coordination Opportunities **Caltrans**
 - 6.1.1. Status of Project Initiation Documents
 - 6.1.2. Update on 10-Year SHOPP List
- 6.2. Alternative Modes Update:
 - 6.2.1. NVTA – Bus Transit Feasibility Study presentation (in draft) **NVTA**
 - 6.2.2. SMART – Feasibility Study update **SCTA**

7. CORRESPONDENCE **GROUP**

8. COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES **GROUP**

9. FUTURE TOPICS

- BARC – San Pablo Bay Active Transportation Access Study
- STA – Ferry Study update
- Environmental Phase Discussion –
 - Segment B Interim
 - Segment A & B Ultimate

10. ADJOURNMENT

Next SR 37 Policy Committee Meeting: 9:30, Thurs., January 10, 2019 at a location to be determined.

Future Meeting Schedule (Pending Approval)

9:30AM, Thursday, January 10, 2019

9:30AM, Thursday, March 7, 2019

9:30AM, Thursday, June 6, 2019

9:30AM, September 5, 2019

SR 37 Policy Committee Members:

SCTA

David Rabbitt, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Jake Mackenzie, MTC Commissioner
Susan Gorin, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

NVTA

Alfredo Pedroza, MTC Commissioner
Belia Ramos, Napa County Board of Supervisors
Leon Garcia, Mayor City of American Canyon

TAM

Damon Connolly, MTC Commissioner
Judy Arnold, Marin County Board of Supervisor s
Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Councilmember, City of Mill Valley

STA

Bob Sampayan, Mayor City of Vallejo
Jim Spering, MTC Commissioner
Erin Hannigan, Solano County Board of Supervisors

MTC

Steve Heminger
Executive Director

Caltrans

Tony Tavares
District 4 Director



**State Route (SR) 37 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
 9:30 a.m., Friday, July 20, 2018
 Foley Cultural Center
 Vallejo, CA 94592**

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Chairperson, Supervisor David Rabbit, called the SR 37 Policy Committee Meeting to Order at approximately 9:32 a.m.

**POLICY
 COMMITTEE
 MEMBERS**

PRESENT:

Judy Arnold	Marin County Supervisor
Damon Connolly	MTC Commissioner, Marin County Supervisor
Leon Gia	Mayor, City of American Canyon
Susan Gorin	Sonoma County Supervisor
Erin Hannigan, Vice Chair	Solano County Board of Supervisors
Jake Mackenzie	MTC Commissioner, City Council, Rohnert Park
Stephanie Moulton-Peters	Councilmember, City of Mill Valley
Alfredo Pedroza	MTC Commissioner, Napa County Supervisor
David Rabbitt, Chair	MTC Commissioner, Sonoma County Supervisor
Belia Ramos	Napa County Supervisor
Bob Sampayan	Mayor, City of Vallejo
Jim Spering	MTC Commissioner, Solano County Supervisor

**POLICY
 COMMITTEE
 MEMBER ABSENT:**

None.

**EXECUTIVE
 DIRECTORS
 PRESENT:**

Daryl Halls	STA
Kate Miller	NVTA
Suzanne Smith (absent)	SCTA
Dianne Steinhauser	TAM

**EXECUTIVE
 DIRECTORS
 ABSENT:**

None.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Anthony Adams	STA
Janet Adams	STA
Thor Anderson	Common Ground
Tom Bartee	Senator Bill Dodd's Office
James Bezek	Solano County
Steve Birdlebough	SCTLC
Adam Brand	SCTA
Allison Brooks	Bay Area Regional Collaborative
Patricia Brown	Resident
James Cameron	SCTA
Davis Carlson	ESA
Jessica Davenport	State Coastal Conservatory
Mike Davis	ICF

Dan Dawson	Marin County
TJ Deutz	United Bridge Partners (UBP)
Elizabeth Dippel	Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART)
Andrew Dohrmann	TY Lin
Barry Eberling	Napa Valley Register
Pat Eklund	Mayor of Novato
Bill Emlen	Solano County
Shannon Fiala	BCDC
Jean Finney	Caltrans
Rick Fraités	Marín Audubon Society
Becky Frank	Caltrans District 4
Andrew Fremier	MTC
Maureen Gaffney	ABAG/SF Bay Trail
Seana Gause	SCTA
Norman Gilroy	Sonoma
Hilary Gitelman	ESA
Joseph Green-Heffern	Solano County Resident
Teri Killgore	City of Vallejo
Kushal Lachhwani	Common Ground
Tom Leader	Common Ground
Craig Miller	Science Editor/KQED
Nick Nguyen	TAM
David Oster	Sonoma Resident
Elizabeth Patterson	Mayor, City of Benicia
Cory Peterson	STA
Erik Prince	TLS/RBD
Barbara Salzman	MAS
Lee Sandahl	Legislative Advocates ILWU
Frazier Schilling	UC Davis
David Schonbrunn	TRANSDEF

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

John Diamonte, representing Regional North Rail, proposed that no new money go to State Route 37 expansion. He suggested that any new money go towards a rail causeway connecting Sears Point to Vallejo. Mr. Diamonte stated that this was a pivot point for transportation in this region and we must move toward an oil free economy.

David Schonbrunn commented that he was misquoted in the previous SR37 Policy Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Schonbrunn referred to a copy of “Rail News” that spoke about connecting SMART with the Capitol Corridor. He stated that he would like to show a presentation regarding this concept at a future time.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

A Minutes of the March 1, 2018 SR 37 Policy Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

Approve SR 37 Policy Committee March 1, 2018 meeting minutes.

By consensus, the March 1, 2018 SR 37 Policy Committee meeting minutes were approved.

4. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Summary of Public Outreach – Corridor Plan

Becky Frank, Caltrans, presented.

