

# **Appendix A**

## **Public Outreach**

## **Public Involvement for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan**

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's (RTC) proactive community engagement process includes public notices, full public access to key decisions, and encourages early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and programming actions. Outreach for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) included a variety of public participation activities as outlined in the *2019 Public Participation Plan*. This public participation plan is prepared in collaboration with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, the Transportation Agency of Monterey County and the San Benito Council of Governments. The RTC's public involvement process for the 2045 RTP included public meetings, virtual and in-person workshops, public hearing, committee meetings, news releases, online surveys, a plan website, social media notices (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor), media interviews, and email notices to a broad range of over 1000 individuals, groups, agencies, and stakeholders. Following this overview is a summary of outreach activities and sample materials.

### **Define Purpose & Identify Stakeholders**

The RTC compiled a list of stakeholders and regularly solicited input on and disseminated Regional Transportation Plan milestone information. The list includes: interested residents, transportation partners, local jurisdictions, other public entities, technical partners, business interests, environmental groups, neighborhood/homeowner, land conservation/development interest group, environmental justice, representatives of pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities users, advocacy, freight, non-profit, education, agriculture, youth/senior, media, state, federal and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation and other interested parties.

A Fact Sheet and webpage were developed to help the community understand more about the RTP, how the plan is developed, and about the sustainability framework approach used in this RTP update. Feedback was requested at key stages of development for the Regional Transportation Plan including the draft goals, targets and policies; and the projects, as well as the draft plan.

### **Consultation & Coordination with other Agencies**

The RTC worked closely with agencies responsible for planning and implementing transportation projects and programs. This included planning and public works representatives from each of the five jurisdictions, Caltrans, the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, the University of California-Santa Cruz, Community Bridges-Lift Line, the Volunteer Center, the Association for Monterey Bay Governments, and other transportation partners and nonprofits that provide employer transportation programs, bicycle programs, or endeavor to improve transportation options to improve the health of the community.

### **Consultation with Interested Parties, Boards of Directors, Advisory Committees**

Decisions at key steps of RTP development were made at noticed public board meetings. Prior to key decisions, materials were shared with the RTC's three advisory bodies (the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC), and Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC)) and comments were incorporated. Board and advisory committee materials

are posted on the RTC website and notices are sent to interested individuals that have signed up for RTC “enews.”

Public Input on the project list is an important part of the RTP development process. Project ideas from the public were forwarded to potential project sponsors for their consideration. The preliminary project lists were reviewed by each of the RTC’s advisory committees, posted on the RTC website and evaluated by the RTC at one of its televised meetings. The project list is also available for public review during circulation of the Draft RTP.

## **Public Notice, Public Hearings, Comment Periods**

All RTC board and advisory committees are held in accordance with the Brown Act; therefore, agendas are posted in a public location and on the RTC website at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The draft RTP was released December 2, 2021 for a 60-day public comment period. Comments are due January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. A public hearing is scheduled for the January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 RTC meeting to receive comments on the draft 2045 RTP. Comments received and recommended updates in response to the comments will be presented to the RTC in Spring 2022. A public hearing will be held to consider adoption of the final 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan and the environmental review findings, statement of overriding considerations, and mitigation monitoring program. Notices about public hearings are distributed to news media and the RTP “enews” subscribers in advance of the hearing. The RTC makes all decisions related to transportation planning and policy in open, noticed meetings, according to the Brown Act (California Code sections 54950-54960.5). The environmental review process, lead by AMBAG, follows requirements set forth by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

## **Use of Media, Informational Materials, Visualization Techniques**

A number of graphic materials were adapted and/or produced for the RTP. The RTP fact sheet contains information on how the plan is developed, the focus on sustainability and how to get involved. The RTC has a website (<https://sccrtc.org/2045rtp>) in which the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan process is described on a page with links to the various milestones of the project. The RTC also uses social media to get information out to the public on how to get involved in the long-range transportation planning process. The RTC featured numerous discussions about the RTP on the agency’s Nextdoor social media platform that reaches 77 neighborhoods and on Facebook which provides yet another avenue for providing information to the public.

## **Encourage Bilingual Participation**

Bilingual participation was encouraged by inviting the community to meetings, making an interpreter available, holding evening meetings at locations accessible by transit, and placing advertisements about the draft RTP availability in Spanish language media and including groups serving bilingual community members in the stakeholder list. The RTP Fact Sheet was also made available in Spanish.

## **Responding to Public Input**

With development of key elements of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the RTC solicited and received public input. Comments were shared with the RTC board throughout the process and incorporated into elements of the document. For comments focused specifically on the project list, project ideas and comments on specific projects were forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction for their consideration. Response to comments on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be included in the Final EIR.

## **Distribution of Final Documents**

The final RTP and EIR will be available online at [www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp](http://www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp), at local libraries, and at the RTC office in Santa Cruz.

**Figure A.1 – Public Outreach**  
**2045 Regional Transportation Plan and Environmental Impact Report**

	NOTICED PUBLIC MEETINGS					
	Board Meetings		Advisory Committees			OTHER
	Regional Transportation Commission	Transportation Policy Workshop	Interagency TAC	Bicycle Committee	Elderly/ Disabled TAC	General Public
<b>Policy Element: Goals, Policies &amp; Targets</b> (Evaluation Measures)						
Preview goals, targets, policies	05/2019		01/2020	12/2019	12/2019	12/2019 1/2020
<b>Draft policy element approved</b>	02/2020					
<b>Action &amp; Financial Elements: Project List and Revenue Projections</b>						
Solicit project ideas through email notification, Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter and website	05/2019		01/2020	02/2020	02/2020	01/2020- 03/2020
<b>Approve complete list of projects</b>	09/2020		08/2020	08/2020	08/2020	
AMBAG: Public workshop on transportation and land use scenarios held in Santa Cruz County						05/2021
<b>Approve the financially constrained project list</b>	03/2021		01/2021	02/2021	02/2021	
AMBAG: Adoption of preferred scenario for SCS						04/14/2021
<b>Environmental Review*</b>						
AMBAG: Notice of Preparation						01/2020
AMBAG: News release on scoping meetings						01/2020
AMBAG: Scoping meeting in Santa Cruz County						01/22/2020
AMBAG: Notices of availability of draft EIR in papers						12/2021
AMBAG: Release of draft EIR	Email notice of availability are sent to all board and committee members					12/2/2021
AMBAG: Documents made available online at: <a href="http://www.ambag.org">www.ambag.org</a> , <a href="http://www.sccrtc.org">www.sccrtc.org</a> , and at local libraries						12/2021
AMBAG: EIR public hearing notice published in papers						01/2022
AMBAG: Public Hearing on draft EIR						01/2022
AMBAG: Comments on the EIR Due						01/31/2022
AMBAG: EIR notice of consideration published in papers						04/2022

**NOTICED PUBLIC MEETINGS**

	<b>Board Meetings</b>		<b>Advisory Committees</b>			<b>OTHER</b>
	<b>Regional Transportation Commission</b>	<b>Transportation Policy Workshop</b>	<b>Interagency TAC</b>	<b>Bicycle Committee</b>	<b>Elderly/ Disabled TAC</b>	<b>General Public</b>
AMBAG: Final EIR available for public review						04/2022
AMBAG: Adopt final MTP/SCS and certify EIR						06/2022
RTC Adopt final EIR	06/2022					
<b>Review of 2045 Regional Transportation Plan</b>						
RTC approve release of draft RTP	12/2/2021					
Release of draft RTP	Email notice of availability are sent to all board and committee members					12/02/2021
Draft RTP available online at <a href="http://www.sccrtc.org">www.sccrtc.org</a> , local libraries, and at RTC office						12/02/2021
Email notices sent to over 1000 people, agencies, and community groups (see Appendix A for distribution list)						week of 12/06/2021
Draft RTP public hearing notice published in papers						week of 12/06/2021
Email notices sent to resource agencies and tribal representatives to solicit input on draft RTP						week of 12/06/2021
Press Release on draft RTP availability						week of 12/06/2021
<b>Public Hearing on draft RTP</b>	01/13/2022					
Input solicited on draft RTP from RTC Committees			12/2021	12/2021	01/2022	
Comments on the draft RTP Due						01/31/2022
Approval of revisions for final RTP	03/03/2022					
<b>Adopt final RTP</b>	06/02/2022					
<b>Other Public Outreach Activities</b> (some bilingual materials)						
Fact Sheets: online, distributed at community meetings						ongoing
Presentations and/or announcements about the RTP						ongoing
Electronic notices: Social media (e.g., Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter updates), emails to distribution list, newsletters for other entities						ongoing
RTP website updates: <a href="http://www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp">www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp</a>						ongoing

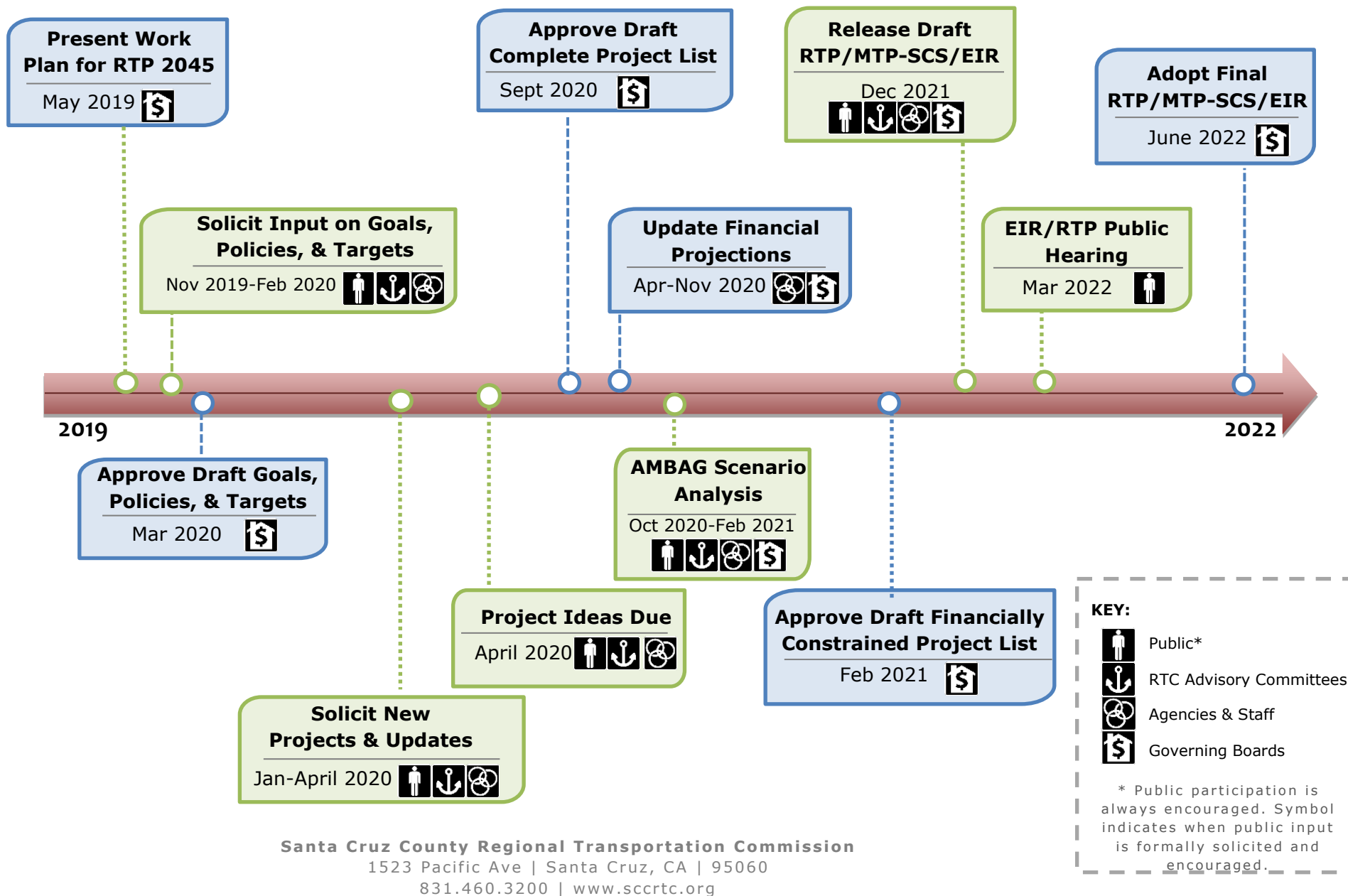
NOTICED PUBLIC MEETINGS						
	Board Meetings		Advisory Committees			OTHER
	Regional Transportation Commission	Transportation Policy Workshop	Interagency TAC	Bicycle Committee	Elderly/ Disabled TAC	General Public
News releases						ongoing
Communication to Tribal Interests						03/2021 11/2021
<b>Bold = Key Decision Points</b>						

\*The CEQA required environmental review for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan is included in the EIR for the 2045 MTP-SCS. AMBAG serves as the lead agency for the EIR and SCCRTC serves as a responsible agency.



# 2045 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## KEY MILESTONES







# 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

## What is the RTP?

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long range (20-25 year) transportation plan for the Santa Cruz County area. The plan assesses the transportation challenges we face now and those we will face in the future. The plan includes strategies to address our transportation challenges, a list of unmet multimodal transportation needs (highway, road, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, airport, etc.), and priorities for limited funds.

The RTP is updated every four or five years to address new trends, issues, and priorities, and to incorporate new state and federal regulations. The last Regional Transportation Plan (2040 RTP) was adopted in June 2018. **Work is currently underway on the next plan, referred to as the 2045 RTP.** Goals, Policies, and Targets were approved in February 2020 and preliminary project list approved in September 2020. The financially constrained project list is currently under development. The final 2045 RTP is scheduled for adoption in June 2022.

## Want to Get Involved?

**Stay informed.** Review materials and provide input as elements of the plan are developed: <https://sccrtc.org/rtp>

**Join E-News.** Sign up directly at <https://sccrtc.org/rtp>

**Send Comments.** Mail comments to SCCRTC: [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org) or 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060



## The RTP provides information on:

- ▶ Transportation needs in the region for 20 to 25 years, based on population growth, environmental, economic and other social trends.
- ▶ The amount of state, federal, and local funding available for transportation projects and new sources of funding needed to deliver high priority projects.
- ▶ Sustainability of the transportation system and sustainable outcomes.
- ▶ New legislative requirements, including SB375, which stipulate that regions must meet greenhouse gas reduction targets through a coordinated land use and transportation plan called the Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- ▶ "Complete Streets" as a tool for planning for a balanced and multi-modal transportation system, particularly for those transportation improvements needed to accommodate growth.

## 2045 Regional Transportation Planning Process





# 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

## How is the long range transportation plan developed?

1. The first step is to **identify the objectives for the region's transportation system** and craft overarching goals and policies, used to guide decisions. Performance measures or targets are also developed to track progress towards achieving the goals.
2. Next, an **estimate of all the potential local, state and federal funding available for transportation projects** is developed. Projects that advance the goals and targets are then identified by transportation agencies, local jurisdictions, and the public.
3. Based on the anticipated funding and the performance measures, the RTC **prioritizes the projects that could be funded over the next 22 years**. A list of additional projects that could be implemented should more funding become available is also identified.
4. The priority project list is then reviewed to **identify potential environmental impacts**. There are opportunities at every stage of the development of the RTP for public, agency and committee input.
5. The goals/policies, funding estimates and project lists build on each other and input at the early stages will shape the **draft and final plan**.



## Why focus on sustainability?

The RTC represents diverse transportation interests and assesses the **impacts of transportation investments on environmental, economic and social concerns**. A focus on sustainability can assist in providing balanced evaluation of transportation projects and programs, recognizing that these areas are intertwined, not exclusionary.

This approach evaluates how transportation investments impact people's health and safety, the economic vitality of the region, and the universal need for a healthy planet. Some investments are **win/win**, but some require trade-offs in the three areas of **economy, environment and people**.

This focus on sustainability assists the RTC in identifying these trade-offs and achieving multiple long-term goals.



# Plan Regional de Transporte 2045

## ¿Que es el RTP?

El Plan Regional de Transporte (RTP por sus siglas en inglés) es un plan a largo plazo (20-25 años) de transporte para el condado de Santa Cruz. El plan de transporte a largo plazo evalúa los retos que enfrentamos ahora y en el futuro. El plan incluye estrategias para resolver los retos, un lista de no cumplido multimodal necesidades de transporte (autopista, carretera, tránsito, bicicleta, peatones, carga, aeropuerto, etc.) y prioridades para el uso de fondos limitados. El RTP se actualiza cada cuatro o cinco años para abordar las prioridades, problemas y nuevas tendencias e incorporar nuevas regulaciones estatales y federales. El último Plan Regional de Transporte del Condado de Santa Cruz se adoptó en junio 2018. Se espera que el siguiente plan se adoptará en junio 2022 y se hará referencia a él como 2045 RTP.

## ¿Quieres participar?

**Manténgase informado.** Revisar los materiales del RTP y contribuya a medida que se desarrollen los elementos del plan. <https://sccrtc.org/2045rtp>

**Correo electrónico.** Regístrese para recibir notificaciones por correo electrónico: <https://sccrtc.org/2045rtp>

**Enviar comentarios.** Envíe comentarios por correo electrónico a [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org) o envíe por correo a 1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250, Santa Cruz, CA 95060



## The RTP provides information on:

- ▶ Las necesidades de transporte en la región por un período de 20 a 25 años, basado en el crecimiento de la población, ambiental, económico y otras tendencias sociales.
- ▶ La cantidad de fondos estatales, federales y locales disponibles para proyectos de transporte y nuevos recursos de fondos necesarios para llevar a cabo proyectos de alta prioridad.
- ▶ Sostenibilidad del sistema de transporte y resultados sostenibles.
- ▶ Nuevos requisitos legales, incluyendo SB375, que estipula que las regiones deben cumplir con metas de reducción de gases causantes del efecto invernadero, por medio del uso coordinado del suelo y un plan de transporte llamado Estrategia de Comunidades Sostenibles.
- ▶ "Calles Completas" como herramienta de planeación para un sistema de transporte balanceado y multimodal, en particular para aquellas mejoras al transporte necesarias para acomodar el crecimiento.

## Proceso de planificación para el transporte regional







# Plan Regional de Transporte 2045

## ¿Cómo se desarrolla el plan de transporte a largo plazo?


1. El primer paso es **identificar los objetivos** para el sistema de transporte de la región y **elaborar metas globales y normas** que se usarán para guiar las decisiones. También se desarrollan medidas de desempeño o metas para seguir el progreso hacia el logro de las metas.
2. Luego, se desarrolla un **presupuesto de todos los posibles fondos locales, estatales y federales disponibles para proyectos de transporte**. Se identifican aquellos proyectos que promueven las metas y objetivos por parte de las agencias de transporte, jurisdicciones locales y el público.
3. Basado en los fondos que se anticipan y las medidas de desempeño, la RTC **identifica qué proyectos pueden financiarse durante los próximos 25 años** basado en prioridades y prevé su financiación. También se identifica una lista de proyectos adicionales que pudieran implementarse si hubiera fondos disponibles.
4. Luego **se revisa la prioridad de la lista de proyectos para identificar posibles impactos ambientales**. En cada etapa del desarrollo del RTP hay oportunidades de aporte para el público, agencias y comités.
5. Las metas/normas, presupuestos de fondos y listas de proyectos se crean progresivamente y el aporte en las etapas primarias **moldeará el borrador y plan final**.



## ¿Por qué un enfoque en sostenibilidad?

La RTC representa diversos intereses de transporte y evalúa los impactos de inversiones de transporte en cuanto a intereses **ambientales**, **económicos** y **sociales**. Un enfoque en sostenibilidad puede ayudar a proveer una evaluación balanceada de proyectos y programas de transporte, reconociendo que estas áreas están entrelazadas, no son exclusivistas. Este enfoque evalúa el impacto de la inversión en el transporte, la salud, la seguridad de la población, la vitalidad económica de la región y la necesidad universal de la salud del planeta. Algunas inversiones son beneficiosas para todos, mientras otras requieren concesiones en las tres áreas de **economía**, **medio ambiente** y **población**. Este enfoque en sostenibilidad ayuda a la RTC a identificar estas concesiones y alcanzar múltiples metas a largo plazo.

# RTP New Project Idea Submission Form

**SCCRTC**  
Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission

[MEETINGS & EVENTS](#) | [FUNDING & PLANNING](#) | [PROJECTS](#) | [SERVICES](#) | [ABOUT THE RTC](#) | [CRUZ511](#)

Measure D

Ordinance

Expenditure Plan

Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

Regional Projects

Direct Funding Recipients

Taxpayer Oversight

FAQs

SBI: Rebuilding California

Funding Overview

Approved Projects (RTIP)

Grant Programs

Budget & Work Program

Environmental Planning

Regional Conservation Investment Strategy

RTIS Online Workshop

SCRCIS: Environmental Setting

SCRCIS: Conservation Elements

SCRCIS: Goals, Objectives, & Actions

Long Range Plans

2045 Regional Transportation Plan

Submit Project Ideas

2019 Public Participation Plan

2040 Regional Transportation Plan

2040 RTP Final Report

Data & Statistics

Special Studies

State Park Dr-Freedom Blvd Aux Lanes, BOS, & Coastal

Santa Cruz County Bicycle Route Signage Program

RTIS Online Workshop

2020 Meetings RTC/TPW

Boulder Creek Complete Streets Improvements

## Submit New Project Ideas for the 2045 RTP

**Make your voice heard!** The RTC is soliciting project ideas for the 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan. This plan will be a minor update to the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and is expected to be adopted June 2022 (see [Key Milestones](#)). The project list that was included in the Final 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (adopted June 2018) is available for your review [here](#).

Project ideas submitted on this form will be shared with the agency who is responsible for transportation projects in your location of interest. Projects will then be considered for inclusion in the [2045 Regional Transportation Plan](#). The [goals](#) of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan are to prioritize projects that maintain the current transportation system, improve safety and expand options for how people travel.

Please submit one form for each new project idea. Example projects could include a street in need of a bike lane, a turn lane to improve traffic flow, a road that needs a sidewalk, new bus services, or any other improvements that you would like to see happen over the next 20 years.

**Name \***

FirstLast


**Email \***

**Describe a specific project that could improve transportation in Santa Cruz County.**

**What jurisdiction is this potential project located?**  
Select all that apply.

**Drop a pin on the project location**  
Pan around the map and zoom in to the street level near the location you want, then click the spot to drop a pin.

MapSatellite



Keyboard shortcuts | Map data ©2021 | Terms of Use | Report a map error

**Provide any other project location details**  
Note project start/endpoints, cross streets, nearest address or landmark, or direction of travel.

<https://sccrtc.org/funding-planning/long-range-plans/2045-regional-transportation-plan/new-project-ideas/>

## Public Outreach for the 2045 RTP

Notices or copies of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan were distributed to the following organizations:

### Partners/Resource Agencies/Media

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments  
Bureau of Land Management  
CA Dept. Conserv State Mining & Geology Board  
California Air Resources Board  
California Coastal Commission  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
California Dept of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery  
California Energy Commission  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
California Governor's Office of Planning & Research  
California Public Utilities Commission  
California Natural Resources Agency  
California State Transportation Agency  
California Transportation Commission  
Caltrans District 5  
Caltrans Headquarters  
Central Coast Energy Services, Inc.  
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control  
Chambers of Commerce, Executive Directors  
Downtown Association  
Ecology Action  
Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Transit Administration  
Legislators, Federal  
Legislators, State  
Libraries, Main Branches  
Local Jurisdiction, City Clerks  
Local Jurisdiction, City Managers  
Local Jurisdiction, City Mayors  
Local Jurisdiction, Planning Directors  
Local Jurisdiction, Public Works Directors  
Media, Newspapers  
Media, Radio  
Media, TV  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region  
San Benito Council of Governments  
San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development  
Santa Cruz County Business Council

Santa Cruz County Libraries  
Santa Cruz County Schools, K-12  
Santa Cruz County Sheriff  
Santa Cruz County Central Fire District  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. National Park Service

### RTC Board & Committees

Commission Members  
Interagency Technical Advisory Committee  
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments  
Cabrillo College  
Caltrans  
City of Capitola  
City of Santa Cruz  
City of Scotts Valley  
City of Watsonville  
County of Santa Cruz  
Ecology Action  
Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District  
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
Bike Committee  
Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee  
Safe on 17  
California Highway Patrol  
California Office of Traffic Safety  
Caltrans  
Caltrans, District 4  
Caltrans, District 5  
City of San Jose  
City of Santa Cruz  
City of Scotts Valley  
County of Santa Clara  
County of Santa Cruz  
Ladd's Auto Body & Towing/AAA  
Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission-SAFE  
Mountain Network News  
Office of Assemblymember Mark Stone  
Office of Assemblymember Paul Fong

San Jose Mercury News  
 San Jose Police Department  
 Santa Clara County Airports and Roads  
 Santa Cruz Sentinel  
 Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District  
 Town of Los Gatos  
 Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
 Transportation Operations System  
 Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments  
 American Medical Response  
 California Highway Patrol  
 Caltrans  
 Caltrans, District 4  
 Caltrans, District 5  
 City of Santa Cruz  
 City of Scotts Valley  
 County of Santa Cruz  
 Ladd's Auto Body & Towing/AAA  
 Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
 Monterey Salinas Transit  
 Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
 Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District  
 Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay Railroad  
 Santa Cruz Regional 911  
 Santa Cruz Yellow Cab  
 Transportation Funding TF Members

### **Stakeholders, Elderly & Disabled**

Alcoholics Anonymous  
 Alzheimer's Association  
 Apria Healthcare  
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Santa Cruz  
 Cabrillo College  
 Cabrillo College Stroke  
 California Grey Bears  
 Californians for Disability Rights  
 California Senior Alliance  
 Central Coast Alliance for Health  
 Central Coast Center for Independent Living  
 Cindy's Celebrations Inc  
 Coastwalk California  
 Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.  
 Community Bridges (Meals on Wheels)  
 Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County  
 Community Life Services  
 Conflict Resolution Center  
 County of Monterey  
 County of Santa Cruz  
 County of Santa Cruz / HRA  
 Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center  
 Dominican Hospital

Easter Seals Central California  
 Elderday  
 ETR Associates  
 Family Service Agency of the Central Coast  
 Goodwill Industries  
 Greenways to School  
 Hope Services  
 Imagine Supported Living Services  
 Lifespan Care  
 Louden Nelson Community Center  
 Metro Advisory Committee  
 Ombudsman Advocate, Inc.  
 Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust  
 Pajaro Valley Unified School District Office  
 Pula Services  
 San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District  
 Santa Cruz County  
 Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities  
 Santa Cruz County Cycling Club  
 Santa Cruz County Immigration Project  
 Santa Cruz County Office of Education  
 Santa Cruz County Veterans Center  
 Santa Cruz County Health Service Agency  
 Santa Cruz Healthcare Center  
 Santa Cruz Host Lions Club  
 Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District  
 Second Harvest Food Bank  
 Senior Citizens Legal Services  
 Senior Living Centers  
 Senior Network Services  
 Seniors Council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties  
 United Way of Santa Cruz County  
 Valley Convalescent Hospital  
 Veterans Services Office Watsonville  
 Vista Center  
 Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County  
 Watsonville Community Hospital  
 WomenCARE  
 Watsonville Dialysis Center  
 Women's Crisis Support/Defensa De Mujeres  
 Youth Services

### **Stakeholders, Environmental**

Agricultural History Project (AHP) Museum  
 Arana Gulch Watershed Alliance (AGWA)  
 California Center for Land Recycling  
 California Coastal Commission  
 California Native Plant Society (CNPS)  
 California Rural Legal Assistance  
 California State Coastal Conservancy

