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*People Power! UPDATE* is published by People Power. Our goal is to educate people and politicians about the advantages of a transportation system less dependent on the automobile. A special thanks to all our volunteers.

# PEOPLE OOH POWER! UPDATE

SANTA CRUZ CYCLING NEWS

ISSUE 53

WINTER / SPRING 2007

## Bike Lanes on Soquel!

by Micah Posner

On January 27th, I was riding back with Ken Foster from the EcoFarm conference in Monterey. It was cold and dark and wet as we got to the stretch of Soquel between Capitola and Seabright, prepared to fight for our survival. And then...there they were, gleaming white and black in the wetness—new bike lanes on Soquel. What a sense of belonging! We now have a place on the road into and out of town—a continuous bike lane down Soquel from Pacific Ave. in Santa Cruz to Freedom Blvd., past Aptos.

Now, it is time to celebrate!

Please join us at 5PM on February 28th, for a Bike Lane ribbon cutting ceremony, to be held by the Walgreen's parking lot, on Soquel, between Frederick Street and Hagemann Avenue. Mayor Emily Reily and others will speak (using the bicycle powered amplifier, or course), and we will inaugurate the new lanes with a group ride, followed by a party at the Bicycle Trip (1127 Soquel) featuring music, refreshments, and door prizes.

As a People Power member, you have extra reason to celebrate. The bike lanes are one of People Power's biggest victories to date. In July of 2001, the City Council voted against a Broadway-Brommer connection, putting plans for an east-west bicycle connection on hold indefinitely. Soon after that decision, a group of cyclists spray painted bike lanes on Soquel at 3AM. The *Sentinel* quoted then-council member Keith Sugar, "I say we'd better make it happen." People Power worked with Bruce Van Allen and Heath Maddox (a county planner at the time) and, with the help of



Soquel bike lane at Seabright and Soquel.

Councilman Tim Fitzmaurice, brought a plan for bike lanes on Soquel to the Council. Though the Council did not approve the lanes at that meeting, they did direct Public Works to set up a Soquel Bike Lane Task Force—which included representatives of the business community, neighbors and bicyclists—for the purpose of creating consensus around a plan for the lanes.

No one thought that consensus would actually be reached and Soquel was not an easy place to put in bike lanes. In order to accommodate the bike lanes, either the street would have to be narrowed to three lanes for automobiles (one in each direction with a turn lane in the middle), or some car parking spaces (precious, due to their proximity to business entryways) would

*continued on page 7*

## Bicycle Shop Class at Starting at Harbor High!

Bike Shop at School has begun! On Tuesday, January 30th, the first Bike Shop high school class in the country opened at Harbor High as an alternative to Auto Shop. All Santa Cruz County high school students are eligible to take the class for transferrable Regional Occupation Program (ROP) credits. To register or for more information talk to your high school guidance counselor or call the ROP program at **479-5333**.

The brainchild of Bicycle Trip owner Berri Michel, this class aims to promote cycling in high schools in Santa Cruz. The class is being taught by Kirk Bernhardt, an experienced bicycle mechanic with over 20 years in the field. Tools and equipment for the class were paid for through grants obtained by People Power and the Bicycle Trip. Now that the class is up and running the ROP will keep it funded and rolling into the future. The classroom is equipped with all of the tools that students need to overhaul their

bicycles and to learn the skills required of a professional bike mechanic. In addition, students are exposed to many of the advantages of riding over driving through the continued involvement of People Power. The Bike Shop course is designed to be easily replicated so that any other school can offer the class.

In a time when global warming and peak oil are threatening the current transportation norms, it is critical that we teach the youth of the nation—and of the world—that bicycles are not just for fun and games. And while the enjoyment of riding a bike is easy to grasp, the use of the machine as a practical mode of transportation is a concept that many still do not understand. Thanks to everyone involved in creating this course—including our own People Power high school intern, Tim Wesolowski. We see this as an important step in the right direction. ■

**INTERVIEW****Peter Beckmann**

*Peter Beckmann, owner of Beckmann's Bakery, is also a People Power business member. Ride your bike to their retail shop at 2341 Mission St in Santa Cruz, and receive a 5% discount!*



**Q:** How long have you been riding a bike?

**A:** I started when I was 8 or 10 years old, 43 years ago. Of course I didn't have to. In Germany you don't really need a car or a bike. I walked to school or took the tram.

