

Our Newest
Busway & Rapid
Transit Project



MST

Agenda #: **5-1**

SURF! Busway & Bus Rapid Transit Project

MST Board of Directors

May 10, 2021

MST Board Action

1. Open Public Hearing
 - a. Receive an update on the SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project
 - b. Conduct a public hearing on the project and the draft Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
 - i. Open Public Comment
 - ii. Close Public Comment

MST Board Action

2. Continue the public hearing to the June 14th MST Board meeting at 10:00 AM for these limited purposes:
 - b. Consider adopting the final Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration;
 - c. Approve the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
 - d. Approve the project.

1. a. Update on the SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project

- a. Brief History of Rail Corridor
- b. What is BRT?
- c. Regional Vision
- d. Project Description
- e. Project Benefits

Brief History of Rail Corridor

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- ▶ 1880 Rail service began connecting San Francisco to the Hotel Del Monte and Pacific Grove
- ▶ 1971 Rail service ended on the “Del Monte” line
- ▶ 1984 Union Pacific Railroad purchased the Southern Pacific Railroad
- ▶ 2003 TAMC purchased the Branch Line for future transit purposes with Proposition 116 funds

Brief History of Rail Corridor

- ▶ 2014 TAMC supports the interim transit use of Bus Rapid Transit on the Monterey Branch Line
- ▶ 2016 Monterey County voters approve Measure X including rapid bus in the corridor
- ▶ 2018 MST completes Monterey Bay Area Feasibility Study of Bus on Shoulder Operations on State Route 1 and the Monterey Branch Line
 - Concluded that the branch line alternative would be the stronger performer compared to other options studied

What is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)?

Major Elements

- Bus only lanes
- Stations
- Vehicles
- Fare collection
- Intelligent transportation systems
- Service and operation

System Performance

- Travel time savings
- Reliability
- Identity and image
- Safety and security
- Capacity

System Benefits

- Increased ridership
- Transit-supportive land development
- Environmental sustainability
- Capital cost effectiveness
- Operating efficiency

Los Angeles MTA Orange Line

- ▶ Frequent bus only service
- ▶ Dedicated former rail corridor
- ▶ 30,000 daily passengers



Eugene, OR Emerald Express (EmX)

- ▶ 21 miles built in 3 phases (West Eugene – Downtown – Springfield)
- ▶ 60% dedicated busway
- ▶ Ridership doubled in first year of operation



Monterey-Salinas Transit - JAZZ

- ▶ 6.75 miles Sand City – Seaside – Transit Plaza – Aquarium
- ▶ Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) and transit flow coordination
- ▶ Station, street improvements
- ▶ Reduced travel time and improved on-time performance



Regional Vision

*Mobility at the
Speed of Life*



Highway 1 Typical Morning Traffic



Photo taken in 2017

SURF! Team

► MST

- ❖ Lisa Rheinheimer, Assistant General Manager
- ❖ Michelle Overmeyer, Director of Planning and Innovation

► TAMC

- ❖ Todd Muck, Deputy Executive Director
- ❖ Madilyn Jacobsen, Transportation Planner

► Kimley-Horn & Associates

- ❖ Peter Meyerhofer, Project Lead/Managing Engineer
- ❖ Tad Stearn, Environmental Project Manager

SURF! Project Description

- A bus-only entry into the TAMC right-of-way at Del Monte Boulevard and Palm Avenue in the City of Marina. This element requires upgraded intersection traffic and safety controls, as well as bicycle and pedestrian path improvements along Del Monte Boulevard.
- Two lanes (one in each direction) of dedicated busway road surface within the TAMC Monterey Branch Line right-of-way. Work within the TAMC right-of-way to construct the bus lanes will require grading, drainage improvements, retaining walls, fencing, recreation trail connections, utility relocations and other necessary improvements to create a safe, dedicated busway.
- A new transit station (5th Street Station) located on MST property near 5th Street east of Highway 1. The station would include bus bays, public parking, drop off area and other amenities.

