

Unified Corridor Investment Study
Frequently Asked Questions
August, 2017

You may also find helpful the [Passenger Rail Transit Study FAQs](#) and the [Rail and Trail FAQs](#).

1. What is the purpose of the Unified Corridor Investment Study?
 - a. The Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) will identify multimodal transportation investments that provide the greatest benefit and most effective use of Highway 1, Soquel Avenue/Drive and Freedom Blvd, and the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line to help meet the transportation needs of current and future generations.
 - b. The goals for the UCS focus on developing a sustainable transportation system which seeks to maximize benefits in terms of the triple bottom line of natural environment, economic vitality and equity.
 - c. The Unified Corridor Investment Study will strive to address the following questions-
 - i. How can Santa Cruz County best move toward a sustainable transportation system based on a triple bottom line analysis of equity, economy and environment consistent with RTC policies adopted in the publically-vetted 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (SCC RTP)?
 - ii. How do we meet the transportation needs of the entire county not only now, but into the future, especially given the limitations in land and transportation resources? Population will continue to grow in SCC – over 35,000 additional people are projected to live in the county in 2035 (13% increase).
 - iii. How can we address congestion on Hwy 1 while at the same time motivating people to shift to other ways to getting around such as transit, carpool, biking and walking?
 - iv. What transportation systems will support development of compact, affordable housing in the urbanized areas of SCC?
 - v. How can we improve the safety of our transportation system?
 - vi. What is the best use of the rail corridor?
 - d. The UCS will satisfy requirements of Measure D, through which over 2/3 of SCC voters directed an open, transparent analysis of transportation options of the rail corridor. The Unified Corridor Investment Study, in investigating how Highway 1, Soquel Avenue/Drive and the recently acquired Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, can work together most effectively to support a sustainable multimodal transportation system, will provide a better analysis of the options than a study of any one mode or facility in isolation.

2. How will the preferred transportation investments for these routes be decided on?
 - a. First step was to identify the project goals and the performance metrics for determining whether these goals are being advanced. Goals and performance metrics can be found on the [project web page](#).
 - b. A two step scenario analysis will then be performed to determine how future scenarios or group of transportation projects implemented by 2035 will advance the goals of the project.
 - c. Step 1 of the scenario analysis will evaluate the feasibility of the scenarios based on the step 1 qualitative criteria and decide which scenarios will be evaluated in Step 2.
 - d. Step 2 of the scenario analysis will be a more extensive quantitative comparison of fewer alternatives for how well they advance the goals of the study as determined by the performance measures.

3. How were the goals and performance metrics for the UCS identified?
 - a. RTC engaged the community in a discussion to better understand the community's transportation priorities as they relate to the three parallel routes. The goals and performance metrics reflect input from the public, stakeholders, and RTC advisory committees.
 - b. Over 3,400 participants responded to a survey, over 70 people attended a public workshop in January 2017, and email comments were received. Recent outreach efforts built on prior public engagement activities conducted in 2015 related to the community's transportation priorities for the three UCS routes.

4. What is a scenario analysis?
 - a. A scenario analysis is a decision making tool that is used as a way to provide comparable data about a number of different possible future transportation networks and to assess how each would perform in advancing goals of the project.
 - b. Scenario analysis is commonly used in many different fields such as finance and economics as well as in transportation.
 - c. Metropolitan Planning Organizations in California use scenario analysis as a tool in developing their long range transportation plans.
 - d. The RTC has experience with scenario analysis as this was used in the 2014 SCC RTP.

5. How were the scenarios identified?
 - a. Based on public input, RTC staff together with Kimley-Horn drafted six scenarios along with a No Build scenario ([Attachment 1](#)) to be evaluated in the Unified Corridor Investment Study.
 - b. Each scenario or group of projects was designed to include all modes (auto, transit, bike, and walk) consistent with RTC sustainability policies to advance triple bottom line goals of environment, equity and economy.
 - c. The scenarios present a range of potential future transportation networks that are well integrated and connect the three parallel routes.
 - d. Projects were grouped together to identify where the interaction between projects could produce a combined effect greater than what could be accomplished individually, adding value to each investment.
 - e. The development of the scenarios was formed with input from the public, community organizations, stakeholders, RTC Advisory Committees, and the RTC over the course of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the UCS as well as numerous years of input on a variety of related projects. The results of the most recent UCS survey (discussed below) provided average rankings of projects that were used to inform their inclusion in the scenarios.

6. How are the projects in the Unified Corridor Study related to projects funded by Measure D?
 - a. Projects funded by Measure D such as the 3 sets of auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 and a trail in the rail corridor will be assumed in every scenario since the decision to implement these projects was already made by the voters.
 - b. Other projects analyzed in the UCS scenarios would need additional sources of funding to be implemented which could be a combination of local, state and federal sources.

7. What is a travel demand model and what role does it play in this study?
 - a. Travel demand models are tools that help forecast future traffic demand based on population, employment, land use and transportation facility changes.

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- b. Travel demand models are accepted as primary tools for transportation planning and decision making. The UCS will use a model developed specifically for Santa Cruz County to assess combinations of transportation improvements in the scenario analysis.
- 8. When will the study be completed?
 - a. The UCS is scheduled to be completed by December 2018.
- 9. How can members of the public stay informed on this project?
 - a. Sign up for an [esubscription](#) on the RTC website to be notified at key milestones of the project and check out the [UCS project web page](#).