



**Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission
Transportation Policy Workshop**

AGENDA

**Thursday, February 18, 2016
9:00 a.m.**

**NOTE LOCATION THIS MONTH
SCCRTC Conference Room
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA**

NOTE

See the last page for details about access for people with disabilities and meeting broadcasts.

En Español

Para información sobre servicios de traducción al español, diríjase a la última página.

AGENDAS ONLINE

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COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Caltrans (ex-officio)	Tim Gubbins
City of Capitola	Dennis Norton
City of Santa Cruz	Don Lane
City of Scotts Valley	Randy Johnson
City of Watsonville	Jimmy Dutra
County of Santa Cruz	Greg Caput
County of Santa Cruz	Ryan Coonerty
County of Santa Cruz	Zach Friend
County of Santa Cruz	John Leopold
County of Santa Cruz	Bruce McPherson
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Karina Cervantez
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Cynthia Chase
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Ed Bottonff

The majority of the Commission constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

1. Introductions
2. Oral communications

Any member of the public may address the Commission for a period not to exceed three minutes on any item within the jurisdiction of the Commission that is not already on the agenda. The Commission will listen to all communication, but in compliance with State law, may not take action on items that are not on the agenda.

Speakers are requested to sign the sign-in sheet so that their names can be accurately recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

CONSENT AGENDA

All items appearing on the consent agenda are considered to be minor or non-controversial and will be acted upon in one motion if no member of the RTC or public wishes an item be removed and discussed on the regular agenda. Members of the Commission may raise questions, seek clarification or add directions to Consent Agenda items without removing the item from the Consent Agenda as long as no other Commissioner objects to the change.

No consent agenda items this month

REGULAR AGENDA

4. Revised 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Proposal to the California Transportation Commission (CTC)
(Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner)
 - a. Staff report
 - b. Resolution amending the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) proposal to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for the 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
 - c. Revised Santa Cruz County STIP proposal
 - d. CTC STIP priorities
5. Excursion Operations on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
(George Dondero, Executive Director, and Cory Caletti, Senior Transportation Planner)
 - a. Staff report
 - b. Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC proposal
 - c. Rail Explorers proposal
6. Next meetings

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean St., 5th floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA.

HOW TO REACH US

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
phone: (831) 460-3200
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- Garfield Park Library
- La Selva Beach Library
- Live Oak Library
- Santa Cruz Downtown Library
- Scotts Valley Library
- Watsonville Main Library

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HOW TO REQUEST

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AGENDA: February 18, 2016

TO: Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) –
Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW)

FROM: Rachel Moriconi, Sr. Transportation Planner

RE: Revised 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
Proposal to the California Transportation Commission (CTC)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Adopt a resolution ([Attachment 1](#)) proposing revisions to projects previously approved for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, as recommended by staff and project sponsors ([Attachment 2](#)); and
 2. If the CTC proposes to delete funds or delay projects that otherwise will be ready to be delivered in FY16/17:
 - a. Reduce STIP funds to the Highway 1/Harkins Slough Road Interchange project by \$1.5 million; and
 - b. Substitute Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds for STIP funds.
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BACKGROUND

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), as the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Santa Cruz County, is responsible for selecting projects to receive certain state and federal transportation revenues, including State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds. Every two years, Caltrans develops and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopts a Fund Estimate showing anticipated revenues available for STIP projects over the next five-years. While each county in the state is designated a share of funds based on formulas established under SB45 in 1997, STIP projects selected by the RTC are subject to concurrence from the California Transportation Commission (CTC), which makes the final determination on which projects are programmed statewide, what year they are programmed, and when to release (allocate) funds to individual projects. In August 2015, the CTC determined that revenues were insufficient to program any new projects in the 2016 STIP and instead requested that regions re-spread projects previously programmed through FY2016-2019 out an additional two years. On December 3, 2015 the RTC approved a proposal to the CTC to delay several STIP-funded projects, based on current project schedules. The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

showing project information as approved by the RTC through December 3, 2015 is available online at: www.sccrtc.org/rtip.

DISCUSSION

Due to the recent drop in oil prices, price-based excise tax revenues projected in the Fund Estimate that was adopted by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in August 2015 are not materializing. While the CTC, RTC, and entities statewide are urging state legislators to work together to develop a compromise that will stabilize and increase STIP and other transportation funding, in the absence of such action the CTC adopted a revised STIP Fund Estimate at its January 21, 2016 meeting. The revised Fund Estimate requires the CTC to not only delay projects previously programmed for STIP funds, but also delete \$754 million in projects (approximately 35% of what is programmed statewide). The CTC is asking regions, including the RTC, to submit revised proposals for the 2016 STIP by February 26. The greatest revenue shortfall, compared to projects programmed, is anticipated in FY16/17.

The RTC currently has about \$25 million in STIP funds programmed toward various projects. The CTC has not committed to spread the deprogramming pain statewide, but if it **were to follow STIP County Share formulas, Santa Cruz County's share of the deficit would be approximately \$4 million**. Since the region already has an unprogrammed County Share balance of \$2.5 million, **the region's equitable share of the deficit would be \$1.5 million**. If the CTC were to instead delete a third of funds from each county, over \$8 million in projects could be deleted in Santa Cruz County. In any case, the CTC will be considering the priorities it established for FY15/16 allocations when deciding which projects to delete (Attachment 3). Based on the CTC priorities, pre-construction, bicycle and pedestrian, and local street and road projects are most at risk.

RTC staff met with local agencies about their STIP-funded projects and **recommends that the RTC adopt a resolution (Attachment 1) proposing amendments to projects previously approved for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as shown in Attachment 2**. This constitutes two changes from the proposal approved by the RTC in December.

- Shift funds for the Highway 1/9 Intersection from FY16/17 to FY17/18. Since the City of Santa Cruz is using local funds to cover over 80% of the project cost, it is anticipated that it can wait until FY17/18 to receive STIP funds without delaying project implementation.
- Shift funds for the Highway 1 41st Avenue- Soquel Avenue Auxiliary Lanes and Chanticleer Bike/Pedestrian Bridge project design and right-of-way phases from FY16/17 to FY17/18. Due to extensive comments on the draft environmental document and new state requirements, the final environmental document is expected to take a few extra months. Staff will provide additional information on this project at a future meeting.

Since the RTC is not proposing projects to receive its \$2.5 million unprogrammed STIP County Share, this revised proposal to the CTC is responsive to the CTC's need to limit the number of projects programmed in the STIP and to push many projects out beyond FY16/17. It does not volunteer projects to be deleted.

