



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

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**AGENDA**

**Thursday, February 17, 2022  
9:00 a.m.**

**REMOTE MEETING**

**Community TV Zoom**

Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85695773402>

Dial-in: (669) 900-9128

Webinar ID: 856 9577 3402

*Accessibility: See last page for details.*

*En Español: Para servicios de traducción al español, dirijase a la última página.*

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

1. Roll call
2. Oral communications

*Any member of the public may address the Commission 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, and may not take action on items that are not on the agenda.*

*Speakers are requested to sign the sign-in sheet and state their name clearly 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 items.*

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

4. Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 through 12 (Pacific Avenue to Rio Del Mar Boulevard) Project Updates  
*(Sarah Christensen, Senior Transportation Engineer and Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner)*
5. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 03, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. See agenda for location.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**HOW TO REACH US**

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250 Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
phone: (831) 460-3200 / email: [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org)

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Items on the agenda: Written comments received by 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday before the meeting will be posted to the RTC website by 2:00 p.m. that same afternoon to allow time for Commissioner review. The opportunity to make oral comments is offered prior to the discussion period of each item.

Items not on the agenda: Written comments on topics within the RTC's jurisdiction, but not on the agenda, that are received during the monthly correspondence period will be posted to a public document. The correspondence period cut-off is 12:00 p.m. on the second Monday prior to the RTC meeting. A link to that document is provided in the Correspondence Log of that month's meeting. The opportunity to make oral comments to the Commission on such topics is offered during Oral Communications.

**COVID-19 REMOTE MEETING UPDATE**

On September 16, 2021, Governor Newsom signed AB 361 into law, which allows the RTC to hold virtual and/or hybrid meetings so long as the RTC makes findings that the state of emergency continues to directly impact its ability to meet safely in person. Information needed to log into the virtual meeting is listed on the first page of the meeting's agenda. Download the Zoom app: <https://zoom.us/download>.

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**AGENDA:** February 17, 2022

**TO:** Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

**FROM:** Sarah Christensen, P. E. Senior Engineer & Grace Blakeslee,  
Senior Transportation Planner

**RE:** Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 through 12 (Pacific Avenue to Rio  
Del Mar Boulevard) Projects Updates

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) receive updates regarding the following Coastal Rail Trail projects under development:

- Segment 12: Rio Del Mar Boulevard to State Park Drive,
  - Segments 10 & 11: State Park Drive to 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue; and,
  - Segments 8 & 9: 17<sup>th</sup> to Pacific Avenue.
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**BACKGROUND**

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) is the RTC's proposed 50-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail network. The spine of the trail network is the 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail from Davenport to Watsonville/Pajaro, to be built within the RTC-owned rail right-of-way. The remaining miles will be connecting paths, sidewalks, bike lanes, other roadway improvements or unpaved coastal spur trails. The MBSST Master Plan organized the trail alignment into 20 Segments with logical beginning and end points.

As set forth in previous decisions by the Commission to adopt the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Master Plan, accept the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) and the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Regional Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS), the Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL) should be used for both an active transportation and a public transit corridor, with electric passenger rail being the locally preferred alternative for transit. As indicated in the TCAA/RNIS Business Plan, there are many risks associated with a rail transit project, including funding. Although RTC's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) includes passenger rail, it is on the unconstrained funding list, due to unidentified funding needs.

Segments 8 through 12 are currently under development, with each project preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and associated preliminary engineering and technical studies. The City of Santa Cruz is leading the preparation of the EIR for Segments 8-9, whereas the County of Santa Cruz is leading the preparation of the EIR for Segments 10-11, with the RTC providing oversight. RTC is preparing the Segment 12 EIR as part of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project between State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard, with Caltrans providing oversight and serving as the lead agency under CEQA.