SURF! Project Description

- A new roundabout in the public right-of-way at California Avenue and Highway 1 southbound ramp in Sand City to better accommodate buses re-entering the public right-of-way.
- A stop at Playa Avenue in Sand City. This segment of the route between the 5th Street Station and Playa Avenue would utilize TAMC corridor right-of way, where a new signal would be constructed at Playa Avenue with transit signal prioritization capabilities. From this point to Contra Costa Avenue in Sand City, SURF! buses would use Del Monte Boulevard (existing roadway).

SURF! PROGRESS

- ❖ Preliminary Engineering/Design
 - ✓ Preserve railroad tracks for future use
 - ✓ Palm/Del Monte in Marina
 - ✓ 5th Street Station in Marina
 - ✓ California/Monterey/Fremont in Seaside and Sand City
 - ✓ Bicycle trail connections, improvements

SURF! CORRIDOR

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DEL MONTE AND PALM (MARINA)

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Video Simulation

Del Monte and
Palm

*for illustrative
purposes only*

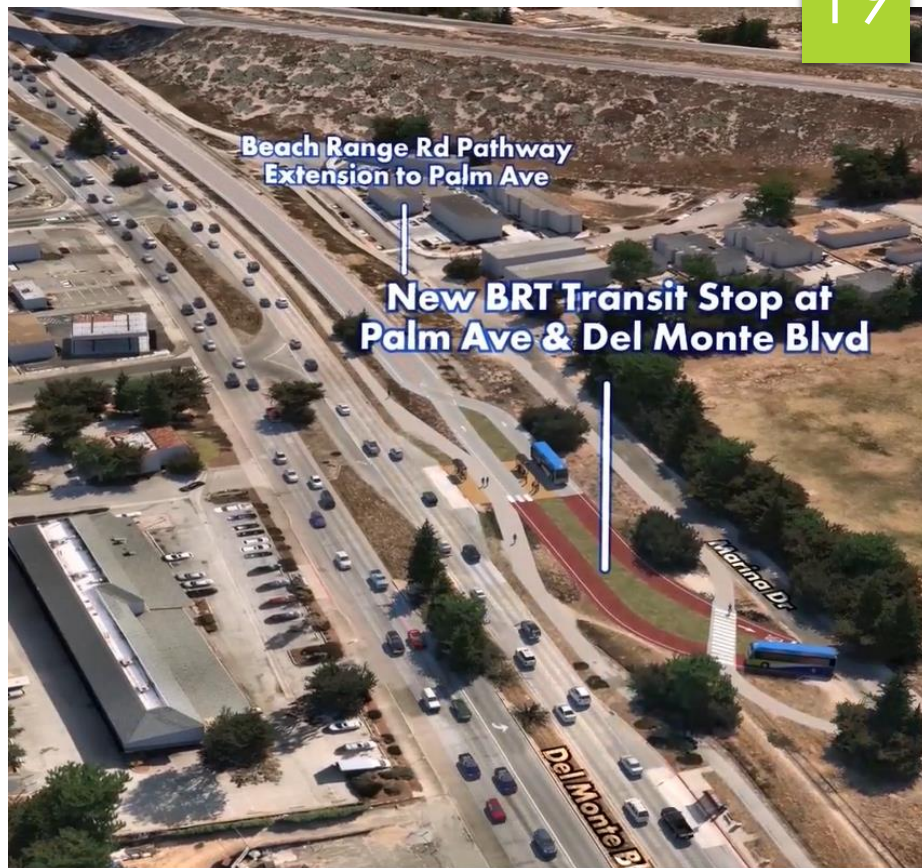


Photo Simulation

Beach Range Rd.