California Sustainable Agricultural Working Group  
 CalPIRG at UCSC  
 Camp Joy Gardens  
 California State Clearing House (CEQA)  
 Campaign for Sensible Transportation  
 Central Coast Water Quality Preservation, Inc.  
 City of Santa Cruz  
 Coastal Watershed Council  
 Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County  
 Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
 Communities for Sustainable Monterey County  
 County of Santa Cruz  
 Ducks Unlimited, Inc.-Santa Cruz Chapter  
 Earth First!  
 Ecology Action  
 Elkhorn Slough Foundation  
 Farmer Veteran Coalition  
 Friends of Arana Gulch  
 Friends of Moss Landing Marine Laboratories  
 Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks  
 Friends of Soquel Creek  
 Friends of the North Coast  
 Friends of the Sea Otter  
 Groundswell Coastal Ecology  
 International Institute for Ecological Agriculture  
 Island Conservation  
 Keep the Green Belt Green  
 La Selva Recreation District  
 Land Watch Monterey County  
 Land Trust of Santa Cruz County  
 Life Lab Science Program  
 Local Farmers  
 Marine Mammal Center-Monterey Bay Operations  
 Mission Pedestrian  
 Mission Springs Camps and Conference Center  
 Monterey Bay Aquarium  
 Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
 Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project  
 Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz  
 Mountain Parks Foundation  
 Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe/SF Bay Area  
 National Environmental Directory  
 Nisene 2 Sea  
 Ocean Conservancy  
 Open Space Alliance  
 Open Space Authority  
 Organic Farming Research Foundation  
 Outdoor Science Exploration and Classroom Science Fun  
 Otter Project, Inc.  
 Pelagic Shark Research Foundation

Redwood Empire  
 Rails to Trails Conservancy  
 Rising Sun Energy Center  
 San Andreas Land Conservancy  
 Santa Cruz Bird Club  
 Santa Cruz County Cycling Club  
 Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau  
 Santa Cruz County Horsemen's Association  
 Santa Cruz County Res Conservation District  
 Santa Cruz Hub for Sustainable Living  
 Santa Cruz Mountains Bioregional Council  
 Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History  
 Save Our Agricultural Land  
 Save Our Shores  
 Scotts Creek Watershed Council  
 Sempervirens Fund  
 Seymour Marine Discovery Center  
 Sierra Club  
 Surfrider Foundation  
 Sustainable Conservation  
 Sustainable Fishery Advocates  
 Swanton Pacific Ranch-CalPoly  
 The Monterey Bay Conservancy  
 UCSC  
 UCSC Institute of Marine Sciences  
 US Geological Survey  
 Valley Women's Club of the San Lorenzo Valley  
 Ventana Wilderness Alliance  
 Watsonville Waste & Recycle  
 Watsonville Wetlands Watch  
 Wild Farm Alliance  
 YES! Helping Outstanding Young Leaders  
 Zero Population Growth

### Stakeholders, Transportation Groups

AAA Northern California  
 Bike Santa Cruz County  
 CalVans  
 California Trucking Association  
 Campaign for Sensible Transportation  
 Carpooltoschool.com  
 City of Santa Cruz  
 Community Bridges (CTSA)  
 Courtesy Cab  
 Ecology Action  
 Enterprise Rideshare  
 First Transit Services, Inc  
 Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Alliance  
 Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Cntrl District  
 Mission Pedestrian  
 Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz  
 Santa Cruz County Cycling Club



Santa Cruz County Greenway  
Santa Cruz County Railroad Historical Society  
Trail Now  
Trail People  
Train Riders Association of California  
UCSC/Transportation and Parking Services  
Watsonville Bike Shack Cooperative

### **Stakeholders, Community**

Action Pajaro Valley  
Agri-Culture  
Arts Council Santa Cruz County  
Barios Unidos  
California Native Plants Society  
California Art Education Association  
Capitola Walks  
Central Coast Agricultural Task Force  
City of Santa Cruz  
City of Seaside  
City of South San Francisco  
Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County  
The Corralitos Cultural Center  
County of Santa Cruz  
Santa Cruz County Office of Education  
Employers over 100  
Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Library  
Happy Valley Conference Center  
Japanese Cultural Fair Committee  
League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz  
Live Oak Family Resource Center  
Live Oak Neighbors  
Metro Advisory Committee  
Michael's Transportation Service  
Mission Pedestrian  
Monterey Bay Central Labor Council  
Mountain Parks Foundation  
Neighbors of Lower Ocean  
Open Space Alliance Santa Cruz  
Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Pleasure Point Business Association  
Redwood Estates Service Association  
Rio Del Mar Improvement Association  
Roaring Camp Railroads  
Rotary Club of San Lorenzo Valley  
Rotary Club of Santa Cruz  
Rotary Club of Scotts Valley  
Rotary Club of Watsonville  
Santa Cruz County Business Council  
Santa Cruz County Confer & Visitors Council  
Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau  
Santa Cruz County Immigration Project  
Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History

Santa Cruz Regional 911  
Santa Cruz Neighbours  
Santa Cruz Seaside Company  
Seymour Marine Discovery Center  
Surfrider Foundation (SC)  
Sumner Woods HOA  
UCSC  
Valley Women's Club of the San Lorenzo Valley  
Watsonville Women's Club

### **Stakeholders, Economic Justice**

Arts Council Santa Cruz County  
Cabrillo College Stroke  
California Public Interest Research Group  
Child Development Resource Center  
City of Capitola  
Community Action Brd of Santa Cruz Cnty, Inc.  
Communities Organized for Power in Action  
Conflict Resolution Center  
Family Service Agency of the Central Coast  
Foster Grandparent Senior Companion Program  
Homeless Community Resource Center  
League of Women Voters  
Lomak Property Group  
Mission Pedestrian  
Monarch Services/Servicios Monarca  
Monterey Bay Central Labor Council  
Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council  
Pajaro Valley Shelter Services  
Peace Coalition of Monterey County  
Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau  
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District  
Senior Network Services  
Seniors Council  
United Way of Santa Cruz County  
Valley Churches United  
Volunteer Center  
Youth Services

**From:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**To:** [Amy Naranjo](#)  
**Subject:** RTC Seeking Public Input on 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Priorities  
**Date:** Friday, December 20, 2019 10:39:47 AM

---



## **RTC Seeking Public Input on 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Priorities**

The RTC is currently seeking public input to help define the Goals, Targets & Policies for the [2045 Regional Transportation Plan](#). Members of the public can provide input to help inform the plan by taking a short survey and by reviewing the [Draft Goals, Targets & Policies](#) and providing input on the document. Answers from the survey along with comments on the draft document will help the RTC update the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies and define priority projects.

### Survey Links:

English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/72CNNPZ>  
Spanish: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VSKHBGC>

### Draft Goals, Targets & Policies Links:

[English](#)  
[Spanish](#)

Input on the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies can be submitted by email to [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org), mail to 1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, or by fax to 831-460-6178. The deadline to provide public input is Jan. 3 at 5 p.m.

[www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org)

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
email: [info\[at\]sccrtc.org](mailto:info[at]sccrtc.org)

[Website](#) [Funding & Planning](#) [Projects](#) [Services](#) [About the RTC](#)

**From:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**To:** [Amy Naranjo](#)  
**Subject:** Submit new project ideas for the 2045 RTP!  
**Date:** Monday, March 02, 2020 1:24:15 PM



Hello Amy,

Your input is being requested on the long range transportation plan update:

- **Solicit New Projects**

The deadline to submit new project ideas has been extended to March 16, 2020

## Santa Cruz County 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

Submit New Project Ideas for 2045 RTP

**The RTC is currently accepting new project ideas for the 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).** The RTP is a long range transportation plan that identifies multi-modal transportation needs (highway, local road, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc), and a financially feasible list of priority transportation projects for our County. The plan is updated every few years and is required in order to receive specific types of funding from state and federal sources.

The 2045 RTP will be a minor update to the 2040 RTP and is expected to be adopted June 2022.



Project ideas submitted will be shared with the agency who is responsible for transportation projects in your location of interest. Projects will then be considered for inclusion in the 2045 RTP.

The goals of the 2045 RTP are to prioritize projects that maintain the current transportation system, improve safety and expand options for how people travel.

Please submit one form for each new project idea. Example projects could include a street in need of a bike lane, a turn lane to improve traffic flow, a road that needs a sidewalk, new bus services, or any other improvements that you would like to see happen over the next 20 years.

More information about the 2045 RTP can be found on the project web page:  
<https://sccrtc.org/rtp>

Thank you.

**Submit Project Idea**

---

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
email: [info\[at\]sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org)

[Meetings](#) [Funding & Planning](#) [Projects](#) [Services](#) [About the RTC](#)



SCCRTC | 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

[Unsubscribe anaranjo@sccrtc.org](mailto:unsubscribe@anaranjo@sccrtc.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [About Constant Contact](#)

Sent by [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org) in collaboration with

**Constant Contact**   
Try email marketing for free today!

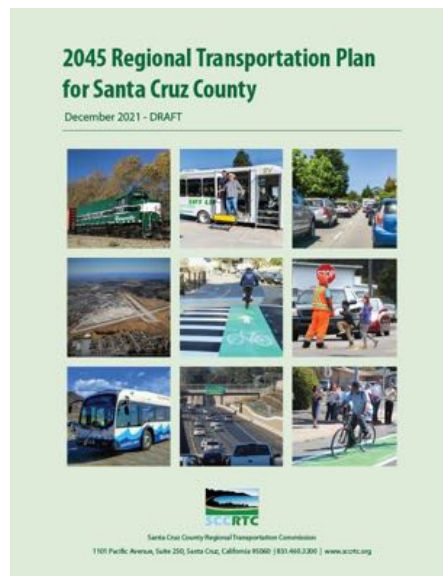
**From:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**To:** [Cruz511 Traveler Information](#)  
**Subject:** RTC Releases Draft 2045 RTP for Public Comment  
**Date:** Friday, December 3, 2021 2:37:23 PM

---



The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission has released the [Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan \(RTP\)](#) for public review and comment and will be holding public meetings to receive public comment. **The public review and comment period began on December 2, 2021 and ends on January 31, 2022.**

The 2045 RTP is a long range (25 year) transportation plan for the Santa Cruz County area. The plan assesses the transportation challenges we face now and those we will face in the future. The plan includes strategies to address our transportation challenges, a list of transportation needs (highway, road, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, airport, etc.), and priorities for limited funds. The RTP is updated every four or five years to address new trends, issues, and priorities, and to incorporate new state and federal regulations.



The potential environmental impacts of the Draft 2045 RTP are collectively detailed in one Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Draft 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and its Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), which encompasses the three RTPs for Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties. **The Draft EIR is available for public review and comment from November 22, 2021 to January 31, 2022.**

A **public hearing for the Draft 2045 RTP** will be held via Zoom at the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission meeting:

- Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 9:30am as part of the RTC meeting

AMBAG will hold virtual **public workshops/hearings for the Draft EIR** via GoToWebinar at the following dates and times.

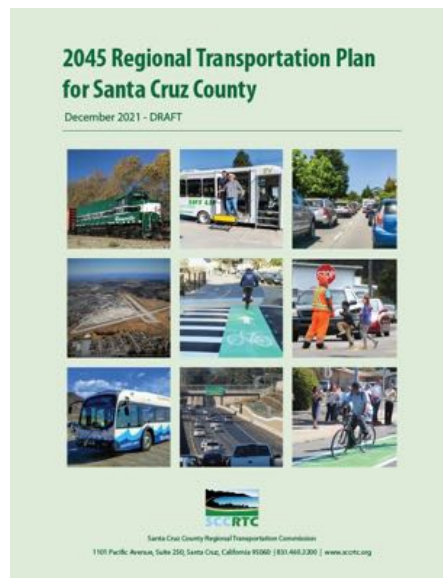
**From:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**To:** [Amy Naranjo](#)  
**Subject:** Public Hearing for Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 6, 2022 3:15:33 PM

---



The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) will hold a public hearing to solicit community input on the [Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan](#) for Santa Cruz County. The RTP identifies transportation needs and priorities in Santa Cruz County over the next 25 years. It is an essential first step in securing funding from federal, state, and local sources.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022 via Community TV Zoom (see [agenda packet](#) for Zoom login information). The hearing will begin no sooner than 9:30 a.m. and will be preceded by a staff presentation and other items to be considered at the RTC's meeting (which begins at 9:00 a.m.).



Learn more about the development of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan and view the draft plan at [www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp](http://www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp).

The public comment period for the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan runs through **Jan. 31, 2022**. The public is encouraged to attend the hearing to provide comments in person or submit written comments by Jan. 31, 2022 to [2045rtp@sccrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@sccrtc.org) or mail to 1101 Pacific Ave., Suite 250, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

**DOWNLOAD DRAFT 2045 RTP**



## Example Facebook posts



**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)**

...

Published by Shannon Munz · July 1, 2019 ·

The RTC is currently seeking public input on its Draft 2019 Public Participation Plan to hear from community members on the ways the commission can better reach the public through its outreach efforts. Take a look at the plan and provide your feedback on the ways we can bring the community into the transportation planning process:

<https://sccrtc.org/2045-regional-transportation-plan/>

SCCRTC.ORG

**2045 Regional Transportation Plan**



**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)**

...

Published by Shannon Munz · December 3, 2019 ·

The RTC is currently seeking public input to help define the Goals, Targets & Policies for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. Please take our short survey and help us update the goals of this long-range transportation plan and define priority projects for our county.

<https://sccrtc.org/rtc-seeking-public-input-on-2045.../>

SCCRTC.ORG

**RTC Seeking Public Input on 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Priorities**



**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)**

...

March 2, 2020 ·

Make your voice heard! The RTC is soliciting new project ideas for the 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The deadline to submit project ideas has been extended to March 16, 2020.

Use this form to submit project ideas:

<https://sccrtc.org/.../2045-regional.../new-project-ideas/...> See more



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) ...

December 3, 2021 · 🌐

📢 RTC Releases Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan for 60-day public review period. Comments due by January 31, 2022. Submit written comments to [2045rtp@sccrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@sccrtc.org). Learn more about the RTP development process at [sccrtc.org/2045rtp](https://sccrtc.org/2045rtp).

2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
for Santa Cruz County

December 2021 - 2041



[sccrtc.org/2045rtp](https://sccrtc.org/2045rtp)

NEXTDOOR.COM

### RTC Releases Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Public...

Hello Neighbors, The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission has released the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for public review and comment and will be holding public meetings to receive public comment. The...







## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission ✓



Communications Specialist Shannon Munz • 3 Dec 19

The RTC is Seeking Public Input on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Priorities. The RTC is currently seeking public input to help define the Goals, Targets & Policies for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. Members of the public can provide input to help inform the plan by taking a short survey and by reviewing the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies and providing input on the Answers from the survey, along with comments on the draft document, will help the RTC update the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies and define priority projects.

More information, the survey link, and the link to the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies document can be found at <https://sccrtc.org/rtc-seeking-public-input-on-2045-regional-transportation-plan-goals-and-priorities/>.



RTC Seeking Public Input on 2045 Regional Transportation Pla...

sccrtc.org



Posted to **Subscribers of Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**



Like



Comment



Share



6 · 9,584 Impressions



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Transportation Planner Amy Naranjo • 2 Mar 20



Submit transportation project ideas for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. \*\*  
Deadline to submit new project ideas extended until March 16, 2020 \*\*

The RTC is currently accepting new project ideas for the 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is a long range transportation plan that identifies multi-modal transportation needs (highway, local road, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc), and a financially feasible list of priority transportation projects for our County. The plan is updated every few years and is required in order to receive specific types of funding from state and federal sources.

The 2045 RTP will be a minor update to the 2040 RTP and is expected to be adopted June 2022.

Project ideas submitted will be shared with the agency who is responsible for transportation projects in your location of interest. Projects will then be considered for inclusion in the 2045 RTP.

The goals of the 2045 RTP are to prioritize projects that maintain the current transportation system, improve safety and expand options for how people travel.

Please submit one form for each new project idea. Example projects could include a street in need of a bike lane, a turn lane to improve traffic flow, a road that needs a sidewalk, new bus services, or any other improvements that you would like to see happen over the next 20 years.

More information about the 2045 RTP can be found on the project web page:  
<https://sccrtc.org/rtp>

Thank you.



### 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

[sccrtc.org](https://sccrtc.org)



Posted to **Subscribers of Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**



Like



17 Comments



Share



7 · 8,514 Impressions

[See 9 previous comments](#)



Transportation Planner Amy Naranjo • Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission



Thank you all for your comments and lively discussion. Comments are now closed on this post. Please submit any project ideas by the March 16th deadline... [See more](#)

9 Mar 20

[Like](#)

[Share](#)



2

Discussion closed on 9 Mar 20. [Learn more »](#)



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission ✓

Transportation Planner Amy Naranjo • 3 Dec



RTC Releases Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Public Review and Comment. Hello Neighbors,

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission has released the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for public review and comment and will be holding public meetings to receive public comment. The public review and comment period began on December 2, 2021 and ends on January 31, 2022.

The 2045 RTP is a long range (25 year) transportation plan for the Santa Cruz County area. The plan assesses the transportation challenges we face now and those we will face in the future. The plan includes strategies to address our transportation challenges, a list of transportation needs (highway, road, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, airport, etc.), and priorities for limited funds. The RTP is updated every four or five years to address new trends, issues, and priorities, and to incorporate new state and federal regulations.



## Example Notices Posted on RTC website

EN ESPAÑOL

Search website GO

**SCCRTC** Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

MEETINGS & EVENTS | FUNDING & PLANNING | PROJECTS | SERVICES | ABOUT THE RTC | CRUZ511

**RECENT POSTS**

Select Month ▼

### Notice of Preparation (NOP) for 2045 RTP/MTP/SCS EIR now available

January 10, 2020

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan and 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy EIR is now available. As the lead agency, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is soliciting input on the scope and contents of the 2045 RTP/SCS EIR pursuant to section 15002 of C.J. 04. The NOP includes, but is not limited to, a description of the project, environmental impacts to be analyzed and preliminary project alternatives to be analyzed.

AMBAG will host a meeting in Santa Cruz on January 22, 2020 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the Live Oak Community Room – Simpkins Center – 979 17th Ave, Santa Cruz, CA. The purpose of the meetings is to solicit input on the scope and content of the environmental analysis that will be included in the Draft EIR. Attend the meeting or submit comments on the EIR scope and contents to Heather Adamson at AMBAG, 24500 Silver Cloud Court, Monterey, California 93940, [hadamson@ambag.org](mailto:hadamson@ambag.org), no later than February 14, 2020.

More information on the 2045 RTP and MTP/SCS can be found at <https://sccrtc.org/funding-planning/long-range-plans/2045-regional-transportation-plan>.

EN ESPAÑOL

Search website GO

**SCCRTC** Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

MEETINGS & EVENTS | FUNDING & PLANNING | PROJECTS | SERVICES | ABOUT THE RTC | CRUZ511

**RECENT POSTS**

Select Month ▼

### RTC Seeking Public Input on 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Priorities

December 3, 2019

The RTC is currently seeking public input to help define the Goals, Targets & Policies for the [2045 Regional Transportation Plan](#). Members of the public can provide input to help inform the plan by taking a short survey and by reviewing the [Draft Goals, Targets & Policies](#) and providing input on the document. Answers from the survey along with comments on the draft document will help the RTC update the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies and define priority projects.

**Survey Links:**

- English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/72CHNPZ>
- Spanish: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ySxHBGC>

**Draft Goals, Targets & Policies Links:**

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)

Input on the Draft Goals, Targets & Policies can be submitted by email to [2045rtc@sccrtc.org](mailto:2045rtc@sccrtc.org), mail to 1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, or by fax to 831-460-6178. **The deadline to provide public input is January 3, 2020 at 5 p.m.**

EN ESPAÑOL

MEETINGS & EVENTS
FUNDING & PLANNING
PROJECTS
SERVICES
ABOUT THE RTC
CRUZ511

### RECENT POSTS

Select Month

## RTC Releases Draft 2045 RTP for Public Comment

December 2, 2021

On December 2, 2021, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission released the draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan for public review and comment. The public comment period for the Draft 2045 RTP runs from December 2nd, 2021 through January 31, 2022 and a public hearing is scheduled for 9:30am at the January 13, 2022 RTC meeting. Printed copies of the Draft 2045 RTP are also available for public review at the libraries in downtown Santa Cruz, Felton, Capitola, La Selva Beach, and Watsonville beginning December 3rd. Written comments on the Draft 2045 RTP for Santa Cruz County can be submitted to [2045rtp@scrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@scrtc.org) by January 31, 2022.

Learn more about the development of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan at [www.scrtc.org/2045rtp](http://www.scrtc.org/2045rtp).

- [Download Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan \(7MB\)](#)

EN ESPAÑOL

MEETINGS & EVENTS
FUNDING & PLANNING
PROJECTS
SERVICES
ABOUT THE RTC
CRUZ511

### RECENT POSTS

Select Month

## Public Hearing to be held for Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

January 6, 2022

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) will hold a public hearing to solicit community input on the [Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan](#) for Santa Cruz County. The RTP identifies transportation needs and priorities in Santa Cruz County over the next 25 years. It is an essential first step in securing funding from federal, state, and local sources.

The hearing will be held on Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022 via Community TV Zoom (see [agenda packet](#) for Zoom login information). The hearing will begin no sooner than 9:30 a.m. and will be preceded by a staff presentation and other items to be considered at the RTC's meeting (which begins at 9:00 a.m.).

Learn more about the development of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan and view the draft plan at [www.scrtc.org/2045rtp](http://www.scrtc.org/2045rtp).

The public comment period for the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan runs through Jan. 31, 2022. The public is encouraged to attend the hearing to provide comments in person or submit written comments by Jan. 31, 2022 to [2045rtp@scrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@scrtc.org) or mail to 1101 Pacific Ave., Suite 250, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

# DRAFT 2045 RTP PUBLIC COMMENTS

## Advisory Committee Comments

### Bicycle Advisory Committee (12/13/21)

1. **Scott Roseman:** supports sustainably and climate change focus in RTP, agrees projects align with goals; says Santa Cruz is progressive but still car-centric, requests more emphasis on biking infrastructure and making cycling a more viable transportation mode in SCC.

### Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (12/16/21)

2. **Matt Machado** (County):
  - a. supports updating Goals and Policies to prioritize system preservation
3. **Steve Wiesner** (County):
  - a. requests adding new project to RTP at request of Sup. Koenig (see Soquel Dr. Reversible Lane (Flex Lane) Feasibility Study)
4. **Paul Hierling** (AMBAG):
  - a. Incorporate any changes to financial element based on additional funding from Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

### Elderly & Disabled Technical Advisory Committee (1/11/22)

5. **Veronica Elsea:**
  - a. typo in “Sustainable Transportation Analysis Ratings System), pg 4-2;
  - b. update “In some areas, local jurisdictions are implementing projects to slow vehicular traffic and create more attractive pedestrian facilities” to also incorporate “functional design” with equal importance, pg. 2-20
  - c. Clarify pedestrian safety work group is ad hoc committee, pg. 2-21
6. **Janet Edwards:**
  - a. Update discussion on accessible transit to reflect loss of accessible taxi service availability in North County (taxi scrip), pg. 2-12
7. **Deborah Benham** (email):
  - a. supports Scotts Valley Active Transportation Plan (SV ATP) incorporated in project list
  - b. CT-P49 (Hwy 17): Include City of Scotts Valley for operational improvements (e.g., offramp/onramp Scotts Valley Dr/Granite Creek Rd; traffic signal and intersection design improvements (re-design of 5-way intersection).

## RTC Public Hearing Comments (1/13/22)

1. **Rafa Sonnenfeld** stated Bus on shoulder with auxiliary lanes projects are a euphemism for highway widening and do little to improve traffic (AMBAG EIR public hearing 1/12)
2. **Brian Peoples (Trail Now)** inquired about cost estimates for Segment 7 Phase 2 project costs; stated estimates don’t line up with other less complicated projects.
3. **Mark Mesitti-Miller (FORT)** expressed support for RTP goals and policies but stated the plan document lacks clear link between approved goals/policies and project prioritization.

4. **Rebecca Downing** commented on RTP strategies and requested strategies better reflect **where** people are going and **how** they wish to get there (including survey findings or similar data)
5. **Todd Marco (NRG)** commented Aptos is central choke point between north and south county where highway, rail, and Soquel Dr. converge, presenting opportunity to prioritize projects in this area.
6. **“Equity Transit”** supports rail with trail projects and expanded transit projects; expressed opposition to any highway widening projects, including auxiliary lanes.
7. **Sally Arnold (FORT)** expressed concern with constrained funding allocated to highway projects despite more funding already identified for passenger rail; expressed concern there is a double standard and reaffirms car-centric planning
8. **Barry Scott** supports more public transit projects instead of highway projects that encourage more driving
9. **Dianne D.** supports a more energy efficient transit system and improvements that benefit all users; asked how projects reduce GHG emissions
10. **Jack Brown** supports equity component of plan that incorporates all users throughout the county; noted not all in the County can access or use rail and stated passenger rail ridership will have a minimal impact on traffic congestion (cited UCIS/TCAA studies); does not support BOS with AUX lanes, prefers “true” BOS.
11. **Ryan Sarnataro** supports prioritizing highway improvements and using rail improvement funds for better alternatives other than rail.
12. **Sean Shrum** stated State Reps can help secure additional funding for needed projects (previous rep Anna Eskew, now represented by Jimmy Panetta)
13. **Linda Wilshusen** asked about the alternative scenarios and opportunity maps included in the EIR discussion (AMBAG EIR Public Hearing 1/19)
14. **Holly Zapala** requested Caltrans move the grade separate project at Laurel Rd/ Sugarloaf Rd/ Glenwood Cutoff area (CT-P52) to the RTC constrained project list. (AMBAG EIR Public Hearing 1/24)

## Comments Received by Email

Comments submitted to [2045rtp@sccrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@sccrtc.org) during the RTP public review period (December 5, 2021 – January 31, 2022) are provided beginning on the next page.

**From:** [Iwalani Faulkner](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 11:05:55 PM

---

January 31, 2021

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1101 Pacific Ave., Suite 250  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Commissioners,

Equity Transit would like to thank the Commission staff for the work they have put into developing the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It is disappointing, however, to see minimal attention given to our Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) in the plan, omission of updated funding sources, a disconnect between goals and projects, and a lack of vision for the fundamental changes needed to transform our transportation system into a more equitable and sustainable system. We should absolutely not be adding any new highway widening projects from State Park Drive to Freedom Blvd. This would require current and future funds be funneled away from critical public transit projects which address both equity and environment goals and also contribute to our economic robustness. For the current commission to say there is no money to repair the tracks but in another breath allot significant funds for wasteful highway climate degrading highway widening is contradictory to our significant efforts to bring electric light rail to our community and not in line with our study recommendations or our climate mitigation goals.

We would like to suggest the following, which we extend appreciation and give credit to FORT for writing and agree to the language.

### **1. How Projects Meet Goals**

The 2045 goals, targets and policies cited in Appendix C of the draft RTP provide an excellent overview of our hopes for a more energy-efficient and less congested future. They include state mandates to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transportation sources to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, and to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Global warming is already drastically changing our local and worldwide climate in ways that will cause social turmoil and much human suffering in the coming years. Locally, we are already familiar with multi-year droughts, horrific fires, and eroding shorelines. The science is irrefutable that GHG emissions are a primary cause of global warming and climate change.

The primary approaches that are used worldwide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation include improvements in vehicle technology and reduction in the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), primarily via public transportation investments. Yet the transportation option that was identified in the 2021 Transit Corridor Alternative Analysis & Rail Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS) as producing the greatest reduction in both VMT



and GHG emissions, that is, electric light rail, is not given more than a passing reference in this draft RTP.