Supervisor David Rabbit asked about the sample size and how participants were recruited. Ms. Frank responded that participants were recruited by posting on Craigslist. Potential participants had to answer screening questions to be selected. She mentioned this was a standard focus group format.

Mayor Bob Sampayan, Vallejo, requested to see the income breakdown slide again.

Supervisor Susan Gorin, Sonoma County, asked how many of the participants use SR37. Ms. Frank responded that they were screened and all use it occasionally and that most participants use it daily or more than 3 times per week. Supervisor Gorin asked if there were any prepared remarks about funding for improvements. Ms. Frank responded that it is common practice to have responses requesting improvements without considering payment.

David Schonbrunn, Transdef, commented that people are ignorant when they say they want to protect the environment, but don't see that their driving is hurting the environment. He stated that a 6 lane highway is "environmental insanity." He suggested decision makers work to align public expectations with reality. He stated that one of the alternatives, Alt #6, did not include rail track improvements. Mr. Schonbrunn further stated that this project was not going to be solved by asking the public.

Steve Birdlebough questioned how much transportation changes that would be taking place over the next 20 years were being considered in the development of this project. He referred to electric scooters and electric bikes and shared transportation as examples. Mr. Birdlebough repeated his request that preparations be made in regards to SR37 design for changing technologies.

Dr. Frazier Schilling, UC Davis, asked if community-wide surveys were going to be conducted. Ms. Frank replied that online surveys were offered as well as attendance at community events. Mr. Schilling requested that the public be able to provide input on the 6 options presented to the focus groups. Ms. Frank responded that the current outreach contract with Caltrans is concluded and that other efforts could continue if funding is identified. Mr. Schilling closed his remarks by stating that shared transportation, autonomous vehicles, and electric vehicles are 3 examples of technological changes that should be considered in relation to SR37 improvements.

B. Corridor Segments Update

Segment B

Kevin Chen, MTC, presented the 3 segments of SR37. He stated that segment B is the priority for improvements on the route. He stated the following goals of the project.

- Improve traffic flow
- Multi-modal use & access
- Improve resiliency
- Ecological & Hydrological enhancements

Mr. Chen commented that substantial outreach has been conducted on this project to date, more than most other projects at this point in their development. He mentioned that this outreach led them to consider alternative routes and designs. Mr. Chen discussed the current

alignment, a northern alignment along SMART Rail Corridor, and a southern alignment across the Bay. He then presented options for interim solutions to improve traffic flow, with a reversible lane configuration or shoulder-running lanes and long-term solutions that address sea level rise and climate adaptation. Mr. Chen stressed that this is a balancing act with resources and needs.

Supervisor Susan Gorin, Sonoma County, commented that there was a great range of options. She mentioned that she would like to see immediate relief around the SR37/SR121 interchange. She further stated that local access to SR37 needs to be maintained.

Segment C

Janet Adams, STA, provided an update on the bus stops being constructed at SR37 and Fairgrounds Dr. She also showed a map that depicted where bike and pedestrian improvements would take place around the interchange in order to better facilitate transit access.

Segment A

Nick Nguyen, TAM, informed the committee that TAM is planning on conducting a levee & flood control study to help inform other projects along Segment A.

Mayor Bob Sampayan, Vallejo, mentioned that improvements are needed at the Fairgrounds Dr @SR37 interchange. He thanked STA for supporting this important and needed project.

Supervisor Erin Hannigan, Solano County, stated that a Fairgrounds Dr needs improvements as it backs traffic up onto SR37 and I80 during events.

Steve Birdleough stated that moving people in shared vehicles is critical. He stated that vanpools and managed lanes need to be considered.

David Schonbrunn commented that all alternatives being considered include more cars, which is against the goal of moving more people in less cars.

Patricia Brown, Petaluma Resident, mentioned that she thought option #6 was great, but though that it being numbered as six showed that it was a last resort. She stated that people wanted transit connections to Sacramento and that the northern alignment did not satisfy transit needs.

Supervisor Gorin stated that she agrees that transit needs to be made available immediately. She also repeated that she wants to see SR37/Sr121 intersection improvements made as soon as possible.

Kate Miller, NVTA, commented that every organization involved in SR37 is considering transit options for the corridor. STA is water, Sonoma is Rail, Napa is Bus. She further stated that SMART is considering the resources that would be needed to connect to Solano.

Supervisor Jake Mackenzie, Sonoma County, asked if 2018 info on origin and destinations was available. Kate Miller, NVTA, replied that NVTA was currently undertaking gathering that information and would presenting it at the January policy meeting or shortly thereafter.

Mayor Leon Garcia, American Canyon, commented that decision makers should look at the impacts to local agencies when considering alternatives.

Supervisor Erin Hannigan, Solano County, requested that the northern alignment be removed from consideration, as it adds time, mileage, and congestion. Ms. Hannigan questioned whether it is possible to do a phase 1 project quickly and at the same time as a phase 2 long-term project. She also raised the question about the cost of each phase.

Mayor Bob Sampayan, Vallejo, stated that he echoed Leon Garcia's concerns and that on race days it can take over an hour to get from Vallejo to Sears Point. He suggested some sort of interim project in the near term to deal with congestion.

Supervisor David Rabbit, Sonoma County, suggested that no more resources are spent on considering the northern alignment. He then requested an update on cost and schedule of a reversible lane option.

Supervisor Susan Gorin, Sonoma County, stated that she agreed with Mr. Rabbit and Ms. Hannigan that the northern alignment is bad. She offered support for a reversible lane idea.

Mayor Leon Garcia, American Canyon, stated that coordinating with businesses to change work schedules should be looked at.

Daryl Halls, STA, commented that this presentation was a sneak preview of things to come. Mr. Halls stated that more details, including cost, would be coming in future meetings. He also stated that the committee would be discussing priorities for projects early next year.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Resilience by Design: San Pablo Bay Corridor

Tom Leader, TLS Architects, provided a presentation.