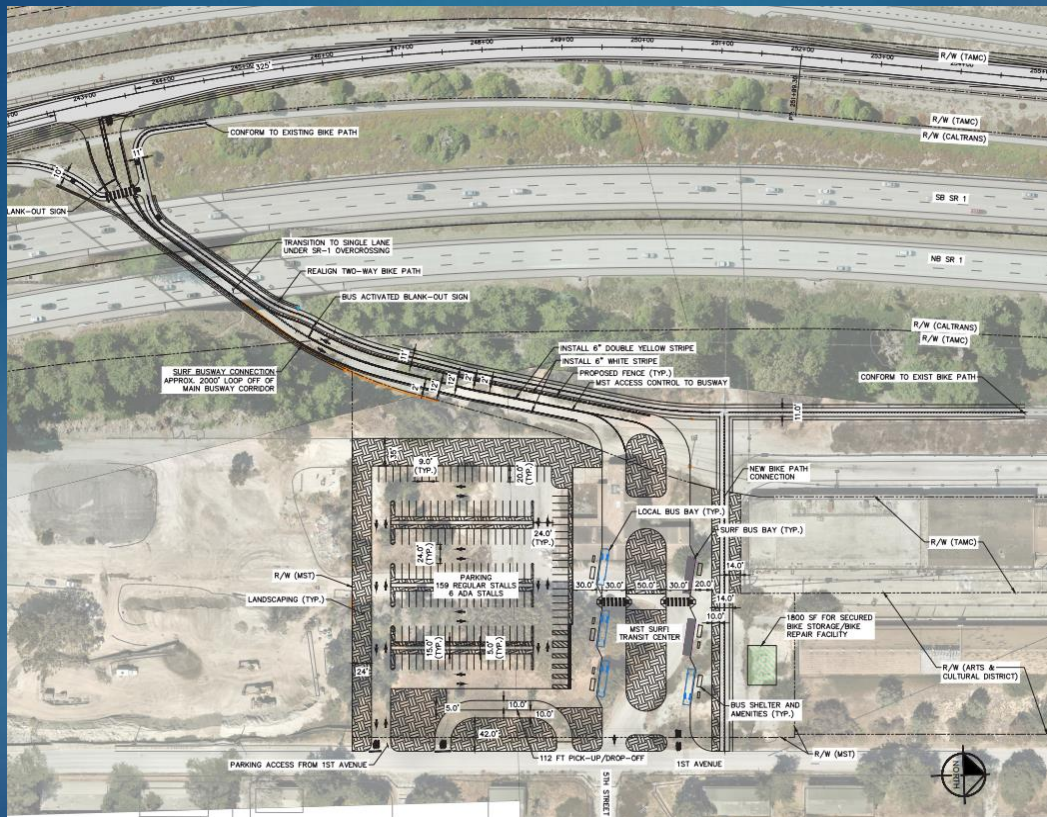
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