**Q:** These days, as the owner of Beckmann's Bakery you could afford to drive?

**A:** Yes but it is so nice. I've been going to school. I ride to the University and get a work out at the same time. Whenever I don't need to go out of town I just use my bike.

**Q:** You've taken a hiatus from the bakery and are pursuing an advanced degree in economics. As a bicyclist, do you see any ties between economic theory and transportation.

**A:** Transportation has many economic issues. The trend today is to squeeze more money out of the system by privatizing the profits and socializing the losses. That works at many levels. For example, the benefit we have of driving on cheap roads with cheap gas is something that the whole world has to pay for. The effects of global warming—the whole world pays for that. Or on a national level, health issues created by automobile use are paid by the general public in taxes.

Human-based development is more expensive to build, but in the long run, it is more economical for society and for home owners. One principle in economics is negative externalities, which refers to all the negative costs of an economic transaction not usually included in the prices of goods and services. If prices reflected true costs to society, the world would become much saner, with regard to transportation and many things. Prices would reflect the true cost of whatever we are doing.

One common argument against it is that the true costs are hard to quantify—the adverse effects of carbon dioxide over the next 20 years, for example. So mainstream economists say if you can't quantify it, you might as well not deal with it.

Then there is also a whole psychological issue of having to drive a car to be a real person. That is what you call conspicuous consumption—consumption for social status.

**Q:** Who benefits from that?

**A:** Capital in general, and corporations. If we all stopped consuming for social status today, our economy would collapse. So the whole credit industry encourages the transportation system. You can buy a car today on a minimum wage job. It's easier to buy a new car than a used car with no money. That's how economics in an unhealthy way supports unhealthy transportation. How skewed is that system? You can get a \$50,000 loan to buy a car, but you can't get one to buy a bicycle.

**Q:** Do you believe we need to widen the freeway to shore up the economy?

**A:** That's not necessarily true in Santa Cruz. We are more of a resource-based economy. We don't need Granite Construction. With the University, the beach, and farming, we'd be OK. I mean we'd shrink, of course, but we'd be fine. We'd learn to live within our means. I try to do that by living simple, by not consuming too much. Bicycling is part of that, besides trying to be ecological. ■

**An Update on Highway Widening**

Many people are wondering why a section of the Highway is being widened even though we defeated Measure J, in 2004. Actually, we voted against raising the local sales tax to pay for widening. If you thought that meant that the county's Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) wouldn't make a top priority of something that most of us said wouldn't be a successful means of addressing the county's transportation woes, think again.

In fact, the RTC has been devious in responding to Measure J. Some of Commission members claim that the vote went so badly not because people didn't want the highway projects—which were to get effectively all the money—but rather, because the measure nominally included monies (in reality, minimal and provisional—an asterisk in the Measure language insured that the rail trail was not actually guaranteed any funding) for the Coastal Rail Trail. This excuse continues to be circulated, despite the fact that projects like the Rail Trail were only included in the initiative because the RTC's polls showed the tax measure getting 10 points more votes if they did so. Of course, if the RTC really wanted to know why people voted against the measure, they could have conducted exit polls. Initially money had been allocated for polling, but the RTC pulled those funds and instead started circulating the ridiculous story that it was the rail trail that sunk Measure J. And so, rather than look at real solutions, the RTC continues on its relentless push to widen the highway, one way or another.