Supervisor David Rabbitt, Sonoma County, commented that it was good to take a look at a vision and not get caught up on what is already there.

Supervisor Jake Mackenzie, Sonoma County, stated that he was pleased to see Resilient by Design presenting and that he likes Common Ground's vision. He mentioned that he requested MTC to move forward with keeping their vision relevant.

Supervisor Susan Gorin, Sonoma County, thanked Common Ground and commented that the San Pablo Bay are first-class wetlands that need to be accessed by the public.

Supervisor David Rabbitt, Sonoma County, stated that he appreciated the light design on the landscape and that highlighting view sheds is needed.

Frazier Schilling, UC Davis, complemented the presentation and shared that he appreciates the example of the bridge from Norway being shown as it provides access to wild-life viewing.

Terry Kilgore, Vallejo, stated that she wanted to present the City's projects to the committee at a future time.

Barbara Salzman, Marin Audubon Society, commented that wetlands are very sensitive for species that inhabit them and that more public access would harm the natural environment.

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. Future Meeting Schedule

9:30 a.m., Thursday, November 8, 2018

9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 7, 2019

7. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments were offered.

8. FUTURE TOPICS

November 8, 2018

- SR 37 PSR/PDS Update Report
- RM 3 Funding Priorities
- Update on Transit Corridor Studies

March 7, 2019

- SR 37 PSR/PDS Progress Final Report
- Environmental Phase Discussion – Segment B Public Scoping Meeting

9. ADJOURNMENT



October 2, 2018

Sent Via Electronic Mail
Page 1 of 2

Steve Heminger
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

RE: STA Comments on State Route 37 (SR 37) Corridor Study and Request for Amendment to Segment C

Dear Mr. Heminger:

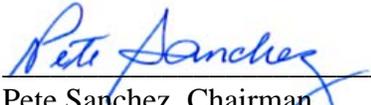
The Solano Transportation Authority (STA) requests that the SR 37 Corridor Study be amended to reflect transit and access improvements for Segment C by including the SR 37/Fairgrounds Drive interchange project as a priority for Segment C in the SR 37 Corridor Study. As the Corridor Plan was being developed, the STA Board recommended the SR 37/Fairgrounds Dr. Improvement as a priority for Segment C to accommodate future transit service and address current and future traffic congestion. The STA Board took this action at their September 13, 2017 meeting; however, the SR 37/Fairground Dr. Interchange project was inadvertently not included in the final Corridor Study.

Currently, the SR 37 Corridor Study identifies the need for transit improvements as well as flood improvements for Segment C, but the nature of the improvements were not clearly defined. The SR 37/Fairground Drive Interchange project includes the only planned transit stop on SR 37 at this time. On July 1, 2018, the STA launched Phase 1 of the SolanoExpress Bus Service to provide more efficient transit connections within Solano County and to regional transit connections such as BART, Capitol Corridor and Vallejo Ferry. Phase 2 of the planned SolanoExpress Bus Service includes a transit stop at the SR 37/Fairgrounds Drive Interchange and is scheduled for implementation July of 2019. Additionally, transportation improvements at this location are vital due to the recurring congestion on SR 37. The SR 37/Fairgrounds Drive project includes a reconfiguration of the interchange to address the congestion and will provide transit options for Vallejo’s Crest neighborhood, Six Flags Discovery Kingdom and Solano County Fairgrounds. It will serve as an anchor location for future Express Bus service for the SR 37 Corridor in addition to I-80.

On September 12, 2018, the STA Board unanimously supported the request that the SR 37 Corridor Study be amended to identify the SR 37/Fairgrounds Drive interchange project as a priority for Segment C. We appreciate the consideration of the SR 37 Policy Committee regarding this amendment request to the SR 37 Corridor Study, and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Marin, Napa, and Sonoma Counties. Feel free to contact us at (707) 399-3205 or dkhalls@sta.ca.gov if you have any questions.

STA Ltr. dated October 2, 2018 to SR 37 Policy Committee – Mr. Steve Heminger, MTC
Re. STA Comments on State Route 37 (SR 37) Corridor Study and
Request for Amendment to Segment C

With Regards,



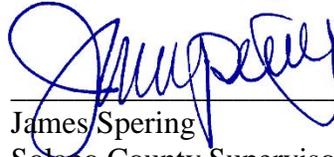
Pete Sanchez, Chairman
Solano Transportation Authority (STA)
Mayor, City of Suisun City



Erin Hannigan
Solano County Supervisor, District 1
Board Member, SR 37 Policy Committee

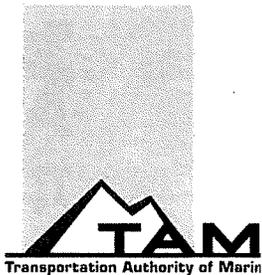


Bob Sampayan
Mayor, City of Vallejo
Board Member, SR 37 Policy Committee



James Sperring
Solano County Supervisor, District 3
Board Member, SR 37 Policy Committee

Cc: SR 37 Policy Committee
Andrew Fremier, Deputy Executive Director (Operations), MTC
Ashley Nguyen and Kevin Chen, MTC
Kate Miller, Executive Director, NVTA
Suzanne Smith, Executive Director, SCTA
Daryl Halls, Executive Director, STA
Dianne Steinhauser, Executive Director, TAM
Tony Tavares, Dan McElhinney, and Jean Finney, Caltrans



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Belvedere
James Campbell

Corte Madera
David Kunhardt

Fairfax
John Reed

Larkspur
Dan Hillmer

Mill Valley
Stephanie Moulton-Peters

Novato
Eric Lucan

Ross
P. Beach Kuhl

San Anselmo
Brian Colbert

San Rafael
Gary Phillips

Sausalito
Ray Withy

Tiburon
Alice Fredericks

County of Marin
Damon Connolly
Katie Rice
Kathrin Sears
Dennis Rodoni
Judy Arnold

October 10, 2018

Mr. Steve Heminger
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale St, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Supervisor David Rabbitt
Chairman SR37 Policy Committee
County of Sonoma
575 Administration Dr, Rm 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Subject: State Route 37 Sea Level Rise and Congestion Corridor Planning

Dear Mr. Heminger:

In January 2017, the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) submitted a letter to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) expressing its appreciation for MTC's support in addressing sea level rise and traffic congestion along the State Route 37 (SR 37) corridor from Highway 101 to Interstate 80. We remain devoted to the collaborative effort to date with MTC and the three other congestion management agencies involved. However, we are concerned about the path this planning effort has recently taken.