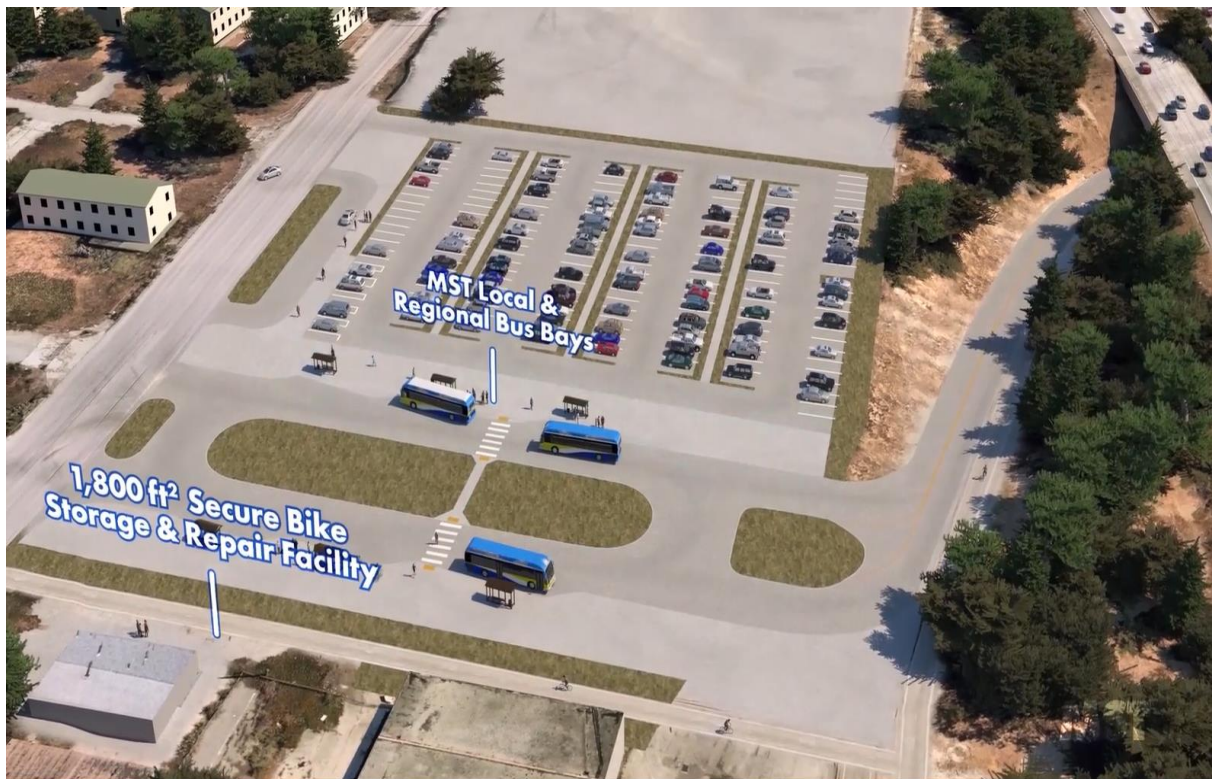