**So, while our RTP goals are laudable and the challenge of global warming formidable, the draft RTP itself does not rise to the occasion. In fact, the Plan does not anywhere make the link between its extensive project list and how these projects will achieve the Plan's goals.**

While many pages of the draft Plan include references to statewide sustainability, transit, and rail plans, our own public rail transit project on the RTC-owned coast rail line is highlighted only inasmuch as it is "on the financially-unconstrained list of projects, due to the lack of identified and likelihood of available funding to the region for a passenger rail project." (p2-13)

It should be noted that most of the projects on the draft RTP's project list do not have funding sources identified during the project development stage. Yet, the rail transit project in particular, due to extensive analysis over the past decades, has over 60% of the estimated high-end capital cost identified as likely...quite unlike any of the Highway 1 widening projects on the Constrained Project List. Also, we're wondering how it happens, then, that NEW multi-million dollar Highway 1 projects are shown on the Constrained Project List without public discussion of **total** project costs or funding sources? [Hwy 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulders Freedom Blvd to State Park \$102M and Hwy 1: Reconstruct Bay Ave/Porter St and 41st Avenue Interchange \$14M.]

**FORT strongly encourages the Commission to recommit to its identified goals, targets and policies in the RTP, and to include, in the future, a constrained list of projects that can show evidence they will actually get us nearer to achieving those goals.**

## **2. Rail Planning**

In Chapter 1, the draft Plan identifies the crucial role that a planning document like the RTP serves: "planning . . . positions our community to receive funding for projects that require a well thought out plan and helps to develop collaboration on projects." Yet the Rail section in Chapter 2 includes a simple factual description of the SCBRL and the last 20 years of its acquisition and study but makes **no further reference to future planning of the branch line's use for passenger or freight service.**

The draft Plan cites multiple references made in regional and state transportation planning documents to our SCBRL and how that planning and coordination could lead to funding. These include:

Chapter 2 notes the inclusion of our SCBRL in the 2018 goals of the **California State Rail Plan**, including: "a new station in Pajaro/Watsonville, an analysis of connections between Santa Cruz, Monterey and the high-speed rail line at Gilroy, implementation planning for connecting Santa Cruz and Monterey to the statewide rail network at Gilroy, and establishment of hourly service by 2040, if recommended by the 2022 rail plan." (p2-15)

It also notes that the **Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)** is "actively pursuing rail service that includes local service as well as greater regional access...local light rail service would connect the cities of Seaside and Monterey to Castroville for connections to Pajaro station and the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond." (p2-15)

Although not referenced in the **draft** Plan, our local **Draft AMBAG 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan** says in its passenger rail section, “rail projects are an important component of the regional transportation network that enhance mobility opportunities for the region’s diverse population and lead to economic vitality for the region. The planned rail services complement each other and result in reducing auto trips on regional highways . . . The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) are working to bring rail service to Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, so that residents can use rail to travel to jobs, education and entertainment.” (p2-11)

The Draft RTP’s Chapter 3 section on Goods Movement briefly mentions that our SCBRL “is also used for freight service”, and then goes on to delineate the importance of rail for freight movement, “Upward pricing pressure on the trucking industry . . . as well as safety and environmental concerns, have prompted the region’s freight and transportation stakeholders to look for alternatives for transporting goods. The rail system is one of the main options available.” (P3-15)

References in other regional and state planning documents to the use of our SCBRL for statewide freight movement are also cited:

“The 2018 California State Rail Plan and the 2020 California Freight Mobility Plan stress the importance of short line railroads, including the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. . . AMBAG(’s). . . U.S. 101 Central Coast California Freight study in 2016 . . . **recommends upgrading the rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Line to Federal Rail Administration Class 2 rail**, allowing freight train speeds of up to 25 mph on sections in Santa Cruz County in order to improve freight connectivity to other regions in California and nationwide.” (p2-15)

Given the importance of planning in being successful in competing for public project funding, **the Commission should include in the RTP additional discussion of the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS) evaluation of transit investment options and its selection of electric passenger rail as the locally preferred alternative for the SCBRL.**

### **3. Funding**

The project list fails to directly connect back to goals, targets, and policies identified. This is especially true when it comes to the SCBRL.

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that the US Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) website calls “a generational investment in America’s intermodal transportation system of which freight and intercity passenger rail are an integral part. . . will provide unprecedented federal funding for rail improvement projects in America. Over the next five years, that means greatly expanding existing FRA programs and creating new programs to enhance our nation’s rail network. The bipartisan infrastructure law includes \$102 billion in total rail funding, including \$66 billion from advanced appropriations, and \$36 billion in authorized funding.” The IIJA also includes \$27 billion just for bridge repairs.

This funding will significantly change the focus on rail throughout the country and specifically in California with its current emphasis on rail through the State Rail Plan. California alone is in line to receive \$4.2 billion from the IIJA.

And yet Chapter 5 of the draft RTP on funding completely down plays this dramatic new funding source, saying “as part of negotiations for a multiyear federal infrastructure plan, congress adopted a new federal transportation act (Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America or INVEST act) which is expected to increase funding for transportation. Details on what this means for projects in Santa Cruz County will be integrated into RTP updates once available.” (p5-2,3)

We also want to call to your attention that later in Chapter 5, there is an outdated discussion of federal funds for infrastructure, saying “while Congress and the President agree that the nation’s infrastructure is a priority, there has been no consensus around specific programs that would be funded or how to pay for transportation system projects.” (p5-6)

The Plan’s description of Unconstrained Projects is: “projects that cannot be implemented over the next 25 years unless there are significant changes in the amount of local, state, and federal funding available for transportation.” Given the magnitude of increased funding that will be available over the next 5 years from both this new federal funding and resulting impact on state funding, we feel rail projects now definitely meet this definition of “significant changes.”

**We ask the Commission to revise this section to provide more current and complete description of the IIJA.** We realize the final passage of this legislation may have happened after the current draft of the RTP was completed, but it is sufficiently important to make these revisions now before the RTP is adopted. It should also specifically be mentioned in the Rail section of the Plan.

**Given the magnitude of increased funding that will be available over the next 5 years, we also ask the RTC to move the following rail projects from the unconstrained list to the constrained list.**

- **Public Transit on Watsonville-Santa Cruz Rail Corridor - RTC-P02 - \$825,000 unconstrained**
- **Rail line: Freight Service Upgrades - RTC-P41 - \$25,000 unconstrained**
- **Recreational Rail Infrastructure - RTC 25 - \$5,340 unconstrained**

## **Conclusion**

We find it shortsighted for the Commission to adopt a twenty-year planning document that pays relatively little attention to one of the three key transit corridors identified in the RTC’s 2019 Unified Corridor Study - the Santa Cruz Rail Branch Line. In doing so, this Draft RTP

ignores the 20 years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in planning that have gone into refining successful project outcomes in the most underutilized transportation corridor in our county.

The Commission also ignores the findings of its regional and statewide planning agencies that specifically incorporate the SCRBL into their future plans, thereby increasing the possibility of significant capital funding for rail transit at a time of unprecedented new funding for passenger rail.

Finally, the Draft RTP includes excellent goals on reducing greenhouse gasses, but then does not link the project list to those goals, and does not include meaningful Constrained funding for rail projects that studies have shown would have the greatest impact on reducing greenhouse gasses and meeting the Plan's goals.

The people of Santa Cruz County deserve a better vision for future transportation in which everyone can affordably, reliably, safely and sustainably reach their destinations — a forward-thinking vision centered squarely on the needs of working people, making our communities more connected and leaving no one behind. The immediate and catastrophic threat of global warming demands we challenge the car-centric status quo, revisit core assumptions and policies underlying our transportation system, and invest in transportation solutions that will help us achieve social justice and environmental sustainability.

We hope these oversights will be corrected in the final adopted document and all future revisions.

Sincerely,

--

Best regards,

Lani Faulkner, Director  
Equity Transit - Tránsito de Equidad  
[www.EquityTransit.org](http://www.EquityTransit.org)  
831-278-1007



**From:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Draft 2045 RTP & EIR Comments  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 4:32:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [SC4B Comments-2045 RTP & EIR.pdf](#)

---

Forwarding...

-Krista

---

**From:** Jeffrey Smedberg <santacruz4bernie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 31, 2022 4:24 PM  
**To:** bruce.mcpherson@santacruzcounty.us; Ryan Coonerty <ryan.coonerty@santacruzcounty.us>; zach.friend@santacruzcounty.us; greg.caput@santacruzcounty.us; manu.koenig@santacruzcounty.us; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>  
**Cc:** magi amma <magiamma@magiamma.com>  
**Subject:** Draft 2045 RTP & EIR Comments

Santa Cruz County Supervisors and Regional Transportation Commission Members,

Please see our attached comments.

--

Thanks,  
Jeffrey Smedberg  
Santa Cruz for Bernie



---

santacruz4bernie@gmail.com • 423 Marnell Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062 • santacruz4bernie.us

January 31, 2022

Subject: Comments on Draft 2045 RTP & its EIR

Dear Santa Cruz County Supervisors and Regional Transportation Commission Members:

The Greenway proposal is not a feasible solution. We urge you, rather, to focus on clean affordable transportation for all.

Therefore the 2,000 local members of the Santa Cruz for Bernie organization urge you to do the following:

- Do not accept the Greenway proposal. It expands the use of fossil fuel vehicles. Transportation causes 41% of Greenhouse Gas emissions in California.
  - o Starting on page 250 of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) there is a list of planned Highway 1 expansion projects which will ultimately widen a part of the highway into eight lanes. Do not extend highway widening.
  - o On page 127 the report states, "The 2045 RTP target to decrease single occupancy vehicle trip mode share by 6.5% by 2030 and increase active transportation trips to 16% of total commute trips by 2030 and to 24% of total commute trips by 2045 will likely not be met given this current trend [shown in Fig. 7.6]."
- Do not kill the Felton Branch line.
  - o Rail is a far more efficient, far less expensive, and greener transport method than trucking.
  - o The Greenway proposal will overturn the will of the voters who chose to fund the preservation of rail infrastructure through Measure D.

Autos are the main source of planet warming greenhouse emissions, and we cannot reduce emissions if we keep supporting the "auto culture." The future of our children and the planet depends on your decisions!

Jeffrey Smedberg, Membership Secretary  
Magi Amma, Co-Convenor and Climate Chair for  
Santa Cruz for Bernie

**From:** [Rick Longinotti](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [2045 RTP](#); [cfst-working-group@googlegroups.com](mailto:cfst-working-group@googlegroups.com)  
**Subject:** For RTC Commissioners  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 4:20:25 PM  
**Attachments:** [EIR comments AMBAG MTP\\_SCS .pdf](#)

---

Dear Staff,  
Could you please forward this to the Commissioners?  
Thank you,  
Rick

Dear Commissioners,

I've attached my organization's comments on the Draft EIR for the AMBAG Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. This is the EIR that analyzes the Regional Transportation Plan from our county.

If you get a chance to read it, you will note that the Plan misses the opportunity for several feasible alternatives to perpetuating auto dependency, including:

- congestion pricing on roadways with revenues benefiting transit service
- increased parking pricing with revenues benefiting transit service
- bona fide bus-on-shoulder in bus-only lanes on Highway 1, instead of bus-stuck-in-auxiliary lanes
- land use patterns that reduce sprawl in rural areas

Fortunately, the opportunities are not missed forever. Please instruct staff to revise the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan to make a substantial shift towards transit and active transportation instead of more business as usual projects that increase auto capacity.

Thank you,

Rick Longinotti, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

January 31, 2022

Heather Adamson, AMBAG

[hadamson@ambag.org](mailto:hadamson@ambag.org)

Re: Comments on the Draft 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

Dear Ms. Adamson,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. As explained below, the concern of my organization centers on the large gap between the greenhouse gas emissions reductions estimated to result from the MTP/SCS and the goals of the State of California to reduce those emissions. We are concerned that the EIR did not analyze induced travel according to state guidelines, resulting in inaccurate estimates for VMT and GHG's. We are concerned that the EIR takes credit for state programs such as vehicle emission standards in calculating regional emission reductions, which is not allowed.

We are concerned that the EIR did not formulate and analyze an alternative that would produce substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to better fulfill state policy. We are concerned that the EIR does not fulfill its responsibility to mandate mitigations for the significant and unavoidable impacts due to greenhouse gas emissions. We bring attention to the requirement that the EIR specify that prior EIR's on road expansion projects that are inadequate under current CEQA standards need to be revised.

Finally, we request that the EIR evaluate how the MTP/SCS perpetuation of auto dependency impacts the health and travel behavior of residents, especially low income residents and people of color.

For the Campaign for Sustainable Transportation,

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair





# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

## Inadequate Objectives

1. The Draft EIR fails to include a target for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in its objectives that is consistent with California legislation and Governor's Executive Orders.

The Draft EIR acknowledges that that GHG emissions with implementation of the MTP/SCS will fall far short of California legislative policy:

*GHG emissions in 2030 would decrease by approximately one percent as compared to 1990 levels, which is not sufficient to achieve the 2030 target of a 40 percent reduction below 1990 levels....which would conflict with the state's ability to achieve SB 32, EO S-3-05, and EO B-55-18 GHG reduction goals. As such, this impact is significant.*

We observe that EO B-55-18 established the goal for California to become fully carbon neutral statewide no later than 2045, and to maintain net negative emissions thereafter. 2045 is exactly the timeframe of the 2045 MTP/SCS and the 2045 RTPs. The plans do not establish the transformative transportation measures required to act on this goal.

In the Project Objectives Section, the Draft EIR acknowledges that "For purposes of this EIR, the primary objective of the 2045 MTP/SCS and the county level RTPs is to comply with applicable regulatory requirements." However, it fails to mention that those regulatory requirements include SB 32, and the Governor's Executive Orders which mandate an alignment of transportation spending with the state's climate goals. The MTP/SCS falls far short of the planning necessary to achieve the targets in SB 32. The remedy starts by articulating a set of objectives that is consistent with that legislation.

## Inadequate Analysis of Induced Travel

2. The Draft EIR fails to analyze induced travel according to CEQA Guidelines

The policy of the State of California recognizes the empirical reality that the more roads are built and expanded, the more auto traffic will proliferate.

*A large number of peer reviewed studies have demonstrated a causal link between highway capacity increases and VMT increases. -Technical Advisory on*



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

*Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Office of Planning and Research, 2018)

This EIR denies the relationship of roadway expansion and VMT, claiming instead that increasing roadways will reduce total VMT and greenhouse gas emissions:

*VMT would be higher under Alternative 2. Although this alternative was designed to reduce VMT by providing or promoting alternative transportation modes, it did so by eliminating many roadway improvement projects, some of which would reduce congested and total VMT.*

The EIR does not specify which roadway improvement projects are purported to reduce congestion and total VMT and present evidence for that claim. The MTP/SCS plans for expansion of Highway 101 near Salinas and Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County, but the EIR fails to discuss the VMT and greenhouse gas impacts of these projects.

The EIR fails to analyze the impact of induced travel. It does not utilize the tools for estimated induced travel recommended by Caltrans' *Transportation Analysis Framework* (2020), which was prepared to "establish Caltrans guidance on how to analyze induced travel associated with transportation projects".

Acknowledging that it failed to analyze major components of induced travel, the Draft EIR makes the unfounded claim that induced travel impacts may be negligible:

*Although the AMBAG RTDM [the travel demand model] does not specifically evaluate induced travel from the perspective of longer trips, changes in mode choice, route changes or newly generated induced trips, at the regional level these effects may be negligible compared to the overall amount of travel.*

The *Transportation Analysis Framework* offers a checklist for determining whether a travel demand model has "capabilities required for induced travel assessment". It states, "In general, a model should pass all five checks before the analyst concludes that the travel demand model is appropriate for making projections of induced travel." The EIR does not indicate that its travel demand model is capable of measuring induced travel to satisfy CEQA requirements.

The State Office of Planning and Research's *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (2018) explains that induced travel impacts of highway expansion are not negligible:



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

*A large number of peer reviewed studies have demonstrated a causal link between highway capacity increases and VMT increases. Many provide quantitative estimates of the magnitude of the induced VMT phenomenon. Collectively, they provide high quality evidence of the existence and magnitude of the induced travel effect...Most studies find a long run elasticity between 0.6 and just over 1.0, meaning that every increase in lanes miles of one percent leads to an increase in vehicle travel of 0.6 to 1.0 percent."*

Applying this research to a local example, the auxiliary lane projects planned for Highway 1 in Santa Cruz, adding two auxiliary lanes to the existing 4-lane highway is an increase in lane-miles of 50%. Thus, according to the studies, one would expect an increase in vehicle miles traveled of 30% to 50%. When combined with the other highway expansion projects in the MTP, this increase is not negligible compared to overall amount of travel in the region. The OPR's *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* states, "Determine the total lane-miles over an area that fully captures travel behavior changes resulting from the project (generally the region,..." We request that the EIR state in detail how it fulfilled this requirement.

The Draft EIR relies on an outmoded, obsolete 2005 technical report:

*At the regional level, induced traffic would be a smaller share of total traffic growth, because only trips diverted from other regions, plus substitutions between transportation and other goods, make up the induced share.*

This notion that increases in vehicle trips on an expanded highway results in long term reduction of trips on the adjacent road network is not supported by the studies of induced travel. Nor is it consistent with current guidance on evaluating induced travel available in Caltrans' *Transportation Analysis Framework*, and the OPR's *Technical Advisory On Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*.

If the only induced traffic worthy of analysis at the regional level is trips diverted from other regions plus trip substitutions, that omits a major portion of the induced travel that happens on a local level. This is not consistent with CEQA guidance. The EIR's conclusion that "the induced travel impact at the regional level would be less than significant" is inconsistent with the research and CEQA guidance.

The failure to accurately estimate the impacts of induced travel makes it highly unlikely that the MTP/SCS meets state emissions standards set by the Air Resources Board.



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

It also makes the analysis of air quality and health impacts, energy, and greenhouse gas impacts unreliable.

Research suggests that the travel demand model used for this EIR may be of limited accuracy. Could you please explain in detail how the following criticism applies to the model used for this EIR?

*The travel time metrics are inaccurate because they rely on Static Traffic Assignment (STA), a 40-year old approach that routinely forecasts unfeasible future traffic flows that exceed capacity. Basing metrics on these impossible volumes produces invalid results. –Marshall, Forecasting the impossible: The status quo of estimating traffic flows with static traffic assignment and the future of dynamic traffic assignment (2018)*

## Inaccurate Measurement of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction

3. The EIR mistakenly takes credit for state programs such as fuel economy standards to demonstrate that the region will meet its GHG reduction standards

The EIR reports that VMT will increase substantially:

THE 2045 MTP/SCS WOULD RESULT IN AN INCREASE TO DAILY VMT [vehicle miles traveled] PER CAPITA BETWEEN THE BASELINE 2020 CONDITIONS AND 2045 CONDITIONS.

One would expect greenhouse gas emissions to rise accordingly. Instead, GHG emissions from vehicular travel are projected to decline by 26% in 2045 relative to the 2020 baseline year. (Table 4.8-3) The EIR explains that it counts state programs towards the reduction:

*The estimated reduction in total mobile source emissions would be due to a combination of transportation improvements proposed in the 2045 MTP/SCS and State initiatives....At the State level, stricter fuel efficiency and vehicle emissions standards such as CAFE standards that will phase in over the planning period would decrease emissions from mobile sources, as reflected in EMFAC2017 emission factors.*

It is an error to include state programs to demonstrate that the region will meet its GHG reduction standards:

*It is important to note that the current SB 375 program does not allow MPOs to take credit for State programs that improve vehicle emission standards, changes*



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

*in fuel composition, and other State measures that will reduce GHG emissions to demonstrate achievement of their regional targets.*

- California Air Resources Board:  
[https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/SB375\\_Updated\\_Final\\_Target\\_Staff\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/SB375_Updated_Final_Target_Staff_Report_2018.pdf)

This memo from the Air Resources Board correctly interprets the legislative purpose of SB 375 which seeks to implement greenhouse gas emissions from land use and transportation planning in addition to state mandated measures such as fuel standards:

*Section 1 (c) Greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks can be substantially reduced by new vehicle technology and by the increased use of low carbon fuel. However, even taking these measures into account, it will be necessary to achieve significant additional greenhouse gas reductions from changed land use patterns and improved transportation. Without improved land use and transportation policy, California will not be able to achieve the goals of AB 32.*

Counting state programs towards regional reduction targets is a major error requiring a recalculation of regional greenhouse gas emissions from transportation.

A recalculation is likely to reveal the region's failure to reach GHG reduction targets, based on the projection for 2045 GHG emissions that are slightly higher for the MTP/SCS than for the No Build Alternative. This indicates that the MTP/SCS contributes insignificantly, if at all, to GHG reduction.

A recalculation requires that amended draft EIR be circulated, since it is likely the new calculation will substantially alter the impact analysis of air quality and health impacts, energy, transportation and land use.

## **Inadequate Alternatives Analysis**

4. The Draft EIR violates CEQA Guidelines by invoking Level of Service to reject Alternative 3 as a feasible alternative.

*Based on the above analysis and summary in Table 7-7, Alternative 3 is the environmentally superior alternative...However, Alternative 3 would substantially increase congested VMT and would result in increased delay for freight*



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

*compared to the 2045 MTP/SCS and as such, would not meet mobility goals of the project...*

It is unlawful to reject the environmentally superior alternative on the grounds of congestion impacts. ("Congested VMT" is defined in Appendix C as Level of Service E or F) Under SB 743, CEQA can no longer use roadway congestion as a measure of significance. The intent of SB 743 includes the following:

*More appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. (Caltrans: Transportation Impacts Under CEQA)*

This intent subordinates congestion relief to the state's goals for public health and GHG reduction.

CEQA Guidelines state, "the discussion of alternatives shall focus on alternatives to the project or its location which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly."

5. The Draft EIR's failure to analyze induced travel results in an unsubstantiated conclusion that Alternative 3 would increase congestion.

The EIR's estimate that Alternative 3 would increase congestion relative to the MTP/SCS plan is unsupported because the EIR fails to analyze induced travel according to CEQA guidelines. (See #1 above)

6. The Draft EIR's opinion on the feasibility of Alternative 3 is not substantiated

*Alternative 3 may not be feasible in that AMBAG does not have land use authority and cannot require local agencies to make major changes to their general plans that would be required in order for Alternative 3 to be implemented.*

While AMBAG does not have authority to require changes in the general plans of local agencies, AMBAG has considerable authority to influence local jurisdictions. Under SB 375, AMBAG is required to identify areas to house the population of the region and to





# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

set forth a development pattern that is integrated with a transportation network which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A transportation project that is not listed in AMBAG's MTP/SCS cannot be developed. This gives AMBAG considerable influence over jurisdictions in the region, as well as Caltrans. Speculation that Alternative 3 "may not be feasible" is misleading.

## 7. The Draft EIR fails to list Alternative 2 as a superior alternative

*Alternative 2 would result in mostly similar impacts [compared to MTP/SCS], with some reduced impacts related to aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, population and housing, and tribal cultural resources.*

Since Alternative 2 would result in reduced impacts it should be clearly stated as superior to the MTP/SCS.

## 8. The Draft EIR fails to propose an alternative that will substantially meet state goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

CEQA Guidelines require an EIR to set forth "those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice." This draft EIR fails to provide a reasoned choice because it does not set forth an alternative that can make a significant contribution to the reduction of VMT and greenhouse gas emissions. For example it could have combined the features of Alternatives 2 and 3, which would result in significant reduction of impacts. Instead the Draft EIR sets up straw man alternatives whose performance is not significantly different than the MTP/SCS plan. This violates CEQA Guidelines that state, "The alternatives shall be limited to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project."

The Draft EIR rejected for analysis the Road Pricing Alternative and the Aggressive VMT Reduction Alternative for reasons that are unfounded:

*Due to the nature of the AMBAG region, certain aggressive VMT reducing measures are infeasible...The rural areas of the AMBAG region are also experiencing higher growth in housing and employment than urban areas.*



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

The statement does not take into account the EIR's statement that most growth under the MTP/SCS is planned for urban areas: *"Population and job growth are allocated principally within existing urban areas near public transit."* The EIR reports that development in rural areas is increasing as if that were a phenomenon that a MTP/SCS is impotent to affect. However, the mandate to impact the location of development is a core purpose of SB 375.

*Heavy commuter travel and interregional travel to the San Francisco Bay Area for jobs create a jobs-housing imbalance and results in higher VMT for the AMBAG region. Increasing infill development and higher density in the AMBAG region may have very little impact on those long work trips.*

This statement leaves out the jobs-housing imbalance within the region, that can and should be addressed by infill development near job centers.

*tourist generated VMT would not decrease through higher density infill development or with transit improvements.*

This statement ignores the potential for tourist travel on the enhanced regional rail system, and the potential for better integrating the Highway 17 express bus with Valley Transit Authority, and thereby with the wider SF Bay Area transit network.

*Other measures such as higher parking fees as well as tolling highway travel are only feasible in highly urbanized areas where increased transit services are available as an alternative mode.*

This statement conflicts with the evidence from UCSC, where the cost of parking is a key factor resulting in a 17% transit mode share among faculty and staff, and a much higher transit mode share among students. The statement that highway tolls are only feasible where increased transit services are available makes the assumption that the region will not increase its transit service. The best examples of highway tolls reducing VMT are where the toll revenue supports transit service. The EIR makes a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the decision not to prioritize transit service makes a viable option infeasible.

*Therefore, an aggressive VMT reduction alternative was not considered as an alternative for detailed consideration in this EIR.*



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

For the reasons stated above, this conclusion is unfounded.

*The California State Transportation Agency, (CalSTA) has prepared the 2021 Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CalSTA 2021). The Climate Action Plan includes strategies to reduce VMT, including developing programs to policies to implement road pricing, also known as VMT fees. However, an alternative that aims to reduce VMT through substantially higher VMT fees would not be feasible in the AMBAG region, as these fees are only feasible in highly urbanized areas where measures like transportation demand management (TDM) strategies are highly effective. Because of the lower densities, rural areas tend to be automobile dependent.*

The Draft EIR fails to mention that much of the region is urbanized, with population and job densities that support transit. In a 2018 talk sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, transit planner Jarrett Walker showed charts of population and job density and said, “For a community of your size and your density, let alone the degree of progressive values that operate in this community, you do not have very much transit.”

The EIR continues to make an unfounded claim that congestion pricing would not work in the region:

*Most trips made by personal automobile on a relatively less congested roadway network which doesn't favor tolling or congestion price strategies. There is often relatively little demand for alternative modes, such as transit, cycling and walk (such alternative travel modes are only feasible and cost effective for a shorter trip in length and time)*

The statement that most trips occur on a “relatively less congested roadway network” is at odds with the reality experienced by many auto commuters. For example, Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County is just as congested as some major highways in large metropolitan areas, and would benefit from congestion pricing that supports express transit in bus-only lanes on the Highway. The Soquel Drive corridor is an exceptionally good candidate for congestion pricing due to the spill-over traffic from Highway 1. With congestion pricing, buses on Soquel Dr. would be more efficient. The same is true for the potential for congestion pricing at the two entrances to the UCSC campus, which would have the effect of stimulating demand for transit and cycling.

*Because the AMBAG region does not contain areas with the same high density land uses and robust transit systems as these large metropolitan cities, and*



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

*because AMBAG does not have the legal authority to impose VMT fees, this alternative was [not] considered as an alternative for detailed consideration in the EIR.*

As with the EIR's earlier statement that AMBAG does not have the authority to channel development to urban areas instead of rural areas, the argument lacks merit. As stated above, there is significant potential for congestion pricing in the AMBAG area. AMBAG does not need the legal authority to impose VMT fees, since it has the authority to require such mitigations by jurisdictions in the region. AMBAG can work with Caltrans, which has a mandate to use road pricing to reduce VMT:

*Expand toll lane use or develop other pricing-based strategy options: This option would consist of expanding the use of toll lanes or developing other pricing strategies, such as increasing parking prices in an area, to reduce VMT. - Caltrans, Transportation Analysis Under CEQA (2020)*

Because the EIR did not propose an alternative that could better meet state goals for GHG emissions, the EIR's conclusion that 2045 MTP/SCS would not result in a significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources is not valid. A plan resulting in lower VMT would waste less energy.