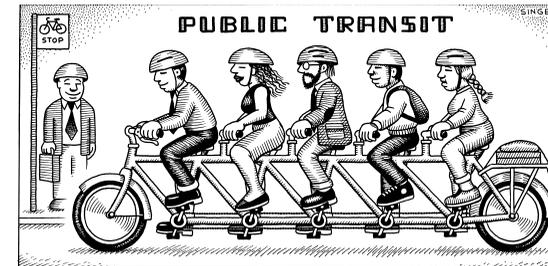
Currently, People Power is working with the Campaign for Sensible Transportation and other organizations to stop further highway widening projects. *continued on page 5*

**Soquel Bike Lanes** *continued from page 1*

have to be removed. The Public Works Department did not want to reduce automobile through lanes, and neither did some neighbors on Soquel, who worried about cars speeding through their neighborhoods to avoid congestion. People Power and other cyclists simply continued to hammer the fact that something had to give, because we had a right to a place on the street. Eventually the Eastside Business Community, led by Gary Bascom of Staff of Life and Tom Hart of Emergicare approved a plan drawn up by Ron Marquez of the Public Works Department that created bike lanes with minimal removal of car parking. Public Works wanted to preserve turn lanes and all other amenities and "do the project right." This took more than three years.

Though our pressure for the lanes was crucial, we wouldn't have the lanes without support from the Eastside Businesses, the entire City Council and the Public Works Department: Ron Marquez (retired), Chris Schneider, Cheryl Schmidt, Desiree Douville, Aaron Becker, and Tom Sharp, in particular.

Besides showing up at the party to celebrate this victory, we hope for a strong turnout so that city officials can see that bike projects have broad community support. We also want to use the ribbon cutting ceremony to express our appreciation to everyone who worked hard to make the Soquel Bike Lanes a reality. We asked for a lot and thanks are certainly in order. For more information, call the People Power office at **425-0665**. ■



People Power thanks Community Printers  
for its generous donation of printing  
costs for our updated brochure.



Thanks also to photographer Peter Doven  
for donating his time and talent to  
providing us with professional-quality  
photographs for the new brochure.

**Kennan Street Pathway  
Access Threatened Again**

The owners of the Riverview Apartments are once again attempting to close the gate at the end of Kennan Street. Several times in the past they have tried to get the bicycle and pedestrian access to the San Lorenzo River Levee Pathway closed to the public. The access provides a safe route to the signaled intersection with Ocean Street, and is a safe way for cyclists and pedestrians from the Market Street and Branciforte Drive areas to get to the levee pathway. It also provides a safe route to Harbor High and Branciforte Schools for children living in the apartments. The property owners have cited the need to control access to the apartment complex because of problems with drug dealing and prostitution. Studies show, however, that these kinds of problems are reduced by public pedestrian and bicycle through traffic.

At the January 23rd meeting, the Santa Cruz City Council was asked to direct staff to reach an agreement with the owners about renewing the contract with the city to retain the property as Section 8 low income housing. The contract will be up for renewal in 2008. Both sides want to reach an agreement early. One of the conditions the apartment owners are demanding is the right to permanently close the Kennan Street gate. They have threatened that if the city fails to meet all their demands, they will not renew the contract for low income housing. If this were to happen, the owners will stop receiving Section 8 vouchers and may—once renters move out of their own accord, and not before—convert dozens of units into market-rate housing.

When the contract was last renewed in 2003, the city granted the owners permission to lock the gate at the end of Kennan Street. This, despite the Planning Commission's recommendation that the gate remain open at all times and that access be improved. Many members of People Power and the general public spoke out for keeping the gate open but to no avail.

At issue is not simply this one gate, but the principle that local government needs to stand up to unreasonable requests by private landowners. None of the council members seem to think that cutting off access will reduce crime, nor that it is good public policy. Instead, they appear to be cowed by threats from the apartment owners. If private landowners know that they can push the city around they will do so, and we will end up losing important bike and pedestrian access points throughout the city.

The request to lock the gate has been referred to the Planning Commission. It is on their meeting agenda for **February 15th at 7:00PM**. Come to the meeting to support our right to maintain access to the levee and other public rights of way. Send email to [citycouncil@ci.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:citycouncil@ci.santa-cruz.ca.us) or write a letter to the council at **809 Center St, SC CA 95060**. For more information, call us at **425-0665**. ■

