



BETTER TRANSPORTATION CHOICES FOR ALL

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

COAST
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www.coast-santabarbara.org

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.

Join COAST

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

Raise money for COAST when you shop online!

COAST has joined with iGive and almost 700 stores (such as Home Depot, Target, Best Buy, GAP, Staples, eBay, Nordstroms and SO many more), which donate a percentage of your purchase total to support COAST.

It's completely free for you and for us. And it's SO easy to do! And right now when you join and shop within 45 days, COAST gets an EXTRA \$5! Start by clicking on the iGive icon on the COAST website.

www.coast-santabarbara.org

Simply sign up with your name and email and you are ready to start shopping and raising money for COAST.

COAST NEWS

COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

SUMMER 2009

WWW.COAST-SANTABARBARA.ORG

Summer Events at COAST

You are invited to our sixth annual Solstice Celebration!
Come and enjoy food, drink, merriment, and a great view of the parade.
When: Saturday, June 20, 11 AM to 2 PM
Where: Business First Bank, corner of State and Figueroa
\$20/person suggested donation. Children are free. To RSVP, please call 875-3562 or e-mail courtney@coast-santabarbara.org. Watch your e-mail for your personal invitation.

Walking Wednesdays with Santa Barbara Walks

By Courtney Dietz

This summer Santa Barbara Walks will be hosting neighborhood walks in your neighborhood! We are kicking off Walking Wednesdays on June 24th. Our goals: to get us out walking together and appreciating each other and our community, learning a bit about a selected topic, and identifying any trouble areas for pedestrians along the way. Each walk will feature a theme based on the area (i.e. architecture, trees of Santa Barbara, historic buildings, water friendly landscapes, etc). Summer in Santa Barbara is a great time for strolling and we are excited to get out and get moving.

We are seeking people knowledgeable in the following areas that would be willing to help lead a walk so we can learn about:

- Architecture (sustainable design, historic buildings, etc)
- Trees of Santa Barbara
- Landscape architecture (California friendly landscaping, edible gardens, etc)
- Pedestrian design

Or... what's YOUR idea? Contact

Courtney@COAST-SantaBarbara.org

or call 805.875.3562.



Commuter Challenge 2009

A surrey race kicked off this year's Commuter Challenge, organized by Traffic solutions. Pictured above is the city of Santa Barbara's surrey. There are 357 teams participating in this year's challenge, which runs during the months of May and June — a record high. COAST has two teams competing: the COASTERS with Eva Inbar, Stephen Murdoch, Greg Janee, KK Holland and Wilson Hubbell, and COASTing Along with Courtney Dietz, Kate Bechtel, Mark Bradley, Alex Pujo and Lee Moldaver. This isn't just about the commute to work; any mode except driving alone on a utilitarian trip counts as a point. Cheer us on!

Celebrating Spring



Caroline Harrah and Bob Zimels at the COAST table at Goleta Earth Day



Kim Stanley and Courtney Dietz at the COAST booth at Santa Barbara Earth Day. We displayed a map where people could stick pins at pedestrian trouble spots. We came home with many, many pins our map.



From left: Lee Moldaver, Bob Zimels, Dave Pritchett and Christine Bourgeois (partially hidden), helping a family find bicycle helmets for their kids at the Santa Barbara Children's Festival.

Transit Service in a Sticky Situation By Mark Bradley

One of the sad realities of our current economic climate is that just when transit services across the nation are getting more riders than ever before—riders who want to reduce their fossil fuel use and avoid the high costs of driving—the funding to keep those services in full operation is disappearing. This is true in Santa Barbara, as MTD and other transit services are threatened by budget crises and declining tax revenues at the local and State levels.

To help address this situation, COAST, along with PUEBLO, SB CAN, CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice), and others have founded the Sustainable Transit Users Coalition (STUC). The acronym STUC is no accident, as transit funders, operators and riders now find themselves “stuck between a rock and a hard place”. Both Federal and State governments charge a gas tax that does not increase with the price of fuel, and the gas tax revenues have been steadily dropping as vehicles become more efficient and as the economy slows. That means that those governments cannot even afford to maintain roads with the fuel tax revenues, never mind maintain full funding of transit service.