## 9. Some performance estimates are inconsistent with empirical realities

According to Appendix C, the percentage of jobs within a half mile of quality regional transit in Alternative 2 will be 31.7% and Alternative 3 will be 30.5%,---significantly higher than the 24.8% for the MTP/SCS plan. This significant advantage of the alternatives is not reflected in projected transit ridership. Since the EIR does not explain the assumptions that result in this conclusion, it is reasonable to surmise that the methodology for estimating transit ridership is less reliable than that of estimating where the jobs will be located.

There are other anomalies that cast doubt on the credibility of the analysis. For example the number of bicycle and walking trips in Alternative 2 is equal to that of the project—in spite of \$1.4 billion spent on alternative transportation in Alternative 2 compared to the project. Similarly, the number of transit trips for Alternative 3 is negligibly different from that of the project, in spite of \$2.2 billion spent on transit infrastructure compared to the project. This analysis suggests that significant investment in transit, bicycle and



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

pedestrian infrastructure has no impact on people's behavior. However, empirical studies have shown the opposite.<sup>1</sup>

EIR conclusions need to be based on supported facts and evidence. The EIR Draft needs to resolve the disparity between its conclusions and the research. Caltrans' Transportation Analysis Framework states:

*Documentation of each fact relied upon, each inference derived from established facts and the logical approach taken to reach a conclusion are necessary so others, including a court if the matter is litigated, can follow the analytical path taken by the practitioner.*

## 10. The MTP/SCS plans inadequately meet the project objectives

Project objectives include:

*Healthy Communities. Protect the health of residents; foster efficient development patterns that optimize travel, housing and employment choices and encourage active transportation.*

*Social Equity. Provide an equitable level of transportation services to all segments of the population.*

The EIR acknowledges that funding for the transit and active transportation infrastructure envisioned by Alternatives 2 and 3 results from “less investment in local streets, roads, and highways compared to the proposed 2045 MTP/SCS.” By prioritizing expenditures on roads and highways over active transportation and transit, the MTP/SCS negatively impacts all residents and especially low income sectors of the population that are more dependent on transit and active transportation. The result is a poverty of mobility, where those who don't drive are second class citizens. Auto dependency requires low income households to spend a greater percentage of income on transportation.<sup>2</sup>

The health impacts of auto dependency are well researched.<sup>3</sup> In U.S. cities, researchers blame traffic pollution for a quarter of all new childhood asthma cases.<sup>4</sup> According to the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, 54% of fatal or serious injury crashes occur on 6% of county streets. More than half of these streets are in low income

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/research-innovation-system->

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.planetizen.com/blogs/111535-automobile-dependency-unequal-burden>

<sup>3</sup> Frumkin, Frank, Jackson, *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*;

<sup>4</sup> <https://e360.yale.edu/digest/vehicle-pollution-causes-4-million-new-child-asthma-cases-every-year>



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup> In our region, there is considerable overlap between low income people and brown people. Is the EIR required to conduct a racial equity analysis?

The road and highway expansion projects in the MTP worsen the community's auto dependency, which in turn has environmental impacts. The EIR is required to evaluate these impacts. CEQA Guidelines state:

*If the physical change causes adverse economic or social effects on people, those adverse effects may be used as a factor in determining whether the physical change is significant.*

## The EIR Needs to Require Mitigations

11. The EIR needs to mandate mitigation for increased VMT, rather than suggest that agencies "can and should" implement mitigations

*Transportation project sponsor agencies shall evaluate transportation projects that involve increasing roadway capacity for their potential to increase VMT. Where project level increases are found to be potentially significant, implementing agencies shall, or can and should, identify and implement measures that reduce VMT.*

As stated by Caltrans' Transportation Analysis under CEQA:

*Where changes to the project or project alternatives cannot avoid or substantially lessen the significant impact, mitigation is required.*

The Caltrans guidance also states that mitigations need to be identified early in the process:

*As a project proceeds toward final design it becomes increasingly difficult to achieve feasible, proportional project-level VMT mitigation for a capacity-increasing roadway project. Therefore, for capacity-increasing projects, early coordination and scoping of mitigation opportunities is advisable.*

12. The EIR needs to mandate VMT and greenhouse gas reduction mitigations that are proportional to their impact

---

<sup>5</sup> Report: *The Impact of Traffic Violence on Santa Cruz County*





# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

The mitigation measure must be “roughly proportional” to the impacts of the project. (Dolan v. City of Tigard, 512 U.S. 374 (1994).

13. Mitigation measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments.

It doesn't appear that the Draft EIR has satisfied the enforceability requirement or the the following requirements:

*The discussion of mitigation measures shall distinguish between the measures which are proposed by project proponents to be included in the project and other measures proposed by the lead, responsible or trustee agency or other persons which are not included but the lead agency determines could reasonably be expected to reduce adverse impacts if required as conditions of approving the project. This discussion shall identify mitigation measures for each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR. -CEQA Guidelines*

Nor does it appear that the Draft EIR has met the following requirement for monitoring mitigations.

Consistent with section 15126.4(a), lead agencies shall consider feasible means, supported by substantial evidence and subject to monitoring or reporting, of mitigating the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions

## **14. Requirement of a subsequent EIR for Highway Expansion Projects**

The Draft EIR should state that prior EIR's for highway expansion projects did not adequately address significant effects of vehicle miles traveled due to induced travel, because they were prepared before current CEQA and Caltrans guidance on estimating induced travel and the requirement to mitigate increased VMT and GHG emissions. The Draft EIR should state that a revised, updated EIR is required for these projects.

*A later EIR shall be required when the initial study or other analysis finds that the later project may cause significant effects on the environment that were not adequately addressed in the prior EIR...*

*If a later activity would have effects that were not examined in the program EIR, a new Initial Study would need to be prepared leading to either an EIR or a Negative Declaration. -CEQA Guidelines*

If a later EIR for these highway projects is not performed, this would allow the MTP/SCS to sidestep its responsibility under state law to require mitigations for greenhouse gas emissions for these projects, since the prior EIR's for highway expansion do not require such mitigations.



# Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair [Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org](mailto:Rick@sustainabletransportationSC.org)

A striking example of a need for a revised EIR is the plan to include so-called “bus on shoulder” operations as part of the auxiliary lane construction on Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County. The Tier I EIR for the HOV Lane Project included analysis of constructing auxiliary lanes in the project area. However, there was not a single mention of Bus on Shoulder in the document. Thus the alternative configurations for bus-on-shoulder were not analyzed. This includes a bus-only lane on the shoulder of the highway. Such a configuration is the very definition of bus-on-shoulder as it exists in other cities. However, the proposed “bus on shoulder” as part of the Porter Ave to State Park Drive auxiliary lanes would operate buses in the auxiliary lanes where they would share the lanes with other vehicle traffic, resulting in a substantial delay for bus operations. This failure of environmental review to analyze the alternatives could result in significant loss of ridership potential.

**From:** [micheal saint](#)  
**To:** [info@ambag.org](mailto:info@ambag.org); [2045 RTP](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 2:21:57 PM

---

January 30th, 2022

Dear Commissioners

For years as an advocate for Sustainable Transportation and a sustainable environment for our tri-county area I have concluded that our SCCRTC, AMBAG and those in charge of planning and executing of transportation projects seem mostly comfortable with business as usual and limiting their efforts to follow the State of California's Climate Action Policy.

After studying EIRs from AMBAG and Caltrans it seems most of the effort goes to finding ways to avoid following the State of California's environmental mandates, the Governors executive orders on climate action, and getting around CEQA requirements. If the same energy could be used on ways to help mitigate the effects of Climate Change during our planning efforts we could be on our way to slowing down this existential threat to our planet and life as we know it.

Ignoring these mandates is allowing the effects of climate change to continue its increasing effect of global warming. All decisions concerning transportation projects, housing infill and sustainable planning should have at its core "are we helping to mitigate climate change?" There are no excuses not to do this.

As an example, since 2016, with the exception of our adoption of a CCE ( Community Choice Energy ), our transportation commissions and AMBAG have done very little to address climate change. Putting in a few green bike lanes, fixing some pedestrian intersections and not pursuing a mass transit system on the rail corridor is a poor start to a sustainable future.

Instead we have attained funding to widen Highway 1 with an addition of a bus on shoulder shared with cars. A more functional description of this hybrid system is buses stuck in traffic. The City of Santa Cruz also approved highway 1/9 Intersection/Improvement project, which includes highway and bridge widening to accommodate more cars.

The city of Santa Cruz is pursuing a major multi-use project, which includes a 310 space parking structure. Not needed according to the parking studies.

We are still too focused on car infrastructure and trying to appease a car eccentric voting base that has been uninvolved, and a leadership that is unwilling to make the tough choices.

A paradigm shift is needed to change this car dependent society. Funding must be reversed, with a majority going to public mass transit, and a robust school bus system. Living at the choke point in Aptos I have seen first hand the decrease in traffic during school holidays.

May I make a suggestion to the planners and those that make these obsolete decisions that do not reflect the realities and direction we must go in the future? Take some time and do a little more research to adopt exciting green sustainable transportation ideas from European cities.

In summary, my opinion is you may be opening yourself up to litigation. A lot of the draft EIR (MTP/SCS ) reasoning to eliminate the alternatives seems unfounded and just opinion oriented. As

an example the use of the rural excuse to not develop a robust mass transit is just conjecture. If you were to focus on where the majority of our population lives, Carmel to Salinas and up to Scotts Valley. You would find that 80% or more of our population resides in that corridor. It is also the most heavily travelled corridor in our county used by locals and visitors to our beautiful area.

As a Climate activist and very concerned citizen about the lack of concern by our governing bodies over climate change, I implore AMBAG and the SCCRTC to redo this EIR ( MTP/SCS ) with a combination of alternative #2 and #3 scenarios.

Sincerely,

Micheal Saint

**From:** [Maryam Dolatshahi](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Saving Lives By Moving The Sugarloaf Project to The Constrained List  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 12:34:28 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

I have personally seen people almost die at this junction and if this isn't completed in the next 23 years, someone will finally lose their life.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 has become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. - <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years - <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including:

- Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families
- Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel
- Those who commute Highway 17 every day
- Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities
- The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when

traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,  
Maryam

--

Maryam Dolatshahi, MD



**From:** [Hossain Mostaghim](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Saving Lives By Moving The Sugarloaf Project To The Constrained List  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 12:30:21 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

I have personally seen people almost die at this junction and if this isn't completed in the next 23 years, someone will finally lose their life.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 has become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. - <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years - <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including:

- Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families
- Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel
- Those who commute Highway 17 every day
- Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities
- The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.


Thank you,

Hossain

**From:** [Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Cc:** [Guy Preston](#); [sbrown@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:sbrown@cityofsantacruz.com)  
**Subject:** Comments on Santa Cruz County RTP/SCS and Associated DEIR  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 11:53:42 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[SC Draft 2045 RTP DEIR CBD Comment Letter 2022-01-31.pdf](#)

---

Dear Regional Transportation Commission,

Attached please find a letter from the Center for Biological Diversity regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy for Santa Cruz County ("RTP/SCS"). The references for the letter are available for  [download here](#).

As noted in the letter, we also request a meeting with staff and/or appropriate Board members to discuss the recommendations in the letter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat (she/her)  
Urban Wildlands Campaigner  
CENTER *for* BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
660 S. Figueroa Street #1000  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Cell: (831) 428-3312  
[ereidwainscoat@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:ereidwainscoat@biologicaldiversity.org)



January 31, 2022

*Sent via email*

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
[2045rtp@scrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@scrtc.org)

**Re: Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for Santa Cruz County's Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy**

Dear Regional Transportation Commission:

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity (the "Center") regarding the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") for the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy for Santa Cruz County ("RTP/SCS"). The Center has reviewed the DEIR and RTP/SCS and provides these comments for consideration by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission ("SC RTC"). As outlined in further detail below, we urge SC RTC to ensure that the DEIR fully considers and mitigates the impacts of the RTP/SCS on mountain lions, wildlife connectivity, and wildfire. As currently written, we are concerned that the DEIR does not meet these goals.

The Center is a non-profit, public interest environmental organization dedicated to the protection of native species and their habitats through science, policy, and environmental law. The Center has over 1.7 million members and online activists throughout California and the United States. The Center and its members have worked for many years to protect imperiled plants and wildlife, open space, air and water quality, and overall quality of life for people in California.

**We urge SC RTC staff and the Board to consider and implement the recommendations in this letter so that the RTP/SCS complies with applicable laws. We also request a meeting with staff or appropriate Board members to discuss how these recommendations can be implemented.**

**I. The EIR Must Analyze and Mitigate Impacts of the RTP/SCS to Mountain Lions (*Puma concolor*) throughout Santa Cruz County.**

We are concerned that the DEIR does not adequately analyze or mitigate impacts of the RTP/SCS on mountain lions. Mountain lions in Santa Cruz County are part of the “Central Coast North” population of mountain lions, which is provisionally listed under the California Endangered Species Act (“CESA”) (Yap et al. 2019). In compliance with CESA, all projects associated with the RTP/SCS must be designed to allow safe passage of mountain lions under or over transportation projects that cross mountain lion movement corridors. (Fish & Game Code § 2054.) In addition, any structures adjacent to open space should include mitigation measures that reduce or eliminate mountain lion conflict (e.g., livestock should be kept in lion-proof enclosures at night), lighting should be turned away from open space, noise should be limited, pet cats and dogs should be kept indoors, and measures that reduce the risk of wildfire ignitions and/or spread should be required (e.g., avoiding new development in fire-prone areas and retrofitting existing communities with solar microgrids, ember-resistant vents and roofing, and 100-foot buffer immediately adjacent to structures with lightly irrigated native vegetation).

We were unable to find any such discussion in the DEIR. The omission is inconsistent with SC RTC’s obligations under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). CEQA requires an EIR to provide decision-making bodies and the public with detailed information about the effect a proposed project is likely to have on the environment, to list ways in which the significant effects of a project might be minimized, and to indicate alternatives to the project. (Pub. Res. Code § 21061.) CEQA further requires a lead agency to mitigate to the extent feasible significant impacts. (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.4.) More specifically, CEQA requires a “mandatory finding of significance” if there is substantial evidence in the record that a proposed plan or project *may* cause a “wildlife *population* to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species . . . .” (CEQA Guidelines § 15065(a)(1).) This means that a project or plan is deemed to have a significant impact on the environment as a matter of law if it reduces the habitat of a species, or reduces the number or range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species. (See *Endangered Habitats League, Inc. v. County of Orange* (2005) 131 Cal.App.4th 777, 792 fn. 12 [citing *Defend the Bay v. City of Irvine* (2004) 119 Cal.App.4th 1261, 1273–1274].)

Here, any further impairment of connectivity or destruction of habitat has the potential to significantly impact the Central Coast North mountain lions, as well as the broader Evolutionarily Significant Unit (“ESU”). By way of background, there is ample scientific evidence that indicates mountain lion populations in Southern California and the Central Coast are threatened and that human activities and land use planning that does not integrate adequate habitat connectivity can have adverse impacts on mountain lions. Continued habitat loss and fragmentation has led to 10 genetically isolated populations within California. Several populations in Southern California are facing an extinction vortex due to high levels of inbreeding, low genetic diversity, and high human-caused mortality rates from car strikes on roads, depredation kills, rodenticide poisoning, poaching, disease, and increased human-caused wildfires (Ernest et al. 2003; Ernest et al. 2014; Riley et al. 2014; Vickers et al. 2015; Benson et al. 2016; Gustafson et al. 2018; Benson et al. 2019). This is detailed in the Center’s petition to

the California Fish and Game Commission to protect Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions under CESA (Yap et al. 2019).

The primary threat to the long-term survival of mountain lions in the Southern California/Central Coast ESU is genetic isolation due to lack of connectivity caused by continuous development in mountain lion habitat with little regard of their movement needs. Thus, the persistence of the populations within Santa Cruz County relies heavily on being connected with mountain lions throughout the ESU *as well as* statewide. Mountain lions are wide ranging species that have home ranges of 75 to 200 mi<sup>2</sup>; clearly, anthropogenic barriers are likely limiting their movement and preventing adequate gene flow for the long-term survival of mountain lions throughout the SC RTC region (Ernest et al. 2003; Ernest et al. 2014; Riley et al. 2014; Vickers et al. 2015; Gustafson et al. 2018; Benson et al. 2019). Yet the RTP/SCS will likely result in the allocation of funding for freeway and road expansions/widenings/construction without adequate mitigation for mountain lion specific wildlife connectivity, which fragments the landscape more severely and propagates sprawl development further out into mountain lion habitat and movement corridors. Such development without addressing wildlife connectivity issues and integrating effective mountain lion specific wildlife crossings and corridors could lead to the extirpation of multiple mountain lion populations in the Santa Cruz and Central Coast region.

As the last remaining wide-ranging top predator in the region, impacts to mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Region could have severe ecological consequences; loss of the keystone species could have ripple effects on other plant and animal species, potentially leading to a decrease in biodiversity and diminished overall ecosystem function. In some ecosystems that lack mountain lions, increased deer populations can overgraze vegetation and cause stream banks to erode (Ripple and Beschta 2006; Ripple and Beschta 2008). Many scavengers, including foxes, raptors, and numerous insects, can lose a reliable food source without mountain lions (Ruth and Elbroch 2014; Barry et al. 2019). Fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, rare native plants, and butterflies could diminish if this apex predator were lost (Ripple and Beschta 2006; Ripple and Beschta 2008; Ripple et al. 2014).

SC RTC also has an obligation to protect species that are listed or provisionally listed under CESA, including Central Coast and Southern California mountain lions. Under CESA, the SC RTC may not approve projects (including the RTP/SCS) that could jeopardize the continued existence of these populations or result in destruction of essential habitat (Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2053(a) and SC RTC must require that appropriate mitigation measures be implemented for projects that could destroy mountain lion habitat or impair connectivity (Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2054).



Given that the Central Coast North mountain lion population are a candidate species under the CESA, the DEIR must be revised and recirculated to analyze and fully mitigate potential impacts on these populations in compliance with both CESA and CEQA.

## **II. The EIR Must Analyze and Mitigate Impacts of the RTP/SCS on Wildlife Movement and Habitat Connectivity.**

The EIR must analyze the potential impacts of the RTP/SCS and its associated projects on wildlife connectivity. Roads and development create barriers that lead to habitat loss and fragmentation, which harms native wildlife, plants, and people. As barriers to wildlife movement, poorly-planned development and roads can affect an animal's behavior, movement patterns, reproductive success, and physiological state, which can lead to significant impacts on individual wildlife, populations, communities, landscapes, and ecosystem function (Mitsch and Wilson 1996; Trombulak and Frissell 2000; van der Ree et al. 2011; Brehme et al. 2013; Haddad et al. 2015; Marsh and Jaeger 2015; Ceia-Hasse et al. 2018). For example, as noted above, habitat fragmentation from roads and development has been shown to cause mortalities and harmful genetic isolation in mountain lions in southern California (Ernest et al. 2014; Riley et al. 2014; Vickers et al. 2015), increase local extinction risk in amphibians and reptiles (Cushman 2006; Brehme et al. 2018), cause high levels of avoidance behavior and mortality in birds and insects (Benítez-López et al. 2010; Loss et al. 2014; Kantola et al. 2019), and alter pollinator behavior and degrade habitats (Trombulak and Frissell 2000; Goverde et al. 2002; Aguilar et al. 2008). Habitat fragmentation also severely impacts plant communities. An 18-year study found that reconnected landscapes had nearly 14% more plant species compared to fragmented habitats, and that number is likely to continue to rise as time passes (Damschen et al. 2019). The authors conclude that efforts to preserve and enhance connectivity will pay off over the long-term (Damschen et al. 2019). In addition, connectivity between high quality habitat areas in heterogeneous landscapes is important to allow for range shifts and species migrations as climate changes (Heller and Zavaleta 2009; Cushman et al. 2013; Krosby et al. 2018). Loss of wildlife connectivity decreases biodiversity and degrades ecosystems.

Edge effects of development in and adjacent to open space will likely impact key, wide-ranging predators, such as mountain lions and bobcats (Crooks 2002; Riley et al. 2006; Delaney et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2012; Smith et al. 2015; Vickers et al. 2015; Smith et al. 2017; Wang et al. 2017), as well as smaller species with poor dispersal abilities, such as song birds, small mammals, and herpetofauna (Cushman 2006; Slabbekoorn and Ripmeester 2008; Benítez-López et al. 2010; Kociolek et al. 2011). Limiting movement and dispersal can affect species' ability to find food, shelter, mates, and refugia after disturbances like fires or floods. Individuals can die off, populations can become isolated, sensitive species can become locally extinct, and important ecological processes like plant pollination and nutrient cycling can be lost. Negative edge effects from human activity, such as traffic, lighting, noise, domestic pets, pollutants, invasive weeds, and increased fire frequency, have been found to be biologically significant up to 300 meters (~1000 feet) away from anthropogenic features in terrestrial systems (Environmental Law Institute 2003)

The EIR must also consider corridor redundancy (*i.e.* the availability of alternative pathways for movement) because it allows for improved functional connectivity and resilience. Compared to a single pathway, multiple connections between habitat patches increase the probability of movement across landscapes by a wider variety of species, and they provide more habitat for low-mobility species while still allowing for their dispersal (Mcrae et al., 2012; Olson & Burnett, 2008; Pinto & Keitt, 2008). In addition, corridor redundancy provides resilience to uncertainty, impacts of climate change, and extreme events, like flooding or wildfires, by providing alternate escape routes or refugia for animals seeking safety (Cushman et al., 2013; Mcrae et al., 2008; Mcrae et al., 2012; Olson & Burnett, 2008; Pinto & Keitt, 2008).

Corridor redundancy is critical when considering the impacts of climate change on wildlife movement and habitat connectivity. Climate change is increasing stress on species and ecosystems, causing changes in distribution, phenology, physiology, vital rates, genetics, ecosystem structure and processes, and increasing species extinction risk (Warren et al. 2011). A 2016 analysis found that climate-related local extinctions are already widespread and have occurred in hundreds of species, including almost half of the 976 species surveyed (Wiens 2016). A separate study estimated that nearly half of terrestrial non-flying threatened mammals and nearly one-quarter of threatened birds may have already been negatively impacted by climate change in at least part of their distribution (Pacifi et al. 2017). A 2016 meta-analysis reported that climate change is already impacting 82 percent of key ecological processes that form the foundation of healthy ecosystems and on which humans depend for basic needs (Scheffers et al. 2016). Genes are changing, species' physiology and physical features such as body size are changing, species are moving to try to keep pace with suitable climate space, species are shifting their timing of breeding and migration, and entire ecosystems are under stress (Parmesan and Yohe 2003; Root et al. 2003; Parmesan 2006; Chen et al. 2011; Maclean and Wilson 2011; Warren et al. 2011; Cahill et al. 2012).

The DEIR must also analyze the RTP/SCS's potential impacts to riparian corridors. Riparian ecosystems have long been recognized as biodiversity hotspots performing important ecological functions in a transition zone between freshwater systems and upland habitats. Many species that rely on these aquatic habitats also rely on the adjacent upland habitats (*e.g.*, riparian areas along streams, and grassland habitat adjacent to wetlands). In fact, 60% of amphibian species, 16% of reptiles, 34% of birds and 12% of mammals in the Pacific Coast ecoregion depend on riparian-stream systems for survival (Kelsey and West 1998). Many other species, including mountain lions and bobcats, often use riparian areas and natural ridgelines as migration corridors or foraging habitat (Dickson et al, 2005; Hilty & Merenlender, 2004; Jennings & Lewison, 2013; Jennings & Zeller, 2017). Additionally, fish rely on healthy upland areas to influence suitable spawning habitat (Lohse et al. 2008), and agricultural encroachment on these habitats and over-aggressive removal of riparian areas have been identified as a major driver of declines in freshwater and anadromous fish (*e.g.*, Stillwater Sciences 2002; Lohse et al. 2008; Moyle et al. 2011). Therefore, buffers that allow for connectivity between the aquatic resource and upland habitat is vital for many species to persist.

It is estimated that 90-95% of historic riparian habitat in the state has been lost (Bowler 1989; Riparian Habitat Joint Venture 2009). Using 2002 land cover data from CalFire, the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture estimated that riparian vegetation makes up less than 0.5% of California's total land area at about 360,000 acres (Riparian Habitat Joint Venture 2004). This is alarming because riparian habitats perform a number of biological and physical functions that benefit wildlife, plants, and humans, and loss of what little is left will have severe, harmful impacts on special-status species, overall biodiversity, and ecosystem function. California cannot afford to lose more riparian corridors.

A literature review found that recommended buffers for wildlife often far exceeded 100 meters (~325 feet), well beyond the largest buffers implemented in practice (Robins 2002). For example, Kilgo et al. (1998) recommend more than 1,600 feet of riparian buffer to sustain bird diversity. In addition, amphibians, which are considered environmental health indicators, have been found to migrate over 1,000 feet between aquatic and terrestrial habitats through multiple life stages (Semlitsch and Bodie 2003; Trenham and Shaffer 2005; Cushman 2006; Fellers and Kleeman 2007). Accommodating the more long-range dispersers is vital for continued survival of species populations and/or recolonization following a local extinction (Semlitsch and Bodie 2003; Cushman 2006). In addition, more extensive buffers provide resiliency in the face of climate change-driven alterations to these habitats, which will cause shifts in species ranges and distributions (Cushman et al., 2013; Heller & Zavaleta, 2009; Warren et al., 2011). This emphasizes the need for sizeable riparian and upland buffers around streams and wetlands in and adjacent to any project included in the RTP/SCS, as well as connectivity corridors between heterogeneous habitats. Again, the EIR must adequately assess and mitigate impacts to local, regional, and global wildlife movement and habitat connectivity.

It is widely recognized that the continuing fragmentation of habitat by humans threatens biodiversity and diminishes our (humans, plants, and animals) ability to adapt to climate change. In a report for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), world-renowned scientists from around the world stated that “[s]cience overwhelmingly shows that interconnected protected areas and other areas for biological diversity conservation are much more effective than disconnected areas in human-dominated systems, especially in the face of climate change” and “[i]t is imperative that the world moves toward a coherent global approach for ecological connectivity conservation, and begins to measure and monitor the effectiveness of efforts to protect connectivity and thereby achieve functional ecological networks” (Hilty et al. 2020).

Given the potential for projects authorized or streamlined by the RTP/SCS to fragment and destroy important habitat, including riparian areas, the Center urges the SC RTC to avoid further fragmentation and degradation of existing, intact, heterogeneous habitats and incorporate clear and enforceable wildlife connectivity mitigation measures that address the needs of target species into the RTP/SCS and EIR.

While DEIR does include some measures specifically for fencing, lighting and drainage systems, it does not include specific measures related to roads, nor does it provide detailed mitigation for target species (DEIR, page 4.4-46). The RTP/SCS should encourage the involvement of wildlife connectivity experts from CDFW and other agencies, organizations,

academic institutions, communities, and local groups starting at the initial planning stage of development and transportation projects so that habitat connectivity can be strategically integrated into project design and appropriately considered in the project budget. The RTP/SCS should require road and highway projects to include adequate wildlife crossing infrastructure in order to reduce impacts to mountain lions and other species.