The Commission approved a professional engineering services agreement to complete the remaining scope of work for the environmental component of the Highway 1 State Park to Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project & Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12. To temporarily minimize impacts, an interim trail was included in the scope of work which would assume that the existing railroad track and ties could be temporarily removed and existing railroad bridges could be temporarily repurposed.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must describe a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project that could feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the proposed project's significant effects. Additionally, a "No Project" alternative must be analyzed. Following the June 2021 recommendation to the Commission to analyze the Interim Trail as an alternative, the Segment 12 Project Development Team (PDT) made up of Caltrans, RTC, County of Santa Cruz, and professional consultants developed a phased approach to the delivery of the Coastal Rail Trail portion of the project. The phased approach includes an analysis of a single build alternative, with an optional first phase for the Coastal Rail Trail for an interim trail to be constructed. This approach was determined the best way to analyze the whole of the project, whether or not an optional interim phase is pursued. The analysis will thereby show the potential impacts of building the optional interim trail, removing/relocating the interim trail, and re-constructing the railroad tracks for the ultimate configuration. It would also provide a full analysis of potential impacts of building the ultimate project without an interim first phase.

### **Ultimate Trail Configuration (Trail Next to Railroad Track Alignment)**

The single build alternative is the ultimate trail next to the railroad track alignment. This would include construction of new trail bridges adjacent to the railroad bridges. (Note that in some cases a trail bridge may be able to

be cantilevered off existing rail bridges). New at-grade trail crossings would be located adjacent to the at-grade railroad crossings. Additional project features include construction of retaining walls along the trail, trail viaducts adjacent to the railroad track alignment, and fencing between the trail and railroad tracks.

### **Optional Interim Phase (Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment)**

RTC owns the SCBL right of way and the railroad structures and bridges, with a contracted common carrier who provides freight service south of Milepost 7 and has rights to provide service north of Milepost 7 when that portion of the line returns to service. It is possible that the common carrier could file for abandonment of freight operations with the STB along all or a portion of the SCBL in which case all or a portion of the SCBL would likely be railbanked to preserve the corridor for future freight re-activation. In this situation, the SCBL could be used for a multiuse trail on an interim basis.

For this reason, in addition to the Ultimate Trail Configuration, the Segment 12 PDT proposes an optional first phase of the Coastal Rail Trail where all or a portion of the trail could be located along the alignment of the existing railroad tracks. Under the optional first phase, the existing railroad bridges would be repurposed to trail bridges, and at-grade railroad crossings would be repurposed to trail crossings in the approximate same location of the existing railroad tracks. Should the optional first phase be constructed, and then freight reactivated, the trail would be removed, the railroad tracks and ties reconstructed, and the trail relocated adjacent to the rail line. For Segment 12, the railroad bridges over Highway 1 need to be removed and replaced with longer span bridges to accommodate the highway improvements. In this case, the PDT is considering options to construct key infrastructure for the new railroad bridge which will ultimately be needed for future potential freight rail re-activation.

### **Environmental Analysis**

By adopting the phased approach for Segments 8 through 12, all the EIRs under development will be consistent and include a single build alternative with an optional first phase approach. Each environmental document will therefore analyze:

- The impacts of the Ultimate Trail Configuration (i.e. Trail Next to the Railroad Track Alignment);
- The impacts of the Interim Trail (i.e. Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment) as an optional first phase; and,
- The impacts of the conversion of the Interim Trail to the Ultimate Trail Configuration including removal of the trail and reconstruction of the railroad tracks for freight service.

A certified environmental impact report and action by the lead agency to select the proposed project as the preferred alternative, along with adoption of the CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and concurrence from the responsible agency would allow the project sponsor to implement the Ultimate Trail Configuration (i.e. Trail Next to Railroad Track Alignment) or the Interim Trail or a combination of the two along the SCBL (i.e. Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment).

Below is a map showing the locations of Segments 8 through 12:



**Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project Update**

The Segment 12 project is being developed as part of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project between the State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard Interchanges. The project Fact Sheet is included as Attachment 1. The Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project proposes to construct a 1.25-mile-long trail between State Park Drive and Rio del Mar Boulevard along the SCBL. The Notice of Preparation of an EIR was released in 2020. The PA/ED component of the project is ongoing and is scheduled to be complete in Spring of 2023.

