Geography

Santa Cruz County is nestled on the Central Coast of California between the Monterey Peninsula to the south and the San Francisco Bay to the north. Bounded by the Pacific Ocean and Monterey Bay on the southwest, San Mateo County to the northwest, Santa Clara County to the north and east and Monterey and San Benito Counties to the south, Santa Cruz County is California's second smallest county in land size.

Table 3: Santa Cruz County at a Glance

County Size (in square miles) [2]	445
Total Population (06) [1]	261,385
Median Age (05) [2]	37.3
Median Household Income (05) [2]	$58,640
Number of Housing Units (05) [2]	101,686
Average Household Size (05) [2]	2.58
Owner-occupied Housing Units (05) [2]	59.80%
Median House Price (05) [2]	$694,100
Number of Employed Residents (05) [2]	135,148
Total Centerline Miles of Roadway in County (05) [6]	1,139
Daily Vehicle Miles of Travel (05) [6]	5,647,513
METRO Fixed Route Revenue Miles (05/06) [3]	4,579,858
METRO Highway 17 Revenue Miles (05/06) [3]	449,369
Bikeway Miles (06) [4]	99.7

Source: [1] Department of Finance [2] US Census [3] Santa Cruz Metro [4] RTC [5] California Office of Traffic Safety [6] HPMS and Caltrans

Major industries in the county include tourism, agriculture, high technology, marine sciences, and education. Traffic flows into, out of, and within Santa Cruz County on over 1,000 miles of roadway, 40 bus lines, 99.7 miles of bikeways, and six state highways. Table 3 provides a basic statistical profile of Santa Cruz County.

Population

As is shown in Table 3, Santa Cruz County is home to more than a quarter million people, over half of whom live in the unincorporated areas. At 587 people per square mile, our county has one of the highest population densities in the state. Table 4 below shows AMBAG's population forecasts for growth in the county through 2030. AMBAG plans to update the population forecasts and project beyond 2030 in 2008.

Table 4: Santa Cruz County Population Forecasts

	CAPITOLA	SANTA CRUZ	SCOTTS VALLEY	WATSONVILLE	UNINCORPORATED	TOTAL
2010	10,978	57,768	13,667	56,779	136,167	275,359
2015	11,041	58,846	13,864	61,126	139,150	284,027
2020	11,104	59,924	14,062	65,473	142,132	292,695
2025	11,120	61,956	14,169	67,946	143,582	298,773
2030	11,136	63,987	14,275	70,418	145,031	304,847

Source: AMBAG's 2005 Monterey Region Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Appendix B

Existing Roadway System

Highways

Santa Cruz County has a number of scenic state highways, several of which also serve as crucial connectors to the San Francisco Bay Area and the rest of the Monterey Bay region. Caltrans is responsible for collecting traffic count data on state highways, and more detailed information can be found in Appendix B, Table 2.

State Route 1: Part of the designated National Highway System, Highway 1 is the only road that traverses the entire county from north to south. Starting in the north at the Santa Cruz/San Mateo County line, this important highway serves Davenport, the north coast beaches, the City of Santa Cruz, Soquel, Live Oak, the City of Capitola, Seacliff, Aptos, Seascape, La Selva Beach, and the City of Watsonville. Highway 1 provides the primary access to the county's coastal areas for much of its length, as well as serving the needs of residents and visitors for much of the urbanized areas. Along the north coast, Highway 1 is a two-lane scenic highway. Along Mission Street in the City of Santa Cruz, it becomes a four-lane urban arterial with heavy commercial use and relatively slow travel speeds. From its interchange with Highway 17 to the Monterey County Line, Route 1 is a four-lane divided freeway that is subject to congestion, primarily from the 1/17 intersection to Larkin Valley Road. In February 2006, construction began on the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project. The project adds a merge lane in each direction between Highway 17 and the Morrissey/La Fonda area to address specific safety issues. The RTC is working with Caltrans to add northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 between Soquel Avenue and Morrissey Boulevard. Finally, The RTC is also working with Caltrans on a preliminary design/environmental study for the Highway 1 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes widening project which would extend from Morrissey Boulevard in Santa Cruz to Larkin Valley/San Andreas Road in Aptos.

State Route 9: Highway 9 is a two-lane rural highway as it enters Santa Cruz County from Santa Clara County in the Santa Cruz Mountains. It provides a slow but scenic 27-mile forested route between cities in Santa Clara Valley and the City of Santa Cruz at its junction with Highway 1. Highway 9 serves the communities of the San Lorenzo Valley, including Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, and Felton, and is a heavily used commuter and recreational travel route.