In incorporating such measures into future drafts of the EIR and RTP/SCS, it is important to consider that different species have different behaviors and needs that affect how they move. For example, smaller species with poor dispersal abilities, like rodents and herpetofauna, would require more frequent intervals of crossings compared to larger wide-ranging species, like mountain lions or coyotes, to increase their chances of finding a crossing. Gunson et al. (2016) recommend that crossing structures generally be spaced about 300m (~0.19mi) apart for small animals when transportation infrastructure bisects large expanses of continuous habitat, though they recognize that some amphibians may need more frequent crossings no more than 50m (~0.03mi) apart. And for many amphibian and reptile species, undercrossings should have grated tops so that the light and moisture inside the crossings are similar to that of the ambient environment. Brehme and Fisher (2020) also provides additional guidance regarding amphibian crossings. Therefore, **multiple crossings designed for different target species may be required. In-depth analyses that include on-the-ground movement studies of which species are moving in the area and their home range area, habitat use, and patterns of movement are needed to determine how to best implement such crossings.** In addition, associated crossing infrastructure (*e.g.*, exclusionary fencing appropriate for target species, berms to buffer crossings from sound and light) should be included to improve chances of wildlife using crossings, and such crossings and associated infrastructure should be designed and built in consultation with local and regional experts, including agency biologists. And **to improve the effectiveness of any wildlife crossings, there should be protected habitat on both sides of the crossing; therefore, mitigation should also include acquiring unprotected lands on both sides of the roads where a wildlife crossing would be implemented,** again, in consultation with local conservation organizations and stakeholders, and preserving and managing those lands in perpetuity to ensure that the wildlife crossings and associated infrastructure remain functional over time. Given that impacts of noise, light, and vibration can affect the use of wildlife crossings, even if crossings are designed with adequate parameters and fencing, the crossings should be built with wildlife responsive design; crossings should have sound and light berms to minimize light and sound at the entrance/exit as well as on/in/under the crossings structures, and they should be well-maintained on both sides of the crossing for animals to use them (Shilling 2020; Vickers 2020).

Here are some additional mitigation measures that should be included in the EIR that projects should be required to implement if they are to be considered “consistent” with the RTP/SCS or receive funding from SC RTP:

- Lead agency shall consult with applicable counties, cities, Tribes, and other local organizations when impacts may occur to open space areas that have been designated as important for wildlife movement related to local ordinances or conservation plans.
- Lead agency and/or project applicant shall design projects to minimize impacts to wildlife movement and habitat connectivity and preserve existing and functional wildlife corridors.
- Lead agency must conduct site-specific analyses of opportunities to preserve or improve habitat linkages with areas on- and off-site.
- For long linear projects with the possibility of impacting wildlife movement (e.g., road expansion), lead agency shall analyze habitat linkages/wildlife movement corridors on a broad scale to avoid critical narrow choke points that could reduce the function of recognized movement corridors.
- Lead agency must require review of construction drawings and habitat connectivity mapping by a qualified biologist to determine the risk of habitat fragmentation.
- For projects with impacts to habitat linkages or corridors, lead agency shall ensure adequate preservation and mitigation of habitat linkages and corridors (e.g., through mitigation banking or purchasing, maintain or restoring offsite habitat).
- Lead agency shall design projects to promote wildlife corridor redundancy by including multiple connections between habitat patches.
- Lead agency shall install overpasses, underpasses, or culverts as appropriate to create wildlife crossings in cases where a roadway or other transportation project may interrupt the flow of species through their habitat. Retrofitting of existing infrastructure in project areas should also be considered for wildlife crossings for purposes of mitigation.
- Lead agency shall install wildlife fencing where appropriate to minimize the probability of wildlife injury due to direct interaction between wildlife and roads or construction.
- Where avoidance of impacts is determined by the lead agency to be infeasible, the lead agency shall design sufficient conservation measures through coordination with local agencies and the regulatory agency (i.e., United States Fish and Wildlife Service and/or CDFW) and in accordance with the respective county and city general plans to establish plans to mitigate for the loss of fish and wildlife movement corridors and/or wildlife nursery sites. The consideration of conservation measures may include the following measures, where applicable: Wildlife movement buffer zones, appropriately spaced

breaks in center barriers, culverts, construction of wildlife crossings such as freeway under- or overpasses, other comparable measures.

- Lead agency shall implement berms and sound/sight barriers at all wildlife crossings to encourage wildlife to utilize crossings. Sound and lighting should also be minimized in developed areas, particularly those that are adjacent to or go through natural habitats.
- Lead agency shall reduce lighting impacts on sensitive species through implementation of mitigation measures including, but not limited to:
  - Use high pressure sodium and/or cut-off fixtures instead of typical mercury vapor fixtures for outdoor lighting;
  - Design exterior lighting to confine illumination to the project site;
  - Provide structural and/or vegetative screening from light-sensitive uses;
  - Use non-reflective glass or glass treated with a non-reflective coating for all exterior windows and glass used on building surfaces;
  - Architectural lighting shall be directed onto the building surfaces and have low reflectivity to minimize glare and limit light onto adjacent properties.
  - Minimize lighting at night.
- Lead agency shall reduce noise impacts to sensitive species through implementation of mitigation measures including, but not limited to:
  - Install temporary noise barriers during construction.
  - Include permanent noise barriers and sound-attenuating features as part of the project design. Barriers could be in the form of outdoor barriers, sound walls, buildings, or earth berms to attenuate noise at adjacent sensitive uses.
  - Ensure that construction equipment is properly maintained per manufacturers' specifications and fitted with the best available noise suppression devices (e.g., improved mufflers, equipment redesign, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds silencers, wraps). All intake and exhaust ports on power equipment shall be muffled or shielded.
  - Use hydraulically or electrically powered tools (e.g., jack hammers, pavement breakers, and rock drills) for project construction to avoid noise associated with compressed air exhaust from pneumatically powered tools.
  - Using rubberized asphalt or "quiet pavement" to reduce road noise for new roadway segments, roadways in which widening or other modifications require

re-pavement, or normal reconstruction of roadways where re-pavement is planned.

- Use equipment and trucks with the best available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, equipment redesign, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds, wherever feasible) for project construction.
- Use techniques such as grade separation, buffer zones, landscaped berms, dense plantings, sound walls, reduced-noise paving materials, and traffic calming measures.

### **III. The EIR Must Adequately Assess and Mitigate Impacts of New Development in High Fire-prone Areas to Wildfire Risk.**

Fire is a natural and necessary ecological process for many different ecosystems within the region; however, increased human-caused ignitions and the expansion of flammable non-native grasses has led to increased fire activity in the area, which is harmful to numerous biological resources and people.

#### **A. The EIR Must Fully Inform the Public and Decisionmakers of the Potential Impacts of More Fire Ignitions from Placing Homes and People in High Fire-Prone Areas.**

According to a report from Governor Gavin Newsom's Office, construction of more homes in the wildland-urban interface is one of the main factors that "magnify the wildfire threat and place substantially more people and property at risk than ever before" (Governor Newsom's Strike Force 2019). Syphard et al. (2019) found that housing and human infrastructure in fire-prone wildlands are the main drivers of fire ignitions and structure loss. This is not new information; scientists have been reporting it for many years in scientific, peer-reviewed journals, and firefighters have observed it.

As outlined in the Center's recent report, *Built to Burn*<sup>1</sup>, increasing housing development in high fire-risk wildlands is putting more people in harm's way and contributing to a dramatic increase in costs associated with fire suppression and damages. Next 10 and UC Berkeley's recent report, *Rebuilding for a Resilient Recovery: Planning in California's Wildland Urban Interface*<sup>2</sup>, likewise found that state and local land use policies are increasing the economic and human cost of wildfire by encouraging rebuilding in the high risk-wildland urban interface instead of focusing development away from fire-prone areas. Sprawl developments with low/intermediate densities extending into habitats that are prone to fire have led to more frequent

---

<sup>1</sup> Tiffany Yap, et al, *Built to Burn: California's Wildlands Developments Are Playing With Fire* (Feb. 2021), available at <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/urban/pdfs/Built-to-Burn-California-Wildfire-Report-Center-Biological-Diversity.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Next 10 and UC Berkeley, *Rebuilding for a Resilient Recovery: Planning in California's Wildland Urban Interface* (June 2021), available at <https://www.next10.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Next10-Rebuilding-Resilient-Final.pdf>.



wildfires caused by human ignitions, like power lines, arson, improperly disposed cigarette butts, debris burning, fireworks, campfires, or sparks from cars or equipment (Keeley et al. 1999; Keeley and Fotheringham 2003; Syphard et al. 2007; Syphard et al. 2012; Bistinas et al. 2013; Balch et al. 2017; Keeley and Syphard 2018; Radeloff et al. 2018; Syphard et al. 2019). Human-caused fires account for 95-97% of all fires in Southern California's Mediterranean habitats (Syphard et al. 2007; Balch et al. 2017). In some Southern California counties, Keeley and Syphard (2018) found that human ignitions were responsible for 98-100% of fires between 1919-2016. Leapfrog developments in high fire-prone areas have the highest predicted fire risk (Syphard et al. 2013), and multiple studies indicate that developments with low/intermediate-density clusters surrounded by fire-dependent vegetation (*i.e.*, grasslands, chaparral, scrub) in areas with a history of fires have the highest chances of burning (Syphard et al. 2012; Bistinas et al. 2013; Syphard et al. 2013; Syphard et al. 2019). The EIR must clearly outline and summarize the scientific evidence linking development in high fire-prone wildlands with increased fire risk; the RTP/SCS could result in the placement of more homes, infrastructure, roads, and communities in high fire-prone areas that have burned in the past and will inevitably burn again.

The EIR must acknowledge the potential wildfire hazard from increased human-caused ignitions in the Santa Cruz region. By placing people in fire-prone areas, the induced sprawl perpetuated by the RTP/SCS would increase the number of potential ignition sources, and therefore the risk of wildfires occurring. In addition, power lines and electrical equipment are a significant source of human-caused ignitions (Keeley and Syphard 2018). The 2017 Thomas Fire, 2017 Tubbs Fire, 2018 Camp Fire, and 2018 Woolsey Fire were found to have been caused by electrical transmission lines and electrical equipment, and the 2019 Kincade Fire is suspected to have been caused by power lines as well. Placing homes and people in high fire-prone areas would only increase the potential likelihood of these ignition sources, as has been documented in multiple scientific studies (Keeley et al. 1999; Keeley and Fotheringham 2003; Syphard et al. 2007; Syphard et al. 2012; Bistinas et al. 2013; Balch et al. 2017; Keeley and Syphard 2018; Radeloff et al. 2018; Syphard et al. 2019).

Although public utilities companies (*i.e.*, PG&E and Southern California Edison) are altering operations in the form of power outages and blackouts during extreme weather conditions (Callahan et al. 2019; Krishnakumar et al. 2019; Fry et al. 2019a), wildfires can still spark and spread quickly towards homes, as evidenced by the wildfires in Moraga (Hernández et al. 2019) and Saddle Ridge/Sylmar (Fry et al. 2019b). And the power outages themselves disproportionately burden our most vulnerable communities, including the elderly, poor, and disabled (Chabria and Luna 2019), and can cause traffic jams and collisions (CBS San Francisco 2019). Michael Wara, Director of the Climate and Energy Policy Program and a senior research scholar at the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, estimated that PG&E's power outage in Northern and Central California could have an economic impact of \$2.5 billion in losses, with most of the burden on businesses (Callahan et al. 2019). It is clear that placing more homes and businesses in known fire-prone areas and wind corridors is irresponsible and can lead to deadly and costly consequences.

While the DEIR does acknowledge that some projects associated with the RTP/SCS would “result in growth in or near wildfire prone areas,” creating “substantial wildfire-related impacts” (DEIR, page 4.17-16), the DEIR fails to describe in detail the full extent of these impacts to people, ecosystems, and wildlife based upon the best available science. While the mitigation focuses on implementing fire resistant measures, there is no acknowledgement that this only reduced the wildfire risk, it does not make the new infrastructure fireproof. **The DEIR must also fully consider alternatives to the proposed RTP/SCS that do not increase the risk of wildfires.**

#### **B. The EIR Must Adequately Assess and Mitigate the Impacts to Special-status Species Due to Increased Human-caused Ignitions.**

As mentioned previously, sprawl developments with low/intermediate densities extending into habitats that are prone to fire, such as chaparral and scrub/shrubland habitats, have led to more frequent wildfires caused by human ignitions, and these types of developments have the highest chances of burning (Keeley et al. 1999; Keeley and Fotheringham 2003; Syphard et al. 2007; Syphard et al. 2012; Bistinas et al. 2013; Syphard et al. 2013; Balch et al. 2017; Keeley and Syphard 2018; Radeloff et al. 2018; Syphard et al. 2019). This could disrupt the natural fire regime and lead to a dangerous feedback loop of deadly fires and habitat destruction.

Significant portions of the Santa Cruz region are dominated by chaparral and scrub/shrublands, native California habitats that are adapted to infrequent (every 30 to 150 years or more), large, high-intensity crown fire regimes (Keeley and Fotheringham 2001). However, if these regimes are disrupted, the habitats become degraded (Keeley 2005; Keeley 2006; Syphard et al. 2018). When fires occur too frequently, type conversion occurs and the native shrublands are replaced by non-native grasses and forbs that burn more frequently and more easily, ultimately eliminating native habitats and biodiversity while increasing fire threat over time (Keeley 2005; Keeley 2006; Syphard et al. 2009; Safford and Van de Water 2014; Syphard et al. 2018). This could have serious consequences for special-status species in the Santa Cruz region that rely on these native habitats for survival, like California tiger salamanders and vernal pool fairy shrimp. In addition, large-scale landscape changes due to vegetation-type conversion from shifts in natural fire regimes could impact wide-ranging species like mountain lions (Jennings 2018), whose populations are already struggling in the area due to lack of connectivity and genetic isolation (Gustafson et al. 2018; Dellinger 2019).

#### **C. The FEIR Fails to Adequately Assess and Mitigate the Potential Health and Air Quality Impacts from Increased Smoke from Human-caused Ignitions.**

Human-caused wildfires at the urban wildland interface that burn through developments are becoming more common with housing extending into fire-prone habitats. This is increasing the frequency and toxicity of smoke exposure to communities in and downwind of the fires. This can lead to harmful public health impacts due to increased air pollution not only from burned vegetation, but also from burned homes, commercial buildings, cars, etc. Buildings and structures often contain plastic materials, metals, and various stored chemicals that release toxic

chemicals when burned, such as pesticides, solvents, paints, and cleaning solutions (Weinhold 2011).

Increased fire frequency due to human activity and ill-placed developments lead to increased occurrences of poor outdoor and indoor air quality from smoke (*e.g.*, Phuleria et al. 2005), which can have public health effects. Hospital visits for respiratory symptoms (*e.g.*, asthma, acute bronchitis, pneumonia, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and cardiovascular symptoms have been shown to increase during and/or after fire events (Künzli et al. 2006; Viswanathan et al. 2006; Delfino et al. 2009; Rappold et al. 2012; Liu et al. 2015; Reid et al. 2016). Children, elderly, and those with underlying chronic disease are the most vulnerable to the harmful health effects of increases in wildfire smoke. While it states that “fire related impacts may extend far beyond the fire footprint as damage to homes, infrastructure, and ecosystems, and diminished air and water quality could all occur. People residing in new residential development could be exposed to smoke and air pollution from wildfires regardless of their location within urbanized areas or the WUI” (DEIR, page, 4.17-16), it does not propose an alternative that would prevent any future growth in wildfire hazard severity areas.

#### **D. The EIR Must Adequately Assess and Mitigate the Impact of Increased Wildfires on Fire Protection Services and Utilities.**

The DEIR does not adequately consider the impacts on firefighters and first responders of the growth induced by the RTP/SCS in high fire-prone natural areas subject to intermittent wildfires. Adding more development to these wild areas will necessitate significant firefighting costs from both state and local authorities. Cal Fire is primarily responsible for addressing wildfires when they occur, and its costs have continued to increase as wildfires in the wildland urban interface have grown more destructive. During the 2017-2018 and the 2018-2019 fiscal years, Cal Fire’s fire suppression costs were \$773 million and an estimated \$635 million, respectively (Cal Fire 2019). Note that this does not include the cost of lives lost, property damage, or clean up during these years, which is estimated to be billions of dollars. The vast majority of wildfires in southern California are caused by humans (Balch et al. 2017; Keeley and Syphard 2018), and inducing sprawl development in high fire hazard areas will increase the frequency and likelihood of such fires (Syphard et al. 2012; Syphard et al. 2013; Radeloff et al. 2018; Syphard et al. 2019). SC RTC should not be approving an RTP/SCS that will streamline or induce unsustainable sprawl in high fire-prone areas and burden future generations of California with the costs of defending and recovering even more cities from dangerous blazes.

According to Captain Michael Feyh of the Sacramento Fire Department, California no longer has a fire season (Simon 2018); wildfires in California are now year-round because of increased human ignitions in fire-prone areas. Emergency calls to fire departments have tripled since the 1980s (Gutierrez and Cassidy 2018), and firefighters (and equipment) are being spread thin throughout the state. Firefighters often work 24- to 36-hour shifts for extended periods of time (often weeks at a time), and they are being kept away from their homes and families for more and more days out of the year (Bransford et al. 2018; Del Real and Kang 2018; Gutierrez 2018; Simon 2018; Ashton et al. 2018). In addition, the firefighting force often must rely on volunteers to battle fires year-round.

The extended fire season is taking a toll on the physical, mental, and emotional health of firefighters, as well as the emotional health of their families (Del Real and Kang 2018; Simon 2018; Ashton et al. 2018). The physical and mental fatigue of endlessly fighting fires and experiencing trauma can lead to exhaustion, which can cause mistakes in life-or-death situations while on duty, and the constant worry and aftermath that family members endure when their loved ones are away working in life-threatening conditions can be harrowing (Ashton et al. 2018). According to psychologist Dr. Nancy Bohl-Penrod, the strain of fighting fires without having sufficient breaks can impact firefighters' interactions with their families, their emotions, and their personalities (Bransford et al. 2018). There have also been reports that suicide rates and substance abuse have been increasing among firefighters (Simon 2018; Greene 2018). This is not sustainable.

The EIR must adequately assess and mitigate the impacts to fire protection services. Placing an additional development in fire-prone areas will further burden already strained people and resources. Funding is already lacking for the increasing costs of fire suppression and property damage from wildfires in California; costs were over \$30 billion from 2010 to 2017, and the destruction from 2018's Camp Fire and Woolsey Fire will likely cost additional billions of dollars. And the draft RTP/SCS does not appear to provide a mechanism for developers to reimburse Cal Fire for the many millions (or billions) of dollars Cal Fire will likely expend when—not if—Central Coast and Southern California communities need to be defended from natural or human-caused wildfires in the vicinity. If costs are not sufficiently covered by the developers, California and federal residents end up paying in the form of fire insurance premiums and taxes that support Cal Fire and federal government subsidies and grants for homes in high risk areas. And these costs do not include other indirect/hidden costs associated with wildfires, such as the costs of doctors' appointments, medication, sick days taken from places of work, funerals, etc. As the costs of housing in California continues to increase, these costs will also continue to rise. Given the current lack of funding and shortage of firefighting personnel, any development in high fire-prone areas should be required to provide adequate funding and resources for firefighting operations and safety measures.

#### **E. The FEIR Fails to Provide Adequate Fire Safety Measures to Effectively Mitigate Wildfire Impacts.**

While the DEIR does provide WF-1 to mitigate the RTP/SCS's wildfire impacts (DEIR at ES-49), this measure does not constitute "all feasible mitigation measures," as required by CEQA. *First and foremost*, the primary policy to minimize impacts to wildfire risk should be to avoid placing human infrastructure in high fire-prone areas, yet this does not appear to be included in the mitigation measures (or the draft RTP/SCS). *Second*, developers should be required to go above and beyond current state and federal standards and building codes to further minimize wildfire risk. While enforceable defensible space regulations are a laudable goal, recommending that developers follow the law and build to code is insufficient. Although defensible space immediately adjacent to structures and ember-resistant vents and roofing may help make homes *fire-resistant*, even the best mitigation cannot make a development *fire-proof*. According to an analysis conducted in the aftermath of the Camp Fire, while 51% of homes built

to code survived the blaze, the remaining 49% did not (Kasler and Reese 2019). In addition, homes can add fuel to fires, and fire safety is not guaranteed.

There are other mitigation measures that should be implemented to minimize wildfire impacts sprawl development in high fire-prone areas. For example, external sprinklers with an independent water source would reduce flammability of structures (California Chaparral Institute 2018). Although external sprinklers are not required by law, water-protected structures are much less likely to burn compared to dry structures, yet the DEIR does not provide this in the recommended project level mitigation measures. The DEIR should require external sprinkler systems for any new development in wildfire zones. In addition, local solar power paired with batteries could reduce power flow (and therefore reduce extreme temperatures) in electricity lines, which would reduce the need for power outages during extreme weather conditions and provide power for communities when outages are necessary (Lee 2019). Michael Wara argues that solar power and batteries for homes and “microgrids” linking business districts would help make communities in high fire risk areas safer because it would provide backup power for medical devices, refrigerators, and the internet to run while allowing the main power grid to get shut down (Wara 2018).

Public safety threats are often exacerbated by infrastructure unable to accommodate the consequences of more human-caused fires at the wildland urban interface. Thus, it is imperative that adequate safety plans for residents and construction/maintenance workers that reflect real-world experience associated with wildfires in California are in place prior to an emergency. Notification systems may not function as expected during an emergency, and evacuation routes can get clogged with traffic quickly, endangering the lives of those trying to evacuate. In addition, the combination of smoke obscuring roads and signage, trees collapsing or being flung into roadways by the wind, and the emotional state of those fleeing for their lives can lead to deadly collisions and roadblocks. And survivors are left to cope with the death of loved ones, physical injuries, and emotional trauma from the chaos that wildfires have inflicted on their communities. These issues are heartbreakingly depicted in an article published in the Sacramento Bee on Oct 22, 2017 (Lundstrom et al. 2017).

It is important to note that even if an adequate evacuation plan is in place, in natural areas with high fire threat where fires have historically burned, a public safety or evacuation plan may not be enough to safeguard people and homes from fires. Having warning systems and evacuation routes in place is important for fire preparedness and fire safety, but these are not guaranteed to function when a fire occurs. And wildfires may ignite with little or no notice, and, as mentioned previously, in severe weather conditions, wind-driven fires can spread quickly—they can cover 10,000 hectares in one to two days as embers are blown ahead of the fires and towards adjacent fuels (e.g., flammable vegetation, structures) (Syphard et al. 2011). This occurred in the Camp Fire in Butte County, which spread at a rate of 80 hectares a minute (about one football field per second) at its fastest, and in its first 14 hours burned over 8,000 hectares (Sabalow et al. 2018). In these types of emergencies warning systems can be slow and ineffective at reaching all residents in harm’s way, and planned evacuation routes may not be sufficient. These issues were observed during the Camp Fire, which led to at least 85 deaths and 13,000 burned homes (Sabalow et al. 2018), as well as in last year’s Tubbs Fire in Sonoma County and Thomas Fire in Santa Cruz County and Ventura County, which led to more than 40

deaths and almost \$12 billion in property damage (Lundstrom et al. 2017; St. John 2017). The EIR must fully disclose the danger of fast-moving wildfires and mitigate the resulting impacts.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the DEIR for the RTP/SCS. We look forward to working with SC RTC to foster land use policy and growth patterns that promote wildlife movement and habitat connectivity and facilitate public health and safety. We again ask to meet with SC RTP staff or appropriate Board members to advance these recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact the Center with any questions at the email addresses listed below.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Reid-Wainscoat  
Campaigner  
Center for Biological Diversity  
660 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 1000  
Los Angeles, California, 90017  
[ereidwainscoat@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:ereidwainscoat@biologicaldiversity.org)



J.P. Rose  
Senior Attorney  
Center for Biological Diversity  
660 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 1000  
Los Angeles, California, 90017  
[jrose@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:jrose@biologicaldiversity.org)

## **References**

*(provided on via OneDrive link)*

- Aguilar R, Quesada M, Ashworth L, Herrerias-Diego Y, Lobo J (2008) Genetic consequences of habitat fragmentation in plant populations: Susceptible signals in plant traits and methodological approaches. *Mol Ecol* 17:5177–5188
- Ashton A, Lillis R, Ramirez W (2018) 249 nights away at California fires : Firefighter families cope with a ‘new normal.’ *Sacramento Bee*
- Balch JK, Bradley BA, Abatzoglou JT, Nagy RC, Fusco EJ, Mahood AL (2017) Human-started wildfires expand the fire niche across the United States. *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 114:2946–2951
- Barry JM, Elbroch LM, Aiello-lammens ME, Sarno RJ, Seelye L, Kusler A, Quigley HB (2019) Pumas as ecosystem engineers: ungulate carcasses support beetle assemblages in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. *Oecologia* 577–586
- Benítez-López A, Alkemade R, Verweij PA (2010) The impacts of roads and other infrastructure on mammal and bird populations: A meta-analysis. *Biol Conserv* 143:1307–1316
- Benson JF, Mahoney PJ, Sikich JA, Serieys LEK, Pollinger JP, Ernest HB, Riley SPD (2016) Interactions between demography, genetics, and landscape connectivity increase extinction probability for a small population of large carnivores in a major metropolitan area. *Proc R Soc B Biol Sci* 283:20160957
- Benson JF, Mahoney PJ, Vickers TW, Sikich JA, Beier P, Riley SPD, Ernest HB, Boyce WM (2019) Extinction vortex dynamics of top predators isolated by urbanization. *Ecol Appl* 29:e01868
- Bistinas I, Oom D, Sá ACL, Harrison SP, Prentice IC, Pereira JMC (2013) Relationships between human population density and burned area at continental and global scales. *PLoS One* 8:1–12
- Bowler PA (1989) Riparian woodland: An endangered habitat in southern California. *Proc 15th Annu Symp South Calif Bot* 3:80–97
- Bransford S, Medina J, Del Real JA (2018) Firefighters Reflect on a Job Now ‘Twice as Violent’. *New York Times*
- Brehme CS, Fisher RN (2020) Research to Inform Caltrans Best Management Practices for Reptile and Amphibian Road Crossings
- Brehme CS, Hathaway SA, Fisher RN (2018) An objective road risk assessment method for multiple species: ranking 166 reptiles and amphibians in California. *Landsc Ecol* 33:911–935
- Brehme CS, Tracey JA, Clenaghan LRMC, Fisher RN (2013) Permeability of roads to movement of scrubland lizards and small mammals. *Conserv Biol* 27:710–720
- Cahill AE, Aiello-Lammens ME, Fisher-Reid MC, Hua X, Karanewsky CJ, Ryu HY, Sbeglia GC, Spagnolo F, Waldron JB, Warsi O, Wiens JJ (2012) How does climate change cause extinction? *Proc R Soc B Biol Sci* 280:20121890
- Cal Fire (2019) Emergency Fund Fire Suppression Expenditures
- California Chaparral Institute (2018) Independent external sprinklers to protect your home during a wildfire
- Callahan M, Rossmann R, Schmitt W (2019) Winds pick up as PG&E shutoff enters second day. *Press Democr.*
- CBS San Francisco (2019) Power Outage Results In Multiple Crashes , Injuries At Santa Rosa Intersections. *CBS San Fr.*



