

COAST provides advocacy, education and outreach to improve transportation options in Santa Barbara County, promoting rail, bus, bike, and pedestrian access.

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 visit:

<http://groups.google.com/group/coastsb>

COAST Happy Hour

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

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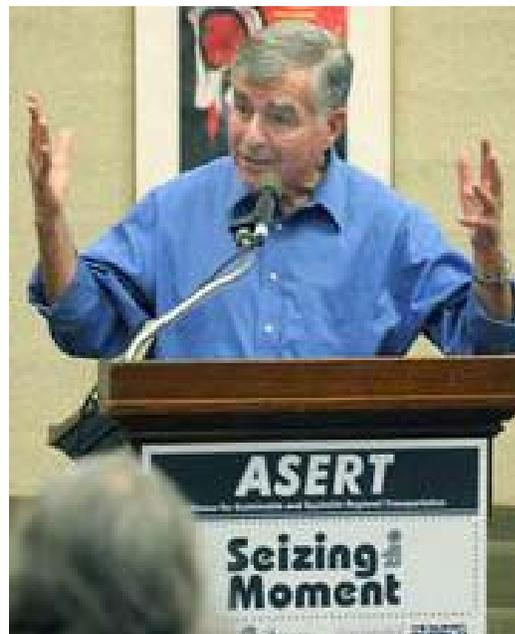
Seizing the Moment By Katherine Holland Sustainable Transportation in the Obama Era

Former Massachusetts Governor and Presidential Candidate **Michael Dukakis** was the keynote speaker at a panel discussion at the Santa Barbara Public Library on January 24th. The event drew over 100 people and celebrated the Nov 2008 passage of Measure A. A video of the entire forum is located at: <http://www.vimeo.com/3008960>

Besides **Michael Dukakis**, the panel featured Supervisor **Salud Carbajal**, **Michael Chiacos**, of the Community Environmental Council; **Gregg Hart**, Public Information and Government Affairs Coordinator of SBCAG; and **Peter De Hann** Programming Director of the VCTC. Congresswoman **Lois Capps** sent a representative.

Dukakis reminded us that there is no form of transportation that is currently unsubsidized: in an average year the federal government spends \$33 billion on highways,

[See Dukakis, page 2]



Michael Dukakis in Santa Barbara
Photo by Paul Wellman, SB Independent

Waiting for the “Wye” to turn green

By Alex Pujó

Sometimes things are not what they appear to be. That was the message from Santa Barbara City Hall when the State/De La Vina proposal was reviewed on a long, long evening at a chamber packed to the rafters. Public comment was cut at 57 slips; many stayed regardless, mute. Reality shows: move over.

Over half spoke in support believing that vehicular speed encouraged by this unusual intersection would sooner or later claim the life of a cyclist or a pedestrian; others argued that the ‘Wye’ was perfectly fine and don’t mess with it, or else! Why so many objections? Council member **Grant House** was about to find out:

1. “Eliminating the sweeping ‘free right

turn’ will increase congestion.” “Well, not really”, answered Project Engineer **Peter Doctors**. “A green arrow will allow the right turn to remain unimpeded, unless activated by a pedestrian. Vehicular speed will diminish with the tighter radius, adding about four seconds to the trip.”

2. “Delivery trucks will have a hard time with the new design, go over the curbs and cause delays.” “No,” replied Doctors, “this will be a ‘standard intersection’, with the same turning radii as every other recently approved City intersection.”

3. “Parking along State Street will be lost.” “No longer the case”, answered Pro-

[Please see “WYE,” page 3]

Meet Katherine Holland
ASERT Project Coordinator



Katherine Holland has a B.A. in Political Science from UCLA, where she focused her studies on political theory and the use of public space. Her previous experience includes working as a project coordinator for a qualitative marketing research company, where she conducted focus groups and assisted companies and organizations, including many non-profits and political groups, with strategic communications testing and outreach. As a volunteer, Katherine has assisted several non-profits with public and media relations work, as well as online outreach. She has also been active on several issues advocacy and electoral campaigns, including state-wide ballot initiatives, and congressional races.

As a native of Santa Barbara and current resident of Downtown Ventura, she is enthusiastic about pursuing regional solutions and excited to be serving as ASERT's new project coordinator.

UCSB Traffic Opportunities By Lee Moldaver

UCSB is the county's largest employer, *and* services consumer. A state agency, UCSB need not go through most municipal or county public planning processes. However, the university must periodically update its **Long Range Development Plan**, to articulate its capital and development vision for the next decade. We're already well into this state-mandated process. Now there is another chance for county residents to review, offer opinions, and help UCSB improve its plan.

A coalition of community, civic, and environmental groups has worked with UCSB to re-open public comment on potential *environmental impacts*, that could happen *if* the University's long range plan were built as (currently) proposed.

There's no guarantee that all "worst case" impacts would happen. But UCSB's stated goal to increase enrollment by 25% over the next fifteen years carries that potential.