State Route 17: Highway 17 is a four-lane freeway/expressway providing the shortest travel distance between Santa Clara County and Santa Cruz County. Most travelers to and from the San Francisco Bay area and Santa Cruz County use Highway 17. The route is heavily used for recreational travel on weekends and for commuter travel on weekdays. It is commonly subject to delays, partly due to the physical configuration of this mountainous roadway. Starting from the Santa Cruz/Santa Clara County Line near Summit Road, Highway 17 is a steep, windy route with narrow or nonexistent shoulders and a narrow median with guard rails. Highway 17 has been the scene of many serious

collisions, but increased enforcement from the California Highway Patrol is credited with an improved safety record in recent years. Additionally, Caltrans is implementing safety improvements such as widening shoulders and improving drainage at key locations. Highway 17 reached its design capacity of 40,000 vehicles in 1968, with further redesign remaining prohibitively expensive and environmentally unfavorable. Although this route has no signalized intersections, it has several unsignalized intersections with acceleration/deceleration lanes as well as T-intersections with local roads.

State Route 129: Highway 129 starts in Watsonville at Highway 1 and runs east to San Benito County. Route 129 traverses hilly terrain. Since it provides the shortest route between the agricultural center of Watsonville and U.S. Route 101 in San Benito County, it carries a large volume of heavy trucks especially since State Route 152 is off limits for semi-trailer trucks over 45-feet in length.

State Route 152: Highway 152 is also a major route connecting Highway 101 and Highway 1. In Santa Cruz County, Highway 152 starts at Highway 1 as a four lane divided roadway to Elkhorn Road in Pajaro. Leaving Watsonville, the highway enters hilly terrain as a two-lane undivided road up over Hecker Pass to the Santa Clara County line. Due to safety concerns regarding semi-trailer truck use of this route, trucks over 45-feet in length are prohibited over the Hecker Pass portion of Highway 152.

State Route 236: Highway 236 is a windy and steep, two-lane rural road that provides access from State Route 9 in Boulder Creek west to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The majority of the roadway is one lane in each direction with some sections narrowing to one lane for both directions. Passing through the park, Highway 236 first heads north, and then east to reconnect with Highway 9, approximately 8 miles north of Boulder Creek.

Other Roadways

In addition to its highways, Santa Cruz County has four other types of roadways shared by automobiles, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians that are described here in order of decreasing traffic volume. The first three, arterials, collectors, and local roads, are the focus of the RTC Transportation Monitoring Program. Detailed information about average daily traffic counts on roadways throughout the county can be found in Appendix B, Table 1.

***Arterials*:** These roads provide corridors for through traffic. Many feed into the highway network and are used as alternatives to highways. Most of these routes are served by bus transit regularly, and have marked bicycle lanes. Principal arterials include major county roads and major city streets with average daily traffic (ADT) volumes over 20,000 and under 50,000. Secondary arterials typically carry between 10,000 and 19,999 ADT. Examples of arterials include Graham Hill Road, Soquel Avenue, 41st Avenue, and Freedom Boulevard.

Collectors: These streets connect neighborhood streets with arterial roadways. Average trip length and travel speeds are lower than on arterial routes. Examples include Delaware Avenue, Chanticleer Avenue, and Seascape Boulevard.

Local: These streets provide direct access to adjacent residential areas, and through traffic is generally discouraged.

Private: These streets, especially prevalent in rural areas of the Santa Cruz mountains, pass through private land and are not maintained at the public's expense.

Travel Characteristics

As the data in the first section of this report demonstrate, average daily traffic volumes have generally increased countywide. Regional modeling completed by AMBAG predicts more of the same. The increase in vehicle miles traveled is expected to be evenly distributed between peak hours (AM-morning, and PM-evening) and off-peak hours as shown in Table 5 below. The projected increase in peak hour demand will result in longer peak period congestion on highways and the local road system.

Table 5: Projected Vehicle Miles of Travel for Santa Cruz County

	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour	Off-Peak	Total
2000	539,201	563,899	4,956,419	6,059,519
2030	686,896	720,650	6,356,532	7,764,079
% change	27.40%	27.80%	28.20%	28.10%

Source: AMBAG's 2005 Monterey Region Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Table III-10

Commute Patterns

Despite the extent and variety of work opportunities available within Santa Cruz County, a substantial number of county residents have historically commuted to other counties to take advantage of generally higher-paying jobs or opportunities unavailable locally. It is estimated that, in the year 2000, more than 25,000 workers drove to jobs in counties north of Santa Cruz County on a daily basis. To a lesser extent, Santa Cruz County residents also commute to Monterey County for job opportunities on the Monterey peninsula, in Moss Landing and in Salinas. In 2000, more than 13,000 people commuted into Santa Cruz County for job opportunities each day. The number of commuters heading outside of Santa Cruz County is expected to increase between the years 2000 and 2020.