**GETTING THERE****Do You Know the Way to Monterey—and Salinas?** by Micah Posner

While plans to get train transportation to the South and Southeast chug along, the nicest and most ecological way to visit places in Monterey County is by bicycle. Ken Foster of Terra Nova Ecological Landscaping makes it a point to ride to the Ecological Farming conference in Monterey each year. I ride to my in-laws' house in Salinas about once a month. Both rides are pleasant and easy, if a bit long for a daily commute. Either town is about 50 miles from Santa Cruz, depending on your exact destination. Plan on 5 hours each way, including short breaks, on a decent bike with decent legs pedaling it. The wind tends to push you to Salinas. To Monterey it is variable, though strong at times. Past Aptos, both routes mainly follow farm roads, though the last stretch to Monterey is on a wonderful class one bike trail. You will pass several fruit stands and can buy food and water.

(An excellent touring map covering the entire area from the Golden Gate Bridge to Big Sur is published by Kreb's Cycle Maps, available at most bike shops and at the Bike Church. Richard Kreb's recommended routes are always fine, and you can try out different variations with each trip. Here I've described the most direct routes to Salinas and Monterey.)

From downtown Santa Cruz take Soquel Avenue (or the more pleasant coastal route, if you prefer) to Freedom Boulevard south of Aptos—about 10 miles. Turn right on Freedom, cross Highway 1, and immediately turn left on Bonita. Go up a short hill, then down to San Andreas Road and turn right. Take San Andreas for several miles through strawberry fields. Where San Andreas comes to a "T" with Beach Street, turn left. Go less than a block and turn right on Thurwachter Road, over the Pajaro River. You are now in Monterey County on McGowan Road. McGowan comes to a "T" at Trafton. Turn right on Trafton, left on Bluff, and then right on Jenson (all short farm roads.)

Jenson lets you off at Highway 1. Turn right. Take Highway 1 for five miles on a good shoulder through Moss Landing. (This section is safe but unpleasant, due to traffic. It can be avoided by going east and taking Elkhorn Road, a less traffic-y but more rigorous and time-consuming detour.) Just after Moss Landing, turn right at Molera, near the fruit stand. Take Molera for several miles until it crosses over Highway 1.

Here is where you decide to go southeast to Salinas or southwest to Monterey.

**For Salinas**, continue on Molera as it turns into Nashua. Merge right onto Cooper, then left on McFadden to Highway 183, into town.



Wide shoulder going through Moss Landing.

PHOTO: KEN FOSTER

**To get to Monterey**, turn right on Monte Road and look for the beginning of the bike trail (a class one, rail-to-trail facility to be exact)—a gorgeous 20 car-free miles along sand dunes with ocean views that will take you all the way into Monterey.

My favorite place to stay in Monterey is an independent and fairly cheap hotel called Borg's, near Lover's Point. There's also an AYH Youth Hostel in Pacific Grove that's pleasant to stay in and affordable. Camping (permitted and not) is found up behind Monterey around the Veteran's Memorial Park. I don't know where to stay in Salinas except for my in-laws' flower farm, where the Japanese food is so good; you never lose weight, even after a 5-hour ride.

By the time my daughter is grown up we will have a class one rail trail from Davenport, all the way to Monterey—but don't wait until then. The best way to get to Monterey is also the best way to get around Santa Cruz—under your own power. ■

**A CALL TO ARTISTS: PEDAL YOUR ART!**

Join Santa Cruz's Cycle-Logical Pedal Art Parade, during Bike to Work/School Week.

Celebrate 2-wheeled transportation, get creative, and win prizes. Decorate your bike, wear a costume, and join the parade on Saturday, May 19th on Pacific Avenue at 10:30 a.m.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**

For more details or questions, call Mia at 457-2565.

**GUEST EDITORIAL by David Espinoza**

*Periodically, we invite members to write opinion pieces concerning issues of interest to our readers. People Power member David Espinoza is working on a campaign that would permit bicyclists to treat stop signs as yields when no traffic is present. While People Power has no official position on this, we invite other members to weigh in.*

**Cars Stop, Bikes Yield**

Riding a bike every day can change your perspective on things. Going to the gym becomes less of a priority, conversations about gas prices aren't very interesting, and certain traffic laws start to make less sense. Stop signs in particular strike me as absurd. Let's be honest, how many times have you ridden through a stop sign without giving it a second thought? If it's more than you can remember, you are not alone. For most bicyclists, stop signs are treated as yields, meaning, stop if cars or pedestrians are already waiting to cross; slow down and keep riding if not. This has less to do with any desire to flout the vehicle code or risk an accident and more to do with an understanding amongst bicyclists that the aforementioned traffic law is simply more applicable to cars.