A UC Davis study, as well as the MTC SR-37 Transportation and Sea Level Rise Corridor Improvement Plan (Corridor Plan), has identified that the lowest elevation along SR 37 is located in Segment A. It is for this reason that Novato Creek occasionally over-tops its banks and floods SR 37, closing the highway to traffic. Most recently, this closure event occurred during January-February 2017, lasting for three weeks. Even if the congestion were reduced in Segment B and the highway were completely replaced, traffic would be completely stopped at Novato Creek due to these flood closures should additional funds for major levee and/or road improvement not be invested.

There is no question that SR 37 is a key transportation corridor linking Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties. As such, TAM values the investment MTC is making in helping to study the corridor and the resulting Corridor Plan. Since developing this comprehensive overview report of the entire corridor, the counties have identified Segment B in Solano and Sonoma counties as the priority segment, due specifically to the current traffic congestion. MTC has partnered directly with these two counties to develop a major replacement project of Segment B with no other investments in Segment A between Highway 101 and State Route 121.

While we recognize the importance of resolving the congestion in Segment B as a first phase and supported this finding at the Policy Committee level, we continue to emphasize the importance of developing and, ultimately, implementing a corridor plan spanning the entire corridor. The ultimate plan should recognize SR 37 as an interconnected system, and not as disparate segments that can be managed and viewed separately. The policy decisions around financing and phasing traffic congestion relief, public access, sea level rise adaptation and environmental restoration should be crafted with the entire corridor in mind and not one particular county or segment. This sentiment has been supported recently by various resource agencies (United States EPA and Regional Water Quality Control Board). MTC's current approach is not aligned with this principle.

We understand that MTC is currently working with Solano County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to lead a capacity improvement project consisting of either a managed reversible 3rd lane or shoulder running lanes. Development of this project is moving quickly, including environmental review, and would likely be funded by an allocation of RM3 funds. It would be conceivably constructed using managed lane tolling. Our concern with this proposal is that MTC is proposing to conduct simultaneously a separate but concurrent environmental review for the Segment B ultimate replacement project, excluding any work or review of Segment A, between Highway 101 and State Route 121.

TAM and Marin County Public Works are continuing further research into safeguarding the lands and the portion of SR 37 in this segment. Together, our two agencies have committed over \$800,000 in grants and other local funds to conduct preliminary planning for the Novato Creek area. We are identifying further work that will need to be done, to create a levee reconstruction and management project that will protect the highway from Highway 101 to State Route 121. We are currently estimating the larger evaluation to cost \$2-\$3 million, with further detailed studies and design of this effort for a total of \$15 million.

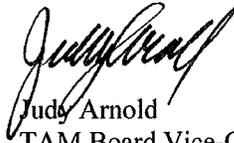
We deeply appreciate MTC's expertise and support in addressing the challenges of sea level rise adaptation and traffic congestion relief along SR 37. We value the partnership with our northern Bay Area counties and look forward to MTC coordination with our SR 37 Policy Advisory Committee in support of TAM's request for additional funds for Segment A and to study the corridor as a whole in regards to the ultimate project.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact us or TAM's Executive Director, Dianne Steinhauser, at 415-226-0820.

Sincerely,



Damon Connolly
TAM Board
Marin County Supervisor
District 1
MTC Commissioner



Judy Arnold
TAM Board Vice-Chair
Marin County Supervisor
District 5



Stephanie Moulton-Peters
TAM Board Chair
Mill Valley Councilmember

cc: SR 37 Policy Committee Members
Andrew Fremier, Deputy Executive Director, MTC
Suzanne Smith, Executive Director, SCTA
Daryl Halls, Executive Director, STA
Kate Miller, Executive Director, NVTA
Tony Tavares, Director District 4, Caltrans



Sonoma County Transportation Authority
Regional Climate Protection Authority

October 15, 2018

Laurie Berman, Director
California Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Steve Heminger, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commissions
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Ms. Berman and Mr. Heminger:

The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) had a robust discussion about State Route 37 (SR37) at our meeting on October 8, 2018, and authorized the representatives from the SR37 Policy Committee to share with you our thoughts on the needed improvements in the corridor.

SR37 represents a regional corridor that requires leadership and commitment. Both Caltrans and MTC have been part of the initial planning work – the UC Davis study funded by Caltrans, the Corridor Plan funded by MTC – but the four North Bay Counties need continued leadership from MTC and the State in the form of staff expertise, commitment of funds and support of the SR37 Joint Policy Committee. We are excited by the opportunity to create a multi-agency project delivery team that employs consultant expertise and works closely with State and local policy makers.

The highest priority on SR37 is congestion relief. Drivers face an 80-minute delay each afternoon, plus this level of congestion results in safety concerns with growing numbers of accidents in the SR37 corridor caused by congestion. Cars seeking to avoid SR37 traffic are clogging other state highways and local roads, creating safety issues there as well. The main choke point on SR37 is located in Sonoma County at State Route 121 (SR121); this area affects all travelers of the corridor and has been identified as the highest priority for improvement in the the recently completed SR37 Corridor Plan. The second most important congestion relief project is at Mare Island where drivers face in excess of 50 minutes of delay in the morning commute.