Unlike other large "urban" campuses, cars and trucks are *not* banned for UCSB students, faculty, or staff. And while the University has been active, extending free or low-cost MTD bus passes or vanpool slots to its 20,000+ students and 5,000+ faculty & staff, a rush hour survey of 101 or El Colegio Drive often finds them horribly congested with vehicle traffic, entering or leaving the campus area. This traffic, and its related components, affects *all* south coast residents health, safety, and quality of life.

For these reasons, COAST joined the coalition of community groups working with UCSB to craft an even better

Long Range Development Plan. Since the coalition's aims are positive, it's taken the name, **Sustainable University Now (SUN)**.

COAST is promoting more sustainable transportation options for UCSB's plan. As the campus grows and evolves, re-orienting itself from its current (haphazard) pattern into one with a planned mobility axis, COAST favors innovative ways to *reduce* trips, accidents, pollution impacts locally, and throughout the area.

UCSB is our area's main economic engine and provider of both employees and consumers for most other businesses. COAST wants a better *Long Range Plan*, so UCSB can grow and age as gracefully as the community where it is our valued neighbor. We're grateful to UCSB executives Gene Lucas and Marc Fisher for their openness and willingness to work with the SUN Coalition, to imagine a more vibrant, less impactful UCSB.

Now, the ball is in *our* court. The re-circulated UCSB EIR is available online. Written, electronic, and oral testimony from the community, based on a careful review of the draft EIR is essential. If you love UCSB *and* livable communities, **this** is the time to express your ideas to the U.C. Regents. Review closes on March 30. Don't be left out.

The **SUN Coalition** includes these organizations: **Community Environmental Council, Environmental Defense Center, Citizens Planning Association, League of Women Voters, Audubon Society, SBCAN, Pueblo, Citizens For Goleta Valley, COAST**, et al.

Dukakis, from page 1

\$16 billion on airlines, and a paltry \$1.5 billion on rail.

Two major funding issues stood out against the backdrop of the state budget crisis and the economic downturn: first, the continued lack of money for operating costs; and two, that the current economic stimulus plan funds only projects that can be shovel ready within 120 days.

ASERT also convened a summit in Ventura on January 31st. Speaking were Senator **Alan Lowenthal**; former Assemblymember **Hannah Beth Jackson**; **Esperanza Martinez** of the Los Angeles Bus Riders' Union; **Rick Cole**, Ventura City Manager; and **Das Williams**, Santa Barbara City Council.

This event drew over 250 people! The event included break-out groups focused on UTN in advance of a VCTC

meeting on February 2nd. As a direct consequence of the outpouring of public energy at the event, public comment has been extended until March 20, 2009.

The forums were sponsored by the **Alliance for Sustainable and Equitable Regional Transportation (ASERT)**. The Alliance consists of **COAST, CAUSE, PUEBLO, and VCCool**.

Walking in Europe: A Comparative Glance

By Courtney Dietz

Recently I visited with a friend in Germany and the Netherlands. While perhaps not ideal for this Santa Barbara transplant to visit in winter, the rewards far exceeded the chilling cold that permeated most of the trip.

Transportation was incredible to experience in both countries: from pedestrians and bikes, to buses, trams and trains, both Germans and the Dutch consistently rely on multiple modes. As I witnessed the variety of heavily utilized transportation options I couldn't help but wonder, "How does the US compare?"

As a percent of urban trips, walking trips are 18% in the Netherlands, 20% in Germany, and only 6% in the US, even though the US has fewer cars per person than Germany. Not surprisingly it follows that the US has 3 times the obesity rate of both countries. In addition, several studies have suggested that the more people are walking and biking the safer it is and this is truly the case as walking is 10 times safer in the Netherlands than it is in the US (in terms of injury and fatality



Bike and pedestrian street in Amsterdam

rates).

And all this is happening in cities far larger than those in our region and with significantly less idyllic weather conditions. Though we can appreciate the South Coast's has own personality and charm, there's definitely plenty to learn and apply here from other cities. *Santa Barbara Walks* is working to make walking safer and easier so that we can all have the choice of using walking to meet our daily needs.

High Speed Rail on the Fast Track

By Mark Bradley

In a last minute surprise, the federal stimulus package contains fully eight billion dollars for high speed rail. In California last November, voters narrowly passed State Proposition 1A, authorizing a \$9 billion bond toward construction of a high speed rail system between Los Angeles and the Bay Area (later to be extended to San Diego and Sacramento). Many high speed rail systems have been proposed and studied in the US in the last 20 years, but very little has happened. COAST hopes that this vote marks the beginning of a new era!

Here are a few key facts about the proposed rail system:

- The construction cost for the LA-

SF portion will be about \$33 billion. That will be paid for by a mix of State, Federal and local funding and private investment. None of the Prop 1A bond funds can be spent until at least another \$9 billion in matching funds is secured. Private investors have already shown interest.

- By drawing passengers out of cars and airplanes, high speed rail would obviate \$100 billion in spending over the next 20 years for the 3,000 new freeway miles and 5 new airport runways that would be needed otherwise. When economic benefits are included, it would take the new system only 5 years of operation to "pay back" the cost of construction.