Table 6 below shows that total workers commuting out of Santa Cruz County rose by 30.4% from 1990 to 2000, while commuting into Santa Cruz County rose only 9.7%. The complete commute pattern data in Appendix H shows that even commuting between Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, an exchange that has historically had more residents in Monterey commuting to Santa Cruz for work than visa versa, followed this trend. In 1990, nearly twice as many Monterey County residents (6,821) commuted to work in Santa Cruz County as Santa Cruz County residents to Monterey County (3,650), but by 2000, this gap was narrowed substantially as Santa Cruz-Monterey commuting rose 41.5% and Monterey-Santa Cruz commuting rose only 11.4%.

Table 6: Santa Cruz County Commute Patterns

County of Residence	County of Work	Total Commuters 1990	Total Commuters 2000	% Change 1990-2000	Absolute Change 1990-2000
Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz	89,628	93,084	3.9%	3,456
Other counties	Santa Cruz	11,899	13,053	9.7%	1,154
Santa Cruz	Other counties	24,568	32,029	30.4%	7,461

Source: AMBAG 2005 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

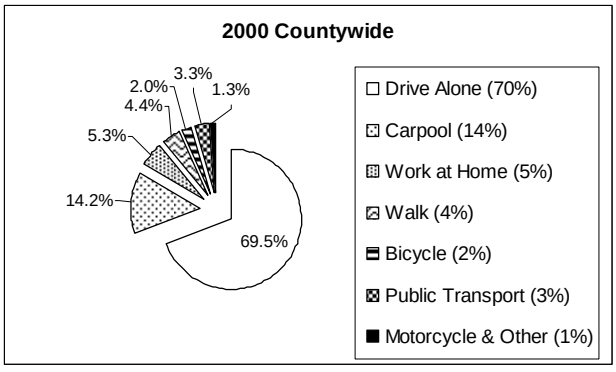
Census Report: Journey to Work

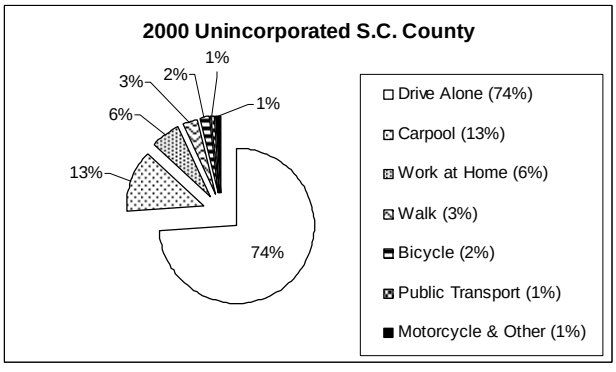
Transportation figures from the 2000 Census long form—known as the Journey to Work (JTW) data—give us a glimpse of the travel behavior of people commuting to work.

