

## Questionnaire for Supervisor Candidates

Kristen Brown, District 2 Candidate - Answers Highlighted in Yellow

### Question 1: Highway 1 Expansion

Do you agree with the CFST in advocating that the Regional Transportation Commission:

- Remove the HOV Lane Project from its Regional Transportation Plan
- Designate the Hwy 1 auxiliary lanes between Santa Cruz and Watsonville as lanes for buses and entering and exiting vehicles only, by use of signage and red paint on the pavement.

#### Background

##### 1. *Hwy Expansion a Failed Strategy to Reduce Congestion*

The RTC has heard from several speakers in its [Innovators in Transportation Speaker Series](#) (Jarrett Walker, Jeffrey Tumlin, Becky Steckler) that expanding highways in order to reduce congestion is a futile exercise, due to increased traffic induced by the expansion. A study by [Duranton and Turner](#) reports a 1 to 1 ratio of increased traffic to increased lane-miles. Studies observe that the full impact of induced travel occurs within ten years. This means that with HOV Lanes there will be more vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions, but no significant improvement in traffic congestion.

##### 2. *HOV Project Financially Infeasible*

According to the Unified Corridors Investment Study (2018), "Implementation of HOV Lanes on Highway 1 will require seeking a significant level of funding at a time when state and federal funding for highway capacity-increasing projects is extremely limited and therefore will not likely be implemented until after 2035."

##### 3. *False Promise of Congestion Relief from Auxiliary Lanes*

In 2016, the RTC spent over \$100,000 on a mailer to all voters in the County claiming that its sales tax measure would "ease congestion on Highway 1." This message was inconsistent with the Caltrans Draft EIR (2015) that said that auxiliary lanes "would result in a very slight improvement in traffic congestion when compared to the No Build Alternative". The EIR also estimated no safety benefit from the auxiliary lanes.

*I am in support of modifications to the RTC transportation plan that would make the HOV lane project most beneficial to transit operations and discourage single-occupancy travel.*

*Additionally, I would support signage and paint to encourage the use of the Aux lanes only for buses and vehicles entering/exiting the freeway.*

### **Question 2: Supporting the General Plan**

No amount of public transportation infrastructure can offset land use decisions that perpetuate auto dependency. The recent proposal for a Kaiser facility with 300 employees, located over a mile from the nearest bus stop, with plans for the largest parking garage in the county, would have added significant traffic on Hwy 1 and local streets. Kaiser withdrew their proposal, though they had significant support on the Board of Supervisors.

Will you oppose amending the General Plan to allow development that perpetuates auto dependency?

*I am in support of transit-oriented development and encourage growth around public transit as a means of decreasing auto dependency. I am committed to working with transit agencies to expand public transit into areas where development is proposed, especially with affordable housing development. Additionally, approval of large projects like the now-withdrawn Kaiser facility should not be approved without explicit plans to be transit-adjacent and less parking intensive.*

### **Question 3: Public Transit**

Do you believe METRO is underfunded? If so, what is your strategy to redress that?  
Do you support free transit passes for youth under 18?

#### Background

San Francisco MUNI receives revenue from City parking facilities, private parking lots (including UC Med and SF State) and developer fees. Santa Cruz METRO does not receive any funds from these sources. There is currently discussion on the METRO Board of a sales tax devoted to transit.

*Yes, I am supportive of additional funding sources for METRO , including a potential sales tax. As a METRO Board member, I voted in support of free transit passes for youth under 18 and support continuing the pilot program into the future.*

### **Question 4: Rail Corridor**

Do you support bringing electric passenger rail to Santa Cruz County and connecting to the State Rail Plan?

#### Background

- 2012 the RTC accepted state money to purchase the ROW for the purpose of implementing passenger rail
- 2021 the Transportation Corridor Alternative Analysis results led the RTC to unanimously vote that the public transit on the corridor should be electric passenger rail
- 2022 73% of the voters rejected Measure D, the "Greenway" proposal to tear out the tracks and replace them with a trail
- 2022 the RTC unanimously voted to hire HDR associates to design a general plan for electric passenger rail

*Yes, I support passenger rail in Santa Cruz County. At the most recent RTC meeting on August 3rd, I voted in favor of authorizing agreements with State agencies to use \$3.45m in Transit and Intercity Capital Rail Program (TIRCP) funding to prepare the Project Concept Report for the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail project, along with an additional \$1.63m in Measure D rail funding that was necessary for that project concept report to be fully funded.*

### **Question 5: Safe Streets for Bicyclists and Pedestrians**

In 2015 Santa Cruz County ranked #1 of 58 California counties in rate of injuries to bicyclists and #11 in rate of injuries to pedestrians. Will you vote to:

- Redirect developer fees slated for projects that increase vehicle capacity to projects that make streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians?
- Adopt Vision Zero as County policy?

*I support directing appropriate developer fees to projects that make streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. I also support adopting vision zero as a county policy. I am committed to taking intentional steps to fund safety improvements including directing developer fees toward safe streets.*

### **Question 6: Reducing Transportation Demand**

Building affordable housing near jobs and amenities is the ultimate strategy for reducing transportation demand. Will you support the following demand reduction strategies that also increase housing affordability?

- Require new multifamily development near transit to unbundle the costs of parking from the costs of renting/purchasing the unit, allowing the consumer to opt out of purchasing parking.
- Require developers who take advantage of exemptions to parking requirements to provide bus passes to tenants.

*Yes, I support unbundling the cost of parking from renting or purchasing, and providing transit passes to tenants, in order to make housing more affordable for those who choose not to drive.*