As we define viable options in the corridor, the SCTA is supportive of exploring an interim improvement between SR121 and Mare Island but we cannot lose sight of the ultimate project that will relieve congestion, withstand impacts from climate change, provide public access to San Pablo Bay and enhance the natural environment. We need a long-range vision for the corridor that includes transit, bike/ped access and non-transportation elements.

In parallel with the congestion relief work, protecting the SR37 corridor between Highway 101 and SR121 is as critical as it is complex. The lowest point on the corridor west of SR121 is near Lakeville Highway in Sonoma County. Pursuing analysis of the levee system and opportunities to shore up existing systems, prevent flooding and ensure access during storm and tidal events requires analysis

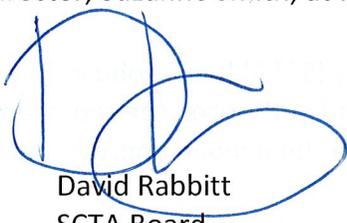
that is atypical of highway projects. We seek creative approaches to providing the most fiscally viable solutions in this portion of the corridor.

The SCTA is grateful for the support provided by MTC and Caltrans to date and we are eager to see the project advance quickly using the Regional Measure 3 funds as leverage to secure other resources. We have dedicated our staff resources to this corridor and look forward to continuing a productive partnership. Should you wish to discuss this further or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us or SCTA's Executive Director, Suzanne Smith, at 707-565-5373.

Sincerely,



Susan Gorin
SCTA Vice Chair
BCDC Commissioner
Sonoma Co. Supervisor



David Rabbitt
SCTA Board
ABAG Chair
Chair, SR37 Policy Committee
Sonoma Co. Supervisor



Jake Mackenzie
SCTA Board
MTC Chair
Rohnert Park Council

Cc: SR37 Policy Committee Members
Tony Tavares, Caltrans
Andrew Fremier, MTC
Daryl Halls, Solano Transportation Authority
Kate Miller, Napa Valley Transportation Authority
Dianne Steinhauser, Transportation Authority of Marin



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

MATTHEW RODRIGUEZ
SECRETARY FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

Sent via electronic mail – hard copy will not follow

May 18, 2018

California Department of Transportation – District 4
Ms. Laurie Berman, Director
Laurie.Berman@dot.ca.gov
111 Grand Ave.
Oakland, CA 94612

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Mr. Jake Mackenzie, Chair
blumacjazz@aol.com
1536 Gladstone Way
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Highway 37 Policy Committee
Mr. David Rabbitt, Chair
David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org
575 Administration Drive, Room 100 A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Subject: Water Board Design Alternatives Guidance and Permitting Requirements for Highway 37 Between U.S. 101 and Interstate 80

Dear Ms. Berman, and Messrs. Mackenzie and Rabbitt:

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) staff appreciates the opportunity to participate in the Environmental Working Group meetings for the State Route 37 (SR 37) design alternative assessment. We are encouraged that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Highway 37 Policy Committee (Committee) are seeking input on the many significant environmental issues associated with reconstructing SR 37 between U.S. 101 and Interstate 80. The purpose of this letter is to proactively advise Caltrans, MTC, and the Committee of our concerns and expectations for the SR 37 project (Project) so they may be incorporated into the planning, environmental documentation, and design process at an early date, so as to facilitate subsequent Water Board review, including permitting. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Project's partners and stakeholders.

Summary

This letter encourages the Project's partners to: evaluate a full range of project designs, including those that are located landward and bayward of the existing SR 37 corridor; consider an

DIC. THOMAS F. YETTER, CHAIR | BRUCE H. WOLFE, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1315 Clay St., Suite 1400, Oakland, CA 94612 | www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay



appropriately protective range of anticipated sea level rise (SLR) projections given SR 37's anticipated life and role as key infrastructure; and evaluate design alternatives with respect to not only their ability to fulfill needed transportation goals, but also with an understanding of their potential impacts to the sensitive bay and wetland environments around SR 37. This includes the alternatives' potential impacts to beneficial uses of waters both now and in the future, considering anticipated SLR. Doing that work now is likely to result in a less-impacting Project that can be more-efficiently permitted by the Water Board and other regulatory agencies, that is likely to need less maintenance or future adaptation, and that is more likely to accommodate or even benefit surrounding sea level rise adaptation projects, including tidal wetland restoration.

Project Alternatives and Design Considerations

At the February 23, 2018, working group meeting, staff from the Water Board, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. EPA described the requirement for the Project to produce an alternatives analysis that considers and evaluates a broad range of design alternatives. Consideration of a reasonable range of alternatives, and identifying the least-impacting alternative, is a requirement of various permitting processes, so this work will facilitate future permitting. The alternatives should include, but not be limited to:

- Abandoning the existing SR 37 corridor and addressing traffic congestion by improving nearby local roads and highways and incorporating multi-modal transit improvements such as adding passenger rail, ferry services, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, etc.;
- Constructing a new highway alignment to the north of the existing SR 37 corridor that moves the corridor out of the San Pablo Baylands to the extent practicable;
- Constructing a new alignment south of the existing SR 37 corridor that connects the east and west project termini via a bridge or causeway over San Pablo Bay; and
- Elevating and reconstructing SR 37 along the existing alignment.

