

## Questionnaire for Supervisor Candidates

### 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 a strong supporter of sustainable transportation alternatives and recognize the importance of reducing our carbon footprint and promoting environmentally friendly modes of transportation. However, it's essential to consider that the 5th District has a predominantly rural landscape, which presents distinct challenges when it comes to transportation.

In rural areas like ours, many residents rely heavily on cars as their primary means of transportation. The vast distances between homes, businesses, and essential services often make public transit options less practical. As a result, we need a transportation strategy that takes into account the diverse needs of our population.

While I support the Campaign for Sustainable Transportation's goal of reducing congestion and emissions, I also believe it's crucial to strike a balance between

sustainable alternatives and the practical realities of our rural district. We should explore a range of options that include improving the efficiency of existing roadways, enhancing road safety, and promoting carpooling initiatives. Additionally, we need to invest in infrastructure that supports the use of electric vehicles, which can reduce emissions without imposing significant limitations on rural residents.

Ultimately, the key is to create a transportation plan that respects the unique characteristics of our district and provides diverse options that meet the needs of our residents. Sustainable transportation is a worthy goal, and we should work towards it while considering the specific challenges and realities of our rural landscape.

### **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?

While I am open to reviewing and considering specific policies and proposals, I want to emphasize my commitment to finding transit solutions that reduce our dependence on cars. Sustainable transportation and responsible land use planning are essential elements of addressing congestion and environmental concerns. In evaluating any potential amendments to the General Plan or other development proposals, I will prioritize solutions that align with our goal of promoting sustainable transportation options. This includes ensuring that new developments are well-connected to public transit and encouraging alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use. However, my commitment to a thorough and balanced review means that I will carefully assess each proposal on its merits and in consideration of the needs and perspectives of our community.

### **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?

I believe that METRO's funding situation is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed. Public transit plays a critical role in reducing traffic congestion, cutting emissions, and providing accessible transportation options for our community. When elected, I am committed to actively working with our state and federal partners to explore additional funding sources for METRO. This may include pursuing grants, advocating for increased funding allocations, and seeking innovative funding mechanisms to support and improve our public transit system.

Furthermore, I am a strong advocate for providing free transit passes to youth under 18. The pandemic has had a significant impact on public transit ridership across the state, and offering free passes to young people can help revitalize ridership. This not only encourages the use of public transit among our youth but also alleviates financial burdens for families, reduces congestion on our roads, and contributes to our environmental goals by reducing emissions.

Investing in our public transit system and making it more accessible to our youth is a win-win proposition for our community. It's an essential step toward building a more sustainable and inclusive transportation infrastructure.

#### 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.

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

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

I wholeheartedly support the idea of bringing electric passenger rail to Santa Cruz County, and I have been a consistent advocate for this vision.

One crucial aspect of this endeavor is its alignment with the State Rail Plan. Connecting to the state's rail plan carries several significant benefits. First, it allows us to make meaningful progress towards our climate goals. Electric passenger rail is a sustainable mode of transportation that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote a greener future for our region. Additionally, connecting to the State Rail Plan has the potential to reach underserved communities, offering them affordable and reliable transportation alternatives. It can improve accessibility for all residents, helping to bridge gaps in our transportation network. Lastly, investing in electric passenger rail can spur economic development. It creates job opportunities, stimulates local businesses, and enhances the overall infrastructure of our county. In summary, the introduction of electric passenger rail is a forward-thinking, multi-faceted solution that aligns with our environmental, economic, and community development goals. I am committed to working tirelessly to make this vision a reality for Santa Cruz County.

I also want to highlight my strong opposition to Measure D, the Santa Cruz Greenway Initiative, which sought to tear out the rail tracks and replace them with a trail. Measure D would have had a negative impact on the 5th District, including local businesses like Roaring Camp Railroads in my town of Felton. I am proud of my volunteer work on the successful No on D Campaign.

### 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

### **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?

As an experienced road bike cyclist and a parent of children who attend San Lorenzo Valley schools, I am deeply committed to enhancing the safety of our streets for both bicyclists and pedestrians. It's concerning to me that Santa Cruz County ranked so high in injuries to these vulnerable road users. We must take proactive steps to address this issue because it hits close to home.

Regarding the idea of redirecting developer fees, this is an idea worth exploring, and I would like to further understand the impacts of this policy decision before making a commitment. I want to ensure that any policy change we make benefits our community and aligns with our broader transportation goals.

Moreover, I am open to adopting Vision Zero as a County policy. This vision aligns with my personal belief that we should do everything in our power to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. I want our streets to be places where our community can safely walk and bike without fear. It's not just a policy issue for me; it's a matter of ensuring the safety and well-being of our loved ones.

In the 5th District, the Regional Transportation Commission is currently working on a project that I strongly support – improving access to the San Lorenzo Valley schools complex in Felton. This project holds personal significance for me because it seeks to enhance the safety of students who walk or bike to school along Highway 9. I understand the concerns of parents and students, and I am committed to addressing them urgently.

### **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

I want to start by highlighting my strong support for multifamily housing development near sustainable transportation options. This is a critical strategy for reducing traffic congestion, emissions, and housing costs, all of which are essential for creating more sustainable and accessible communities.

Affordable housing development financing is a complex issue, and I am committed to making it easier for affordable housing projects to be developed. It's vital that we find innovative solutions to incentivize the construction of affordable housing, especially in areas well-served by sustainable transportation options. However, the path to achieving this goal is multifaceted and can take various forms.

The specific policy proposals mentioned, such as unbundling parking costs and requiring developers to provide bus passes, are indeed potential ways to encourage sustainable transportation choices and reduce housing costs. While I'm generally supportive of such ideas, I must stress the importance of gathering more information and conducting comprehensive evaluations before making any definitive commitments.

In our pursuit of affordable housing and sustainable transportation, it's crucial to consider the unique characteristics and needs of our community. We should explore a range of options, engage in open discussions with stakeholders, and carefully assess the potential impacts of various policies.

In essence, my commitment is to the overarching goals of multifamily housing development and sustainable transportation. I am open to exploring a variety of approaches to achieve these goals, recognizing that there are many diverse ways of doing so. As we move forward, I will work diligently to make well-informed decisions that benefit our community as a whole and contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive future.