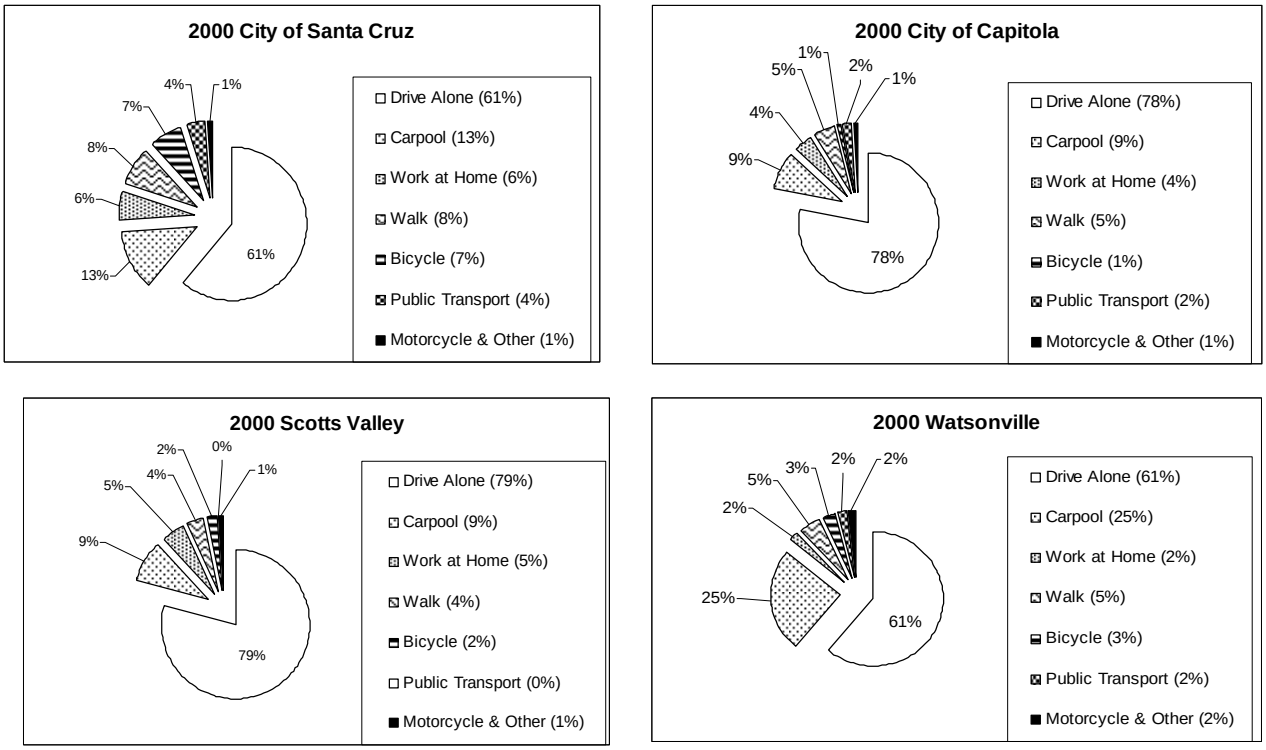
The Census is the only survey that includes travel data at the county and city level, and although the JTW is by far the most comprehensive snapshot of commuting available, it does not provide any information about the 80 percent of trips that are for other purposes (ex. shopping trips, school trips, etc.). In 2005, Journey to Work data for Santa Cruz County was updated with a sampling of 1-in-40 addresses. Because the Census asks respondents to indicate the mode of transportation they usually take to work, it fails to count people who took transit, bicycled, or walked to work occasionally. And, where people used more than one mode to get to work (i.e. walking to a transit station), only the mode that commuters estimated they used most of the distance is counted.

In 2000, there were more than 126,000 workers over 16 years of age in the Santa Cruz County region, an increase of approximately 10,100 from 1990. Figure 10 demonstrates how residents of the county traveled to work in 2000, starting with the entire county, and then detailing each individual local jurisdiction. Countywide, 70% of commuters drove alone, 14% carpool, and 16% chose other alternatives to driving alone. Carpooling in Watsonville (25% of commute trips) exceeded the countywide standard of 14% of trips; while the use of alternative modes in the City of Santa Cruz was higher than in the rest of the county (61% of commuters drove alone). Countywide data from the 2005 American Community Survey by the US Census is shown in Figure 11 and indicates 72% of commuters drove alone, 10% carpool, and 18% chose other alternatives to driving alone.

Figure 10: How Santa Cruz County Region Workers Commute

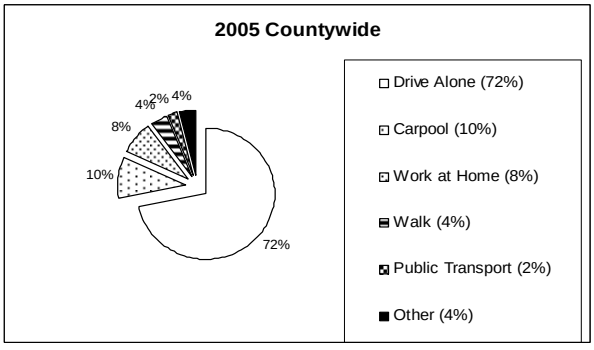






Source: US Census

Figure 11: How Santa Cruz County Commutes to Work-2005



Source: US Census

Collision Information

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) tracks collision information on state highways, county, and city roads, using its Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) database. Table 7 shows a comparison of collision data from 1997-2005. The number of injury collisions declined in 2004 and 2005 from 2003 for motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The number of fatal collisions decreased for motor vehicles and pedestrians and remained constant for bicyclists from 2003 to 2005. The RTC and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE) have a funding partnership to fund the "Safe on 17" campaign. The CHP maintains the campaign, which includes public information and increased enforcement on Highway 17. Caltrans is an important partner in the Safe on 17 Program. They are responsible for identifying and implementing potential engineering and safety improvements including installing guardrail, signage and traffic operations

system elements. Statistics, based on Office of Traffic Safety findings from this campaign, are included in Appendix I, Table 2.