- Ceia-Hasse A, Navarro LM, Borda-de-Água L, Pereira HM (2018) Population persistence in landscapes fragmented by roads: Disentangling isolation, mortality, and the effect of dispersal. *Ecol Modell* 375:45–53
- Chabria A, Luna T (2019) PG&E power outages bring darkness , stress and debt to California’s poor and elderly. *Los Angeles Times*
- Chen I-C, Hill JK, Ohlemüller R, Roy DB, Thomas CD (2011) Rapid range shifts of species associated with high levels of climate warming. *Science* (80- ) 333:1024–1026
- Crooks KR (2002) Relative sensitivities of mammalian carnivores to habitat fragmentation. *Conserv Biol* 16:488–502
- Cushman SA (2006) Effects of habitat loss and fragmentation on amphibians: A review and prospectus. *Biol Conserv* 128:231–240
- Cushman SA, McRae B, Adriaensen F, Beier P, Shirley M, Zeller K (2013) Biological corridors and connectivity. In: Macdonald DW, Willis KJ (eds) *Key Topics in Conservation Biology* 2, First Edit. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., pp 384–403
- Damschen EI, Brudvig LA, Burt MA, Jr RJF, Haddad NM, Levey DJ, Orrock JL, Resasco J, Tewksbury JJ (2019) Ongoing accumulation of plant diversity through habitat connectivity in an 18-year experiment. *Science* (80- ) 365:1478–1480
- Del Real JA, Kang I (2018) *California Today: The Increasing Strain on State Firefighters*. New York Times
- Delaney KS, Riley SPD, Fisher RN (2010) A rapid, strong, and convergent genetic response to urban habitat fragmentation in four divergent and widespread vertebrates. *PLoS One* 5:e12767
- Delfino RJ, Brummel S, Wu J, Stern H, Ostro B, Lipsett M, Winer A, Street DH, Zhang L, Tjoa T, Gillen DL (2009) The relationship of respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions to the southern California wildfires of 2003. *Occup Environ Med* 66:189–197
- Dellinger J (2019) Relationship between habitat and genetics in a wide-ranging large carnivore. Temecula, CA
- Dickson BG, Jennes JS, Beier P (2005) Influence of Vegetation, Topography, and Roads on Cougar Movement in Southern California. *J Wildl Manage* 69:264–276
- Environmental Law Institute (2003) Conservation thresholds for land use planners
- Ernest HB, Boyce WM, Bleich VC, May B, Stiver SJ, Torres SG (2003) Genetic structure of mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) populations in California. *Conserv Genet* 353–366
- Ernest HB, Vickers TW, Morrison SA, Buchalski MR, Boyce WM (2014) Fractured genetic connectivity threatens a Southern California puma (*Puma concolor*) population. *PLoS One* 9:
- Fellers GM and, Kleeman PM (2007) California Red-Legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*) Movement and Habitat Use : Implications for Conservation. *J Herpetol* 41:276–286
- Fry H, Dolan M, Luna T, Serna J (2019a) Gov. Newsom slams PG&E over ‘unacceptable’ power outages and failure to fix systems. *Los Angeles Times*
- Fry H, Miller L, Ormseth M, Serna J (2019b) Saddleridge fire explodes to 4 , 700 acres , burns 25 homes in San Fernando Valley. *Los Angeles Times*
- Goverde M, Schweizer K, Baur B, Erhardt A (2002) Small-scale habitat fragmentation effects on pollinator behaviour: Experimental evidence from the bumblebee *Bombus veteranus* on calcareous grasslands. *Biol Conserv* 104:293–299
- Governor Newsom’s Strike Force (2019) *Wildfires and Climate Change: California’s Energy Future*

- Greene D (2018) California Firefighters Battle Exhaustion. Natl. Public Radio
- Gunson K, Seburn D, Kintsch J, Crowley J (2016) Best Management Practices for Mitigating the Effects of Roads on Amphibian and Reptile Species at Risk in Ontario
- Gustafson KD, Gagne RB, Vickers TW, Riley SPD, Wilmers CC, Bleich VC, Pierce BM, Kenyon M, Drazenovich TL, Sikich JA, Boyce WM, Ernest HB (2018) Genetic source–sink dynamics among naturally structured and anthropogenically fragmented puma populations. *Conserv Genet* 20:215–227
- Gutierrez M (2018) California blazes tax budgets, firefighters : ‘Fatigue is starting to set in’.’ *SFChronicle*
- Gutierrez M, Cassidy M (2018) As California burns, volunteer firefighters become harder to find. *SFChronicle*
- Haddad NM, Brudvig LA, Clobert J, Davies KF, Gonzalez A, Holt RD, Lovejoy TE, Sexton JO, Austin MP, Collins CD, Cook WM, Damschen EI, Ewers RM, Foster BL, Jenkins CN, King AJ, Laurance WF, Levey DJ, Margules CR, Melbourne BA, Nicholls AO, Orrock JL, Song D, Townshend JR (2015) Habitat fragmentation and its lasting impact on Earth’s ecosystems. *Sci Adv* 1:1–9
- Heller NE, Zavaleta ES (2009) Biodiversity management in the face of climate change: A review of 22 years of recommendations. *Biol Conserv* 142:14–32
- Hernández L, Gafni M, Bauman A (2019) Moraga blaze 100% contained. *San Fr. Chron.*
- Hilty J, Worboys G, Keeley A, Woodley S, Lausche B, Locke H, Carr M, Pulsford I, Pittcock J, White W, Theobald D, Levine J, Reuling M, Watson J, Ament R, Tabor G (2020) Guidance for conserving connectivity through ecological networks and corridors. Gland, Switzerland
- Hilty JA, Merenlender AM (2004) Use of Riparian Corridors and Vineyards by Mammalian Predators in Northern California. *Conserv Biol* 18:126–135
- Jennings M (2018) Effects of Wildfire on Wildlife and Connectivity
- Jennings M, Lewison R (2013) Planning for Connectivity Under Climate Change: Using Bobcat Movement To Assess Landscape Connectivity Across San Diego County’s Open Space
- Jennings M, Zeller K (2017) Comprehensive Multi-species Connectivity Assessment and Planning for the Highway 67 Region of San Diego County, California
- Kantola T, Tracy JL, Baum KA, Quinn MA, Coulson RN (2019) Spatial risk assessment of eastern monarch butterfly road mortality during autumn migration within the southern corridor. *Biol Conserv* 231:150–160
- Kasler D, Reese P (2019) The weakest link: Why your house may burn while your neighbor’s survives the next wildfire. *Sacramento Bee*
- Keeley JE (2005) Fire as a threat to biodiversity in fire-type shrublands
- Keeley JE (2006) Fire management impacts on invasive plants in the western United States. *Conserv Biol* 20:375–384 . <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2006.00339.x>
- Keeley JE, Fotheringham CJ (2003) Impact of Past Present and Future Fire Regimes on North American Mediterranean Shrublands. In: *Fire and climatic change in temperate ecosystems of the Western Americas*. pp 218–262
- Keeley JE, Fotheringham CJ (2001) Historic fire regime in southern California shrublands. *Conserv Biol* 15:1536–1548
- Keeley JE, Fotheringham CJ, Morais M (1999) Reexamining fire suppression impacts on brushland fire regimes. *Science* (80- ) 284:1829–1832
- Keeley JE, Syphard AD (2018) Historical patterns of wildfire ignition sources in California ecosystems. *Int J Wildl Fire* 27:781

- Kilgo JC, Sargent RA, Chapman BR, Miller K V. (1998) Effect of stand width and adjacent habitat on breeding bird communities in bottomland hardwoods. *J Wildl Manage* 62:72–83
- Kociolek AV, Clevenger AP, St. Clair CC, Proppe DS (2011) Effects of Road Networks on Bird Populations. *Conserv Biol* 25:241–249
- Krishnakumar P, Welsh B, Murphy R (2019) Where SoCal Edison may shut o power in California. *Los Angeles Times*
- Krosby M, Theobald DM, Norheim R, Mcrae BH (2018) Identifying riparian climate corridors to inform climate adaptation planning. *PLoS One* 13:e0205156
- Künzli N, Avol E, Wu J, Gauderman WJ, Rappaport E, Millstein J, Bennion J, McConnell R, Gilliland FD, Berhane K, Lurmann F, Winer A, Peters JM (2006) Health effects of the 2003 Southern California wildfires on children. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 174:1221–1228
- Lee A (2019) My turn: Here’s how rooftop solar can combat wildfires. *CAL Matters*
- Lee JS, Ruell EW, Boydston EE, Lyren LM, Alonso RS, Troyer JL, Crooks KR, Vandewoude S (2012) Gene flow and pathogen transmission among bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) in a fragmented urban landscape. *Mol Ecol* 21:1617–1631
- Liu JC, Pereira G, Uhl SA, Bravo MA, Bell ML (2015) A systematic review of the physical health impacts from non- occupational exposure to wildfire smoke. *Environ Res* 136:120–132 . <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2014.10.015>.A
- Lohse KA, Newburn DA, Opperman JJ, Merenlender AM (2008) Forecasting relative impacts of land use on anadromous fish habitat to guide conservation planning. *Ecol Appl* 18:467–482
- Loss SR, Will T, Marra PP (2014) Estimation of bird-vehicle collision mortality on U.S. roads. *J Wildl Manage* 78:763–771
- Lundstrom M, Kasler D, Lillis R (2017) “It’s just luck - kismet.” Why some people lived and others died in California fires. *Sacramento Bee*
- Maclean IMD, Wilson RJ (2011) Recent ecological responses to climate change support predictions of high extinction risk. *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 108:12337–12342
- Marsh DM, Jaeger JAG (2015) Direct effects of roads on small animal populations. In: *Roads and ecological infrastructure: Concepts and applications for small animals*. pp 42–56
- Mcrae BH, Dickson BG, Keitt TH, Shah VB (2008) Using circuit theory to model connectivity in ecology, evolution, and conservation. *Ecology* 89:2712–2724
- Mcrae BH, Hall SA, Beier P, Theobald DM (2012) Where to restore ecological connectivity? Detecting barriers and quantifying restoration benefits. *PLoS One* 7:e52604
- Mitsch WJ, Wilson RF (1996) Improving the success of wetland creation and restoration with know-how, time, and self-design. *Ecol Appl* 6:16–17
- Moyle PB, Katz JVE, Quiñones RM (2011) Rapid decline of California’s native inland fishes: A status assessment. *Biol Conserv* 144:2414–2423
- Olson DH, Burnett KM (2013) Geometry of forest landscape connectivity: pathways for persistence. In: *Density Management in the 21st Century: West Side Story: Proceedings of the Density Management Workshop, 4-6 October 2011, Corvallis, Oregon*.
- Pacifici M, Visconti P, Butchart SHM, Watson JEM, Cassola FM, Rondinini C (2017) Species’ traits influenced their response to recent climate change. *Nat Clim Chang* 7:205–208
- Parmesan C (2006) Ecological and Evolutionary Responses to Recent Climate Change. *Annu Rev Ecol Evol Syst* 37:637–669
- Parmesan C, Yohe G (2003) A globally coherent fingerprint of climate change ipacts across natural systems. *Nature* 421:37–42
- Phuleria HC, Fine PM, Zhu Y, Sioutas C (2005) Air quality impacts of the October 2003

- Southern California wildfires. *J Geophys Res* 110: . <https://doi.org/10.1029/2004JD004626>
- Pinto N, Keitt TH (2008) Beyond the least-cost path: Evaluating corridor redundancy using a graph- theoretic approach. *Landsc Ecol* 24:253–266
- Radeloff VC, Helmers DP, Kramer HA, Mockrin MH, Alexandre PM, Bar-Massada A, Butsic V, Hawbaker TJ, Martinuzzi S, Syphard AD, Stewart SI (2018) Rapid growth of the US wildland-urban interface raises wildfire risk. *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 115:3314–3319
- Rappold AG, Cascio WE, Kilaru VJ, Stone SL, Neas LM, Devlin RB, Diaz-Sanchez D (2012) Cardio-respiratory outcomes associated with exposure to wildfire smoke are modified by measures of community health. *Environ Heal A Glob Access Sci Source* 11: . <https://doi.org/10.1186/1476-069X-11-71>
- Reid CE, Brauer M, Johnston FH, Jerrett M, Balme JR, Elliott CT (2016) Critical review of health impacts of wildfire smoke. *Environ Health Perspect* 124:1334–1343
- Riley SPD, Pollinger JP, Sauvajot RM, York EC, Bromley C, Fuller TK, Wayne RK (2006) A southern California freeway is a physical and social barrier to gene flow in carnivores. *Mol Ecol* 15:1733–1741
- Riley SPD, Serieys LEK, Pollinger JP, Sikich JA, Dalbeck L, Wayne RK, Ernest HB (2014) Individual behaviors dominate the dynamics of an urban mountain lion population isolated by roads. *Curr Biol* 24:1989–1994
- Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (2009) California Riparian Habitat Restoration Handbook
- Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (2004) The Riparian Bird Conservation Plan: A strategy for reversing the decline of riparian associated birds in California
- Ripple WJ, Beschta RL (2006) Linking a cougar decline , trophic cascade , and catastrophic regime shift in Zion National Park. *Biol Conserv* 133:397–408
- Ripple WJ, Beschta RL (2008) Trophic cascades involving cougar, mule deer, and black oaks in Yosemite National Park. *Biol Conserv* 141:1249–1256
- Ripple WJ, Estes JA, Beschta RL, Wilms CC, Ritchie EG, Hebblewhite M, Berger J, Elmhagen B, Letnic M, Nelson MP, Schmitz OJ, Smith DW, Wallach AD, Wirsing AJ (2014) Status and ecological effects of the world ’s largest carnivores. *Science* (80- ) 343:1241484
- Robins JD (2002) Stream Setback Technical Memo
- Root TL, Price JT, Hall KR, Schneider SH, Resenzweig C, Pounds JA (2003) Fingerprints of global warming on wild animals and plants. *Nature* 421:57–60
- Ruth TK, Elbroch LM (2014) The carcass chronicles : carnivory, nutrient flow, and biodiversity. *Wild Felid Monit* 14–19
- Sabalow R, Lillis R, Kasler D, Yoon-Hendricks A, Reese P (2018) ‘This fire was outrunning us ’: Surviving the Camp Fire took bravery, stamina and luck. *Sacramento Bee*
- Safford HD, Van de Water KM (2014) Using Fire Return Interval Departure (FRID) analysis to map spatial and temporal changes in fire frequency on National Forest lands in California. *Pacific Southwest Res Stn - Res Pap PSW-RP-266* 1–59 . <https://doi.org/Res. Pap. PSW-RP-266>
- Scheffers BR, De Meester L, Bridge TCL, Hoffmann AA, Pandolfi JM, Corlett RT, Butchart SHM, Pearce-Kelly P, Kovacs KM, Dudgeon D, Pacifici M, Rondinini C, Foden WB, Martin TG, Mora C, Bickford D, Watson JEM (2016) The broad footprint of climate change from genes to biomes to people. *Science* (80- ) 354:
- Semlitsch RD, Bodie JR (2003) Biological criteria for buffer zones around wetlands and riparian habitats for amphibians and reptiles. *Conserv Biol* 17:1219–1228

- Shilling FM (2020) Wildlife Behavior in Response to Traffic Disturbance Wildlife Behavior in Response to Traffic Disturbance
- Simon S (2018) Constant Wildfires Leave California Firefighters Strained. Natl. Public Radio
- Slabbekoorn H, Ripmeester EAP (2008) Birdsong and anthropogenic noise: implications and applications for conservation. *Mol Ecol* 17:72–83
- Smith JA, Suraci JP, Clinchy M, Crawford A, Roberts D, Zanette LY, Wilmers CC (2017) Fear of the human ‘super predator’ reduces feeding time in large carnivores. *Proc R Soc B Biol Sci* 284:20170433
- Smith JA, Wang Y, Wilmers CC (2015) Top carnivores increase their kill rates on prey as a response to human-induced fear. *Proc R Soc B Biol Sci* 282:
- St. John P (2017) Alarming failures left many in path of California wildfires vulnerable and without warning. *LA Times*
- Stillwater Sciences (2002) Napa River Basin Limiting Factors Analysis
- Syphard AD, Brennan TJ, Keeley JE (2018) Chaparral Landscape Conversion in Southern California. In: *Valuing Chaparral*. pp 323–346
- Syphard AD, Keeley JE, Brennan TJ (2011) Comparing the role of fuel breaks across southern California national forests. *For Ecol Manage* 261:2038–2048
- Syphard AD, Keeley JE, Massada AB, Brennan TJ, Radeloff VC (2012) Housing arrangement and location determine the likelihood of housing loss due to wildfire. *PLoS One* 7:e33954
- Syphard AD, Massada AB, Butsic V, Keeley JE (2013) Land use planning and wildfire : Development policies influence future probability of housing loss. *PLoS One* 8:e71708
- Syphard AD, Radeloff VC, Hawbaker TJ, Stewart SI (2009) Conservation threats due to human-caused increases in fire frequency in mediterranean-climate ecosystems. *Conserv Biol* 23:758–769
- Syphard AD, Radeloff VC, Keeley JE, Hawbaker TJ, Clayton MK, Stewart SI, Hammer RB, Syphard AD, Radeloff VC, Keeley JE, Hawbaker TJ, Stewart SI, Hammer RB (2007) Human influence on California fire regimes. *Ecol Soc Am* 17:1388–1402
- Syphard AD, Rustigian-romsos H, Mann M, Conlisk E, Moritz MA, Ackerly D (2019) The relative influence of climate and housing development on current and projected future fire patterns and structure loss across three California landscapes. *Glob Environ Chang* 56:41–55
- Trenham PC, Shaffer HB (2005) Amphibian upland habitat use and its consequences for population viability. *Ecol Appl* 15:1158–1168
- Trombulak SC, Frissell CA (2000) Review of ecological effects of roads on terrestrial and aquatic communities. *Conserv Biol* 14:18–30
- van der Ree R, Jaeger JAG, van der Grift EA, Clevenger AP (2011) Effects of roads and traffic on wildlife populations and landscape function: Road ecology is moving toward larger scales. *Ecol Soc* 16:48
- Vickers TW (2020) Final Report: Santa Ana Mountains to Eastern Peninsular Range Conservation Connectivity Infrastructure Planning Project for Interstate 15 and Closely Associated Roadways
- Vickers TW, Sanchez JN, Johnson CK, Morrison SA, Botta R, Smith T, Cohen BS, Huber PR, Ernest HB, Boyce WM (2015) Survival and mortality of pumas (*Puma concolor*) in a fragmented, urbanizing landscape. *PLoS One* 10:1–18
- Viswanathan S, Eria L, Diunugala N, Johnson J, Mc Clean C (2006) An analysis of effects of San Diego wildfire on ambient air quality. *J Air Waste Manag Assoc* 56:56–67 .

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10473289.2006.10464439>

- Wang Y, Smith JA, Wilmers CC (2017) Residential development alters behavior, movement, and energetics in a top carnivore. *PlosOne* 1–17
- Wara MW (2018) Op-Ed: There ' s a quick way to help prevent wildfires : Shut off the power grid. *Los Angeles Times*
- Warren R, Price J, Fischlin A, de la Nava Santos S, Midgley G (2011) Increasing impacts of climate change upon ecosystems with increasing global mean temperature rise. *Clim Change* 106:141–177
- Weinhold B (2011) Fields and forests in flames: Vegetation smoke and human health. *Environ Health Perspect* 119:A386–A393
- Wiens JJ (2016) Climate-related local extinctions are already widespread among plant and animal species. *PLoS Biol* 14:1–18
- Yap TA, Rose JP, Cummings B (2019) A Petition to List the Southern California/Central Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) of Mountain Lions as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA)

**From:** [Board Chair Friends of the Rail Trail](#)  
**To:** [info@ambag.org](#); [Heather Adamson](#); [mtwomey@ambag.org](#); [aberteaud@ambag.org](#)  
**Cc:** [2045 RTP](#); [Jacques Bertrand](#); [Sandy Brown](#); [Greg Caput](#); [Ryan Coonerty](#); [Zach Friend](#); [Renee Golder](#); [Tim Gubbins](#); [Felipe Hernandez](#); [Gine Johnson](#); [Randy Johnson](#); [Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson](#); [Manu Koenig](#); [Donna Lind](#); [Bruce McPherson](#); [Larry Pageler](#); [Guy Preston](#); [Dr. Rob Paul Quinn](#); [Mike Rotkin](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#); [Andy Schiffrin](#); [Sam Storey](#); [Derek Timm](#); [alnorthc@cabrillo.edu](#); [Eduardo Montesino](#); [Kristen Petersen](#)  
**Subject:** DRAFT 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 11:30:52 AM  
**Attachments:** [FORT - Comments on DRAFT 2045 RTP.pdf](#)

---

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments  
24580 Silver Cloud Court  
Monterey, CA 93940

RE: DRAFT 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy

Dear Members of the AMBAG Board of Directors:

Please accept the Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail (FORT) comments on the *DRAFT Santa Cruz County 2045 Regional Transportation Plan* as pertaining as well to the Goals and Policies, Performance Measures, and Project List in the *DRAFT 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan & the Sustainable Communities Strategy*.

In particular, FORT would like to highlight three paragraphs early in the attached letter as they embody our key comment on the Santa Cruz County *Draft RTP*, which applies as well as the *Draft MTP*:

*Global warming is already drastically changing our local and worldwide climate in ways that will cause social turmoil and much human suffering in the coming years. Locally, we are already familiar with multi-year droughts, horrific fires, and eroding shorelines. The science is irrefutable that GHG emissions are a primary cause of global warming and climate change.*

*The primary approaches that are used worldwide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation include improvements in vehicle technology and reduction in the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), primarily via public transportation investments. Yet the transportation option that was identified in the [Santa Cruz County] 2021 Transit Corridor Alternative Analysis & Rail Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS) as producing the greatest reduction in both VMT and GHG emissions, that is, electric light rail, is not given more than a passing reference in this draft RTP.*

*So, while our RTP goals are laudable and the challenge of global warming formidable, the draft RTP itself does not rise to the occasion. In fact, the Plan does not anywhere make the link between its extensive project list and how these projects will achieve the Plan's goals.*

Thank you very much for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Faina Segal  
Board Chair  
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail  
P.O.Box 1652, Capitola, CA 95010-1652  
[www.railandtrail.org](http://www.railandtrail.org) and [coastconnect.org](http://coastconnect.org)  
Cell: 831-331-6432



**From:** [Board Chair Friends of the Rail Trail](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#); [Jacques Bertrand](#); [Sandy Brown](#); [Greg Caput](#); [Ryan Coonerty](#); [Zach Friend](#); [Renee Golder](#); [Tim Gubbins](#); [Felipe Hernandez](#); [Gine Johnson](#); [Randy Johnson](#); [Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson](#); [Manu Koenig](#); [Donna Lind](#); [Bruce McPherson](#); [Eduardo Montesino](#); [Larry Pageler](#); [Kristen Petersen](#); [Guy Preston](#); [Dr. Rob Paul Quinn](#); [Mike Rotkin](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#); [Andy Schiffrin](#); [Sam Storey](#); [Derek Timm](#); [alnorthc@cabrillo.edu](mailto:alnorthc@cabrillo.edu)  
**Subject:** Comments on the 2045 DRAFT RTP  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 11:22:10 AM  
**Attachments:** [FORT - Comments on DRAFT 2045 RTP.pdf](#)

---

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

Please find attached the public comments on the draft 2045 RTP from the Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail.

Best,

Faina Segal  
Board Chair  
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail  
P.O.Box 1652, Capitola, CA 95010-1652  
[www.railandtrail.org](http://www.railandtrail.org) and [coastconnect.org](http://coastconnect.org)  
Cell: 831-331-6432



January 31, 2021

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1101 Pacific Ave., Suite 250  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Commissioners,

The Friends of Rail and Trail first want to thank the Commission staff for all the work they have put into developing the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). We are, however, disappointed in the minimal attention given to our Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) in the plan, the omission of updated funding sources, the disconnect between goals and projects, and the lack of vision for the fundamental changes needed to transform our transportation system into a more equitable and sustainable system. Accordingly, we offer the following comments for consideration in the final approved RTP:

### **1. How Projects Meet Goals**

The 2045 goals, targets and policies cited in Appendix C of the draft RTP provide an excellent overview of our hopes for a more energy-efficient and less congested future. They include state mandates to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transportation sources to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, and to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Global warming is already drastically changing our local and worldwide climate in ways that will cause social turmoil and much human suffering in the coming years. Locally, we are already familiar with multi-year droughts, horrific fires, and eroding shorelines. The science is irrefutable that GHG emissions are a primary cause of global warming and climate change.

The primary approaches that are used worldwide to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation include improvements in vehicle technology and reduction in the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), primarily via public transportation investments. Yet the transportation option that was identified in the 2021 Transit Corridor Alternative Analysis & Rail Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS) as producing the greatest reduction in both VMT and



GHG emissions, that is, electric light rail, is not given more than a passing reference in this draft RTP.

**So, while our RTP goals are laudable and the challenge of global warming formidable, the draft RTP itself does not rise to the occasion. In fact, the Plan does not anywhere make the link between its extensive project list and how these projects will achieve the Plan's goals.**

While many pages of the draft Plan include references to statewide sustainability, transit, and rail plans, our own public rail transit project on the RTC-owned coast rail line is highlighted only insomuch as it is "on the financially-unconstrained list of projects, due to the lack of identified and likelihood of available funding to the region for a passenger rail project." (p2-13)

It should be noted that most of the projects on the draft RTP's project list do not have funding sources identified during the project development stage. Yet, the rail transit project in particular, due to extensive analysis over the past decades, has over 60% of the estimated high-end capital cost identified as likely...quite unlike any of the Highway 1 widening projects on the Constrained Project List. Also, we're wondering how it happens, then, that NEW multi-million dollar Highway 1 projects are shown on the Constrained Project List without public discussion of **total** project costs or funding sources? [Hwy 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulders Freedom Blvd to State Park \$102M and Hwy 1: Reconstruct Bay Ave/Porter St and 41st Avenue Interchange \$14M.]

**FORT strongly encourages the Commission to recommit to its identified goals, targets and policies in the RTP, and to include, in the future, a constrained list of projects that can show evidence they will actually get us nearer to achieving those goals.**

## **2. Rail Planning**

In Chapter 1, the draft Plan identifies the crucial role that a planning document like the RTP serves: "planning . . . positions our community to receive funding for projects that require a well thought out plan and helps to develop collaboration on projects." Yet the Rail section in Chapter 2 includes a simple factual description of the SCBRL and the last 20 years of its acquisition and study but makes **no further reference to future planning of the branch line's use for passenger or freight service.**



The draft Plan cites multiple references made in regional and state transportation planning documents to our SCBRL and how that planning and coordination could lead to funding. These include:

Chapter 2 notes the inclusion of our SCBRL in the 2018 goals of the **California State Rail Plan**, including: “a new station in Pajaro/Watsonville, an analysis of connections between Santa Cruz, Monterey and the high-speed rail line at Gilroy, implementation planning for connecting Santa Cruz and Monterey to the statewide rail network at Gilroy, and establishment of hourly service by 2040, if recommended by the 2022 rail plan.” (p2-15)

It also notes that the **Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)** is “actively pursuing rail service that includes local service as well as greater regional access...local light rail service would connect the cities of Seaside and Monterey to Castroville for connections to Pajaro station and the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond.” (p2-15)

Although not referenced in the draft Plan, our local **Draft AMBAG 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan** says in its passenger rail section, “rail projects are an important component of the regional transportation network that enhance mobility opportunities for the region’s diverse population and lead to economic vitality for the region. The planned rail services complement each other and result in reducing auto trips on regional highways . . . The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) are working to bring rail service to Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, so that residents can use rail to travel to jobs, education and entertainment.” (p2-11)

The Draft RTP’s Chapter 3 section on Goods Movement briefly mentions that our SCBRL “is also used for freight service”, and then goes on to delineate the importance of rail for freight movement, “Upward pricing pressure on the trucking industry . . . as well as safety and environmental concerns, have prompted the region’s freight and transportation stakeholders to look for alternatives for transporting goods. The rail system is one of the main options available.” (P3-15)

References in other regional and state planning documents to the use of our SCBRL for statewide freight movement are also cited:



“The 2018 California State Rail Plan and the 2020 California Freight Mobility Plan stress the importance of short line railroads, including the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. . . AMBAG(‘s). . . U.S. 101 Central Coast California Freight study in 2016 . . . **recommends upgrading the rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Line to Federal Rail Administration Class 2 rail**, allowing freight train speeds of up to 25 mph on sections in Santa Cruz County in order to improve freight connectivity to other regions in California and nationwide.” (p2-15)

Given the importance of planning in being successful in competing for public project funding, **the Commission should include in the RTP additional discussion of the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS) evaluation of transit investment options and its selection of electric passenger rail as the locally preferred alternative for the SCBRL.**

### **3. Funding**

The project list fails to directly connect back to goals, targets, and policies identified. This is especially true when it comes to the SCBRL.