If the CTC instead proposes to delete funds from projects in Santa Cruz County or delays projects that otherwise will be ready to be delivered in FY16/17, staff and project sponsors recommend that the RTC:

- 1. Reduce STIP funds to the Highway 1/Harkins Slough Road project by \$1.5 million.** The City of Watsonville has been working with Caltrans to refine the scope of this project to focus on improving bicycle/pedestrian access over Highway 1. Preliminary estimates for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge are lower than the currently programmed amount. Given that this project is also eligible for more reliable Active Transportation Program (ATP) funds, staff recommends that the RTC support the City of Watsonville in submitting an application for ATP funds for this project. If the City of Watsonville does not receive an ATP grant for the project and/or the final engineers construction cost estimate is higher, staff recommends that the RTC indicate its intent to reprogram \$1.5 million in funds to the project. The City of Watsonville anticipates that the final engineers estimate will be available in FY2019/20.

- 2. Substitute Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds for STIP funds.** This action would apply to projects the CTC deletes and projects delayed beyond 2016/17 that otherwise are ready to be delivered. Using RSTP to backfill the STIP means that less funding will be available for new projects in Santa Cruz County in the near future, however this change in the "color of funds" would reaffirm the RTC's financial commitment to these projects and keep them on schedule. At its January 14 meeting, the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) recommended that the RTC postpone issuing a call for projects for Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds until more is known about which projects will be affected by the STIP funding shortfall.

Other options staff and project sponsors considered but do not recommend:

1. Propose no changes to STIP projects and leave it up to the CTC to decide which projects to delete;
2. Delete STIP projects that will not be ready for construction for several years, in anticipation that they could be reprogrammed if additional STIP funding becomes available (for instance, if the California legislature approves a funding package that addresses STIP funding shortfalls and gasoline prices stabilize);
3. Delete projects that do not have 100% of matching funds budgeted;
4. Prioritize projects based on project benefits, including number of people served by a project and how well they advance regional and state goals (safety, system preservation, greenhouse gas emission reductions, etc).
5. Delete projects which do not match the CTC's priorities; or

6. Reduce the scope and funding for projects proportionally.

Next Steps

The RTC's revised proposal for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects is due to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) by February 26, 2016. If regions statewide do not propose sufficient deletions, CTC staff will propose specific projects to delete in each region. Staff will work with the CTC and projects sponsors to minimize impacts to projects, consistent with RTC direction at this meeting. The CTC will release its staff recommendations by April 22, 2016. Final CTC approval of the 2016 STIP has been postponed to May 18-19, 2016.

The CTC's revised Fund Estimate assumes price-based gas taxes will be 10 cents per gallon in FY16/17 and rise 2 cents each subsequent year. Unfortunately, the CTC's revised Fund Estimate – requiring deletion of \$754 million in projects - may be an optimistic estimate, since many economists predict oil prices will not rise, which could mean that further cuts to the STIP will be made in the future. The RTC will continue to work with projects sponsors, legislators, and the community to secure more reliable funding sources for transportation projects.

SUMMARY

Due to a significant drop in the price of oil, revenues generated from gas and diesel taxes in California have plummeted. In response, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted a new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Fund Estimate on January 21 which requires over \$750 million in projects programmed statewide to be deleted from the STIP. The CTC is requesting that regions submit revised proposals for STIP funds by February 26. Staff and project sponsors **recommend that the RTC not program \$2.5 million of the region's county share balance** and shift some projects to later years of the STIP. If the CTC decides to delete projects in Santa Cruz County, staff and project sponsors recommend deleting \$1.5 million from one project that may have cost savings and substituting Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds for STIP funds for projects.

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Revised Santa Cruz County STIP Proposal
3. CTC STIP Priorities

RESOLUTION NO. 10-16

Adopted by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
on the date of February 18, 2016
on the motion of Commissioner
duly seconded by Commissioner

A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (RTIP)
PROPOSAL TO THE CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (CTC) FOR
THE 2016 STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

WHEREAS, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for programming and monitoring the use of various state and federal transportation funding sources and is responsible for preparing and adopting the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP) to reflect approved projects, consistent with the *Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP), state law (including **SB 45**) and the **California Transportation Commission's (CTC) State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Guidelines**, and in consultation and cooperation with local project sponsors and Caltrans District 5;

WHEREAS, the RTC adopted the *2016 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for Santa Cruz County* on December 3, 2015 amending funding and schedule information for previously approved projects;

WHEREAS, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted a revised State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Fund Estimate on January 21, 2016 that shows a significant reduction in revenues from the price based excise tax on gasoline through FY2020/21;

WHEREAS, the CTC will be rescinding \$752 million in STIP funds previously committed to projects statewide due to reduced transportation revenues and has requested revised Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) proposals from regional agencies;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION:

1. The *2016 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for Santa Cruz County* is hereby amended to shift State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds previously committed to projects to later years, as summarized in Exhibit A.
2. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) is hereby requested to reflect this action in the *2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*.

AYES: COMMISSIONERS

NOES: COMMISSIONERS

ABSTAIN: COMMISSIONERS

ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS

Zach Friend, Chair

ATTEST:

George Dondero, Secretary

Exhibit A: Santa Cruz County Revised 2016 STIP Proposal

Distribution: RTIP files

Recommended Revised STIP Proposal

All figures in 000's (thousands)