RTC staff plans to pursue Senate Bill 1 (SB1) Solutions for Congested Corridors and Local Partnership Program funding for this project. The call for projects for these programs is scheduled for June of 2022 with applications due in December of 2022. Only the construction component of the project is eligible for the SB1 competitive funds, and a local match of 20-30% of the construction cost is likely needed to compete. Staff will recommend programming of matching funds for construction at a future meeting.

### ***Coastal Rail Trail Segment 8 & 9 and 10 & 11 Project Update***

Segment 8 & 9 of the Coastal Rail Trail includes 2.5 miles of the MBSST's rail trail spine between Pacific Avenue in the City of Santa Cruz and 17th Avenue in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County along the SCBL (Attachment 1: Project Fact Sheets). The City of Santa Cruz is the project sponsor for Segment 8 & 9.

Segment 10 & 11 of the Coastal Rail Trail includes 4.7 miles of the MBSST's rail trail spine between 17th Avenue in Live Oak through Jade Street Park in the City of Capitola, then down the coast to State Park Drive (Attachment 1: Project Fact Sheets). The County of Santa Cruz is the project sponsor for Segments 10 & 11.

The City and County of Santa Cruz released Notice of Preparation (NOP)s for Environmental Impact Reports in Fall 2021 for Segment 8 & 9 and Segment 10 & 11, respectively. The NOPs included two possible alternatives, including the Rail-with-Trail and Railbank-with-Trail alignments. Since that time the City and County have adopted the phased approach discussed previously in this staff report. Therefore, the Draft Environmental Impact Reports for Segments 8 & 9 and 10 & 11 will include a single build alternative for the Ultimate Trail Configuration (i.e. Trail Next to the Railroad Track Alignment) with an optional first phase to allow for a potential Interim Trail (i.e. Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment). The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Segments 8 & 9 and Segments 10 & 11 of the Coastal Rail Trail are scheduled to be released by the end of 2022.

The City and County of Santa Cruz will solicit input on schematic plans for a Trail Next to Railroad Track Alignment (i.e. Ultimate Trail Configuration) and Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment (i.e. Interim Trail) between Pacific Avenue and State Park Drive from the public and stakeholders in Spring 2022. Virtual public open houses will be scheduled to provide the public with information about the schematic plans. The schematic plans will also be presented to the RTC Advisory Committees in the spring of 2022.

The City of Santa Cruz is seeking funding for construction of the project and will be submitting applications for the State’s Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 6 funding. Cycle 6 ATP grant applications are due in June 2022. RTC programmed \$2 million in FY23/24 to serve as a future grant match for construction of Segments 8 & 9.

RTC has currently programmed \$4 million in Measure D funds to the County of Santa Cruz for environmental and preliminary design of Segments 10 & 11 between FY20/21 and FY22/23. The County of Santa Cruz has indicated that it will be seeking additional Measure D-Active Transportation funding for a match to preconstruction and construction components of the project. The County of Santa Cruz also plans to submit an application for the State’s Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 6 funding.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There are no new fiscal impacts associated with receiving an update on the Coastal Rail Trail Projects. Measure D funding is programmed for the projects and staff may return at a subsequent Commission meeting to recommend programming of funds as the local match for the upcoming competitive grant programs. Typically, grant applications that include a greater local match are more competitive.

**SUMMARY**

The TPW will receive an update on the Coastal Rail Trail Projects under development, including a phased approach for the environmental analysis of the projects. The projects are in the preliminary engineering and environmental clearance component of the projects. Staff may return to the Commission at subsequent meetings to recommend programming of a local match in preparation for competitive grant programs.

Attachments:

- 1. Project Fact Sheets



## PROJECT FACT SHEET

Updated February 2022

# Active Transportation: Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 & 9

## Project Description

The Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 and 9 project (as defined in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail {MBSST} Network Master Plan) includes 2.5 miles of the MBSST's rail trail spine between Pacific Street in the City of Santa Cruz and 17th Avenue in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County along the publicly-owned railroad right-of-way.