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that the US Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) website calls “a generational investment in America’s intermodal transportation system of which freight and intercity passenger rail are an integral part. . . will provide unprecedented federal funding for rail improvement projects in America. Over the next five years, that means greatly expanding existing FRA programs and creating new programs to enhance our nation’s rail network. The bipartisan infrastructure law includes \$102 billion in total rail funding, including \$66 billion from advanced appropriations, and \$36 billion in authorized funding.” The IIJA also includes \$27 billion just for bridge repairs.

This funding will significantly change the focus on rail throughout the country and specifically in California with its current emphasis on rail through the State Rail Plan. California alone is in line to receive \$4.2 billion from the IIJA.

And yet Chapter 5 of the draft RTP on funding completely down plays this dramatic new funding source, saying “as part of negotiations for a multiyear federal infrastructure plan, congress adopted a new federal transportation act (Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America or INVEST act) which is expected to increase funding for



transportation. Details on what this means for projects in Santa Cruz County will be integrated into RTP updates once available.” (p5-2,3)

We also want to call to your attention that later in Chapter 5, there is an outdated discussion of federal funds for infrastructure, saying “while Congress and the President agree that the nation’s infrastructure is a priority, there has been no consensus around specific programs that would be funded or how to pay for transportation system projects.” (p5-6)

The Plan’s description of Unconstrained Projects is: “projects that cannot be implemented over the next 25 years unless there are significant changes in the amount of local, state, and federal funding available for transportation.” Given the magnitude of increased funding that will be available over the next 5 years from both this new federal funding and resulting impact on state funding, we feel rail projects now definitely meet this definition of “significant changes.”

**We ask the Commission to revise this section to provide more current and complete description of the IJJA.** We realize the final passage of this legislation may have happened after the current draft of the RTP was completed, but it is sufficiently important to make these revisions now before the RTP is adopted. It should also specifically be mentioned in the Rail section of the Plan.

**Given the magnitude of increased funding that will be available over the next 5 years, we also ask the RTC to move the following rail projects from the unconstrained list to the constrained list.**

- **Public Transit on Watsonville-Santa Cruz Rail Corridor - RTC-P02 - \$825,000 unconstrained**
- **Rail line: Freight Service Upgrades - RTC-P41 - \$25,000 unconstrained**
- **Recreational Rail Infrastructure - RTC 25 - \$5,340 unconstrained**

### **Conclusion**

We find it shortsighted for the Commission to adopt a twenty-year planning document that pays relatively little attention to one of the three key transit corridors identified in the RTC’s 2019 Unified Corridor Study - the Santa Cruz Rail Branch Line. In doing so, this Draft RTP ignores the 20 years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in planning that have gone into refining successful project outcomes in the most underutilized transportation corridor in our county.



The Commission also ignores the findings of its regional and statewide planning agencies that specifically incorporate the SCRBL into their future plans, thereby increasing the possibility of significant capital funding for rail transit at a time of unprecedented new funding for passenger rail.

Finally, the Draft RTP includes excellent goals on reducing greenhouse gasses, but then does not link the project list to those goals, and does not include meaningful Constrained funding for rail projects that studies have shown would have the greatest impact on reducing greenhouse gasses and meeting the Plan's goals.

The people of Santa Cruz County deserve a better vision for future transportation in which everyone can affordably, reliably, safely and sustainably reach their destinations — a forward-thinking vision centered squarely on the needs of working people, making our communities more connected and leaving no one behind. The immediate and catastrophic threat of global warming demands we challenge the car-centric status quo, revisit core assumptions and policies underlying our transportation system, and invest in transportation solutions that will help us achieve social justice and environmental sustainability.

We hope these oversights will be corrected in the final adopted document and all future revisions.

Sincerely,

Faina Segal, Board Chair  
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail  
Email: [executive@railandtrail.org](mailto:executive@railandtrail.org)



**From:** [Kaew, Samaporn Tinyanont](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 11:14:43 AM  
**Attachments:** [SCCRTC 2045 comments Tinyanont.pdf](#)

---

Dear whom it may concern,

Please find attached my comments to the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.

Best regards,  
Samaporn Tinyanont

Dear Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

I am writing in support of the preservation of the existing, and RTC-owned, Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and its utilization as a transit corridor with passenger rail service. Doing so will reduce Santa Cruz county's car dependence, increase mobility without increased congestion, and connect us to the rest of the state through the upcoming rail network.

**A case for rail preservation.** Imagine Santa Cruz where you can hop on a train, weave your way through the beautiful redwoods and majestic landscape of the Santa Cruz Mountains, and arrive in San Jose ready to connect to the rest of the bay area. This was a reality in the first half of the 20th century. Since then we have abandoned this reality in pursuit of the glamor of automobiles. With Hwy 17 constructed, train ridership declined and the line was dismantled with their tunnels sealed by dynamites after a landslide in 1940 [1, 2], leaving only the southern section to Felton, which is continued to be served by the Roaring Camp Railroads.

While highways and automobiles define the American experience of the latter half of the 20th century, the continued population growth and changing travel pattern started to reveal the weaknesses of the system. Many people end up spending good parts of their days trapped behind their wheels navigating the crawling traffic. Today, there is no argument that Hwy 17 is well beyond its capacity serving both commuters on weekdays and vacationers on weekends. Should the 1900s rail infrastructure have been preserved, passenger service on that corridor would provide travelers with an efficient alternative mode of transportation, providing them with a traffic-free option to travel between Santa Cruz and the Bay Area.

With most of the rails ripped off and tunnels sealed or abandoned for almost a century, reactivating the Santa Cruz Mountain corridor will be extremely costly, with the last feasibility study putting the cost around \$1 billion in 1994 (\$1.8 billion today) [3]. Removing the old rail corridor with the promise of reinstallation tomorrow is anything but feasible, and those **Let us not repeat the mistake of the past and remove another rail corridor that is very much functional and that is already publicly owned.**

**Rail as part of the solution to our housing crisis.** Housing cost in Santa Cruz is one of the most expensive *in the world*. \$2000 can get you a one-bedroom apartment that is readily available in virtually any market in the US, including large expensive cities like New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The same cannot be said for Santa Cruz. Solving this crisis will involve many factors, **but equitable transit including rails is a part of the solution.**

First, passenger rail service will allow us to build more housing units further from places of employment, along the **existing** rail corridor, without adding more traffic to our already taxed highways. The foremost argument opposing new housing units is that they would make traffic worse. **Rails will allow us to build more housing without adding cars to the roads.** Second, passenger rail service will allow the city of Santa Cruz to reclaim land currently spent on surface parking lots in areas that would otherwise be prime housing locations. Specifically, **the Broadwalk and/or 100 Beach St. surface parking lots can easily be redeveloped into**

**mixed-use housing-commercial units, generating tax revenue to the city.** Visiting drivers can instead park further away from the city, and take the train to Broadwalk and the beach. This would also allow the visitors to support local businesses elsewhere in Santa Cruz, and not just the Broadwalk. Lastly, passenger rails will provide employment opportunities in Santa Cruz county, from operation, maintenance and beyond.

**Issues with the 2045 vision.** The current draft of the 2045 vision **vastly downplays** the potential contribution rails can have in Santa Cruz county. The discussions of rails' role in the next decades in Santa Cruz is almost non-existing. This lack of details shows the RTC's lack of commitment to this mode of transportation. Further, Appendix E lists passenger rail service as a single item, making it seem like a huge expense, while different road maintenance and construction projects get their own item. It is crucial to provide a more comprehensive cost comparison between passenger rail service and road infrastructure maintenance.

I advocate for a much more expanded discussion of roles that passenger rails can play in Santa Cruz county in 2030s and 2040s. Let's make this document truly a vision, and not just a prediction of continued status quo. Up and down California, all cities big and small are expanding their rail network to accommodate the future. Los Angeles, a place I called home for 10 years, realized its mistake of tearing out its extensive rail networks in the 1960s, and is now relaying the tracks at a great cost, almost exactly retracing the old routes [4]. Let's not repeat the mistake of the 20th century. Vision 2045 should advocate for the preservation and utilization of passenger rails in Santa Cruz county. Perhaps, the future will even call for an expansion of rails, serving more corridors and/or providing energy efficient, traffic-free transits to Santa Clara Valley and beyond.

Best Regards,  
Samaporn Tinyanont

[1] <https://www.abandonedrails.com/south-pacific-coast-railroad>

[2] <https://www.kqed.org/news/11869346/the-story-behind-those-old-train-tunnels-in-the-santa-cruz-mountains>

[3] [https://www.bayrailalliance.org/files/library/Santa Cruz-Los Gatos Rail Corridor study.pdf](https://www.bayrailalliance.org/files/library/Santa_Cruz-Los_Gatos_Rail_Corridor_study.pdf)

[4] <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/1/17/las-lost-transit>

**From:** [Deborah Molina](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Future Santa Cruz  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 10:33:51 AM

---

Dear RTC members-

I envision a Santa Cruz where people continue to value the beauty of where we live, and choose to live active lives. I support having a Greenway bike and pedestrian path along the railroad corridor as I believe that will enhance and enrich our county for all residents. We need a continuous trail that is not diverted onto busy surface streets. Communities that have turned their rails into trails have increased tourism and small business opportunities. A bicycle and pedestrian Greenway would improve safety, save vast amounts of money, including future taxes, improve the environment and get folks out of their cars.

We need to invest in our Metro bus system by increasing routes and times. Buses get people where they need to go, on an infrastructure that is already in place, at a fraction of the cost of a train. Currently there is no train infrastructure and it wouldn't get people where they need to go (unless they then take a bus!). Tickets on a bus are much cheaper than a train ticket would be (even with tax payer subsidies), which is far more equitable.

If we add an HOV lane to Highway 1, buses could move through traffic faster and make it a reasonable and efficient commuter option.

I look forward to a future where we continue to highly value our community's beauty, and all people are able to benefit from the incredible asset of a Greenway bringing our community together.

Thank you!  
Deb Molina  
District 1

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Dianne](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Draft Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Sunday, January 30, 2022 5:49:26 PM

---

## Commissioners and Staff:

After many years devoted to acquisition, study, public hearings and investment in analysis resulting in determination that electric light rail is the best use for our rail corridor, why isn't our SC Branch Rail Line given a higher level of importance and detail in the Draft RTP? It almost seems to be missing in sections focusing on future plans and projects!

Electric light passenger rail will definitely be needed as the County population grows in the coming years. Roads won't suffice, even for buses. As you know, people in cars and trucks hate sitting in traffic. They can't afford the time. And it's only going to get a lot worse.

State and Federal transportation departments are strongly encouraging passenger rail expansion.... and they are FUNDING IT! We are so fortunate to already own our rail corridor. We can be near shovel-ready as 100's of millions of dollars get allocated to regions where planning for future light rail is underway.

Electric passenger rail needs a much more thorough description in the Draft LRP, including up to date funding possibilities, like the new Federal Infrastructure Act and the State Rail Plan.

Please keep me informed about LRP revisions and RTC decisions on this matter.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Dianne Dryer

Thurber Lane, SC

**From:** [Barry Scott](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Comments re: 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Sunday, January 30, 2022 4:17:03 PM  
**Attachments:** [CRSC CCC RTP Jan 2022.pdf](#)

---

Dear Commissioners and others,

Please find below and attached my comments relating to the Draft 2045 Regional Transportation plan:

**Barry Scott**  
**Coastal Rail Santa Cruz**  
**Aptos, CA**

### **Comments: draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan for Santa Cruz County**

**General comment: wildfire and other natural disaster vulnerability context.** Roads and highways alone are incapable of providing adequate transportation services in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the devastating effects of natural disasters including wildfires, earthquakes, landslides and other catastrophes. Prevention and recovery vehicles require hardened freight-capable rail infrastructure so that we are not completely dependent on roads and highways.

**Our freight rail infrastructure, therefore, must not be compromised in any fashion.** We must maintain our railroads and bridges and trestles to the current freight-capable standard as promised to the state and to the community as part of the purchase of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line in 2012.

Please read this letter sent to Supervisor McPherson and published in the San Lorenzo Valley Post:

<https://slvpost.com/slv-fire-officials-respond-to-rtc-oppose-forced-abandonment-of-the-felton-branch-line/>

January 26, 2022

#### **Dear Supervisor McPherson and members of the SCCRTC:**

We write you today to urge you not to proceed with any efforts to abandon freight service on the Felton Branch Rail Line or the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. These rail lines ensure there is a rail connection for Santa Cruz County and the rest of California, which may be critical in providing an essential route to the San Lorenzo Valley and other areas during future fire emergencies related to climate change, severe drought and catastrophic wildfires.

New technologies and innovative solutions to climate-driven emergencies are in development in California and beyond. For example, fire trains are beginning to see use to help fight major wildfires. This was the case in Northern California during the 2021 Dixie Fire. Fire trains use water and retardant, hauled by rail in tanker cars. The trains also include firefighting professionals who battle wildfires from the train, helping to protect watersheds and critical infrastructure.

Freight use abandonment of either rail line will lead to railbanking, which would result in

tearing out the tracks, thus eliminating a potentially critical tool in the years ahead as we learn to adapt to the new realities of climate change.

As you may be aware, there are areas of the Santa Cruz Mountains that are only accessed via the rail line, such as within Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park and the Pogonip open space area.

Coupled with new technologies, such as fire trains that are under study in California, is major new funding for wildfire prevention and protection that is being developed by both the state and federal governments. It is important for Santa Cruz County to maximize options for future resources and to not get left behind in funding and policy decisions that could potentially benefit our region.

**We urge you to maintain the Felton Branch Rail Line and the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line as critical infrastructure for our community.**

Sincerely,

Robert Gray, Fire Chief, Felton Fire District

Dan Walters, Fire Chief, Zayante Fire District

Stacie Brownlee, Fire Chief, Ben Lomond Fire District

Mark Bingham, Fire Chief, Boulder Creek Fire District

Jim Anderson, Vice Chair, Felton Fire District

Bob Locatelli, Fire Director, Boulder Creek Fire District

Sam Robustelli, Fire Director, Boulder Creek Fire District

**General comments: coastal public access context.** The California Coastal Act mandates that maximum opportunities for public access to the coast shall be provided, subject to several common sense considerations.

One of the best-known public access features of the region is the partially complete Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST), part of the California Coastal Trail (CCT) network. The MBSST is envisioned to eventually provide for both a bikeway and a pedestrian route, between Pacific Grove and Davenport. The 2045 RTP represents a highly appropriate opportunity to prioritize completion of the MBSST, as well as connecting CCT segments. To the extent that it will encourage walking and bicycles as preferred commute modes, this will help communities meet their GHG goals consistent with SB 375 (and Coastal Act Sec. 30253 regarding air quality, minimizing energy consumption, and vehicle miles traveled). As a matter of public policy, completion of the MBSST/CCT will be an asset for both public recreation and public health, for our region's tourism economy and for supporting sustainable communities.

**Efforts to modify any part of the trail plans involving deactivation or other modification of the active rail line threaten the entire MBSST project and risk cost overruns and delays.**

### **Protection of our existing Freight Rail Network:**

The AMBAG region's rail corridors-including Amtrak's Coast Line, as well as the dormant Monterey Branch Line (MBL) and limited use Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL) are considered valuable supplements to the roadway system. This applies to rail's capacity to move freight as

well as people. It has been posited that every rail car can move the same tonnage as four highway big rigs (CSX website; SCCRTC hearing of 11/8/2018).

**Therefore, to the extent that a functioning rail freight system exists, it proportionately can protect the capacity of the roadway system for all users. Thus, rail lines can represent an economical, GHG-efficient mode for certain types of freight movement-and, for getting the public to the coast (and home again).**

**Rail lines: suggested additional treatment in the 2045 RTP text:** Improvement and better use of the region's rail corridors could be amplified in the RTP. In particular, consideration should be given to the role that at least some of the region's rail corridors might play in meeting Coastal Act policies promoting mass transit and the minimization of energy use, along with SB 375 requirements regarding minimization of GHG impacts. We also foresee a need for thoughtful advance planning for rail facilities' adaptation to sea level rise impacts, beyond 2045. Accordingly, we recommend that the following rail-related topics receive specific treatment and priority in the RTP:

- Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL). This 32-mile line was recently acquired by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC). The RTP should expand its discussion of this corridor for maximizing its ability to enhance public access in light of the above-referenced Coastal Act objectives, including as appropriate for coastal lateral access (as a strand of the MBSST), commuting, and freight transportation.
- Santa Cruz. Big Trees & Pacific Railway. The AMBAG 2040 MTP/SCS appropriately includes a discussion of the existing freight and passenger excursion train operation that extends from Felton (Roaring Camp) through the scenic San Lorenzo River gorge, connecting to the SCBL at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. Although shown on the draft CSRP map of short line freight operations (draft CSRP Exhibit 6.2), there is no accompanying discussion. We hope that the RTP includes discussion of the Felton Line at least for regional planning purposes.

References in other regional and state planning documents to the use of our SCBRL for statewide freight movement are also cited:

“The 2018 California State Rail Plan and the 2020 California Freight Mobility Plan stress the importance of short line railroads, including the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. . . AMBAG('s). . . U.S. 101 Central Coast California Freight study in 2016 . . . **recommends upgrading the rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Line to Federal Rail Administration Class 2 rail**, allowing freight train speeds of up to 25 mph on sections in Santa Cruz County in order to improve freight connectivity to other regions in California and nationwide.” (p2-15)

Given the importance of planning in being successful in competing for public project funding, **the Commission should include in the RTP additional discussion of the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study (TCAA/RNIS) evaluation of transit investment options and its selection of electric passenger rail as the locally preferred**



**alternative for the SCBRL.**

### **3. Funding**

The project list's failure to directly connect back to goals, targets, and policies identified. This is especially true when it comes to the SCBRL.

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that the US Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) website calls "a generational investment in America's intermodal transportation system of which freight and intercity passenger rail are an integral part. . . will provide unprecedented federal funding for rail improvement projects in America. Over the next five years, that means greatly expanding existing FRA programs and creating new programs to enhance our nation's rail network. The bipartisan infrastructure law includes \$102 billion in total rail funding, including \$66 billion from advanced appropriations, and \$36 billion in authorized funding." The IIJA also includes \$27 billion just for bridge repairs.

This funding will significantly change the focus on rail throughout the country and specifically in California with its current emphasis on rail through the State Rail Plan. California alone is in line to receive \$4.2 billion from the IIJA.

The Plan's description of Unconstrained Projects is: "projects that cannot be implemented over the next 25 years unless there are significant changes in the amount of local, state, and federal funding available for transportation." Given the magnitude of increased funding that will be available over the next 5 years from both this new federal funding and the resulting impact on state funding, we feel rail projects now definitely meet this definition of "significant changes."

**Funding: We ask the Commission to revise this section to provide a more current and complete description of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.** We realize the final passage of this legislation may have happened after the current draft of the RTP was completed, but it is sufficiently important to make these revisions now before the RTP is adopted. It should also specifically be mentioned in the Rail section of the Plan.

**Given the magnitude of increased funding that will be available over the next 5 years, we also ask the RTC to move the following rail projects from the unconstrained list to the constrained list.**

- **Public Transit on Watsonville-Santa Cruz Rail Corridor - RTC-P02 - \$825,000 unconstrained**
- **Rail line: Freight Service Upgrades - RTC-P41 - \$25,000 unconstrained**
- **Recreational Rail Infrastructure - RTC 25 - \$5,340 unconstrained**

### **Conclusion**

We find it shortsighted for the Commission to adopt a twenty-year planning document that pays relatively little attention to one of the three key transit corridors in the County - the Santa Cruz Rail Branch Line. In doing so, the Commission almost ignores the 20 years and

hundreds of thousands of dollars in planning that have gone into the study of that transit corridor.

The Commission also ignores the findings of its regional and statewide planning agencies that specifically incorporate the SCRBL into their future plans, thereby increasing the possibility of future funding for rail transit options at a time of unprecedented funding for rail.

Finally, the RTP includes excellent goals on reducing greenhouse gases, but then does not link their project list to those goals, and does not include in the identified projects, key rail projects that could have the greatest impact on reducing greenhouse gases and meeting the Plan's goals.

Sincerely,

Barry Scott

--

**Barry Scott**

**Office: 831.612.6574**

**Mobile: 209.482.5663**

**From:** [Jan Keith](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Public comments on RTC plan  
**Date:** Sunday, January 30, 2022 9:48:51 AM

---

Hello,

I am many of our county residents DEMAND the right to vote on this rail/trail plan!!

This affects all of our lives, and our pocketbooks, our peace of mind, etc. etc.

PLEASE reconsider moving ahead with any physical actions on these plans until you have the approval of the majority of voters/payers of this plan!!

Otherwise, we will need to petition the removal of the RTC committee and replace you with elected representatives.

Janice Keith  
La Selva Beach, CA

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

CALTRANS DISTRICT 5  
50 HIGUERA STREET  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401-5415  
PHONE (805) 835-6490  
FAX (805) 549-3329  
TTY 711  
[www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/)



Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

January 26, 2022

Mr. Guy Preston  
Executive Director  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC)  
1523 Pacific Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Preston:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Caltrans supports SCCRTC's sustainable transportation goals that benefit People, Planet, and Prosperity. We appreciate SCCRTC planning efforts towards developing a regional vision that aims to address climate change, enhance system performance, reliability, improve active transportation, and advance equity & livability in all communities. Caltrans also commends SCCRTC for providing a robust discussion of the region, as well as working with the other local agencies to develop a comprehensive and coordinated long range plan.

Caltrans values our partnership with SCCRTC, and we look forward to future collaborative work to advance the goals laid out in the 2045 RTP. Detailed comments are included in the enclosure. If you have any questions, please contact Gus Alfaro at (805) 835-6490 or via email at [gustavo.alfaro@dot.ca.gov](mailto:gustavo.alfaro@dot.ca.gov)

Sincerely,

Orchid Monroy-Ochoa on behalf of:  
Scott Eades  
Deputy District Director  
Planning and Local Assistance

Enclosure

c: Jelani Young, Caltrans ORIP

**Enclosure**  
**SCCRTC 2045 Draft RTP**  
**Comments by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)**

<b>Page #(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
General Comments	<p>The Office of Regional and Community Planning (ORCP) would like SCCRTC to ensure that the RTP Checklist is accurate and encompasses all the pages in the RTP that meet the corresponding requirements.</p> <p>It is hard to determine what is short-term and what is long term strategies and policies. Please delineate long-term versus short-term more clearly.</p> <p>Please include a clear description of project intent and a need statement at the beginning of the document. Currently this requirement is found in Appendix E.</p>
Modal Section of RTP Checklist	Check and revise all the pages referenced in the checklist for this section.
Programming and Operations Section of RTP Checklist	Check and revise all the pages referenced in the checklist for this section.
Financial Section of RTP Checklist	Appendix G is referenced for this requirement, but its is actually Appendix F. Please revise.
ES-2	In sentence starting with "In 2012, the RTC became owner" please change to, "In 2012, with State funding sponsorship, the RTC became owner..."
1-2	Last sentence above System Preservation, change "chaining" to "changing"

**Enclosure**  
**SCCRTC 2045 Draft RTP**  
**Comments by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)**

1-4	Suggest adding source of 2020 Collision Facts.
1-5	No mention of the SHOPP in the 2020-2024 SHSP. Suggest rewording this sentence. Include 5 Es and propose a sentence that reads: "These include education, enforcement, engineering, emergency response, and emerging technologies, led by a coalition of State, local transportation agency partners, CHP enforcement and police departments, health service agencies, and public works departments."
1-7	Suggest referencing state statistic in CAPTI. 40% of GHG attributable to transportation in CA.
2-2	The first example cited, adding new travel lanes, would not be funded through the SHOPP regardless of funding availability. The current narrative suggests that funding limitations are the main reason Caltrans can't complete this type of project through the SHOPP. This section could be revised to describe that most of the SHOPP budget is dedicated to maintenance, and there is limited funding for operations. In other words, we advise removing "adding new travel lanes" entirely.
2-3	If available, consider citing benefits of FSP; Remove the reference to TCRs on the D5 website...these were removed due to ADA compliance
2-12	Please notify State as a sponsor of SCBRL.

**Enclosure**  
**SCCRTC 2045 Draft RTP**  
**Comments by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)**

2-13	If applicable, cite that other projects included in the Constrained list do not preclude the ability to implement passenger rail in the future.
2-16	<p>Fig 2.5 please update the following names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Altamont Corridor (not Commuter) Express ✓</li><li>- the San Jose to Sacramento "Amtrak" line should be changed to Capitol Corridor ✓</li><li>- the Central Valley "Amtrak" line should be changed to San Joaquin's ✓</li><li>- HSR should be labeled between Gilroy and SF ✓</li><li>- Anything south of San Jose can be called "Salinas Extension" or "Amtrak long-distance" ✓</li><li>-Suggest adding color legend. ✓</li></ul>
2-17	On page 2-17 please remove the last part about Coast Daylight. Coast Daylight as has been previously imagined does not align with the State Rail Plan. Suggest rewording to: additional network integration studies have identified future increased service between the SF BAY Area and Los Angeles via SLO along the Coast route. The future Pajaro station will be served.
2-18	Please add another image for the established 2040 vision for the state rail network to supplement the narrative on the State Rail Plan. This can be found on Page 9, among other locations, within the plan: <a href="https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/rail-mass-transportation/documents/rail-plan/0-executive-symmarycsrpfinal.pdf">https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/rail-mass-transportation/documents/rail-plan/0-executive-symmarycsrpfinal.pdf</a>

**Enclosure**  
**SCCRTC 2045 Draft RTP**  
**Comments by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)**

3-8	Please replace "windy" with "winding" to avoid confusion; Please remove "limited access points" - including it in the current section conveys that limited access is related to congestion, but our access management plan found the opposite, finding that reducing access points would help maintain safety and decrease congestion.
5-1	Introduction: In the 2nd paragraph, there is an additional line that separates "priorities for the constrained funds and work with the state and federal" to "representatives to identify"
5-2	State Revenues: Revise "adding funding" to "added funding" in 2nd sentence.
5-7	Other potential revenues: Suggest revising "examples of some of funding mechanisms" to "examples of some funding mechanisms"
6-2	Are both constrained and un-constrained projects analyzed in the Travel Demand Model, or is just the constrained projects?
6-3	1st paragraph – Revise "constrained project lists" to "constrained projects list"
6-5	Goods Movement: Revise to "511 Traveler Information" ; Goal 2 - Improve Safety: Suggest deleting "These programs include" and revising the previous sentence to "The 2045 RTP continues investing in the following programs...."
6-7	Highway Maintenance: Suggest revising "current highway system" to "current state highway system"



**Enclosure**  
**SCCRTC 2045 Draft RTP**  
**Comments by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)**

7-1	It may be helpful to define "bikeway" to avoid confusion. We assume the definition refers to all bike route classes but some may interpret it as just Class 1.
Appendix E:	Project CT-P63 - Current total SHOPP programming is \$16,851; Project CT-P62 - Current total SHOPP programming is \$19,962; Project CT-P59 - Current total SHOPP programming is \$29,047; Project CT-P60 - Current total SHOPP programming is \$14,435; Please ensure that all Non-SHOPP projects are moved into other Various Agency category.
Page 250 of 278 (Appendix E)	Suggest adding project EA # references 05-1C733 (Bay/Porter) and 05-C734 (Freedom-State Park)

**From:** [Ali Azarchehr](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Highway 17 Cutoff Area Interchange - 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2022 3:15:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf](#)

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Laurel Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 has become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. -

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years -

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including: Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel

Those who commute Highway 17 every day

Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities

The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicles slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access

Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,  
Ali Azarchehr

**From:** [Aiyman Hadi](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Cutoff Area Interchange project  
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2022 12:28:08 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 had become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. -

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years -

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including: Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel

Those who commute Highway 17 every day

Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities

The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,

--

**Thank you,**

**Aiyman Hadi**

Head of Digital Marketing

**T** +1 650 784 5308

**From:** [Zaki Hussain](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Interchange Project: 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2022 12:13:58 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 had become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. - <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years - <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including:

- Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families

Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel.