Project Sponsor	Project	STIP PPNO	RTIP #	STIP \$	STIP Funds (Bold-updates from 12/3/15)						STIP \$/Phase				Total Cost	Other funds	RTC Staff and Project Sponsor Recommendations	
					15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	E&P	PS&E	R/W	Const				
Santa Cruz	State Routes 1/9 Intersection Improvements (construction)	4658	SC 25	1,329		1,329	1,329					0	0	0	1,329	\$7.8M	City funds	Shift funds to FY17/18. City of Santa Cruz contributing majority of funds for this project and can initiate work in FY16/17 using local funds and wait until FY17/18 for STIP.
Santa Cruz	MBSST- Segment 7	2551	TRL07SC	805		805						0	0	0	805	\$6M	Fed Earmark, City funds, donations	No change.
Watsonville	Rt 1/ Harkins Slough Rd Improvements	413	WAT 01	5,840				462	6,878			0	0	462	6,878	\$9.8M	City funds	If required by CTC, reduce amount programmed by \$1.5M based on preliminary updated construction cost estimates. RTC commit to backfill with up to \$1.5M RSTP or future STIP funds if final cost estimate higher. As approved by RTC 12/3/15 - shifts funds to later years based on current schedule.
Watsonville	Airport Boulevard at Freedom Blvd Modifications	2366	WAT 38	850		850						0	0	0	850	\$1.3M	Fed HSIP; City funds	As approved by RTC 12/3/15 - shifts funds from FY15/16 to FY16/17
Watsonville	Airport Boulevard Improvements (1200 feet east of Westgate Drive/Larkin Valley Road to east of Hanger Way)	2555	WAT 40	1,195		1,195						0	0	0	1,195	\$1.5M	City funds	No change.
Watsonville	MBSST- Segment 18	2552	TRL18L	1,040	90	950						0	90	0	950	\$1.3M	City funds, donations	No change.
Watsonville	Sidewalk Infill Harkins Slough Road and Main Street	2556	WAT 41	120		120						0	0	0	120	\$200k	City funds	As approved by RTC 12/3/15 - shifts funds from FY15/16 to FY16/17
Santa Cruz Co	Cassery Rd Bridge Replacement	2557	CO 73	125			125					0	0	0	125	\$903k	County funds	As approved by RTC 12/3/15 - shifts funds from FY15/16 to FY16/17
Santa Cruz Co	Freedom Blvd Cape Seal (Hwy 1 to Pleasant Vly Rd)	2558	CO 74	800	800							0	0	0	800	\$1M	County funds	No change.
SCCRTC	Hwy 1 41st Ave-Soquel Ave Auxiliary Lanes and Chanticleer Bike/Ped Bridge	73A	RTC 24F	4,000		4,000	4,000			\$2M reserve		0	2,570	1,430	\$2M reserve	\$27M	TBD - proposed ballot measure; STIP reserve	Shift funds to FY17/18. Due to extensive comments received on Draft EIR (1/18/16) and new federal rules, additional analysis being done for Final environmental.
SCCRTC	RT 1 Mar Vista Bike/Ped Overcrossing	1968	RTC 30	6,564			1,635	4,929				0	575	1,060	4,929	\$7.5M	RSTP	As approved by RTC 12/3/15 - swap RSTP currently programmed for construction with STIP funds programmed for environmental review; shifts funds to later years to match current schedule.
SCCRTC	Freeway Service Patrol	923	RTC 01	150		150						0	0	0	0	\$350k /year	State FSP	No change.
SCCRTC	Planning, Programming & Monitoring (PPM)	921	RTC 04	524		175	175	174				0	0	0	0		See budget	No change.

Notes: Bold-updates from action taken by RTC December 3, 2015.
 STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
 RTIP: Regional Transportation Improvement Program
 Components - E&P: Environmental and Project Report;
 PS&E: Plans, Specifications, and Engineering (design)
 R/W: Right-of-way; Const: Construction

Totals 23,342 890 3,920 7,089 5,391 5,378 Reserve
 Share 27,381
 Balance 4,039
 Reserve

Estimated Project Schedule (start-end -- month/year)

Project	E&P	PS&E	R/W	Const	CTC Category Priority #	Summary of Benefits
State Routes 1/9 Intersection Improvements (construction)	Complete	7/15-12/16	7/15-12/16	1/17-12/17	#3: Funded with both STIP and other competitively selected fund; #8: Operation improvement on SRS #17: Active transportation	Improve access and safety; reduce congestion and bottleneck, energy use and emissions. Heavily traveled (approx 85K/day), provides access for the UCSC, Santa Cruz west side, Harvey West Business Area and Downtown. Primary transit connection between operations base and revenue service. Improves safety for bicycles and pedestrians. From 2009-2013, 50 collisions occurred within the project extent and the intersection regularly has the highest number of collisions in the city.
MBSST- Segment 7	3/15-5/16	3/15-9/16	3/15-9/16	10/16-8/17	#3: Funded with both STIP and other competitively selected funds; #4: At risk of losing federal DEMO funds	Provide off-street active transportation facility trail that will improve safety for bicycles and pedestrians and increase connectivity to neighborhoods, businesses, and activity centers. Reduces VMT. Provides safe alternative to SR1/Mission St. which does not have bicycle facilities and has high fatal and injury collisions rates (41 collisions 2009-2013). High use anticipated/dense area: directly serves employment, recreational, tourism, commercial/services, and residences. Connects to Wilder Ranch State Park trails and beach area, Mission St Extension bikeway, and improves access to Natural Bridges State Park. Serves 4 schools within ¼ mile. Highest rated segment in the MBSST Master Plan. STIP funds providing match to \$3.25M federal earmark that is subject to being lost. Strong community support for project, including \$1.18M in funds provided by the City of SC and donated by community members to the project.
Rt 1/ Harkins Slough Rd Improvements	7/16-7/18	7/18-1/20	7/18-1/20	4/20-8/21	#17: Active transportation	Improve safety and traffic flow. Improve pedestrian and bike access to PVHS - students currently walking in roadway of overpass to access high school.
Airport Boulevard at Freedom Blvd Modifications	10/14-3/16	4/15-1/17	9/15-1/17	1/17-11/17	#4: At risk of losing federal funds (HSIP) #16: Operational improvements on local road #17: Active transportation	Reduce collisions, reduce delay, and system preservation. ADT over 20k/day
Airport Boulevard Improvements (1200 feet east of Westgate Drive/Larkin Valley Road to east of Hanger Way)	1/16-1/17	1/16-8/16	1/16-8/16	10/16-8/17	#15: Local road rehab and reconstruction; #16: Operational improvements on local road #17: Active transportation	Reconstruct roadway, install new sidewalk, upgrade curb ramps and other pedestrian facilities. Major transportation corridor (ADT 18,000). Improve safety by creating a high visibility crosswalk; system preservation; fill gaps in sidewalk network; improve access for the disabled with curb ramps and increase access to bus facilities; reduce pedestrian crossing distance; add pedestrian signal heads, pedestrian-actuated traffic signals and audible countdown pedestrian signal heads.
MBSST- Segment 18	6/15-3/16	3/16-9/16	3/16-9/16	9/16-7/17	#3: Funded with both STIP and other competitively selected fund; #17: Active transportation	Improve safety for bicycles and pedestrians. Reduce VMT by increasing biking and walking; improve connectivity to City trail network, reduce disparities in safety and access for transportation disadvantaged; increase economic benefits from birdwatchers. Part of larger trail network planned to eventually provide access to High School iff/when bridge built over slough on Lee Rd.
Sidewalk Infill Harkins Slough Road and Main Street	6/15-3/16	10/15-5/16	1/16-8/16	9/16-4/17	#17: Active transportation	Fills gap in sidewalk network; provide access to High School, transit, employment centers, commercial; safety.
Cassery Rd Bridge Replacement	6/13-7/16	9/14-3/17	7/16-12/16	3/17-10/17	#15: Local road rehab and reconstruction	System preservation and open bridge to 2 lanes (currently one-lane).
Freedom Blvd Cape Seal (Hwy 1 to Pleasant Vly Rd)	11/15-12/15	12/15-2/16	na	3/16-8/16	#15: Local road rehab and reconstruction	System preservation. PCI 26-46. Used by autos (ADT 15,700), buses, bikes, and Aptos High School. Connects communities of Aptos, Corralitos and Freedom. Used as an alternative to SR 1.
Hwy 1 41st Ave-Soquel Ave Auxiliary Lanes and Chanticleer Bike/Ped Bridge	est. done Spring 2017	7/17-12/18	7/17-12/18	1/19-7/20	#20: Preconstruction funding for projects on state highway system; #8: Operational improvement on the SRS	Auxiliary lanes will improve freeway operations by reducing congestion, travel delay and vehicle collisions. The Chanticleer pedestrian/bicycle crossing will promote active travel modes and improve access and safety across Highway 1. This is the busiest section of Highway 1 in the county, carrying over 100,000 vehicles a day. Daily congestion on Highway 1 results in by-pass traffic on local arterials, increased travel times and delay. Project identified as the most beneficial operational improvement that can be made to Highway 1.
RT 1 Mar Vista Bike/Ped Overcrossing	3/16-3/18	4/18-6/19	4/18-6/19	6/19-7/20	#3: Funded with both STIP and other competitively selected fund; #17: Active transportation	Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety, reduce VMT, and address the division in community cohesion created by Highway 1 bisecting the Aptos community. The pedestrian/bicycle bridge proposed since early 1990s will provide an alternative between the congested Highway 1 Interchanges at Park Avenue and State Park Drive for access to Mar Vista Elementary School and Cabrillo College, and the New Brighton and Sea Cliff State Parks.
Freeway Service Patrol	na	na	na	ongoing	#7: Safety projects on the SRS and #8: Operational improvements on SRS	Reduce non-recurrent congestion, which is estimated to cause 30-50% of congestion; reduce emissions caused by idling; improve safety by reducing likelihood of secondary collisions; reduce delay. Hwy 1 ADT over 100K/day.
Planning, Programming & Monitoring (PPM)	na	na	na	ongoing	#2: PPM	Ensure that state and federal planning and programming requirements are met, in order for projects to access state and federal funds.