Table 7: California Highway Patrol Collisions Summary, 1997-2005

Vehicle Collisions	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Fatal Collisions	21	21	9	18	23	22	24	17	22
Injury Collisions	1453	1448	1350	1380	1313	1286	1367	1195	1199
Bicycle-Involved Collisions									
Fatal Collisions	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1
Injury Collisions	197	161	180	154	150	150	170	160	150
Pedestrian-Involved Collisions									
Fatal Collisions	5	2	1	2	3	6	7	2	5
Injury Collisions	118	127	98	97	87	83	87	79	79

Source: CHP & SWITRS annual report (tables 8A, dated 5/4/05)

Air Quality Monitoring

The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) monitors air quality in the Monterey Bay region. MBUAPCD has four monitoring stations in Santa Cruz County: Davenport, Scotts Valley, Watsonville, and Santa Cruz. Ozone, the primary constituent of smog, is formed in the atmosphere through complex chemical reactions involving volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) in the presence of sunlight. According to MBUAPCD's 2000 Air Quality Management Plan, on- and off-road motor vehicles are the largest sources of VOC (52%) and NOx (75%) in the Monterey Bay Air Basin. Fuel combustion from on-road vehicles and entrained road dust from paved roads account for 10% of particulate matter smaller than 10 microns (PM10) during summer days. Appendix J shows PM10 and ozone data collected at Santa Cruz County stations through 2006.

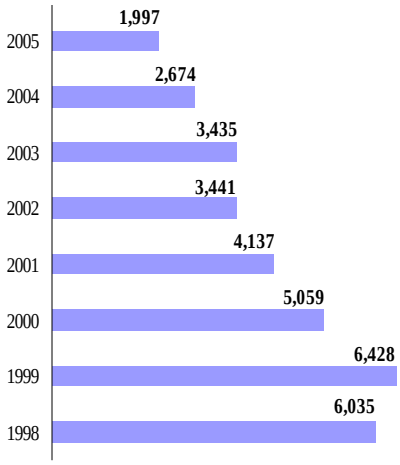
Traffic Operations System

Traffic Operation System elements are cost effective tools for addressing transportation safety, congestion, traveler information and emergency response. These elements, including changeable message signs, highway advisory radio, closed circuit TV cameras, traffic monitoring stations, call boxes, and roving tow trucks are used to detect traffic incidents, inform motorists about current roadway conditions, assist stranded motorists, and reduce congestion associated with unexpected events. 2006 marked the first year that Santa Cruz County residents could view a live traffic feed on the web at http://video.dot.ca.gov. The camera provides real time view of traffic conditions at the Highway 1/17 interchange.

Motorist Aid Call Box System

Acting as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies, RTC is the agency responsible for the one hundred and twenty-four yellow telephone call boxes located along the side of highways in Santa Cruz County. Motorists requesting assistance or reporting an incident simply pick up the telephone handset and reach an operator. Recent trends in calls show a decrease in calls likely as a result of the prevalence of cellular phones. However, more than 1,400 calls were placed from call boxes in 2006. Details on the Call Box System total usage over the last eight years are shown in Appendix K.

Figure 12: Annual Call Box Calls

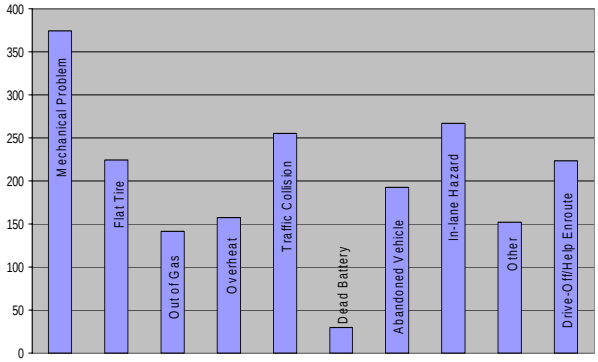


Freeway Service Patrol

Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) tow trucks patrol Highways 1 and 17, providing assistance to disabled vehicles such as minor car repair, flat tire repair, or towing off the highway and removing disabled vehicles and debris from the travel lane. This quick assistance and removal helps reduce traffic congestion, reduce the potential for secondary collisions, and improve air quality. This service is paid for out of state and local funds and is free to motorists. As shown in Figure 13, FSP provided assistance to over 2000 people in 2006.