There is a good reason for this. A car blowing through a stop sign at say 15-20 miles per hour is clearly a threat to public safety. A bicyclist on the other hand, riding past a stop sign at 2-7 miles per hour is at worst, a minor nuisance, and definitely not a danger of lethal proportions. Indeed, you don't need a degree in physics to understand the colossal difference in mass, velocity, and maneuverability between a moving car and a moving bicycle.

The problem is, of course, the vehicle code which, as it's currently written, doesn't reflect the reality regular bicyclists already live by.

While many of us may slow down to a snail's pace or carefully cruise through stops signs, we always run the risk of getting a hefty traffic ticket. This happened to a friend of mine downtown last summer. The price? \$140 plus admin fees. I've heard additional stories from a number of otherwise traffic-law-abiding bicyclists in town who've been chased down by city cops charging them with failure to make a complete stop. To the County's credit, there is community service, and a bicycle traffic school in the works, for those who cannot pay the fines but this misses the point. The real question should be, should yielding be considered a crime?

At the heart of the matter is an implicit bias within the traffic code that favors the technology of the automobile over the technology of bicycles. Because bicycles have until recently,

been considered more of a toy than a peaceful, safe, and sustainable form of transportation, the traffic code has treated bicyclists as a secondary matter to be dealt with (if at all): not really a car but not really a pedestrian. In San Francisco for example, when it comes to making a left hand turn, bicyclists are encouraged to either try to merge like a car into the proper lane OR ride to the cross walk, get off your bike, and walk across. Imagine if we were to ask the same thing of drivers.

Even some bicycle advocates get this concept wrong by demanding the same road rights as cars when we should be demanding traffic legislation that is proportional to the technology involved. In other words, cars and bicyclists may both require similar facilities, but that does not make them the same thing. While it may only require a soft push of a pedal to stop a car and then get it going again, it takes a certain amount of effort for bicyclists to do the same. More importantly, unlike cars, a bicyclist is much more in tune with her surroundings both visually and audially. No artificial air conditioning, no noisy engines, no music blaring, no blind spots. Traffic laws should reflect this.

As gas prices and global temperatures continue to rise, the need for progressive traffic legislation that includes the interests of the growing bicyclist population will become increasingly clear. Let's not waste anymore time—Stop signs can easily be brought up to speed (pardon the pun) by simply having our legislators add the words, "Bikes Yield" under "STOP." It would seem, at the very least, a modest proposal.

To get involved with the ad-hoc committee for progressive traffic legislation, please contact: [pochovilla@yahoo.com](mailto:pochovilla@yahoo.com) ■

**"Measure of Safety" Legislation AB 60—Safe Passing Distance Bill**

Family, friends, teammates and bicycle supporters have joined State Assembly member Pedro Nava to support the "Measure of Safety" law that was introduced in memory of Kendra Payne—a UCSB triathlete who died tragically while on a training ride, after a passing vehicle struck her.

Originally introduced as AB 1941, the bill did not pass out of committee. Assembly Member Pedro Nava, now chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee, reintroduced the legislation on December 4, 2006, as AB 60.

Current law requires a vehicle to pass bicycles to the left at a "safe distance." AB 60 would change this requirement so that vehicles must pass bicycles with at least three feet clearance.

To keep informed on this and other legislation, contact the California Bike Coalition at (916) 446-7558 or visit their web site at [www.calbike.org](http://www.calbike.org). ■

## Transportation Funding Task Force Draft Plan is Announced

The Transportation Funding Task force has just released its draft plan which includes three recommended ballot measure alternatives for transportation funding in Santa Cruz County. The plan can be obtained by calling the RTC at (831) 460-3200, or by going to the web site at: [www.tftaskforce.org/plan.htm](http://www.tftaskforce.org/plan.htm).