Each design alternative will require a detailed assessment of the direct and indirect hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological impacts to the San Pablo Baylands, surrounding marsh and wetland habitats, and creeks in the project study area. For example, the alternatives analysis should address how each alternative would affect the conditions and processes that support beneficial uses of San Pablo Bay and its bayland habitats, including, but not limited to:

- Tidal flooding, wave inundation, sediment supply, habitat conditions (especially for listed species such as the salt marsh harvest mouse [SMHM]), and the potential landward transgression of the high marsh wave-built platform that is currently bayward of the existing SR 37 alignment (commonly referred to as the "SR 37 Strip Marsh");
- The SLR-driven landward transgression of estuarine habitats in the San Pablo Baylands across adjacent estuarine-terrestrial transition zones in the Marin, Sonoma, and Napa hills and lowlands;
- The movement and distribution of watershed-derived sediment, especially from the Napa River and Sonoma Creek, into the baylands;
- The movement and distribution of estuarine-derived sediment from San Pablo Bay into its baylands;

- The SR 37 embankment's condition as a vector for the rapid geographic spread of highly invasive, state-priority weeds (e.g., perennial pepperweed [*Lepidium latofolium*], stinkwort [*Dittrichia graveolens*], and Pacific bentgrass [*Agrostis avenaceae*]) throughout the San Pablo Baylands;
- The movement of wildlife between San Pablo Bay, its baylands, and adjacent estuarine-terrestrial transition zones; and
- The provision of adequate interior (non-transition zone) marsh high tide refugia for wildlife, especially listed species such as SMHM, Ridgway's rail, and black rail.

The preferred alternative should be the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative that accomplishes the basic project purpose and avoids and minimizes direct and indirect impacts to these conditions and processes and allows for natural adjustment of the surrounding habitats to SLR.

The stakeholder outreach and working group meetings have generally focused on discussing and evaluating different design alternatives along the existing SR 37 alignment. Project alternatives that have been studied for the existing alignment include elevating SR 37 on a fill embankment, a causeway, or a combination of fill and causeway. Elevating SR 37 on a fill embankment along all, or a portion, of the corridor will likely result in significant direct fill impacts to San Pablo Bay and surrounding wetlands and potentially significant indirect impacts to the physical and ecological processes that support these habitats. Raising SR 37 on a causeway would be more likely to allow for San Pablo Bay and the sensitive habitats surrounding SR 37 to more effectively adapt to future SLR.

Other considerations that should be considered while assessing project alternatives include, but are not limited to, the risk of structural failure and associated impacts to beneficial uses due to seismic activity on the Hayward-Rogers Creek Fault, which runs through the SR 37 corridor; and geotechnical challenges to constructing a new roadway on fill or piles along or near the existing alignment, such as the availability of roadway fill, feasibility of transporting significant volumes of fill to the Project, and settling and consolidation of underlying younger and older Bay Muds.

Sea-Level Rise Considerations

Consideration of design alternatives that will accommodate projected SLR in the year 2100, as the Project proposes, will require a comprehensive range of alternatives to be assessed to avoid and minimize impacts and protect the beneficial uses of San Pablo Bay, the multiple tidal creeks passing under SR 37, and the sensitive marsh habitats and listed species present throughout the SR 37 corridor.

We expect the Project's partners to apply the California Ocean Protection Council's State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance – 2018 Update (Guidance) to develop and evaluate project alternatives. The Guidance provides a science-based methodology for State and local governments to analyze and assess the risks associated with SLR and to incorporate SLR into their planning, permitting, and investment decisions. The Guidance also provides a step-wise approach to help decision-makers assess risk by evaluating a range of SLR projections and the impacts or consequences associated with those projections. The Guidance assigns statistical

probabilities to a range of potential SLR scenarios, to help planners and decision-makers contextualize the risk associated with planning for specific levels of SLR.

The range of SLR projections in the Guidance includes an extreme SLR risk aversion scenario, called H++, which is not tied to a specific emissions trajectory but should be considered for projects with a lifespan beyond 2050 that have a low tolerance for risk, including major roads and regional transportation corridors such as SR 37. The Guidance states that the H++ SLR projection for year 2100 is 10.2 feet (roughly 122 inches), but, since it is a single scenario, the Guidance does not assign it a probability (likelihood of occurrence). The next most conservative SLR risk aversion scenario (medium-high, with a 0.5% likelihood of occurrence) projects a SLR range of 5.7 to 6.9 feet (roughly 68 to 83 inches), which approximates the SLR scenario of 66 inches (plus storm surge) that has been discussed in past SR 37 working group discussions and presentations. The State and its partners will likely invest considerable public funds in modifying SR 37, and significant impacts to beneficial uses of State waters could result from design modifications that insufficiently address SLR. For these reasons we urge the Project to consider utilizing the more conservative H++ and/or 0.5% probability SLR scenarios described in the Guidance to develop SR 37 design alternatives. Where appropriate, design alternatives may consider phased paths to SLR adaptation; that is, approaches that identify sequential thresholds that trigger new phases of adaptation. The Guidance describes a decision framework for defining these adaptation pathways.

Stormwater Treatment

The Project will be required to treat stormwater runoff from all new and reworked impervious surfaces associated with the Project through low impact development best management practices (BMPs). The current location of SR 37 could make onsite construction and maintenance of stormwater treatment BMPs difficult, so incorporating stormwater treatment planning and design into the Project's early development stages will be beneficial. If stormwater treatment for all new and reworked impervious areas associated with the Project is not feasible onsite, an alternative compliance project(s) will be required to treat an equivalent area of impervious surface offsite. As such, the development of project alternatives should consider the degree to which onsite treatment is feasible and identify offsite alternative compliance projects to make up for any shortfall.

Project Segments, Stages, and Near-Term Improvements

For project planning and design purposes, the Project has been broken up into three segments:

- Segment A – U.S. 101 in Novato to SR 121 near Sears Point
- Segment B – SR 121 to Mare Island in Vallejo, and
- Segment C – Mare Island to the SR 37 junction with I-80.

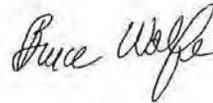
The February 23, 2018, environmental working group meeting included a discussion that the middle segment, Segment B, may be prioritized for improvements before Segments A and C. We urge the Project's partners to continue to consider all three segments together during project planning to ensure a corridor-wide vision guides the design and so that the long-term adaptation planning for Segments A and C will not be constrained by the design of Segment B.

