

COAST is a Santa Barbara County regional organization promoting environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable transportation and reduced dependency on automobiles.

How to reach us

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E-mail discussion list

Participate in discussions of local and regional transportation issues; receive notices of meetings and events. Subscribing is free and easy. Just send a message to:

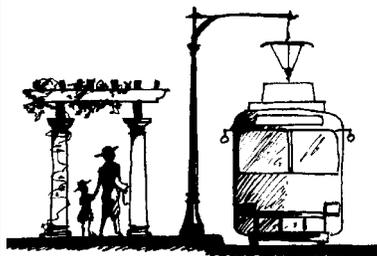
Coast-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
Leave the subject line and the body of the message blank.

COAST Happy Hour

Please join us the second Thursday of each month from 5-7 PM at the El Paseo Restaurant in Santa Barbara.

Join COAST

Support COAST by becoming a member. Just use the enclosed envelope. Thank you!



COAST NEWS

COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

FALL 2007

WWW.COAST-SANTABARBARA.ORG

Brother, can you spare a Billion?

If approved by voters in November '08 Measure D will generate \$1Billion in Santa Barbara County for transportation over the next 30 years. How that money is spent will depend on what we do in the next five months.

Measure D, the ½ cent sales tax enacted in Santa Barbara County in 1989, will sunset in 2010. This is the main local funding source for transportation, with no strings attached and safe from State control.

COAST fought long and hard to renew Measure D in 2006 because it would have allocated 43% of revenues to local and regional buses; commuter rail Oxnard-Goleta; bike lanes; safe routes to school, and traffic reduction programs.

Support for D-2006 was strong in the South Coast (64%) but weak in North County (42%). State law now requires 2/3

voter approval for a tax –it only needed 50% in 1989.

After the 2006 defeat at the polls, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) decided to try again in 2008, when a large turnout for the presidential election is expected. SBCAG voted to keep the ½ cent tax (instead of asking for an additional ¼ cent as in 2006) to improve its chances of success.

The Expenditure Plan for D-2008 will be crafted by two separate committees (South Coast and North County) to reflect the different geographical and political realities of the two regions. Furthermore, SBCAG voted to fund Highway 101 widening ("seed money", not the whole amount) south of Milpas "off the top" – before dividing revenues between North and South. *Continued next page*

Is Union Pacific All Aboard Or On A Separate Track?

By Helene Schneider, Santa Barbara City Councilmember and member of the Council Rail Sub-Committee

There's no question that establishing a commuter rail line from Oxnard to Goleta will play an important role in reducing traffic congestion. And as the needed 101 Improvements Project from Milpas to Hot Springs gets under way, residents, commuters and visitors alike are in for a stop-and-go ride as construction commences in 2008. It is imperative for us to find a way to move people from Point A to Point B in a cost-effective way - and quickly! How we connect the dots, however, is not as easy as it may appear - and the Santa Barbara Council Rail Sub-Committee has been spending its last few meetings figuring out the details.

The main player at the commuter rail table is Union Pacific (U/P), which owns the rail



line for its freight service. On April 11th, the Santa Barbara City Council Rail Subcommittee (consisting of Councilmembers Roger Horton, Grant House and myself) were fortunate to meet with Jerry Wilmoth, U/P's Network Infrastructure General Manager and Thomas Mulligan, U/P's Passenger Train Operations Director. The situation is this: while the bulk of U/P's freight moves from the Port of Los Angeles to points east via the Central Valley, our coastal rail line is their lifeline if

Please see Rail, next page



Billion, *continued from page 1*

Thus two Advisory Committees were established to draft separate Expenditure Plans by November '07 for final adoption by SBCAG in December. These Advisory Committees consist of the SBCAG representatives from each region (six from the South, eight from the North) plus a number of representatives from community and business organizations, including COAST.

In the meanwhile, COAST reconvened the "Coalition For a Fair Measure D" (CFFMD), the umbrella group for 26 organizations formed in 2006. This

Coalition has been occupied mainly with the South Coast expenditure plan, but also coordinating activities with transportation advocates in North County.

The main obstacle to a progressive expenditure plan for 2008 is the status quo. The current Measure D (D-1989) allocates 70% of revenues to local government (the eight cities and the County) for transportation purposes without specifying programs. To date, every jurisdiction –except Santa Barbara- used the lion's share of Measure D for streets and roads –not buses. Arguably, some money went to bike

lanes and sidewalks, but the overwhelming beneficiary of Measure D has been automobile mobility.

And, of course, one billion dollars can only go so far! The "no new taxes" (1/2 cent) plan may be popular, but it cannot generate enough revenue for the current road maintenance program to which Public Works agencies have become addicted, let alone pay for the buses, trains, bikeways and sidewalks expected from a balanced plan. Funding 101 "off the top" aggravates this shortage, but don't worry: COAST is here to fix everything!



Thanks to a grant from the **Fund for Santa Barbara**, COAST is again coordinating the **Coalition for a Fair Measure D**. Here we are in session:

Front row, from left: Ralph Fertig, Mark Bradley, Olivia Uribe, Eva Inbar, Diane Channing.

Back row, from left: Shiva Polevka, Geoff Green, Wilson Hubbell, Kate Bechtel, Dennis Story, Kalon Kelley, David Pritchett.

Rail, *continued from page 1*

anything goes wrong with their main route. It is more cost effective for U/P to use the coastal line than keeping the freight stuck at the ports. So, this means that U/P wants as much flexibility for their goods movement - and they're concerned that any passenger rail expansion may hinder their productivity, and thus their bottom line.