At the Federal level, the fund reserves

for both highways and transit have been drawn down over recent years, and will soon be completely bankrupt unless new policies are adopted next year when Congress reauthorizes the Federal surface transportation bill that sets the framework for all transportation funding. Lawmakers will be considering increases in the fuel tax, as well as a national system of per-mile road charges, as ways to pay for both roads and transit. In the meantime, the new “stimulus” funding bill has provided some funding for transit, and MTD will be able to use that funding to purchase some new buses. Unfortunately, the stimulus funds cannot be used to cover transit operating expenses, and that is precisely the type of funding that most transit operators need the most.

At the State level, the California legislature voted to permanently discontinue the State Transit Assistance (STA) funds, which will mean a loss of well over \$1 million per year in funding to local transit services. With residents voting down the State funding initiatives in the May special election, even more cuts in State transit funding may be looming. Similar to the Federal level, State lawmakers are considering an increase in fuel taxes as a way to address the huge budget deficit, but

Republican legislators are lined up firmly in opposition. There does not appear to be any other realistic solution on the horizon, so the State funding situation looks bleak indeed.

Locally, we are fortunate that voters passed Measure A in 2008. This will provide funding for MTD and other Santa Barbara County operators to maintain at least basic services for the next thirty years. Nevertheless, MTD has had to raise fares to cover rising fuel prices and decreasing State and local tax revenues, and has also had to cut back services slightly. Even though MTD is one of the most efficient transit services in the nation in terms of covering its own costs, the current economic service has left MTD in a very difficult situation trying to maintain full, affordable service for its riders while staying within its budget.

COAST, as part of the Sustainable Transit Users Coalition, is determined to help keep the public informed and also make the public's voice heard in the midst of this complex and many-layered funding crisis, so that we can maintain and even improve our vital transit services. If you are interested in helping us with this effort, please contact me at mark@coast-santabarbara.org.

COAST Position Regarding the Santa Barbara City Charter Amendment to Reduce Building Height in Commercial Areas

The Board of Directors of COAST considers a building heights Charter amendment unnecessary and potentially harmful to sound transportation planning. We encourage our members to join COAST, the Community Environmental Council (CEC), SBCAN, PUEBLO and others in opposing this change.

The City Charter has served Santa Barbara well for many years. Development undergoes a lengthy and rigorous review based on strict regulations overseen by the City's boards and commissions. During the recent economic boom (1997-2007), two projects were built downtown in ways that may have exceeded the mass, bulk and scale that give Santa Barbara its characteristic charm. In response, a group of citizens collected signatures and placed a Charter amendment on the November, 2009 ballot to lower allowable building height to 40' in the historic district and 45' elsewhere. This would cap buildings at three stories in those commercial areas where a maximum of four is currently allowed.

Altering building height standards through a Charter amendment at the ballot box is a simplistic approach with unintended and unknown consequences that may affect aesthetics, housing, transportation and the vitality of a city threatened by a vanishing middle class. The rationale and urgency behind this proposal have disappeared with the burst of the economic bubble and a revised review process implemented in 2008 more critical of larger and taller buildings. A comprehensive dialogue of urban issues, including housing and transportation, is currently under way with the General Plan Update (PlanSB). The discussion of building heights belongs there.

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Lane & Train, Chapter VI

By Lee Moldaver

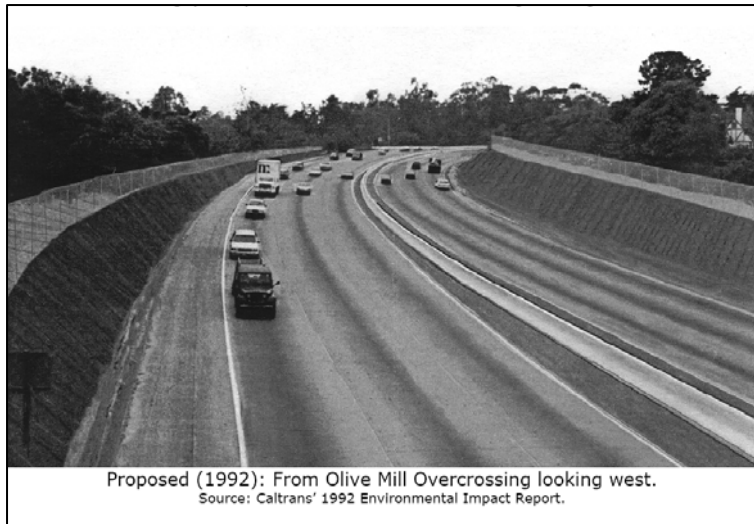
Local history has a funny way of repeating itself when it comes to the South Coast's mercurial relationship with the 101 freeway.