- State Parks to convert Beach Range Rd. to vehicle traffic for campground
- Zero-emission buses planned for SURF!
- Better bus service frequency during peak traffic congestion

DESIGN: 5TH STREET STATION (MARINA)

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**SURF!**

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS Use and Reduce Traffic on Highway 1

MST

Enhance Mobility and Improve Bicycle Trail Connections

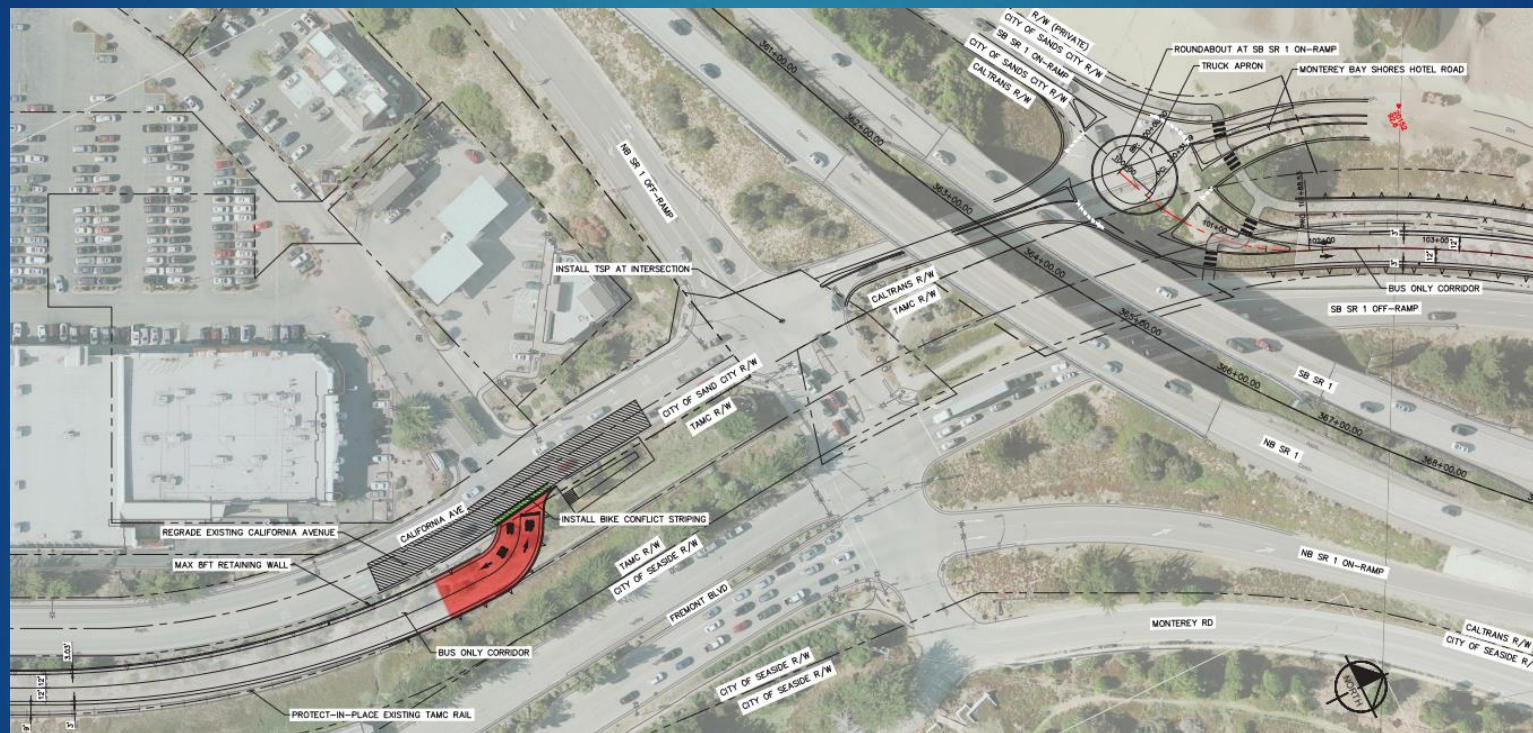
Video Simulation

5th Street Station

*for illustrative
purposes only*

CALIFORNIA/FREMONT (SEASIDE/SAND CITY)

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**Beach Range Rd
Extension South**

MST

Increase Transit Use and Reduce Traffic on Highway 1



Video Simulation

California/ Fremont

for illustrative purposes only

VIDEO SIMULATION CALIFORNIA/ PLAYA

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*for
illustrative
purposes
only*

SURF!