*****EVE'S TIP PRIORITIES

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recommended for allocation based on criteria chosen to reflect statewide goals and policies, including Governor's executive orders 0 Etkgk, in priority order:

- AB 3090 cash reimbursements
- Planning, Programming and Monitoring
- Projects funded with both STIP and other competitively selected fund
- Projects at risk of losing federal funding if not allocated
- Project Allocations for:
 - Required mitigation projects for construction projects previously allocated
 - Safety projects on the state highway system (that cannot be funded by SHOPP)
 - Operational improvements on the state highway system
 - Capacity expansion intercity rail projects
 - Operational improvements on intercity rail system
 - Capacity expansion urban transit projects with intercity rail benefit or significant regional benefit
 - Operational improvements to transit with intercity rail benefit or significant regional benefit
 - Capacity expansion projects on state highways with freight benefit or that demonstrate significant economic impact, and that incorporate multiple corridor elements (rail, transit and/or active transportation)
 - Capacity expansion projects on state highways with freight benefit or that demonstrate significant economic impact
 - Local road rehabilitation and reconstruction
 - Operational improvements on local road and transit operational improvements
 - Active Transportation projects
 - Capacity expansion projects on state highways (other than those detailed above)
 - Capacity expansion local road projects and capacity expansion transit projects without intercity rail or significant regional benefit
 - Preconstruction funding for projects on the state highway system (excluding preconstruction components for projects funded with both STIP and other competitively selected funds)
 - Preconstruction funding for projects on local roads (excluding preconstruction components for projects funded with both STIP and other competitively selected funds)

AGENDA: February 18, 2016

TO: Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director and Cory Caletti, Senior Planner
RE: Excursion Operations on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Receive presentations from Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC, a mini-trolley style rail vehicle, and Rail Explorers, a rail bike excursion service proposing to run recreational service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; and
 2. Authorize the Executive Director or his/her designee to approve licenses and agreements for the recreational excursions as long as the RTC is indemnified, appropriate insurance is provided, all appropriate safety requirements and practices are followed, approval is secured from SC&MB Railway, and reasonable compensation is provided.
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BACKGROUND

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) approved temporary licenses to the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) for motorcar excursions on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Iowa Pacific, doing business locally as Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay (SC&MB) Railway, worked with NARCOA to ensure safe events. The RTC authorized future NARCOA excursions as long as all appropriate agreements and safety arrangements are put in place.

The RTC has been in discussions with other parties interested in running excursion services. The RTC is interested in maximizing the use of the rail line; boosting transportation uses; pursuing revenue generating services for the betterment of both the rail line and the greater Santa Cruz County economy; and increasing visibility of the coastal vantage points only available from the rail line.

All uses of the line would be subservient to uses by SC&MB Railway, the federally designated operator and owner of an easement for freight and recreational services. Currently, some freight operations take place in South County; a recreational seasonal train also operates in South County; and future plans are being explored for wine, dinner, and/or sunset train services

DISCUSSION

In the past three years, the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) ran a well received motorcar excursion, which functioned safely and boosted **Santa Cruz County's visitor economy**. The operation is expected to run into the future.

The RTC has received proposals for similar types of services from Santa Cruz Rail Tour LLC, and Rail Explorers. These services have potential for contributing to the local economy, boosting use of the rail corridor, and bringing attention to currently inaccessible views of the Santa Cruz coast line.

Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC

Late last year, RTC staff was approached by Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC, owned by, Santa Cruz native, Carl Arnett. As indicated in Attachment 1, Mr. Arnett proposes to run a 6 passenger, self-contained rail vehicle **named "Daisy."** The rail vehicle is powered by a 4 cylinder engine. The trolley style vehicle would provide tours of the north coast section of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, which is currently minimally used. The tour excursions would operate each weekend day with the possibility of some weekday tours mid-summer. The tours would operate from the west side of Santa Cruz to Davenport and back; and would utilize a bell for movement and grade crossing notifications, instead of horns. The low speed tour would last approximately 1.5 hours round trip. With approval, the excursion service could also travel south to Capitola or Aptos for special events.