COAST emerged in the 1990s as a grassroots effort to better define which sustainable transportation options community leaders would support, in the wake of the state of California's unsuccessful effort to force a poorly designed 101 freeway plan upon the region.

COAST identified two key steps to answer that question:

- *Operational Improvements* to the south Santa Barbara County 101 corridor, championed by the late Barry Siegel (a.k.a., the "Lane"); and,
- A demonstration commuter rail operation between west Ventura County and south Santa Barbara County, championed by Dennis Story (a.k.a., the "Train").

101 Operational Improvements were promoted by former county supervisor Naomi Schwartz, through SBCAG. The



Proposed (1992): From Olive Mill Overcrossing looking west. Source: Caltrans' 1992 Environmental Impact Report.

lever was a detailed engineering study by *Parsons Brinkerhoff*. The goal: "fix" the 101's worst performing South Coast segments. Then, determine whether the freeway's overall situation permanently improved. While it took almost ten years to launch the first improvements (i.e. *Ortega Hill* in Summerland), the projects are now going great-guns, in the Milpas-Salinas-Hot Springs area, with several different improvements advancing concurrently.

Three significant 101 corridor challenges loom on the horizon:

1. Stability of state and federal funding to complete the remaining improvements on a timely basis;

2. Continuing delays in moving forward the commuter rail demonstration project;

3. Designing an attractive freeway corridor between Hot Springs and Sheffield Roads in Montecito.

High Montecito coastal property values, the proximity of the RR tracks, the geology of seaward cliffs, various geographic and cost constraints, all are nudging Caltrans back toward an un-landscaped 101 corridor in this area, with 3 lanes on each side (one very wide), sound walls on both edges, and no median between them.

A proposal that stark galvanized South Coast concerns about the last project in the early 1990s. Fortunately, Caltrans time-line for this 101 segment has "slipped" due to the recession. Now COAST will again work with SBCAG, Caltrans, local and state leaders, to assure that essential *Lane & Train* solutions to area transportation needs *don't* get lost during the temporary economic downturn. Leading up to these crucial discussions, our members' thoughts will be particularly valued.



Coalition for Sustainable Transportation
 P.O. Box 2495
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Your membership expiration month appears on your label above your address. Please keep your membership current!

We thank our Supporters

We thank the **McCune Foundation** and the **Green Park Foundation** for supporting our major projects.

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Bike to School Day: Don Lubach reports from Hollister School



I still need to tally the empty sticker sheets, but I think our count is right at around 150 and 180 if you count parents and siblings. The students LOVED the goodies that Safe Routes/SB-COAST provided.

Paul Weakliem printed up the wonderful posters, Bob Cooper handed out prizes, Kurt Heidner helped with stickers and counting, and Tom Hilzer allowed himself to be called in to service directing traffic. Matt McClintock stopped by to support the event with a fabulous Dutch bike. Kim Stanley from COAST dropped off the prizes for us.

While the Sheriff must have had something come up, we had Sam Masson of SB Bike Repair who gave some attention to the 4th grade bikes (to help prepare for their upcoming beach ride) and the wonderful presence of the guys who just opened the Wheel House. They displayed some very interesting family-oriented bikes.

Ah! So many to thank. Mostly, the kids! They were all so great. And if I did anything of value today, it's because of Judy Keim who used to run all of the Hollister Bike events and shared her spirit and enthusiasm with me. I rode in to work after this feeling so happy to be a parent and member of the Hollister community--I was a hawk on wheels.

We thank our Members

We thank these people who joined COAST or renewed their membership during the past three months: **Michael Bennett, Vicky Blum and David Lebell, Barbara Lindemann, Erik Thomassen, Bicky Townsend, Kate Bechtel, Roseanne Puff, Adrienne Davis, Carla Blackwell, Tracey Blakeley, Elizabeth Downing and Peter Hasler, Dick and Joyce Axilrod, Robert Bernstein, Amy Esau, Mari Quinteros, Susan Horne, Alex and June Pujo, Eva Inbar, Patricia Gebhard, Gavin Feiger, Kent Epperson, Kristen and Chris Sneddon, Jan Atkins, Jennifer Wohl, Priscilla Ortiz, Dick and Mickey Flacks, Samuel and Darlene Chirman, Corey and Jill Anderson, Janice Keller, Linda Krop, Jennifer Cushnie, Eric Lassen, Neil and Barbara Elliott, Dan Herron.**

We couldn't do our work without you!