Figure 13: 2006 FSP Total Assist

Highway 17 – 1,162 Assists
Highway 1 – 996 Assists



Bus Transit

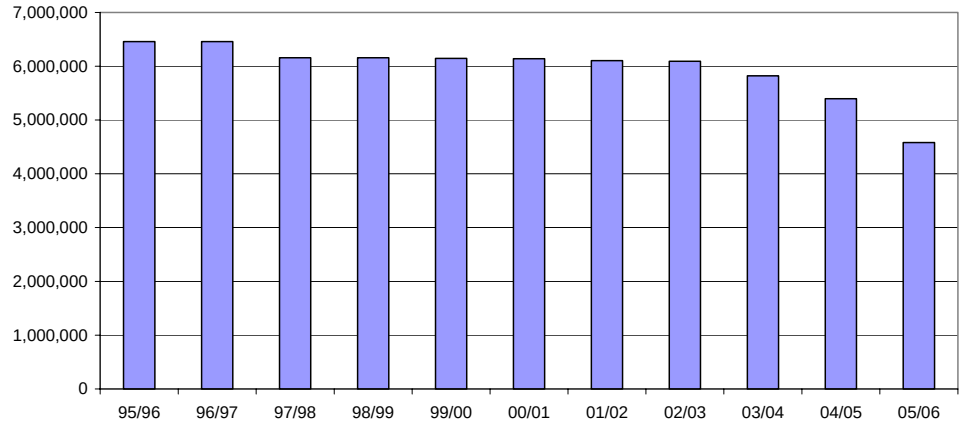
The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD or METRO) is the only fixed-route public transit operator in Santa Cruz County. SCMTD served over 4.6 million passenger trips in FY 05-06 with 73 buses on 40 routes, not including the Highway 17 Express Service, operated jointly with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

SCMTD provides three types of service in Santa Cruz County: urban collector, urban local feeder, and rural routes. The routes serving the downtown Santa Cruz METRO Center (also known as Pacific Station) are “pulsed” to enable better connectivity at this hub. In addition to downtown Santa Cruz, SCMTD operates four other transit centers in Capitola, Felton, Scotts Valley and downtown Watsonville.

SCMTD covers just under 500 directional miles in the county. All major trip generators in the county are served, including the University of California, Cabrillo College, all secondary schools, major employment centers, central business districts, the Capitola Mall and other commercial centers, social service agencies, beaches, and parks. Metro buses operated 2.4 million revenue miles in FY 05/06. Figure 14 shows change in SCMTD Passenger Trips from 1996/97 to 2005/06. (These figures do not include mileage from the Hwy 17 express bus.) Appendix L summarizes various SCMTD operating statistics and performance measures for FY 03/04 through FY 05/06. The decline in ridership in 2005/06 can be attributed to service cuts that resulted from reduced revenues and a 37-day labor strike which suspended all fixed-route service. Fare increases also may have contributed to the decline. More recent data indicates that ridership is recovering after the labor strike.

Individuals traveling to or from areas outside of Santa Cruz County can travel on the Highway 17 Express to San Jose, which connects to light rail, Caltrain, and Amtrak, or transfer to Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) in Watsonville. Greyhound also operates buses from Watsonville and Santa Cruz to the San Francisco Bay Area and points south.

Figure 14: SCMTD Annual Fixed Route Passengers - FY 95/96 to 05/06



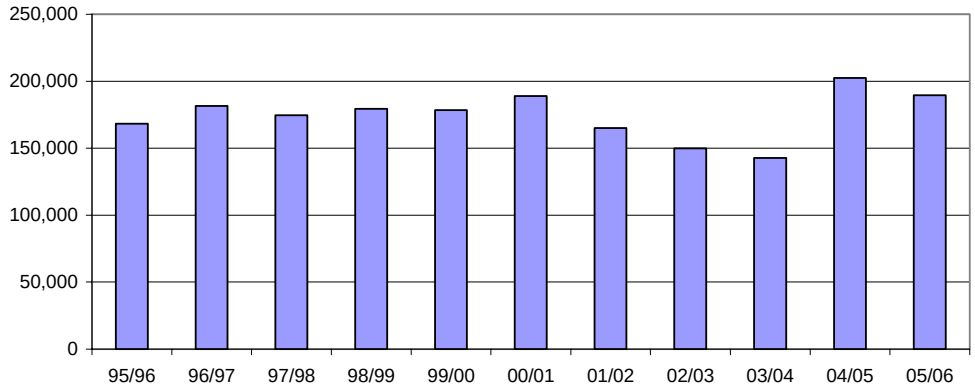
Note: Ridership levels in 05/06 low due to 37-day labor strike

Highway 17 Express Bus

The Highway 17 Express bus is a commuter bus which is operated by SCMTD and travels between Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and San Jose. The service was originally intended to provide emergency commuter transportation service while 1989 earthquake damage on Highway 17 was being repaired. However, the service proved to be extremely popular and has continued to the present.