Ticket sales would offset operation expenses and insurance. The service would operate in accordance to rules set forth in an agreement between SC&MB Railway, as well as agreements with the RTC. Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC proposes to provide the RTC with monthly ticket sales information and compensation at the rate of 10% of sales until gross ticket sales reach \$11,500 per year, which is the cost of liability insurance. Thereafter, the RTC would be compensated at the rate of 20% of ticket sales. The term would be for one year with termination options set forth in referenced agreements.

Rail Explorers

RTC staff was also approached **by Rail Explorers, a "railbike" operation currently** running in upstate New York wishing to expand. Rail Explorers submitted a proposal to launch a Rail Explorers Santa Cruz Division (Attachment 2) and operate locally. Railbikes are custom built, easy to pedal, and operated in groups with a range of ages and abilities. Railbikes accommodate either two or four passengers and typically run in clusters. Ticket sales are sold per railbike at proposed cost of \$75 for a tandem bike and \$125 for a quad (four-seater). Service is proposed to run between Wilder Ranch State Park and Davenport Beach.

An estimated 26 full time and part time jobs will be created per season. Rail Explorers requests a five-year agreement. They project between 35,000 and 45,000 riders in the first season, and are proposing that \$1.00 from each ticket sold

go to the RTC. Projected sales amount to \$980,000 for 2016 (assuming a July launch with a 6 month operational time frame), \$1,617,000 for 2017, and \$1,800,000 for 2018. Liability insurance will be provided by Rail Explorers.

Coordination

Rail Explorers and Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC have been in coordination and are looking forward to collaborations. Both potential excursions understand that their operations are not to interfere with either current or planned SC&MB Railway operations. An agreement between SC&MB has already been drafted between Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC and SC&MB Railway, to be entered into pending approval from the RTC, with successful negotiations and proper safety and liability documentation.

In addition to coordination between Rail Explorers and Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC, Rail Explorers has been in close communication with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and is looking to collaborate with California State Parks.

Staff recommends that the RTC authorize the Executive Director or his/her designee to approve licenses and agreements for motorcar and rail bike operated by Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC and Rail Explorers, respectively. The excursions would operate on the rail line as long as the RTC is indemnified, appropriate insurance is provided, all appropriate safety requirements and practices are followed, approval is secured from SC&MB Railway and a agreed upon compensation is provided.

SUMMARY

The RTC is interested in maximizing the use of the rail line; boosting transportation uses; pursuing revenue generating services for the betterment of both the rail line and the greater Santa Cruz County economy; and increasing visibility of the coastal vantage points only available from the rail line. The RTC has previously issued licenses to the North American Railcar Operators Association for motorcar excursion on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Two additional excursion services have come forth interested in running recreational operations on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Staff recommends that the RTC authorize the Executive Director to approve licenses for rail vehicle and railbike excursions as long as the RTC is indemnified, safety requirements and practices are followed, insurance is provided, reasonable compensation is provided, and approvals are provided by the SC&MB Railway.

Attachments:

1. Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC Proposal
2. Rail Explorers Proposal



Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC

11/3/2015

Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Proposal for rail corridor tours.

Dear RTC:

My name is Carl Arnett, I am a 61 year Santa Cruz native who has seen many transportation changes and challenges over the years, I believe in the need for a mix of all transportation options in the county including rail.

There is public interest and concerns in the future uses of the Santa Cruz rail corridor. I believe that some of those interested would benefit from seeing parts of the rail line and learning about this valuable assets long history. I would like to provide that ability with "Daisy". "Daisy" is a small, quiet, cute, 6 passenger self-contained rail vehicle that was built by Classic Cable Cars in Healdsburg CA. Powered by a 4 cylinder gas engine, "Daisy" has many safety features and exceeds current requirements. Everyone who sees "Daisy" can't help but smile, and want to ride.

I am proposing to operate this trolley style vehicle for tours of the north coast section of the Santa Cruz branch line. Currently this rail asset is sitting idle.

I would operate "Daisy" for 3 or 4 tour excursions of the North coast rail line each weekend day with the possibility of some weekday tours in during the summer. The tours would operate from the west side of Santa Cruz at mile marker 20 or 22 to Wilder ranch and on towards Davenport before returning. This would be a slow speed tour lasting about 1½ hours round trip.

During the tour there would be a narrative presented about the history of rail in Santa Cruz County as well as the ability to see the rail corridor as few have had the opportunity. With prior approval I could also operate the occasional excursion south to Capitola or Aptos for participation in special events and the promotion of Operation Lifesaver.

I am a facilitator for Operation Lifesaver, Rail Safety Education for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and first responders. "Daisy" would be used as a display and promotional vehicle for railroad safety as has it has done at many rail fairs and events over the years. More information about Operation Lifesaver can be found at oli.org.

Tour ticket sales would be used to help cover the insurance and operating expenses. This would not be a profitable venture, my goal is to increase the appreciation for the rail corridor and the beauty and diversity of our county from a rail perspective that few have had the benefit of seeing.

The operation would consist of an operator/driver and a flagman with up to 5 guests. The operation would follow the rules set forward in the track use agreement with the railroad operating company the "Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railroad". The trolley would stop at, and be flagged through the few paved crossings on this section of line, regardless of other rail warning devices. "Daisy" does not use a "train" horn but rather a true cable car trolley bell for movement notifications and warnings, additional warning signal devices are available to the operator should the need arise.

I hope this RTC can see the positive benefits this small tour operation could have in public relations for the rail & trail corridor as it's future is developed.

I am, and have been in discussions for a track use agreement with Iowa Pacific Holdings who have been helpful in working out the details and logistics of this project.


Santa Cruz Rail Tours LLC, would at it's cost:

1. Provide track bed vegetation control and Vegetation trimming for safe operating visibility from mile marker 20 to 31.
2. Clean and maintain flange ways along it's excursion route.
3. Provide Operation Life Saver presentations available to schools, Social groups and interested organizations.
4. Provide by mutual agreement "special" tours of the Santa Cruz Branch Line for RTC presentation needs.

Compensation:

Santa Cruz Rail Tours LLC, would provide the RTC with monthly ticket sales information and compensation at the rate of 10% of the ticket sales until gross ticket sales reach \$11,500 per year (the cost for liability insurance) after which the RTC would be compensated at the rate of 20% of ticket sales.

Sincerely,


Carl Arnett
"Daisy" owner/operator



Santa Cruz Rail Tours, LLC

"DAISY"



"Daisy" was built in 2001 by Custom Cable Cars in Healdsburg, CA

Over the years "Daisy" has operated on many different rail lines all around the US and Canada taking guests for rides at rail fairs and special events.

