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Saskia Rymer-Burnett
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via email: Saskia.Rymer-Burnett@dot.ca.gov
cc: Tatiana.Ahlstrand@dot.ca.gov

RE: Draft Caltrans District 1 Transit Plan

Ms. Rymer-Burnett:

The Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP) has reviewed the draft District 1 Transit Plan ("plan"). We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

US-101 in Eureka

We agree with the plan's identification of Eureka's 4th and 5th Streets corridor (US-101) as a Tier 1 priority for improvement, both as a segment (Table 6) and as a "cluster of stops" (Table 7). We also agree with the identification of Broadway between Henderson and Hawthorne Streets (also US-101) as a Tier 1 priority as a segment (Table 6) and as a single stop (Table 7). However, we strongly believe that the entire US-101 corridor in Eureka, including all of Broadway, must be designated a Tier 1 priority.

It seems likely that one reason all of 4th and 5th Streets are currently designated Tier 1, but not all of Broadway, is that bus stops on Broadway are fewer and further apart. But several bus routes use almost the entire corridor, and riders are using all of the Broadway corridor to access stops. It makes little sense to break Eureka's US-101 corridor into segments for specific improvements, when the entire corridor is used by both buses and riders. Changing conditions in only one location will have limited impacts on safety, access, speed, and reliability.

The plan should call out the need for corridor-level safety and access improvements, including traffic calming, improved pedestrian crossings, and Class IV bike lanes throughout the Eureka US-101 corridor.

To the greatest extent feasible, bus boarding improvements in the Eureka US-101 corridor (Table 6) should prioritize bus bulbs or boarding islands allowing the bus to stop in-lane, in order to avoid the problem identified by partners of parked vehicles blocking bus stops, and to increase transit speed and reduce variability by eliminating the need to merge back into traffic.

Bus stops throughout the corridor—not just at Broadway and Hawthorne St—also need better shelters, lighting, and seating (Table 7). While some stops on 4th and 5th Street have a few amenities, some have none, and no stop has sufficient shelters, lighting, or seating.

Bus Stop Improvements

The plan should prioritize dynamic, real-time bus status information at stops throughout the District, rather than static signage. Real-time information provides significant benefits for riders, some of whom do not have access to smart phones even if a signal is available.

Tables 6 and 7 should also identify secure, weather-protected bike parking and bikeshare stations as needed improvements at all major stops. Secure bike parking is noted as a community-identified need (see p.39), but is not identified as a potential improvement for any Tier 1 or Tier 2 locations. Bikeshare stations, which can serve a similar function, are similarly absent from these tables.

Bus Speed and Reliability

Bus pull-outs are identified as a safety improvement measure in for several top-tier locations in the plan. We agree that pull-outs are necessary and beneficial in some locations. However, in higher-traffic areas, pull-outs can decrease transit speed and reliability, due to the difficulties of safely merging back into traffic.

Many of the locations identified for pull-outs—such as US-101 in Eureka and Crescent City—are also identified as having low and variable transit speeds, conditions which pull-outs could exacerbate. The plan should instead recommend bus bulbs, boarding islands, or other in-lane options wherever feasible in high-traffic areas. Safety concerns can be mitigated by corresponding traffic calming and other road design measures.

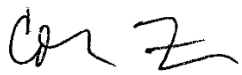
Implementation

The plan should include a clearer commitment to faster implementation of improvements in Tier 1 and Tier 2 locations, both for Caltrans-initiated projects and for processing third-party encroachment permits. The speed of improvements to date has been painfully slow. For the

plan to have a meaningful impact, identified improvements must be thoroughly and rapidly implemented.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



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