Highway 17 Express bus ridership increased significantly in 2004/05 when Amtrak service was combined with the SCMTD's Highway 17 Express bus. The decline in 2005/06 is attributable to the labor strike. More recent data indicates that ridership is recovering after the labor strike. Historical ridership figures for the Highway 17 Express Bus are shown in Figure 15, below.

Figure 15: Hwy 17 Express Ridership



Note: Ridership levels in 05/06 low due to 37-day labor strike

Commute Solutions

The RTC's rideshare program, Commute Solutions, provides information to thousands of commuters, visitors, and businesses each year on alternatives to driving alone such as carpooling, bicycling, transit, telecommuting, and walking. Commute Solutions offers a personalized, free ride-matching service for people with similar commutes who are interested in joining a carpool or vanpool. People can access this ride-matching service by calling 429-POOL or online at www.commutesolutions.org. Commuters who access the ride-matching database online can get an instant matchlist of potential carpoolers anytime of the day or night. Permanent signs along county highways prominently display the ride matching service phone number.

Park and Ride Lots

Park and Ride lots assist commuters by providing a convenient place to park when riding the bus or meeting carpools and vanpools. There are six park and ride locations in Santa Cruz County, two of which are informal lots, facilities that are not officially designated or maintained. The average daily capacity of all these locations is 441 vehicles.

The use of Park and Ride facilities is related to a very wide range of factors, from freeway congestion levels,

bus service to the lots, the cost of gasoline, and the location, visibility, design, and marketing of existing facilities. Park and Ride lots in Santa Cruz County are consistently underused, though it is difficult to determine what factors influence this under-use.

Table 8: Park & Ride Lot Usage 2004-2007

Parking Lot Name/Description	Current Lot Capacity	2004 (June)	2005 (November)	2007 (March)
Resurrection Church East & West	78	22	30	26
Soquel/Paul Sweet Road	57	32	26	24
Morrissey/Rooney	12	5	5	3
Scotts Valley Transit	219	150	122	176
Summit Road [1]	12	4	8	9
Pasatiempo [1]	63	44	50	58
TOTAL OCCUPIED SPACES		**257**	**241**	**296**

Source: RTC – 2007 [1] Capacity estimated

As part of the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Widening Project study, the RTC and Caltrans are commissioning studies to include new Park and Ride facilities along this route, with special consideration for their integration with possible HOV lanes (thus encouraging higher vehicle occupancy). The project team is evaluating inclusion of these new parking facilities within the Caltrans right-of-way, since proximity to major commute routes tends to be a very significant factor in attracting carpoolers, vanpoolers, and users of public transit.

Transportation Services for People with Special Needs

Numerous specialized transportation services within the region are available to elderly and disabled residents of Santa Cruz County. Many of these services are called “paratransit”, meaning door-to-door transportation operated by specially-trained drivers using lift or ramp equipped vehicles that can accommodate persons using wheel chairs.

Paratransit services mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are provided by SCMTD and its subcontractors. In FY 05/06, these shared-ride, door-to-door paratransit services, called Metro ParaCruz, provided nearly 85,000 one-way rides for seniors and disabled residents. Individuals using ParaCruz must be certified as being unable to use the regular bus service. In addition, the Metro operates fixed route bus service with lift or ramp equipped vehicles and provides discount fares for the elderly and disabled to maximize accessibility and use of the existing fixed-route system (buses, bus stops, and transit centers).

In addition, Community Bridges' Lift Line program, which serves as the area's Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA), provides transportation services for Elderday, the Cabrillo College Stroke Center, Meals on Wheels, Senior Dining Centers, the MultiPurpose Senior Services Program, and Taxi Scrip program. Lift Line also provides specialized transportation services for elderly and disabled individuals living outside of SCMTD's regular, fixed-route transit service area, and those in need of non-emergency medical transport. In FY 05/06, Lift Line provided over 67,000 one-way rides.

Although the majority of specialized services are offered by SCMTD and Lift Line, a host of smaller, private, for-profit and non-profit entities countywide operate over 250 vehicles that provide transportation to the elderly, those living with disabilities, and the economically disadvantaged. In addition, over half a million rides were provided on fixed route transit for seniors and people with disabilities. The RTC's Guide to Specialized Transportation provides a list of all the service providers in Santa Cruz County.

In 2004, the RTC established a Paratransit Coordination Task Force that was convened to work on the county's specialized transportation issues, including, but not limited to: funding, coordination between services, legal requirements, eligibility, customer service, quality, and community input. Recommendations from the task force are available on the RTC's website (http://www.sccrtc.org/paratrans-tf.html).