"Daisy" comfortably seats 5 guests and the operator, large windows allow for maximum visibility during excursions.

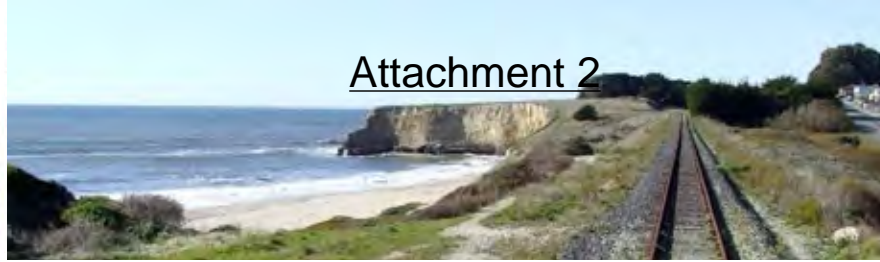
Turning is accomplished by a built-in hydraulic turntable that lifts "Daisy" up from the tracks to rotate the vehicle in the other direction.



"Daisy" exceeds required safety equipment and operates with higher track safety procedures than are required by the host railroad.

"Daisy" maintains radio contact with any other rail traffic in the area for safe separation.

Attachment 2



Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

Summary of Proposal

Rail Explorers is an eco-tourism business offering a unique way to experience the magic of the railroad and the freedom of the wild. Our custom built pedal-powered 'railbikes' are easy to pedal and offer families, groups of friends, couples and people of all ages and abilities the opportunity to 'ride the rails'.

Rail Explorers is proposing to expand its New York based operations to offer railbike tours between Santa Cruz and Davenport. With spectacular views over the coastal cliffs and Pacific Ocean, a strong existing tourism market, and proximity to large population centers we are confident that **Rail Explorers: Santa Cruz Division** will be a popular attraction, with a significant positive economic impact to the region.



Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

Total Distance: Santa Cruz to Davenport: 10 miles



Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz County: Statistics

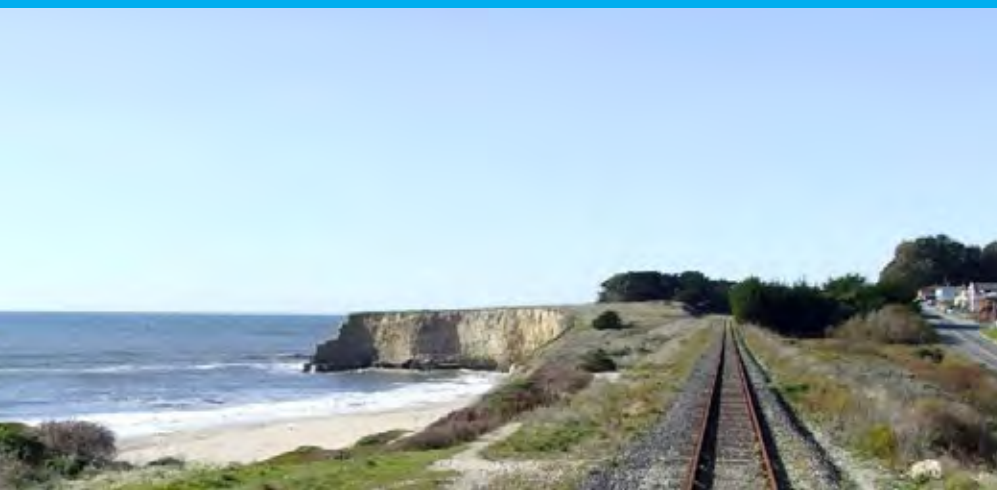
- *Over 3 million annual visitors to Santa Cruz County*
- *Santa Cruz enjoys year-round tourism, with peak seasons in Spring & Fall*
- *9 million people within 100 miles, 23 million within one day's drive*
- *29 miles of beaches and 14 State Parks over 7000 acres*
- *Railroad is adjacent to Pacific Coast Highway 1 “one of the most scenic drives in the USA”*
- *High percentage of visitors looking for ‘family friendly’ activities*
- *Average overnight stay 3 nights*
- *Average overnight visitor spend \$151/day - only \$10 on attractions*



Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

Rail Explorers Santa Cruz Division

- *First railbike attraction on the West Coast*
- *10 mile guided tour for up to 80 people, up to 4 times per day*
- *Terminus at Wilder Ranch State Park & Davenport Beach*
- *Attractive to a broad demographic: families, couples, the elderly & millennials*
- *Increases visitor spending and overnight stays*
- *Peak & Off-Peak Pricing with Discount Days to encourage Local Ridership*
- *Estimated Annual Ridership: 47,000 people*
- *Estimated Direct Economic Impact: \$7,767,000*
- *Estimated Job Creation: 26 Full Time & Part Time Jobs*



Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

Market Analysis

The Location

Santa Cruz County is a popular destination for over 3 million visitors every year. The area boasts magnificent beaches, surfing, redwood forests, farmland and coastal walks. The Pacific Coast Highway which parallels the railroad is an extremely popular route due to its scenic beauty. The population centers of San Francisco and Sacramento are nearby. Nine million people live within 100 miles, & twenty-three million live within one day's drive of Santa Cruz.

The average visitor is

- Professional
- Educated (Bachelors degree or above)
- Earns \$80,000 per year
- Traveling with family or a group of friends
- Spend 2-5 days in the area
- Majority are returning after a previous visit

Age Groups

- families with young children
- couples
- mature couples (no kids)

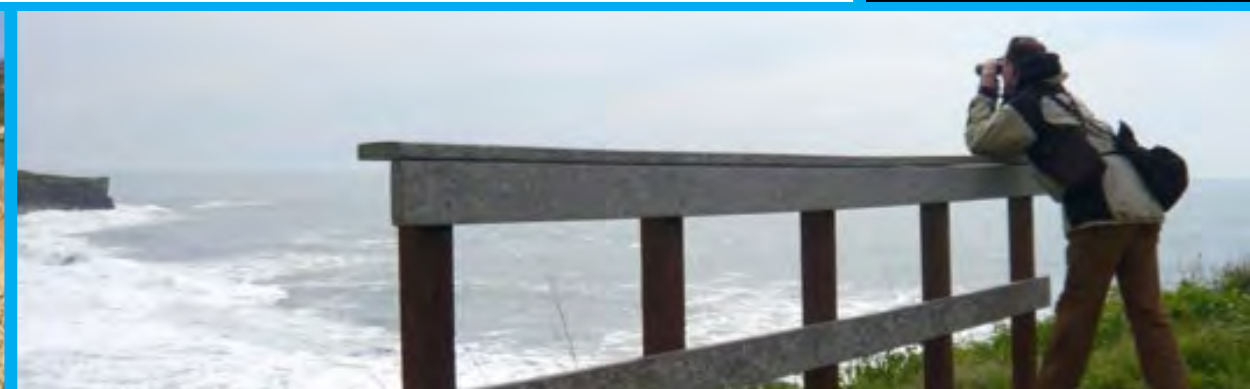
The common draws:

- the ocean & the beach
- explore the area
- the beauty of the landscape
- a chance to get away from it all, relax, and reflect.