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

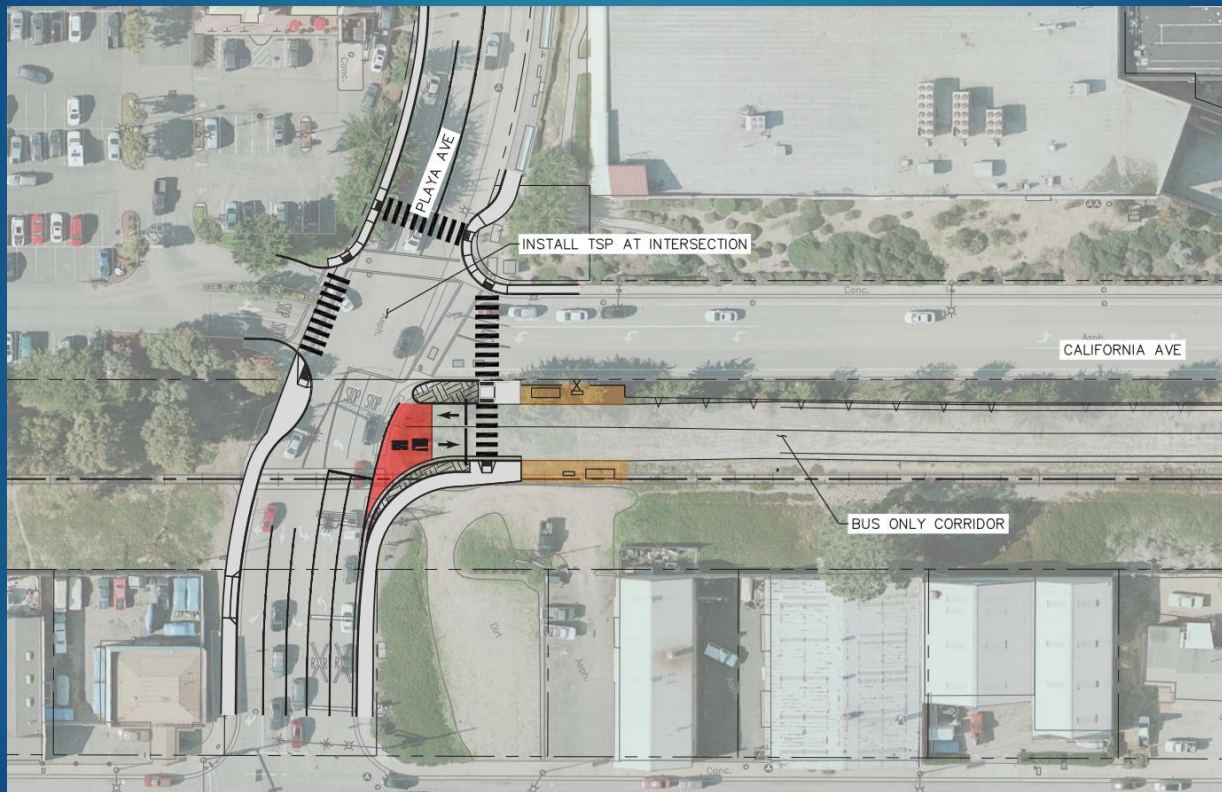
MST

Improve Transit Connections

MST
MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT

CALIFORNIA/ PLAYA (SEASIDE/SAND CITY)

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PROJECT BENEFITS

Environmental

- ✓ Improves air quality with increased transit use and zero-emission buses
- ✓ Reduces greenhouse gas emissions, combats Global Climate Change
- ✓ Reduces microplastics that flow to the Monterey Bay from vehicle tires
- ✓ Provides alternative transportation option for State Parks access and the coast for recreational enjoyment

Traffic Congestion

- ✓ Increases transit use
- ✓ Reduces traffic on Highway 1



PROJECT BENEFITS

Mobility and Equity

- ✓ Improves bicycle connections and adds 1 mile of new bicycle trails
- ✓ Offers affordable transportation options
- ✓ Connects low-income residents to healthcare, education, and employment

Transit

- ✓ Improves travel time reliability for transit riders
- ✓ Provides more reliable transit options
- ✓ Enhances transit connections to CSUMB, military neighborhoods, Marina, and beyond



PROJECT BENEFITS

Land Use

- ✓ Achieves a higher and better near-term use of the inactive Monterey Branch Line corridor while preserving long-term planning options for future light rail
- ✓ Supports transit-oriented development, access to Housing and Community Development funds
- ✓ Supports local land use policies, General Plans, Regional, State, and Federal goals

PROJECT PROGRESS

❖ Coordination with Partners

- ✓ US DOT and FTA – consultation with US Fish and Wildlife, access to Capital Investment Grants (\$\$\$)
- ✓ Caltrans – small slivers of right-of-way inside Caltrans property, requires coordination and approvals
- ✓ California Coastal Commission – Coastal permit needed
- ✓ California State Parks
- ✓ Cities of Marina, San City, Seaside and County
- ✓ TAMC Committees
- ✓ Interested community groups

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

- ▶ Feb. 2021 Public survey, 162 responses with overall positive support
- ▶ 2020-2021 Letters of support from Cities of Marina, Seaside, Sand City, Monterey
- ▶ 2021 Letters of support from LandWatch, Caltrans, Fire Chiefs