Bicycle Planning & Facilities

Several of the county's major collector and arterial roadways also have Class II bikeways (bike lanes), but significant gaps remain in the countywide network. The focus of bikeway development continues to be in high density urban areas and urban corridors that encourage commute and utility trips by bicycle. The City of Santa Cruz has been active in planning for bicycles in recent years, trying a number of non-standard bicycle treatments on a demonstration basis. The City of Watsonville also developed an extensive network of bicycle/pedestrian trails throughout the wetlands of Watsonville.

The Commission, advised by an 11-member volunteer Bicycle Committee, makes recommendations regarding the allocation of state and federal money to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects, and works with the local jurisdictions to obtain grants to close gaps in the bikeway network. The RTC works to increase bicycle commuting as well as encourage bicycle use through subsidizing the cost of bicycle racks and lockers, and publishing a countywide bike map. Table 9, below, shows growth in bikeway miles across the county since 1994. Recent increases in bikeway miles are largely attributable to new striping of existing roadways.

Table 9: Bikeway Miles

Jurisdiction	1994	1997	1999	2002	2003	2004	2005
Capitola	5.8	6.2	6.4	6.4	8.3	10.4	11
Santa Cruz	28.8	30.9	31.8	31.8	31.8	35.2	35.2
Scotts Valley	2.8	4.4	4.8	8.5	9.3	9.5	9.5
Watsonville	5.8	5.8	6	9.2	9.2	9.2	11.4
Unincorporated	24.7	26.4	26.7	28.1	32.6	32.6	32.6
Countywide Total	**67.9**	**73.7**	**75.7**	**84**	**91.2**	**96.9**	**99.7**

In order to promote bicycle safety, the RTC serves as a clearing house for bicycle hazard reports. In FY 05-06, the RTC received 52 Bicycle Hazard Reports. Of these, 7 were related to traffic signal actuation issues, 17 were regarding substandard facilities, 14 were pothole/cracked pavement reports, 12 were debris and other obstructions, and 2 were construction hazards.

The RTC also supports and works with numerous groups to increase bicycle safety. One of the groups the RTC works with is The County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (HSA). In May and June of 2006, health education staff and community volunteers conducted a countywide bicycle safety observation study to evaluate the impact of educational efforts on bicyclists' behavior. Data was collected on helmet use, riding with traffic, stopping at stop signs/lights, and riding on the sidewalk at 37 locations throughout Santa Cruz County. A total of 2,554 bicyclists were observed. Significant findings included:

- Females were more likely to wear helmets with a rate of 41%, compared to men at 35%
- Watsonville had a significantly lower rate of helmet use (17%) compared to North County (46%)
- 77% of cyclists were men, 23% were women
- 84% of cyclists rode with traffic on the right side of the road
- 59% of cyclists stopped at stop signs and lights
- 27% of cyclists rode on the sidewalk

Pedestrian Facilities & Planning

According to a 1999 survey completed by the Community Traffic Safety Coalition, walkability was rated as fair to good in Santa Cruz County. Several main issues identified in the survey were the need for better, safer spaces for walkers and wheelchair users, the need to control motor vehicle speeds and the need to continue to increase driver awareness of pedestrian needs and rights. The RTC's Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee is charged with advising the Commission on issues related to accessibility.

The Community Traffic Safety Coalition, in cooperation with other interested parties, sponsored, in 2004, a walkability study for the City of Watsonville, to address recent safety concerns for residents of the area. The results of the study suggest that:

- 30% of those surveyed reported walking 5-7 days a week
- 52% reported walking 1-4 days a week
- 81% walked for recreation or exercise
- 6% reported that drivers did not behave well. The main reasons identified were not yielding to walkers, and driving too fast
- 21% reported not having a good walk. The main reasons identified were too much traffic and litter
- 35% reported that streets were not easy to cross--signals not being timed was the main reason identified

In 2005 the RTC and the Community Traffic Safety Coalition (CTSC) instituted a pedestrian access report program. The program allows community members to report obstacles or hazards that may be encountered during pedestrian travel, such as cracked sidewalks, sidewalks blocked by vehicles or overgrown vegetation. In addition, the report can be used to indicate gaps in the sidewalk network and desired improvements. The reports are collected by the RTC and forwarded to the appropriate Public Works Department. Appendix M provides a summary of pedestrian access reports submitted to the RTC from 2005-2007. In addition to the pedestrian access report program, the CTSC runs a Watsonville Bike and Pedestrian Task Force, a Ride n' Stride safety program and a Safe Routes to Schools program.