Prior to full build-out of all of the Project's segments, near-term projects to address maintenance and flooding issues may be needed, such as the project to address flooding and closure of SR 37 west of Novato Creek in February 2017. The Water Board expects that any short-term projects will be designed, as practicable, in accordance with the future SR 37 corridor vision currently being developed. Any small-scale, short-term SR 37 projects needed prior to the full corridor build-out projects will be required to avoid and minimize impacts and mitigate for unavoidable impacts to jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Stormwater treatment must also be implemented as required by Caltrans's statewide stormwater permit and/or any Water Board permit issued for the short-term project.

Closing

Water Board staff are available to meet to discuss the above comments. We encourage Caltrans, MTC, and the Committee to continue stakeholder outreach efforts and provide regular updates as project planning and design progresses. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Derek Beauduy of my staff at (510) 622-2348 or via email to derek.beauduy@waterboards.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed
by Bruce H. Wolfe
Date: 2018.05.18
13:18:50 -07'00'

Bruce H. Wolfe
Executive Officer

cc: Richard Bottoms, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jessica Davenport, State Coastal Conservancy
Steven Moore, State Water Resources Control Board
Hardeep Takhar, Caltrans, District 4
Luisa Valiela, U.S. EPA
Larry Goldzband, BCDC



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

August 31, 2018

Melanie Brent, Caltrans District 4
111 Grand Ave.
Oakland, CA 94612

Subject: Early Coordination for the Highway 37 Project Between U.S. 101 and Interstate 80, Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Solano Counties, California

Dear Ms. Brent,

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide early coordination recommendations to Caltrans per your role as the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) lead agency and decisionmaker for future improvements to Highway 37. We understand that Caltrans participates in Environmental Working Group coordination meetings with local transportation, planning, and environmental agencies and organizations to plan for future improvements along the State Route 37 corridor. The purpose of this letter is to provide Caltrans with early feedback to assist in the design and analysis of future alternatives for meeting the transportation needs of the region, while providing for the continued environmental health of the SR 37 corridor. We note that this information is critical for future decisions and analysis pursuant to NEPA.

Over the last few decades, over \$100 million has been invested in restoring the tidal baylands that SR 37 traverses. Baylands restoration projects in this region have been implemented to reconnect natural systems that improve water quality and habitat for a multitude of species, including Ridgway's rail and the salt marsh harvest mouse. These project have also been built to plan for rising sea levels and variable hydrology. The Baylands Goals Report (1999) set the 100,000 acres tidal wetlands goal for the Bay Area, as a whole, and identified the North Bay as an area where large scale restoration should occur and extend into the watersheds of the region's major tributaries.¹

Integrated NEPA/404 MOU

The SR 37 project will be a candidate for the Caltrans, EPA, Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to merge NEPA and CWA Section 404 permitting processes for surface transportation projects that have five or more acres of permanent impacts to Waters of the United States and that require a NEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The MOU (http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/downloads/MOUs/NEPA404/nepa404_2006_final_mou.pdf) provides a framework for early coordination, including checkpoints, dispute resolution, tiering, and planning that can help refine the SR 37 project moving forward. The MOU is regularly followed using synchronized California Environmental Quality Act/NEPA processes that result in one combined EIR/EIS. We note that while the MOU includes signatories from only federal agencies, it has been used successfully for other

¹ Goals Project. 1999. Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals. A report of habitat recommendations prepared by the San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Ecosystem Goals Project. First Reprint. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, San Francisco, Calif./S.F. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, Oakland, CA

highway projects in California as a framework for coordinating equally among all regional, state, and federal resource and regulatory agencies that have permitting and authorization roles in highway projects. Key milestones include Purpose and Need, Alternatives to be analyzed in the NEPA document, and the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), further described below.

Clean Water Act Section 404

EPA highlights the following permitting requirements for potential impacts to waters and wetlands from future projects along SR 37. These can be added to the draft “Environmental Criteria for Evaluation of SR 37 Alternatives,” dated June 11, 2018, that was shared with the Environmental Working Group. EPA recommends that the following criteria be incorporated into the decisionmaking process as soon as possible, in advance of the initiation of NEPA and CWA Section 404 processes, to avoid the need to revisit decisions in the future. EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) have jurisdictional authority over CWA Section 404 permitting. Any project that proposes to place fill or dredged material into Waters of the United States will require a CWA Section 404 permit from the Corps. As part of that process, Caltrans will submit a CWA Section 404 application, 404(b)(1) Alternatives Analysis, and information to support a determination of the appropriate NEPA process before a permit decision could be made.

EPA encourages Caltrans to integrate CWA Section 404 regulatory requirements into the NEPA process for both regulatory and planning programs to streamline environmental review by using NEPA documents for multiple permitting processes. Alternatives Analysis for a CWA Section 404 permit action must comply with EPA’s 404(b)(1) Guidelines, including detailed evaluation of all practicable and reasonable alternatives that would fulfill the project’s purpose and need, including alternatives outside the legal jurisdiction of the Corps (40 CFR Section 1502.14(c)). An alternative is practicable if it is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics considering overall project purposes. The CWA Section 404(b)(1) analysis must provide a clear discussion of the reasons for the elimination of alternatives which are not evaluated in detail, and clearly demonstrate that the preferred alternative for a proposed action is the LEDPA that achieves the overall project purpose.

The LEDPA is the alternative with the fewest direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts to aquatic resources, so long as it does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences (40 CFR Section 230.10(a)). To identify the LEDPA, the environmental impacts, beneficial and adverse, of the proposal and alternatives should be presented in comparative form, thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker and the public (40 CFR 1502.14). The potential environmental impacts of each alternative should be quantified to the greatest extent possible (e.g. acres of wetlands impacted; change to water quality).