The three proposed ballot measures (described below) involve raising local taxes over 30, 34, and 21 years respectively, to pay for suggested works on the infrastructure.

**Option 1:** \$1.2 billion, that would include widening Highway 1, increased bus service, begin passenger rail, road maintenance, and other projects. It would raise sales taxes, gas taxes, parcel taxes, transit occupancy taxes, vehicle registration fees and regional developer fees for 30 years to pay for these projects.

**Option 2:** \$578 million for auxiliary lanes and metering lights on Highway 1, increased bus service, bike lanes and road repair, among other projects. It would raise the county sales tax by 1/2 cent for 34 years.

**Option 3:** \$357 million, that would put two 1/2 cent sales-tax measures on the ballot and allow voters to choose. One would widen Highway 1; the other would pay for bus expansion, a coastal trail, road maintenance and bike paths and do nothing to Highway 1. If one of the measure wins the required votes, county sales tax would be raised by 1/2 cent for 21 years.

The Task Force will hold meetings throughout the county over the next few months to negotiate a single option. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, February 6th, 6:30PM, in **Watsonville**  
Watsonville Senior Center  
114 East 5th Street
- February 15th, 6:30PM, in **Santa Cruz**  
Mission Hill Middle School auditorium  
425 King Street
- March 1, 6:30PM, in **Scotts Valley**  
Scotts Valley Senior Center,  
370 Kings Village Road
- March 6, 6:30PM, in **Capitola**  
Mid County Senior Center  
829 Bay Avenue
- March 13, 6:30PM, in **Aptos**  
Temple Beth El  
3055 Porter Gulch Road

All meetings of the Transportation Funding Task Force are open to the public. ■

## Quelle bonne idée!

PARIS, France (AP)—The City of Light wants to soon become a City of Bicycles. Paris City Hall announced it has selected French outdoor advertising firm JCDecaux SA to operate a new free bicycle service in the capital.

Joining other European cities like the Dutch capital, Amsterdam, Paris wants to make thousands of bikes available for free to commuters, strollers and tourists—in part to help cut down on pollution.

JCDecaux's Somupi unit is to have some 14,100 bikes deployed in the capital by this summer. The company was chosen over a consortium of rivals including U.S.-based Clear Channel Outdoor Holdings Inc., and several major French companies. ■



## Another Reason to Ride Your Bike

According to Arthur Kramer, scientist at the University of Illinois, Urbana, a recent study on 59 healthy adults, ages 60-79, show that decline in brain function that usually begins in middle age can be slowed or reversed by regular aerobic exercise. After only 3 months of 3 hours a week of aerobic exercise, increases in the brain's grey matter (neurons) and white matter (connections between neurons) were noted. Increases in brain volume are linked to improvements in thinking, remembering, and cognitive flexibility. ■

## AND... Another Reason not to Drive

A new medical study published in the January 26th online issue of *The Lancet*, highlights another risk of promoting automobile travel to the exclusion of alternatives. The study by USC researchers looked at lung development in more than 3,600 children over 13 years and found that children growing up within 1/4 mile of a highway risk having their lung development permanently impaired. This can increase the likelihood of serious respiratory disease and heart disease later in life. This is the first study to show that extended exposure to car and truck exhaust affects the growth of the lungs, and hence their capacity.

If widening Highway 1 does indeed increase the amount of automobile and truck traffic, this will increase exposure to tailpipe emissions of everyone in Santa Cruz County—especially those living near the highway.