[Please see **Rail**, page 4]

"Wye," continued from page 1

Project Manager Dru van Hengel. "We redesigned the project so only one space may be lost."

4. "In austere times like this we should use our money wisely and prioritize those projects that the community supports." Only 20% of the funds come from City coffers; the rest are federal funds funneled through a Caltrans' competitive grant to improve safety and congestion on De La Vina. The grant includes other parts of De La Vina, and traffic lights are planned at Figueroa (where a pedestrian was killed recently) and at Canon Perdido. These funds cannot be used elsewhere.

At any other time and place this exchange –given the tacit acknowledgment that these answers were nothing but the truth- would have concluded with a motion, a second and couple of 'ayes'. Not this Tuesday.

Just like the bottom of the iceberg, what is not said is always bigger, snickering through the fog, revealed in a burst of anger, a blog entry. What else is here, then, besides a public works project to improve safety?

To those opposing the project, there is a whole lot more. They talk, blog and reproduce. They claim that City Hall plans to destroy good, functioning streets; eliminate parking; promote alternative modes of transportation; increase density, and approve tall buildings full of subsidized housing for people who don't deserve to live in Santa Barbara.

Did you get all that? You may not at first but, if you live or work near the 'Wye', sooner or later a nice lady with a plate of cookies and a clipboard will stop by to explain everything. You will soon begin to see the light, and Travis Armstrong will be there daily to confirm your worst fears in newsprint.

When did walking become controversial, bicycling radical? Safety has been delayed but not postponed. The 'Wye' will be back and better: a sweet, little bikeway will follow the curve bypassing the traffic light. A big, heartfelt 'thank you!' to all those who called, emailed and spent quantity time in the trenches with the best of us.



Coalition for Sustainable Transportation
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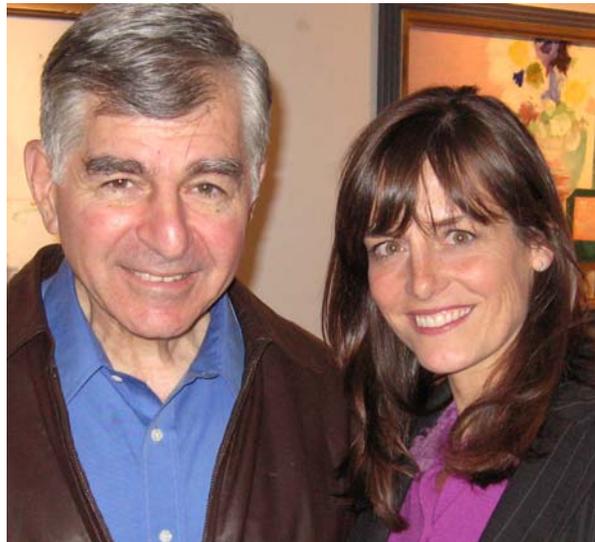
Rail, continued from page 3

- With high speed rail fares half as high as air fares, the system would attract about 55 million passengers in 2030, and generate a net operating profit of over \$1 billion per year. It will also reduce oil use by 12.7 million barrels per year, and CO2 emissions by 12 billion pounds per year.

The Prop 1A bond measure will also provide almost \$1 billion for improving other rail corridors around the state, including the LOSSAN corridor through Santa Barbara.

For more information, go to www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov

Welcome Caroline Harrah, COAST Director of Development



Caroline Harrah brings to COAST over 15 years of marketing and financial communications expertise. Her work in the non-profit sector includes fundraising and development for organizations serving children, families-at-risk and the arts. Caroline earned a BA in Political Science from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Caroline is an avid walker and runner and can frequently be seen pushing her children in a stroller up and down State Street.

Caroline is pictured here with Michael Dukakis.

We thank our Members

We thank these people who joined COAST or renewed their membership during the past three months: Jean & Barry Schuyler, Tom Evans, Gregory Mohr & Wendy Wittl, Hyla Fetler & Tracy Fernandez, Anita & Porter Abbott, Katie O'Reilly Rogers, Daniel Frank, L. Dennis Thompson, David Stone, Maida Smith, George Relles & B.L. Borovay, Priscilla Ortiz, Ed Maschke, Erika Lindemann, John Kirk, Drew Hunter, Ken & Jane Hahn, Steve Foley & Margaret McMillan, Brad Fiedel & Ann Dusenberry, Cass Ensberg & Tom Jacobs, Neil & Barbara Elliott, Vicky Blum & David Lebell, George Amoon, Dolores Pollock, Laura Malakoff, David & Sharon Landecker, Judith Keim, Laura Katz, Charmaine Jacobs, Brian Fahnstock, Ashleigh Brilliant, Marianne Henry, John T. & Betty Gerig, Kristen Zecher, Martin & Velma Stevenson, Hanne & John Sonquist, Steve Morris, Beebe Longstreet, Greg Janee, Ruth Hochmann, Rick Frickman, Allyn Fleming & Phil Schilling, Hal Conklin, J'Amy Brown. **We couldn't do our work without you!**