To assure that the SR 37 Project complies with the CWA Section 404(b)1 Guidelines, EPA recommends that early planning occurring now also consider what future NEPA and permitting documentation will need to include: 1) Provide sufficient information regarding appropriate hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological habitat design considerations to make a reasonable judgment discerning the LEDPA, and 2) Demonstrate that the preferred project alternative would minimize potential adverse impacts to sensitive aquatic ecosystems to the maximum extent practicable. Due to the project’s proximity to the baylands, including a diversity of creeks, marshes, and wetlands, EPA strongly encourages considering alternatives that maximize opportunities to incorporate appropriate floodplain design; incorporate sea level rise models that further long-term resiliency of the project; facilitate connectivity between inner, non-tidal aquatic habitats and tidal margins; incorporate stormwater treatment planning into the project

design; consider sediment transport processes; and provide adequate transitional zone to accommodate wildlife species in and around the project area.

EPA understands that environmental and economic concerns must be integrated and balanced for the multitude of SR 37 regional users and communities; therefore, EPA continues to support Caltrans in a strong stakeholder and community coalition engagement process to refine the LEDPA analysis. We also highly recommend that Caltrans host early coordination meetings at key milestones for the project with goal of participation by all permitting/authorization entities including the Corps, EPA, USFWS, NMFS, Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Early regulatory coordination on anticipated authorization and permitting issues can improve the documentation of the alternatives analysis and prepare the agencies for future permitting and design decisions, including future NEPA analysis.

SR 37 Corridor

Preliminary discussions with the Environmental Working Group for the SR 37 project have focused attention on Segment B of SR 37, between Sears Point at SR 121 and the eastern edge of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. We recommend that Caltrans, as the lead federal agency for NEPA, consider the entirety of the SR 37 corridor, from US 101 to SR 29/Interstate 80, when analyzing regional and local solutions for the SR 37 corridor. Focusing on a solution for only Segment B of SR37 may preclude the consideration of alternatives for transportation solutions in the project area as it will dictate the beginning and endpoint of a future roadway design immediately to the east and west of Segment B. A programmatic analysis assessing broad regional alternatives and ultimately defining a corridor to focus on would help in assessing the benefits and adverse impacts of regional solutions.

We look forward to continued discussions as alternatives are refined for the entire proposed SR 37 project and encourage Caltrans to formalize the involvement of resource and regulatory agencies so that input developed early in the process may be incorporated into future NEPA documentation. We note that there are other "Planning and Environmental Linkages" projects that can serve as a model for the use of pre-NEPA analyses and conclusions to inform future NEPA analysis and properly document planning materials so that they can be later included by reference in NEPA documents. Holding a formal kick-off meeting including regulatory and resource agencies would help accomplish the goal of documenting consultation and agency involvement. Please contact EPA if you have any questions about any of the early coordination comments provided in this letter. Carolyn Mulvihill, the lead NEPA reviewer for SR 37 can be reached at 415-947-3554 or mulvihill.carolyn@epa.gov. Jennifer Siu, the lead EPA reviewer for CWA Section 404 permitting, can be reached at 415-972-3983 or siu.jennifer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Connell Dunning, Transportation Team Supervisor
Environmental Review Section

cc: Richard Bottoms, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Gary Stern, National Marine Fisheries Service
Melissa Amato, San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Larry Wyckoff, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Derek Beauduy, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
Brad McCrae, Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Jessica Davenport, State Coastal Conservancy
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October 26, 2018

David Rabbitt, Chair, and Members
State Route 37 Policy Committee
525 Administration Drive, Room 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Via E-mail

RE: Priorities for Planning & Action

Dear Chair Rabbitt and Policy Committee Members—

We understand that during the months since the Policy Committee's last meeting, restriping of eastbound lanes near Sears Point has continued to prove beneficial, and that a number of other issues concerning the SR-37 Corridor have emerged. We also realize that congestion continues to be a concern, and that steps have been taken to integrate public transportation into the corridor planning process.

STA/WETA has begun a study of ferry service from Solano to Marin County. SMART has commissioned an engineering study of the rail corridor to Suisun City. NVTa is gathering data to determine the origins and destinations of commuters to address the feasibility of ride-sharing services. Regardless of the outcome of the November election, it is critical to assure that funding will be prioritized to take the next steps to minimize single-occupant driving in the corridor.

Experience tells us that simply adding a highway lane does not reduce congestion during peak hours, because any space offered by a new lane is quickly occupied. Unless people who travel during the times of heaviest road-use have convenient vehicle-sharing and transit alternatives, gridlock will remain. Planning to prevent such an outcome needs to begin now.

Because congestion is greatest during commute hours, it makes sense to get commuters out of single-occupant cars. They travel the same route nearly every day, and with convenient alternatives and effective encouragement, are the drivers most likely to use carpools, vans, or transit. Strategies to encourage use of such alternatives are also likely to provide ways to minimize tie-ups during the construction of SR-37 improvements.

We look forward to hearing about the status of the ongoing transit studies at the Policy Committee Meeting on November 8th, and to reviewing draft reports from the transit-related studies when they become available. Also, we encourage you to direct members of your staff to build capacity and supporting budgets that balance planning for new construction and adaptation to sea level rise with the needs for public transportation and environmental design in the corridor. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact Steve Birdlebough at (707) 576-6632 scbaffirm@gmail.com or Joe Green-Heffern (510) 912-7679 jm.greenheffern@gmail.com

We appreciate your work for the Policy Committee and the larger community.

Sincerely,



Victoria Brandon
Redwood Chapter Chair



Igor Tregub
San Francisco Bay Chapter Chair

cc: Transportation Authority of Marin,
Napa Valley Transportation Authority
Solano Transportation Authority
Sonoma, County Transportation Authority
Caltrans