So, where's the mutual benefit? The answer = capital improvement funding: new sidings, upgrading older track, bridge repair and replacement, and upgrading the manual switches to an automated system. Both passenger and freight rail capacity requires these

improvements to increase productivity and on-time performance. Is it possible that U/P will allow for additional passenger rail trains we work together and secure such funding? That's the big question - and while U/P's representatives were reluctant to offer anything, we have to ask if they would sing a different tune if there was significant funding on the table.

There was one mutually agreed upon area to pursue, which is to re-examine the current Amtrak schedule possibly altering some departure and arrival times towards a better commuter schedule. The Council Rail Subcommittee is now figuring out its next steps.

On August 21st, the Santa Barbara City Council approved the Council Commuter Rail Subcommittee's Action Plan, titled On-TRAC, A Plan of Transit/Rail Action For Commuters. We hope with this action plan in place, the City of Santa Barbara can work with other governmental agencies in seeing commuter rail move from an idea into reality.

Of course, we cannot accomplish this alone. Residents from throughout the rail corridor need to contact their elected officials at all levels about the need to fund a commuter rail line. Meanwhile, the Subcommittee will continue researching answers and reporting on our progress.

Walk to School Day is October 3

We welcome Kim Stanley, our new Safe Routes to School coordinator for elementary schools. Kim is a longtime Santa Barbara resident and environmental activist who used to work for the CEC; she is also the mother of two young children. She brings to the job a true enthusiasm for the idea of walking and biking to go places; in fact, she does it herself all the time. Kim will join Catriona Gay, who



continues to be in charge of secondary schools, and Bob Zimels, our new Director of Bicycle Education. We offer Santa Barbara area schools a full menu of Safe Routes to School activities: Organizational help with Walk and Bike to School Day, safety training including bike rodeos and bike helmet distribution, and quarterly Task Force meetings. Special thanks to the **Goleta Valley Cycling Club** for supporting our bike education program!

To find out more about Santa Barbara's Safe Routes to Schools movement, and how you can become involved, please visit the SR2S page of the COAST website, or contact Kim, ksz@linkline.com, or Catriona, catrionaj1@cox.net.

And don't forget, October 3 is Walk to School Day! Is your child's school participating?

Safe Routes in Montecito

The dream of a footpath along San Ysidro Road for children who walk to **Montecito Union School** is moving closer to reality. Thanks to a generous grant from the **Green Park Foundation**, COAST is working with MUS parents and administrators, public works staff and First District Supervisor Salud Carbal on the design of such a path to prepare a project that can be submitted for funding through a Safe Routes to School grant. This will be a beautiful natural path made of decomposed granite, constructed to meet ADA standards.

MUS also started school bus service for those families who live too far away to walk to school. A free bus ride was the sensation of Back-to-School Day at MUS. In addition, MUS

became a pilot school for the school pool component of the new carpool match list software now offered by Traffic Solutions. COAST helped promote the new programs with a table at MUS Back to School day. In addition, Kate Bechtel helps train MUS staff and parents in using the new program.

At Cold Spring School, a brochure produced by the county went out to neighbors asking them to trim their vegetation so that informal footpaths can be created for children walking to school. A new club will meet every Wednesday to walk to school together. One could hardly imagine a more beautiful place to walk in than Montecito. Both Montecito schools are now in the forefront of the Safe Routes to School movement!

Privateering Mass Transit



Ventura Harbor: April 1

A new mode of public transportation is invading the shores of Santa Barbara this year – the tall passenger ship. We spoke with Captain William Bligh, the Chief of Operations of the new commuter service between the Ventura and Santa Barbara Harbors. "Everything is going great guns", he reported, "except for the days when there's no wind blowing. We had the crew man the oars below deck, but then they complained to the Labor Relations Board, and I darned near had a mutiny on my hands. Then we started to offer half-priced Galley Class tickets for passengers who were willing to row, but we barely got any takers. Finally, the First Mate came up with idea of putting in music and video screens down in the galley and calling it Fitness Class. Now we've got folks paying extra to ride down there."

Passenger James C. Sikk of Ventura was complimentary of the new service. "Sometimes they fire off the cannons in the morning, and it really wakes you up – better than a triple espresso. And then on the way home you can watch the dolphins play as you drink your flagon of rum. Really takes the edge off after a hard day. But there have been a few, shall we say, 'incidents' out at sea".

When asked of such passenger complaints, Bligh admitted "Aye, it's true, at times we spy another ship along the way, and we have to stop and take on some prisoners... I mean, passengers. But, we are doing a great service to the taxpayers. We've got a great farebox recovery ratio," asserted Bligh, pointing to a very large treasure chest. Taxpayers' Association spokesman I.B. Freeman concurred, adding "Privateering transportation is the wave of the future."



Coalition for Sustainable Transportation
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COAST Board Retreat 2007



COAST Board members, staff and friends at the COAST retreat in August.

From left: Dick Axilrod, Kate Bechtel, Mark Bradley, Lee Moldaver, Alex Pujo, Eva Inbar, Kim Stanley, Dennis Story, Diane Channing, Catriona Gay. Thank you to those who attended and helped to make this a thoughtful and productive day. A very special thank you to Geoff Green (FUND for Santa Barbara) for facilitating the discussion. We came away invigorated and with new plans and ideas.

Become a COAST Member

Our newsletter now appears quarterly and is mailed to our members. To continue to receive this newsletter, and to help us promote sustainable transportation, please join COAST by returning the enclosed envelope. We couldn't do our work without our members. Thank you.

We thank our supporters

We thank the Green Park Foundation, the Goleta Valley Cycling Club and the Fund for Santa Barbara for their generous grants. In addition, we thank all the individuals who made contributions large and small this year. A special thank-you goes to the group of sixth graders who made \$100 at their lemonade stand and donated the money to COAST.

Young COAST Supporters