TESTIMONIALS

“The SURF! Busway Project will support the transportation needs of our growing city.”
Mayor Ian Oglesby, City of Seaside

“The proposed project aligns with the City’s vision and provides needed public transportation options within our city.” **Mayor Mary Ann Carbone, Sand City**

“The SURF! Busway will provide our community with a safe, fast, and reliable alternative commuting along Highway 1.” **Mayor Bruce Delgado, City of Marina**

“It brings Monterey County one step closer to making the use of private automobiles a choice, and not a necessity... We at the City of Monterey enthusiastically support MST’s SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project and we look forward to working together to drive this project forward.” **Mayor Clyde Roberson, City of Monterey**

TESTIMONIALS

“MST has developed a strong working relationship with the Blue Zones initiative... We are proud to support MST’s SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project and proud to be associated with their great work in Monterey County.” **Kendra Howell, Senior Policy Lead, Blue Zones Project Monterey County**

“Monterey County residents and visitors will enjoy taking transit over using a single occupant vehicle with this frequent, reliable, and convenient service.” **Michele Vaughn, President, Monterey County Fire Chief’s Association**

PROJECT COST AND FUNDING

TOTAL PROJECT
COST: \$55.8 M

Est. construction cost: \$50.7 M

Secure funding - \$15.2 M

- TAMC Measure X - \$15 M
- State Local Partnership - \$100,000
- Federal \$69,000

Future funding - \$40.6 M

- State TIRCP - \$25 M
- State Active Transportation - \$1.3 M
- Community Project Funding - \$5 M
- US DOT Capital Investment Grant - \$9.3 M

NEXT STEPS

- Board consideration of CEQA document and project
- Final design, permitting, Capital Investment Grant analysis
- Seek State/Federal Funding – Ongoing until fully funded

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Types of CEQA Documents	Circumstance
Exemptions: Categorical and Statutory	Certain types of projects are exempt from CEQA review (SB288 – BRT Projects)
Initial Study with <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative Declaration (ND)• Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When no impacts are identified• When impacts can be minimized, reduced or mitigated to less-than-significant levels
Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	Environmental impacts have been identified and cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION AND REVIEW

- ✓ CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP) released August 13, closed September 14, 2020

Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration public comment period March 13, 2021 – April 12, 2021

- ✓ NEPA Federal process initiated with FTA as lead agency

CONCERNS HEARD

- ▶ Species - Plants, Animals
- ▶ Light
- ▶ Noise
- ▶ Aesthetics, Visual
- ▶ Alternatives Analysis
- ▶ Use of Busway by others

Comments from the public and other agencies will be considered in the final IS/MND

ENVIRONMENTAL NEXT STEPS

- Public Review IS/MND – closed April 12, 2021
- Public Hearing – May 10, 2021
- New information and additional comments considered for the record, Errata, Final IS/MND, MMRP, and Board action – June 14, 2021
- NEPA Review – Fall 2021/Winter 2022
- Final Design and Construction – 2021-2027

MST BOARD ACTION

- ✓ Receive an update on the SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project
- 2. Conduct a public hearing on the project and the draft Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).**
 - a. Open Public Comment**
 - b. Close Public Comment**

a. Open Public Comment

b. Close Public Comment

- ▶ Public hearing is not intended to be a debate or oral argument
- ▶ MST staff, consultants will answer questions from Board members only
- ▶ Remarks from the public phrased as a question will be considered comments
- ▶ New information and additional comments will be considered for the record as part of the CEQA process
- ▶ Each commentor has limited time per Board Chair discretion
- ▶ No ceding of time to others
- ▶ Timer provides countdown

CONTINUE PUBLIC HEARING

2. Continue the public hearing to the June 14th MST Board meeting to at 10:00 AM for these limited purposes:
 - a. Consider findings and adopt the final Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration;
 - b. Approve the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
 - c. Approve the project.