For the health of everyone in Santa Cruz County, reducing emissions coming from Highway 1 and other roadways is an obvious common good. Just one more reason for having fewer—and certainly not *more*—more cars on the road. ■

## Looking Back at the Rail Symposium

State Assemblymember John Laird is arguably People Power's most influential member and despite busy schedules in Sacramento, he and his staff really make an effort to stay involved in the social and political life of Santa Cruz. When Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" came out, Laird and staff hosted a free showing. At the forum afterward, the obvious question came up: "How will widening Highway 1 effect our county's contribution to global warming?" John responded with advice: "I think the reason people are still looking at widening the Highway is that we haven't presented convincing alternatives." Several months later, he agreed to co-host, with People Power and Friends of the Rail Trail, a symposium on the potential for trains and trails in Santa Cruz County. Tom Honig, the editor of the *Sentinel*, soon joined as a co-sponsor and provided ad space which was crucial to the event's success. Watsonville, Capitola, and Santa Cruz also co-sponsored, with Capitola providing the venue (the Jade Street Community Center) free of charge. Funding was donated by the Weiss-Penzias family to help pay for our staff time, while Beckmann's Bakery, New Leaf Market, and Kelly's Bakery all donated snacks. The Sierra Club hired PedX to put up flyers and covered other expenses, and People Power member Bruce Sawhill arranged for an appearance of the marimba band Hapana (of which he is a member) to provide pre-symposium music.

Guest speakers came from all across the country without being paid because they care about sensible transportation and want to help us bring it here. The discussion was a mixture of cautious advice and hopeful exuberance. Mike Hart, CEO of Sierra railroads made it clear that, for freight and recreational rail, his company is ready to go as soon as the tracks become available. Everyone seemed to agree that these uses were good steps that would eventually subsidize passenger rail.

The panelists familiar with the layout of Santa Cruz County noted that our unique geography, with most of the population living within a mile or two of the rail line, could make it a good place for trains. Nonetheless, panelist David Nelson made it clear that we need to proceed slowly, and that some projects do fail to generate the rider ship needed—particularly in less urban areas like ours.

John Laird did an excellent job moderating, and managed to get most of the dozens of questions from the audience answered. Debbie Hale, from the Monterey Transit Agency, talked about her County's plan to bring Amtrak and Caltrain to Watsonville by 2010, thereby creating a connection to state and nationwide rail systems.

Perhaps the best thing about the symposium was the extraordinary turnout. Over 230 people attended, which dramatically exceeded our expectations. (We had chairs and a sound system to accommodate 180). Most of the audience was very supportive of

trains and trails, though there was also a small but healthy dose of skepticism. It's interesting to compare the attendance and enthusiasm of the symposium with meetings and public hearing on widening the Highway. Attendance at the latter has never reached more than 100 people, with 2/3 or more consistently opposing widening.

Other than our inadequate sound system, the biggest disappointment about the symposium was that almost none of the Regional Transportation Commission "leaders" bothered to show up, though they were personally invited by John Laird. The exception was our newest commission member, Neal Coonerty, and members of his staff. This raises the question: is the RTC really interested in transportation, or is it more interested in subsidizing automobile-oriented growth?

If you missed the symposium, it is still being aired on Community Television. (Our thanks to Community Television for charging less than half of their usual fee to record the event.) To find out when you can see it, call Jack at 425-8848 x27. You can also order a DVD from Community Television for \$20 by contacting Jack or Kathy at [kathy@communitytv.org](mailto:kathy@communitytv.org). ■

## Highway Widening

*continued from page 2*

One crucial event to keep in mind is the **March, 2008 election for Supervisors in Live Oak**. Although the people of Live Oak voted against Measure J, their current Supervisor, Jan Beautz, is a huge proponent of highway widening ("there is more than one way to widen a highway"). Be prepared to work for a better Live Oak supervisor, especially if you live in the district. Although spring of '08 is still a ways away, it is an election that will, in many ways, determine the shape of things to come.

People Power is also working with the Transportation Funding Task Force, as well as exploring the possibility of putting something crystal clear on the November 2008 ballot. We will also likely be taking a trip to Sacramento on May 4th, 2007, to protest state funding of the sneak lanes. And, finally, we are researching legal action. Of course we will be notifying all People Power members about our plans as they come to fruition.

If you have energy to be involved at the planning stages, we need you. Please contact Paul Elerick, chair of the Campaign for Sensible Transportation, at 688-2304 or [elerick@cruzio.com](mailto:elerick@cruzio.com) to help us figure out how to stop this behemoth. ■

For a discussion of why highway widening doesn't work to reduce congestion, see the article by People Power director Micah Posner in the February 8th issue of *Good Times*.