

**NORTH COUNTY CORRIDOR
TRANSPORTATION EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY**

ITEM: 3c

SUBJECT:

City of Riverbank Circulation Update

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Discussion only

FISCAL IMPACT:

Not determined

DISCUSSION:

Please see the attached document from J.D. Hightower, Community Development Director for the City of Riverbank regarding the Desire to Relocate SR 108 Corridor.

The Riverbank SR 108 Enhancement Plan can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.riverbank.org/Depts/CommunityDevelopment/default.aspx> then click on

["Riverbank SR 108 Enhancement Plan" **New**](#)



City of Riverbank Community Development Department

Planning ≈ Building ≈ Neighborhood Improvement

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DATE: April 16, 2010

TO: North County Corridor Joint Powers Authority

FROM: J.D. Hightower, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **DESIRE TO RELOCATE SR 108 CORRIDOR**

As a backdrop, the City of Riverbank's adopted Vision Statement for the year 2025 calls that:

Riverbank in 2025 has a small-town character where residents can live, work, and play locally. The City has a thriving downtown that offers a variety of retail opportunities and services and functions as the social and cultural heart of the community. Riverbank has a healthy and diversified industrial base served by its railroad, safe and walkable/bikable neighborhoods, and a wide range of employment and housing opportunities for its diverse population. Although we welcome automobiles, Riverbank is a place for PEOPLE.

Those who choose not to drive can easily and safely walk, bicycle, or use public transit to get to work, school, shopping, or a local park. Riverbankers' strong sense of community identity is reflected in its public gathering places and activities, architectural variety, and the ways in which the City's riverfront location, railroad-oriented history, agricultural heritage, and other unique qualities are celebrated in the built environment. Riverbank in 2025 has succeeded in creating a BALANCE between housing and jobs for its residents, commerce and industries that support the local economy, and the protection of agriculture and natural resources.

To accomplish this vision, Riverbank desires to have the State Route 108 corridor re-designated away from the current Patterson Road, Callandar Avenue, Atchison Road alignment. The enclosed 2003 Riverbank SR 108 Enhancement Plan identified the Claribel Road corridor as the more appropriate route for State Route 108 (pages 19 – 20). The 2005 Vision Statement further called that, "Commercial corridors, such as Patterson Road, should be attractive, unique, pedestrian-friendly centers of commerce to enhance the City's character.". Context sensitive design for along the current SR 108, despite official Caltrans policy support, has not been achieved. Therefore, Riverbank moved forward to fully evaluate the potential of re-designating the Claribel Road corridor as State Route 108 in accordance with the Enhancement Plan.

One of the important concepts of the 2005 of Riverbank's vision in relationship to the location of the current State Route 108 is that, "Downtown should be the social and cultural heart of our community, and must not be left behind as the City grows." If Downtown is the heart of Riverbank, then the current State Route 108 is the main cultural artery leading to and from this heart. Recognizing this important planning relationship, the City has drafted a Specific Plan for the downtown area and has applied for a Caltrans Environment Justice grant to draft a separate Specific Plan for the Patterson Road corridor.

The overall intent of these planning efforts is to redevelop the vacant 27 acres adjacent to our heart, the former Sun Gangi cannery site. The City intends to see the cannery redeveloped with high density/intensity commercial/residential mixed used area. This area is to carry-on the existing downtown design rhythm. The cultural heart that downtown represents needs to be strengthened by an influx of downtown residents that will utilize existing and planned commercial uses on a daily basis. The cannery represents the best chance to increase new residential development in the downtown area. An influx of people to the area that a high speed rail station could potentially bring is the reason that Riverbank desires to have the cannery site evaluated as an alternative station site for the BNSF alignment.

Regardless of the eventual uses taking place in a redeveloped cannery site, its connection to the downtown area is paramount. The General Plan Update identifies the Santa Fe Street alignment as an additional crossing of the BNSF rail corridor. A fully connected Santa Fe Street with a signal at Callandar Road is envisioned as a gateway entrance to the cannery site. Because Santa Fe Street crossing would be in addition to the existing Patterson Road at grade crossing, Santa Fe Street is envisioned as a grade separated under-crossing of the BNSF rail corridor.

Realizing the safety and connectivity advantages of a grade separated Santa Fe Street crossing, Riverbank is attempting to put together a financing plan for this project. Riverbank applied to the CPUC for grade separation projects in the last recent grant cycle. For matching funds for the project, Riverbank identified a BNSF program that will award \$2 million for grade separated projects, if an existing at grade crossing is given-up. Because of the proximity of Patterson Road, staff identified this at grade crossing as the at grade crossing to give-up for the Santa Fe Street grade separated project. The closure of the Patterson Road crossing could only happen as part of comprehensive system wide project that also included the Callandar Road (SR 108)/Santa Fe Street signalization as well as signalization of the Claus Road/Atchison (SR 108) intersection.

The overall intent of this system wide approach is to have the existing SR 108 corridor move regional truck traffic from the First Street bridge to regional expressways on Oakdale Road and Claus Road. Removing regional truck traffic would improve the safety and walkability of both the Riverbank Skate Park and downtown entrance on First Street as well as alleviate road conditions on Roselle Avenue. Staff is not sure that the NCC would alleviate northbound truck traffic to the BNSF Collegeville Inter-modal Transfer Station or to the George Reed batch plant operations on River Road.

Since the presentation of the Riverbank project to the administrative judge on the CPUC funding program, the Santa Fe Street underpass was not awarded during this grant cycle. Simultaneously as part of the Draft EIR for the Downtown Specific Plan, preliminary traffic modeling indicated that the closure of Patterson Road would add a significant amount of trips to Santa Fe Street. The amount of trips added to Santa Fe Street would probably violate the design intents of the recently completed downtown improvements. The costs of the recently completed downtown improvements far outweigh the \$2 million in BNSF matching funds, therefore, the closure of Patterson Road probably is not a feasible alternative.

The General Plan Update Circulation Element identifies rail crossings at both Patterson Road and Santa Fe Street. The Downtown Specific Plan is to provide for the systematic implementation of General Plan policies, therefore, the preferred alternative to be studied by the Downtown Specific Plan will be with both crossings.