The goals of this project are to increase the numbers of people biking and walking, improve safety and mobility of non-motorized users, and provide high-quality connections to schools, parks, and community facilities. When constructed, this project will be part of a planned 32-mile rail trail network that traverses the entire coastline of Santa Cruz County. A part of the Segment 8 project, the San Lorenzo River Railroad Trestle trail widening, was accelerated ahead of the rest of the segment and was completed in May 2019.

Segments 8 and 9 are particularly challenging due to three new bridges and four at-grade crossings.

Preconstruction is funded by a \$3M Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 3 grant, with local matching funds from Measure D transportation funds and \$1.5M from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.



## Project Highlights

- ▶ Provides a dedicated bike/ped trail, improving safety and connectivity to schools, employment centers, and transit facilities
- ▶ Connects to the Beach Street bikeway and Segment 7, connecting the west and east sides of Santa Cruz
- ▶ Includes a new bike/ped bridge at Rodeo Gulch
- ▶ Includes either a separate multi-use bike/ped structure or a 10' multi-use path across the Santa Cruz Harbor, cantilevered off the Harbor rail bridge
- ▶ Connects to downtown Santa Cruz via the San Lorenzo River levee trails
- ▶ Provides a 10' multi-use path across the San Lorenzo River, cantilevered off the San Lorenzo River Railroad Trestle (completed in 2019)
- ▶ Extends through the Seabright neighborhood to Live Oak
- ▶ 48,000 residents live within 1 mile of the corridor, where 15 schools and 37 parks are located

## Project Delivery Strategy

The City of Santa Cruz is leading the project delivery. The City advanced construction of the multi-use path across the San Lorenzo River with an innovative approach, cantilevering off the existing rail trestle with a system that used lightweight decking. Between the San Lorenzo River and 17th Avenue, the project will evaluate a Trail Next to the Railroad Track Alignment ("Ultimate Trail Configuration") and a Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment ("Interim Trail") as an optional first phase. The City is funding the remaining pre-construction work with grants from the Land Trust and the state's Active Transportation Program. The City is targeting SB1-Active Transportation Program and federal grant opportunities to fully fund the construction.



# Active Transportation: Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 & 9

## Total Programming

<b>Estimated Total Cost</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>33M</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>		
Measure D (Active Transportation)	\$	2M
Measure D (Local-Neighborhood)	\$	3M
Other Secured*	\$	5.2M
Need	\$	23M

## Project Status/Schedule

The multi-use path cantilevered off the San Lorenzo River Railroad Trestle was completed in 2019. Preliminary engineering and environmental review are underway and will be complete in 2023. Construction is dependent on acquiring additional funding.

\*Includes TDA, ATP, and Land Trust funds.



Preliminary project rendering



# Active Transportation: Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 & 11

## Project Description

The Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 project (as defined in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail {MBSST} Network Master Plan) proposes to construct 4.7 miles of the MBSST's rail trail spine between 17th Avenue in the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County known as Live Oak through Jade Street Park in the City of Capitola, then down the coast to State Park Drive.

The goals of this project are to increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking, improve safety and mobility of non-motorized users, and to provide high-quality connections to schools, parks, and community facilities. When constructed, this project will connect to a proposed 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail network that parallels the entire coastline of Santa Cruz County.

Segment 10 is particularly challenging due to right-of-way constraints requiring realignment of one mile of the railroad track bed. The project includes a 200-foot span pre-engineered bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Rodeo Gulch Creek on the inland side of the rail trestle bridge.

Segment 11 is particularly challenging due to extreme topography, including bridge structures at Soquel Creek, New Brighton State Beach, and Borregas Creek.