Local attractions

- Wharf
- Boardwalk
- West Cliffs Drive
- Natural Bridges State Beach
- Roaring Camp Railroad

Railbiking with **Rail Explorers** is an activity that aligns perfectly with the profile of visitors to the Santa Cruz region. It is a new and unique activity that is family friendly, suitable for all ages, which offers access to the coast in an exciting and accessible way.



Rail Explorers: Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships

Crucial to the success of Rail Explorers will be a close relationship with both the Santa Cruz Regional Transport Commission (SCRTC) & the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, & Californian State Parks & Recreation.

Rail Explorers Santa Cruz operations require the endorsement of the three core organizations:

- SCRTC - railroad right of way - Santa Cruz to Davenport
 - Davenport Terminus & parking area
- Land Trust of SC - land adjacent to rail corridor
 - Davenport Terminus Cliff walk access
- Californian State Parks & Recreation
 - Wilder Ranch Terminus & parking area
 - Nature walks & Wilder Farm

Synergy of Resources

Rail Explorers is the perfect hybrid of bike, rail, preservation and community, encompassing SCRTC, Land Trust of SC, California State Parks & Recreation, Iowa Pacific, Friends of the Rail & Trail, and Bike Santa Cruz County.



Rail Explorers: Benefits for Santa Cruz County

Jobs

26 full time and part time jobs.

Internships and training offered to young citizens of the Santa Cruz region.

Key roles include: General Manager, Operations Manager, Marketing, Sales and Booking Manager, Maintenance and Repairs.

Economic Returns to Local Communities & California State through:

Taxes generated through ticket sales, merchandise & payroll.

Suitable for Everybody - including those with disabilities

Rail Explorers is an experience that can be enjoyed by everyone. The easy to ride railbikes are suitable for the elderly, families with young children and people with disabilities. Modified railbikes will be available for wheelchairs, ensuring that this spectacular activity can be enjoyed by everybody.

Preserve the Rails

Rail Explorers will activate, preserve and maintain the existing rail infrastructure for the future.

Rail Explorers daily tours and activity on the rails will deter vandalism & trespass.

Sharing the Rail Corridor with the Rail Trail

Rail Explorers can co-exist with the proposed Rail Trail in a mutually beneficial and friendly way. **Rail Explorers'** marketing efforts will directly benefit the Rail Trail through additional exposure, and will offer a 'Gateway Experience' to the trail.

A Great Attraction

Rail Explorers will become one of the region's 'must-do' attractions, bringing in local, interstate and international visitors. **Rail Explorers: Adirondack Division** is currently rated #1 Outdoor Activity in Saranac Lake on Trip Advisor. An incredible 60% of visitors nominated **Rail Explorers** as their primary reason for travel to the region.

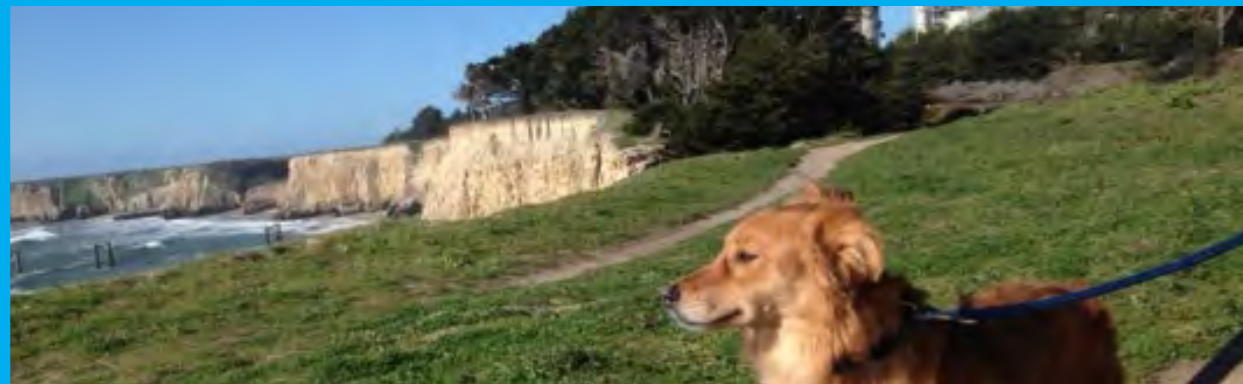


Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

Rail Explorers Santa Cruz Core Revenue Streams:

1. Ticket Sales – prices for rail bikes will be \$75 for a Tandem (2 person railbike) and \$125 for a Quad (4 person railbike).
2. Tours & Packages - Rail Explorers will work with area businesses to create special events and personalized tours. partner with tour service providers to contract tour bus and group bookings. Santa Cruz has over 80 annual events throughout the year, presenting many opportunities for partnerships.
3. Merchandise – Rail Explorers will sell branded t-shirts, hats, sweatshirts and bags. Collectible enamel pins and cloth badges will also be available for purchase.
4. Refreshments – Rail Explorers will offer water, sodas, coffee, snacks and ice cream creating an additional revenue stream for the business.
5. Special Events – Birthday party booking, corporate events, team-building activities, summer camps, family reunions, fundraising campaigns and community events.
6. College Events – within 50miles of Santa Cruz County are 29 colleges. The railbikes present many opportunities to facilitate outdoor classroom activities and recreation events for college classes and students.
7. Special Needs – We plan to create an integrated program for veterans, and are looking to develop programs with local centers to provide a safe outdoor recreational activity for special needs children and adults. Rail Explorers offers a uniquely accessible experience for those with special needs.
8. Medical Prescriptions – Rail Explorers is proposing to provide a curated exercise program that can be a “prescriptive” medicine for cancer and cardiac rehabilitation patients. Through local clinics, Rail Explorers may qualify as a rehabilitation exercise provider, eligible for Government funded treatment programs.