## Project Highlights

- ▶ Provides a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian trail, improving safety and connectivity to schools, commercial centers, and transit facilities
- ▶ Includes three new bicycle and pedestrian bridges
- ▶ Over 49,000 residents live within one mile of the corridor
- ▶ 14 schools, 26 parks, and New Brighton and Seacliff State Beaches are within one mile of the corridor
- ▶ Enhances mobility and transportation for disadvantaged communities

## Project Delivery Strategy

The County is advancing the environmental, design, and right-of-way phases of the project (between 17th Avenue and Live Oak) with \$4 million of Measure D. The project will evaluate the Trail Next to the Railroad Track Alignment ("Ultimate Trail Configuration"), which does not include the Capitola Trestle, and a Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment ("Interim Trail") as an optional first phase, which does include the Capitola Trestle. This project can be phased to smaller sections as funding becomes available. The County is targeting SB1-Active Transportation Program and federal grant opportunities to fully fund the construction.



# Active Transportation: Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 & 11

## Total Programming

Estimated Total Cost	\$	TBD*
<b>Funding Sources</b>		
Measure D (Active Transportation)	\$	4M
Other Secured	\$	0
Need	\$	TBD*

\*Cost estimates are under development.



## Project Status/Schedule

The project, with the exception of the Capitola trestle, began the environmental phase in 2021, which is expected to be completed in 2023. The final design phase is expected to begin in early 2023 and be completed by the end of the year. The project is expected to go to construction in 2024 pending funding availability.





# Highway Corridors: Highway 1 Aux Lanes and BOS (State Park Drive to Freedom Boulevard), and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12

## Project Description

The project will construct northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes and bus-on-shoulder improvements between the State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard interchanges, replace the two existing railroad bridges between the State Park Drive and Rio del Mar interchanges, and widen the Aptos Creek bridge. This section of Highway 1 provides access to Aptos Village, Rio del Mar, Aptos High School, and Aptos Hills/Corralitos. The auxiliary lanes will connect the on-ramps with the next off-ramp, thereby extending the weaving and merging distance between the ramps, improving traffic operations, and reducing cut-through traffic diverting to local streets and neighborhoods.

The existing railroad bridges will be replaced with longer span bridges to accommodate the addition of auxiliary lanes on Highway 1. The Highway 1 bridge over Aptos Creek will be widened or replaced as part of the project. The new bridges, soundwalls, and retaining walls will incorporate aesthetic treatments consistent with the visual character of the corridor and the adjacent community.

This project also includes construction of Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail, a bicycle and pedestrian trail along an approximately 1.25-mile segment of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way from State Park Drive to Rio Del Mar Boulevard. The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor is an active freight line and is owned by the RTC.



## Project Highlights

- ▶ Improves traffic and safety operations on Highway 1
- ▶ Adds infrastructure for buses to travel in the auxiliary lanes between interchanges and on the outside shoulder through interchanges
- ▶ Reduces cut-through traffic diverting to local streets and neighborhoods by adding auxiliary lanes between State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard
- ▶ Replaces two existing railroad bridges and widens the Highway 1 Aptos Creek bridge
- ▶ Provides a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian trail, improving safety and connectivity to schools, commercial centers, and transit facilities
- ▶ Multimodal options to increase corridor throughput
- ▶ Improves active transportation connectivity

## Project Delivery Strategy

The RTC is leading the delivery of this project. Measure D-Highway Corridor funds and other RTC discretionary funds will be used to complete preconstruction work and as a match for future grants. The project will evaluate a Trail Next to the Railroad Track Alignment ("Ultimate Trail Configuration") and a Trail on the Railroad Track Alignment ("Interim Trail") as an optional first phase. RTC is targeting Cycle 3 of the SB1 Solutions to Congested Corridors Program, and Local Partnership Program funds.



# Highway Corridors: Highway 1 Aux Lanes and BOS (State Park Drive to Freedom Boulevard), and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12

## Project Funding

Estimated Total Cost	\$	TBD
<b>Funding Sources</b>		
Measure D (Highway)	\$	19.2M
Other Secured	\$	1.2M
Needed	\$	TBD



## Project Status/Schedule

The environmental phase of this project is expected to be completed in 2022. The design phase is expected to begin in 2022 and be construction-ready in 2025, pending availability of funds for construction.



Preliminary rendering of new railroad and bicycle/pedestrian bridges