TOTAL PROJECTED SALES 2016: \$980,000 (6 months from July launch)
TOTAL PROJECTED SALES 2017: \$1,617,000
TOTAL PROJECTED SALES 2018: \$1,800,000



Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

A SUSTAINABLE, COMMUNITY FOCUSED VISION

Rail Explorers is committed to social and environmentally responsible operations and management. We operate with the immediate and long-term goals of:

- Presenting an alternate, sustainable eco-industry using existing rail assets with minimum investment and significant social and economic returns
- Preservation and activation of the railroad with an economically sustainable business
- Delivering a new and engaging tourism product that can be enjoyed by EVERYONE, including families with young children, couples, groups of friends, the elderly and the disabled
- Connecting with a broad demographic of visitors to become one of the region's most sought after tourism products – a 'must do' attraction bringing in visitors from far and wide
- Dispersing visitor spending into the communities of Davenport and Watsonville
- Providing economic returns to Local Communities and Federal & State Governments

PRODUCT & SERVICE ADVANTAGE

Rail Explorers is the first of its kind in the USA, and has no other rival in the marketplace. The company have secured a 15year exclusive distribution deal with the designer of the railbikes for the entire North American market. As proven in our first season in NY in 2015, the demand for our product is strong and captures the imagination of all who see the railbikes. It is attractive to all ages and accessible to all abilities.

Rail Explorers can operate on railroads that are not suitable for regular train operations. The light weight of the railbikes compared to a locomotive allows operation on out of service or abandoned railroads with little or no track remediation in most locations.

Rail Explorers have an operational model that has been tested and refined through our first season. Years of research and practical experience provided invaluable insight to expand and grow our operation.

Rail Explorers Santa Cruz

On Site Facilities

Davenport Terminus (pending negotiations)

Location - RTC siding alongside railroad adjacent to Davenport Beach

Ticketing & Sales - mobile trailer (Airstream conversion)

Refreshments - local Davenport businesses (bakery, cafe, bistro)

Bathroom Facilities - mobile trailer restrooms

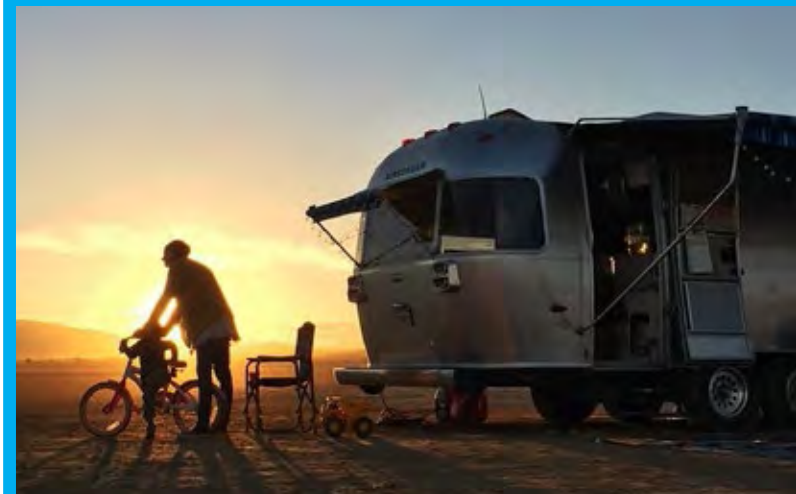
Wilder Ranch Terminus (pending negotiations)

Location - CA State Parks land at Wilder Ranch adjacent to RTC railroad

Ticketing & Sales - mobile trailer (Airstream conversion)

Refreshments - potential partnerships with local food trucks

Bathroom Facilities - existing on site - supplement with mobile trailer restrooms



Rail Explorers Frequently Asked Questions

What is Rail Explorers?	Rail Explorers is a private enterprise which activates underused or abandoned railroads. Rail Explorers' custom built pedal powered 'railbikes' transform old rails into vibrant tourist attractions. The railbikes offer a unique new way to experience the magic of the railroad and the freedom of the wild.
Where can I try it?	Rail Explorers Adirondacks operates out of Saranac Lake in New York. They are proposing to expand the business to the west coast, to the railroad between Santa Cruz & Davenport.
Where would it start?	Rail Explorers Santa Cruz would run between Wilder Ranch State Park & Davenport Beach.
Where will I park?	There are designated parking areas at both locations.
How can I pass a slower railbike?	Passing is not possible - the idea is to enjoy the experience, not go as fast as you can. The railbikes are fitted with hydraulic disc brakes to regulate speed and maintain distance from the railbike in front.
What about railbikes coming the other way?	The tours are timed so that all railbikes have reached the destination before they are turned around for the return journey.
How do I get back to where I started?	Each ticket includes a complimentary shuttle to get you back to your vehicle.
How much does it cost?	Tickets are sold per railbike. Tandem (2 seats) \$75. Quad (4 seats) \$125 Off-peak pricing & Discount Days will ensure that the railbikes are affordable for everyone.
Who can ride the railbikes?	Everyone! Rail Explorers railbikes are suitable for all ages and abilities - the elderly, families with young children, couples, cyclists, non-cyclists, hikers and couch potatoes.
What about people with disabilities?	Yes! Rail Explorers is available to everyone, including those with disabilities. Modified rail-bikes can accommodate wheelchairs. There is no need to steer so vision impaired riders can also enjoy this unique experience. Our goal is to offer an accessible experience for all.
What about the corporate events and team building?	Railbiking is a fantastic activity to do together. Railbiking is easy, great fun and a unique, memorable experience. Share it with your team - travel in convoy or space the railbikes out - you will all enjoy this exciting new way to get out and get active!

Who We Are

Rail Explorers is headed by Mr Alex Catchpoole and Ms Mary-Joy Lu.

Mary-Joy and Alex began their entrepreneurial partnership almost 20 years ago. Their partnership gives them a strong combination of complementary skills, and they share a strong belief in community and the preservation of resources for the future.

Both Alex and Mary-Joy are consummate professionals who having spent the last 12 years in New York City running their media production company TANQ, dealing with large commercial budgets and contracts and delivering projects on time for tight on air deadlines. During this period they have consulted to some of the globes largest and most prestigious brands including Bank of America, American Express, Time Warner, Acela Amtrak Railways, Lincoln, Mercedes Benz, Volvo, Avon, Samsung, US Asthma Foundation, OLAY Cosmetics and the US Marine Corps.

The couple launched Rail Explorers in July of 2015, after developing the business for the previous three years.



Rail Explorers Contact Details

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