- Those who commute Highway 17 every day
- Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities
- The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to

install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,

Zaki Hussain

--

Zaki Hussain

408.891.6591

[zakiahussain@gmail.com](mailto:zakiahussain@gmail.com)

**From:** [Mohammad Zarghami](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Overdue project  
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2022 12:10:33 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 had become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. -

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years -

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including: Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel

Those who commute Highway 17 every day

Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities

The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.



This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,

--

Dr. Mohammad Reza Zarghami B.S., D.C.

**From:** [Asad Hussain](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Hallo?  
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2022 12:07:59 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List:

<https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 had become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. -

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>.

And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years -

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>.

It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including:

Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families  
Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel

Those who commute Highway 17 every day

Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities

The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17.

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create “conflict points” where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,  
Asad

**From:** [Meisam Movassat](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Interchange Project - Please Read  
**Date:** Saturday, January 22, 2022 11:43:57 AM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 had become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. -

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years -

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching effects including: Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel

Those who commute Highway 17 every day

Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities

The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.

Thank you,

**From:** [Amy Naranjo](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Comments on your agenda items (RTC 1/13/2022)  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022 1:42:41 PM

---

Segment 7 phase 2 cost estimates comment from Brian peoples

Sent from Surface Duo

---

**From:** Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022 11:58:17 AM  
**To:** Brianna Goodman <bgoodman@sccrtc.org>; Amy Naranjo <anaranjo@sccrtc.org>; Sarah Christensen <schristensen@sccrtc.org>  
**Cc:** Yesenia Parra <yparra@sccrtc.org>  
**Subject:** Comments on your agenda items (RTC 1/13/2022)

Hi Brianna, Amy, and Sarah,

Below, please find written comments on your agenda items, below.

These were appropriately submitted by the 12pm 01/12/2022 written comment deadline. However, I was unable to send them to you ahead of the meeting due to the high volume of comments we received on the closed session item (which I am processing now) and other duties associated with the RTC meeting. For that, I apologize.

I believe these comments were also delivered orally at the meeting. They have been logged in the Correspondence log.

Best,  
Krista

---

**From:** Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 12, 2022 9:32 AM  
**To:** Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>  
**Subject:** RTC Meeting 1/13/22 Comments

**Item #9: Pilot Project utilizing goats to control vegetation on Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor**

Based on similar experiences utilizing goats to control vegetation overgrowth along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail corridor, it is not a realistic long-term solution for management of Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor vegetation. The goats will not eat all the various vegetation, not providing a clean mitigation required to maintain the corridor. Based on our experience, the goat operator will have to bring in additional food to ensure the goats have enough to eat. The real solution is to invest in opening the Coastal Trail NOW which will require the physical removal of vegetation to allow active transportation along the corridor.

**Item #20: PUBLIC HEARING on Draft 2045 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

It does not appear that the cost projections within the draft RTP have been updated with current

market rates for construction projects. For example, item #TRL 07bSC; Segment 7-phase 2 (Bay/California St to Pacific Ave/wharf) Coastal Trail has a projected cost of \$11,000,000. The recently completed Segment 7-phase 1 cost \$10M per mile and was considered to be the least expensive section of the trail due to its configuration and environment. Segment 7-phase 2 is projected to be one of the most expensive due to the requirement to remove heritage trees, major earth work and construction of large retaining walls. It is not a realistic plan if the projected cost is not accurate. We recommend that there be an update to the cost estimates and, preferably, use the cost to build the Coastal Trail after railbanking, removal of rails and ties and placing trail in center of corridor.

**Item #22: Construction Contract Award – Phase 1 Coastal Erosion Repair at Manresa along the Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor)**

The doubling of cost for the Coastal Erosion Repair at Manresa along the Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor is an example of how the delay in opening the Santa Cruz Coastal Trail is costing Santa Cruz taxpayers. Not shown in the detailed project cost is removal and replacement of the rails and ties. Does the scope of work include removal and replacement of rails and ties? If so, we recommend that the tracks not be replaced, rather the corridor remain as a dirt path at the completion of the erosion repair.

Brian Peoples

Trail Now

**From:** [Catherine Marino](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Specialized Transit for Seniors/Disabled  
**Date:** Friday, January 14, 2022 12:57:53 PM

---

Hello Transportation Commissioners!

Thanks for all that you do for our citizens.

As a senior and increasingly less abled citizen, I'd love to see light electric rail move into focus as soon as possible for our county.

I live in Live Oak, which includes a large amount of Senior Housing, Care Facilities, and Senior Mobile Home Communities.

Many of us who must use Para Transit, Lift Line, or even Metro would definitely be able to take advantage of light electric trams on our rail corridor due to their level, easy boarding- and the proximity of the corridor to our living situations.

Metro, Para Transit, and Lift Line are helpful indeed, but due to their stairs, electric lifts, and scheduling ahead, do not all offer the same transportation freedom as level boarding electric trams.

Please consider all of our citizens when looking toward future transit needs.

We have room for light rail plus the widest adjacent trail in the County, let's use our corridor to meet all of our citizen's transit needs.

Thank you,  
Catherine Marino



**From:** [Patricia McVeigh](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Airport transportation  
**Date:** Friday, January 14, 2022 12:28:04 PM

---

As you consider the 2045 transportation plan for the county, please include plans to have direct bus service to the San Jose airport. Currently it is necessary to take a bus to the San Jose bus station and then catch a taxi or a train or another bus to travel a few miles to the airport this is a ridiculous waste of energy and time thank you for the consideration.

From Patricia Mc Veigh Santa Cruz

Have a Happy Day,

Pat

**From:** [fred geiger](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Cc:** [Ed Porter](#); [gail williamson](#)  
**Subject:** Transpo plan comment  
**Date:** Friday, January 14, 2022 9:49:23 AM

---

The best use of transpo funds is green rail.

The worst is freeway lane additions/ widening.

Induced demand of bigger freeways will cause congestion levels to return in a short time , as well as increased pollution ,noise etc.

The present and growing 8,000 commuters to UCSC from mid County and beyond could best be accommodated on the rail line with a PRT connection from the Boardwalk area with a stop at the Downtown transit center and continuing along the River levy and through the Pogonip to the U !

Lest get the most for taxpayer transpo dollars!

Fred Geiger

Santa Cruz

**From:** [Alice Schmidt](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** First Draft of 2045 Transit Plan  
**Date:** Friday, January 14, 2022 9:35:49 AM

---

All of the new transit projects listed in Friday's Sentinel are much needed improvements to our transit infrastructure. As a means to alleviate the upcoming congestion these projects will create for the Highway 1 corridor over the next several years it would be advantageous to have the rail corridor interim trail fully functional. I fully support using the trail to help reduce the car congestion these transit projects will create for much of the county. Many traveling to work, schools or shops will use the interim trail rather than add to the highway 1 corridor congestion.

If you build it (the interim trail), they will come!

Alice Schmidt

831-332-7212  
101 Holiday Drive  
La Selva Beach, CA

[alicecs@aol.com](mailto:alicecs@aol.com)

**From:** [Cindy](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Keep the rail  
**Date:** Friday, January 14, 2022 7:56:20 AM

---

Please be sure to keep rail in the equation of the highway 1 corridor. To remove rail is foolish. We need to address the future of clean transportation that is available to all. Not just able bodied residents. I love walking and biking on the rail trail and will be thrilled when one day I can ride clean rail up to Capitola. Clean rail is the future.

Thanks,

Cindy Jacobs

**From:** [Lee](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comments about plan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 9:16:38 PM

---

I am writing to express my thoughts on the 2045 rtp plan.

No train

Yes on trail

No widening highway 1

Stop making decisions based on data. Make decisions based on neighborhood needs.

We need to re-do our infrastructure, we do not to create new infrastructure for more people to visit our community

. Stop catering to tourists and commuters.

Start catering to local neighborhoods.

Enough said,

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Mike Pisano](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** SCCRTC - Draft 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 9:35:52 AM

---

Hi Draft 2045RTP,

**For the Draft 2045 RTP:**

We have many workers that work early in the morning & later in the evening, but we do not have a bus service during most of these times.

Other Counties have a "All Nighter Service" to get people home safe from work. We have several work locations that start shifts at 6am, and we have many restaurants/bar that end their workday after midnight. The GO program in Downtown Santa Cruz is awesome, but it does not have the funding to fund an earlier or later Metro service. I was in manufacturing for several decades and know that I had some workers that strongly requested to only working later shifts.

Can there be special funding, in the "Draft 2045 RTP", to allow a special circular "All Nighter" bus service to capture all of our counties Metro stations to help get people home safe from work?

I envision a daily hourly one-way circular bus route that travels around the county, between Midnight & 6am, that would stop at all the counties transit centers in Watsonville, Capitola, Scotts Valley & Santa Cruz (7-days a week).

Thank You for your time and consideration  
Michael Pisano - Soquel

**From:** [Mike Pisano](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** SCCRTC - Draft 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 12, 2022 7:32:13 PM

---

Hi 2045RTP,

**For the Draft 2045 RTP:**

If funding could be available for more Bike Lockers in Santa Cruz County.

We are given great rebates for electric bikes, but at \$3000 needed to purchase a decent ebike with the high propensity for those ebike to be stolen.

To add bikelink controlled bike lockers at more retail locations in our County.

EV Charging Stations:

If funding could be added to add quick EV charging stations in Soquel Village.

If funding could be added to add quick EV charging stations at Retail locations, and at other public parking lots (or public parking garages).

I would like to see more information on what makes a walkable city?

- What goals are we going to use to make are County more walkable...
- Some cities have robots delivering food, (like Mt. View) – do not know what this will do to delivery employees, but with the great resignation – who knows.

I would like to see funding for a Bus Stop Committee:

The Santa Cruz Metro had a Bus Stop Committee, but disbanded after losing funding due to budget deficit.

A bus stop committee can draw into meetings; local public works, Caltrans, etc.. to help improve or add bus stops.

May have access to funding to complete projects.

I would like to see funding for a Pedestrian Committee:

The SCCRTC had a Pedestrian Committee, but it was disbanded.

A Pedestrian Committee can draw into meetings; local public works, Caltrans, etc.. to help improve walkable pedestrian safety.

May have access to funding to complete projects.

Add incentives to add Flex Fuel stations in Santa Cruz County.

We have no flex fuel stations (E85) in Santa Cruz County to help lower our carbon footprint.

Here is an example of nearby locations - <https://propelfuels.com/>

Thank You for your time and consideration

Michael Pisano - Soquel

**From:** [frank.rimicci](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Keep moving forward in 2022  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 8:39:07 PM

---

Dear Commissioners,

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of You for Your diligence in supporting real transit solutions. I know Your job cannot have been easy, given the contentious issues and the nature of the citizens of Our county. What I would like to interject is My support for the current locally preferred alternative, being trail with rail. I cannot tell You how much I appreciate the fine rail trail built thus far, I have ridden that trail along the rail corridor since I was 8 years old. (Dirt trail then) I wish to urge You to not be swayed by negative influences that may cause You to abandon the plan. In the future You will all be able to say You had a hand in the progress of such an important beneficial asset. I realize that rail passenger transit will not be a magic bullet to eliminate congestion and pollution, but along with metro connections, ridesharing and a trail, there can be significant reduction of single occupancy auto use. And a better opportunity for visitors to enjoy coming here. And although not all areas of the county will be served by rail transit, consider good paying local jobs that everyone will benefit from. And definitely consider the south county workers that are stressed mentally and financially just trying to get to the thousands of service jobs north of Them. As it stands at this point in time, things are kind of hanging, but please keep grounded and do what needs to be done, which is to keep moving forward. Thanks, Frank Rimicci Jr. 750 Amesti Rd. Corralitos, 831-724-6710



**From:** [Heidy](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Draft 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 5:22:02 PM

---

Dear Commissioners,

What an impressive amount of work on the Draft 2045 RTP. I appreciate the opportunity to provide comment and make a request.

While I am primarily addressing the rail corridor, my feedback may apply to other elements. If it does, please extend my thinking.

The rail corridor backs up to my home in Capitola and, as I've mentioned in previous communication, passersby can see directly into my bedroom window. The line of sight is such that mitigation will be required no matter which proposal, rail or trail, succeeds. Living along the corridor has never been a problem due to its limited use, but I simply don't know what the impact will be in the future. We have been residents since 2005.

It's possible I'm missing something, but when engaging formal documents **such as this draft**, neighborhood safety appears to be excluded from the broader questions of transportation safety. I do not believe neighborhood safety should be extricated. That's why I respectfully request the development of a public safety committee, comprised of emergency responders, other criminal justice officials, individuals who have experience working in human services, and neighborhood representatives to provide evaluation and advice to the RTC.

It is much easier to plan for impacts rather than respond to them. Existing residents have a right to personal safety. Cities and the county must also understand whether public safety budgets would be altered.

Best Regards,  
Heidy Kellison  
Fanmar Way  
Capitola

**From:** [Neil Waldhauer](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on the 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 11, 2022 11:47:00 AM

---

I am submitting this comment in response to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.

I'm writing about the goals for transportation in 2045 for Santa Cruz County. Two items in particular, passenger rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Line and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail are new developments for regional transportation.

I want passenger train service because the train offers a quiet, comfortable way to travel. It's quite a bit nicer than driving a car or taking a bus. I want train service because the tracks are fixed in place, so that once service is running, it won't be switched to another part of the city.

My hope is for 15 minute service (A train comes every 15 minutes) from end to end, from Davenport to Monterey. Once set up, the rail system has the same costs for an empty train as a full one. I want to see the fare set to 25 cents until the trains start to run full. At that point, I'd raise rates enough to have one empty seat on a peak hour train.

I want trains to reach San Jose and San Francisco, to the Amtrak station in Pajaro junction, to Monterey and to the new high-speed rail network to Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Diego. I'd like to see the operating budget come entirely from state, federal and private grants. Fare receipts would be used only to finance expansion of passenger service.

While we are waiting for local passenger service to be financed by outside sources, we should use our meager budget to put the Santa Cruz Branch Line back into serviceable condition. I have learned that a number of outside agencies have expressed interest in operating passenger trains on our line. I'd like these to commence as soon as possible. Our rails should be repaired to allow this to happen.

The rail trail on the Westside is really nice to use. I live close enough to the tracks that I use it nearly daily. Construction on the next segment begins in a few weeks, and I hope to see construction on two more segments starting next year.

TAMC has expressed interest in bringing passenger rail back to Monterey. I would like RTC to cooperate with TAMC to help make this happen. I'd also like the bicycle trail to go all the way around the bay.

I know the RTC handles more than the rail trail. However, I find this to be the topic I am concerned about. Thanks for reading.

Neil Waldhauer  
Santa Cruz, California  
January 11, 2022

**From:** [Danielle](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** input  
**Date:** Monday, January 10, 2022 9:56:18 AM

---

To RTC

I strongly support the installation of usable train/rail service in Santa Cruz County. Our county is crippled by a lack of alternate routes to Hwy 1 and Soquel Ave/Drive.

People who live on the West Side of SC or in Scotts Valley perhaps don't realize how desperate and dangerous the situation is for people who need to commute to work, school, appointments, etc.

We also need the rail service as an alternate for fuel dependent cars which pollute our air.

A trail would be nice too - for biking and walking. I like to ride my bike but am fearful of riding on roads with a lot of cars.

Now is the time to move forward with a viable rail service for our community with a trail along side where appropriate.

Thank you

Danielle Dorrian  
202 Santa Clara Ave  
Aptos

**From:** [Sean Abbey](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Draft 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Sunday, January 9, 2022 3:36:06 PM

---

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the transportation goals for our community! I am very supportive of the plan's focus on sustainability, as well as the preservation and improvement of our existing infrastructure. As the plan says, "the region must find ways to operate and utilize our existing highway and transit networks more efficiently and sustainably over the long term." I am very happy that the plan is clear that it intends "to bring about safer, healthier and more efficient travel choices that provide improved multimodal access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other destinations for our residents and visitors" and is clear that "addressing many of these challenges will require a significant change in how we choose to travel".

Given this plans emphasis on sustainability and utilization of existing infrastructure, I am disappointed that the Locally Preferred Alternative of electric light rail running on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line is an unconstrained project. The SCBRL is already owned by the county, which is one of the most complicated and expensive processes in creating a project of this kind. If we intend to utilize our existing transit networks efficiently, it would be extremely shortsighted to not take advantage of such a valuable resource. The SCBRL runs straight through the most densely populated portions of our county and many of the major job centers, and it connects the largest cities in our county. This line would create a back-bone of public transportation in the community and would very likely increase the use of our other public transit services. Combined with a trail running alongside it, the rail corridor would create the potential for residents to rely on active and public transit for the majority of their travel needs. This ability to travel without a car is particularly valuable for two important groups in our community, students and service workers. What's more, an electric rail line may eventually link us to the rest of the state, according to the state rail plan, which would allow for tourists without traffic!

It is also clear that car dependent planning is unsustainable on multiple levels. Besides concerns with GHG emissions, many of our roads are already congested with further population growth expected. The draft plan states, "the population in Santa Cruz County is expected to increase 9% between 2025 and 2045". The housing crisis in California will not allow us to continue building insufficient new homes in any community, ours included. New residents will provide significant contributions to our local economy but will also add to traffic if not given alternatives to driving. Increasing capacities of highways is shown to not decrease congestion, and local roads are not able to be expanded. Even if we wanted to pursue expansion projects, the draft plan says it well that "highway projects can be relatively expensive, especially compared to the region's share of funds. Additionally, truck and automobile traffic volumes are lower than in many areas of the state or nation, which can

make it difficult to compete for state and federal funds." Our limited funding abilities should not be focused on trying to make more car travel possible when California has made it clear it will be prioritizing sustainable transport funding: <https://calsta.ca.gov/press-releases/2021-07-12-ca-finalizes-capti>.

The plan is clear that reduced car dependence and increased utilization of active and public transit would provide significant benefits to our community, including lower GHG emissions, reduced air pollution, lower obesity rates, fewer traffic collisions, and keeping money within the local economy. If we truly want a sustainable and efficient transportation system in our county, and all the benefits that come with it, we must take full advantage of the SCBRL.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the 2045 draft plan.

Sean Abbey  
Felton Resident

**From:** [Adam Salvadalena](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Hwy 17 Access Management CT-P52 Comment  
**Date:** Sunday, January 9, 2022 10:53:00 AM

---

Hi,

Regarding Hwy 17 Access Management CT-P52 (Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Grade Separation Concept), clarify if eminent domain, or blight, is contemplated in the case of the adjacent residential properties.

Further, clarify contemplated treatment of the adjacent neighborhood or residential properties, and if these residences are being considered as blighted, and/or if its physical development has been contemplated as being held back by the buildings' proximity to the highway.

If contemplated, clarify which properties are considered to represent an immediate threat to public health and safety, and provide a date by which any supporting assessment on a property-by-property basis will be made.

Thanks, Adam

**From:** [Fred Gillaspay](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** 2045 RTP - Sugarloaf/Glenwood Cut-Off/Laurel Area Interchange - Hwy 17  
**Date:** Friday, January 7, 2022 6:46:19 PM

---

Greetings,

As a resident of Sugarloaf Road for 48 years I have seen everything there is to see on Hwy 17. Literally.

The proposed Highway 17 Access Plan for the highway completely ignores the true geography of the region, identifies problem areas that just do not exist and is way, way under-budgeted for what it proposed to accomplish. \$40 million won't go very far to make a dent.

The real problem with Hwy 17 IS NOT THE HIGHWAY! It is the speeding and reckless driving!

For a mere fraction of the "initial" \$40 million proposed for the Access Plan, a simple ramping-up of CHP patrols stationed between the Summit and Scotts Valley on a permanent basis would accomplish the same goals — and more. This plan could be initiated and in-place in a matter of mere months. After all, nothing prevents accidents or slows crazy drivers down more than a radar-equipped CHP on a motorcycle or in a patrol car!

Why is this solution not a consideration? Is it just too obvious, simple and comparatively inexpensive? Why wait 20 or 30 years when we can accomplish the same goals when we need them most?

Don't allow more accidents, injuries and deaths to occur needlessly. Why not make this a simple solution that can be executed almost immediately, not in decades?

Thanks for considering my perspective on the matter.

FRED W. GILLASPY  
465 Sugarloaf Road, Scotts Valley, CA 95066  
[FGillaspay@mac.com](mailto:FGillaspay@mac.com)

831-438-2809 | Cell: 831-239-4292

**From:** [Holly Zappala](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange Project - 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Friday, January 7, 2022 12:58:10 PM

---

To the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I live off of Sugarloaf Road and I'd like to submit comments regarding the potential Laurel Rd/Sugarloaf Rd/Glenwood Cutoff Area Interchange project as part of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. This project is listed at the bottom of page 2 of 54 on the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Project List: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/rptRTP2045draftCONuncon.pdf>.

This project has been talked about for many years and I am disappointed to see that it is listed as unconstrained in the next 23 years. This project is incredibly important and should be moved to the constrained list with funding secured.

As traffic has increased throughout the entire bay area, Highway 17 had become increasingly dangerous to drive. In fact, as I am sure you are aware, Highway 17 is one of the most dangerous roads in the country. According to a CBS Bay Area article from 2017, the number of collisions on Highway 17 has more than quadrupled in the last decade. - <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/05/15/stats-show-hwy-17-growing-more-dangerous-for-commuters/>. And according to a 2019 Mercury News article, the number of fatal and injury collisions has increased substantially in recent years - <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/09/22/highway-17-crashes-remain-on-troubling-rise/>. It is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce accidents, injuries, and deaths on Highway 17.

Accidents on Highway 17 and the traffic jams they cause have far-reaching affects including:

- Those involved who often tragically lose their lives or sustain other injuries and their families
- Strain on our first responders including CHP, Fire, Sheriff, EMS and other personnel
- Those who commute Highway 17 every day
- Others who drive Highway 17 occasionally to go to the beach or for other activities
- The thousands of people who live in communities off of Highway 17

Highway 17 is uniquely dangerous in a number of different aspects: it has heavy traffic, sharp turns, blind curves, slippery winter conditions, narrow shoulders, animals crossing, and perhaps most significantly - it functions as both a highway with fast-moving vehicles and also as a local road for thousands of people who live along it to access their neighborhoods and driveways.

These very different dual uses do not mix well and create "conflict points" where vehicle slow to exit, accelerate from a complete stop to enter, and make left turns. These actions create unexpected changes in traffic flow, especially significant when traffic is heavier. As a result, these conflict points are the cause of many serious accidents, the ensuing strain on first responders, and the stopped traffic and delays for anyone using the highway.

It is important that we reduce these conflict points to allow vehicles to move more efficiently and safely. There are currently 28 conflict points at Sugarloaf/Laurel/Glenwood Cutoff and this project would reduce that number to 4. This project is also in alignment with the efforts to install a wildlife habitat connectivity crossing.

For those of us that live along Highway 17, it has become increasingly dangerous to enter and exit our homes (with no commercial uses in any of these neighborhoods, we need to access Highway 17 to go anywhere). As a resident of Sugarloaf, I would gladly travel farther on frontage streets in exchange for the safety and reliability of an interchange at this location.

This project is vital to enhancing the safety, mobility, and accessibility on Hwy 17 and I hope you will consider moving it to the constrained list with funding secured.



**From:** [Steve Wiesner](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Thursday, January 6, 2022 5:51:30 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

---

Hello,

The County of Santa Cruz is commenting and advocating for a “Fix it First” for Roads prioritization of the Goals for the 2045 RTP. Specifically, the County is advocating that the RTP prioritize Goal 3.A.1 (Maintain the existing system and improve the condition of transportation facilities - Increase the percentage of pavement in good condition to 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2045) over all the other goals in the RTP. The County’s position is that adopting a Fix it First policy for Roads will greatly benefit many of the Goals, Targets and Policies in the Plan and therefore should be the highest priority.

Please include as a comment to the 2045 RTP.

Thank you and Happy New Year!



**Steve Wiesner, P.E.**

Assistant Director of Public Works  
Transportation Division  
County of Santa Cruz

**Phone:** 831-454-2160

**Email:**

[steve.wiesner@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:steve.wiesner@santacruzcounty.us)

<https://www.dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/>



**From:** [2045 RTP Project Ideas](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from Steve Wiesner  
**Date:** Monday, January 3, 2022 1:46:06 PM

**Name**

Steve Wiesner

**Email**

[steve.wiesner@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:steve.wiesner@santacruzcounty.us)

**Describe a specific project that could improve transportation in Santa Cruz County.**

Project: Soquel Dr. Reversible Lane (Flex Lane) Feasibility Study

**What jurisdiction is this potential project located?**

- Unincorporated County

**Drop a pin on the project location**



**Provide any other project location details**

Feasibility Study limits is on Soquel Dr. from Hwy 1/Soquel Dr. intersection to Park Ave/Soquel Dr. intersection.

**How will this project improve the transportation system in Santa Cruz County?**

The project will reduce trip delays, congestion and air quality.

**Get 2045 RTP Project Updates**

- Check this box to join the RTP email distribution list

**Geocoder**

- Place Name: N/A
- Street Number: N/A
- Street Name: N/A
- Street ( number + name ): N/A
- Street ( name + number ): N/A
- Premise: N/A
- Subpremise: N/A

**From:** [Robert Hull](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on 2045 plan  
**Date:** Sunday, December 19, 2021 11:57:45 AM

---

The priorities for implementing transit within Santa Cruz County:

- 1) Repair and maintain existing infrastructure. This includes
  - Widening and improving CA 1 between Santa Cruz and Watsonville.
  - Widening and improving CA 17 between Scotts Valley and Summit area.
  - Fixing numerous local streets. For example:
    - Glenwood Drive near Scotts Valley Drive.
    - Granite Creek Road overcrossing of CA-17.
- 2) The balance of funding to support commerce vs social equity should support more commerce.  
This implies more highways to anticipate autonomous vehicles traveling to employment and commerce.

Thank you,  
Robert Hull  
Scotts Valley

**From:** [David Jones](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Draft 2045 Plan  
**Date:** Saturday, December 18, 2021 9:11:18 AM

---

Dear Friends,

I write in support the needed traffic/bicycle/pedestrian/street and sidewalk improvements proposed in the Draft 2045 RTC Plan for the City of Scotts Valley.

In particular, as a resident of Bluebonnet Lane, Scotts Valley, I am very concerned that this residential street has become a expressway for vehicles driving to/from the library, senior center, the Skypark recreational area, library, post office, shopping center and transit center.

The city council envisions a future "town center" on the vacant property where the former airport runway is located, and this development (housing, retail, mixed housing/retail) will only increase the vehicle traffic in our area.

Scotts Valley Dr. and Mt. Hermon Rd. are the main arterials through Scotts Valley, but they are jammed with traffic day and night. Drivers use Bean Creek Rd. and Bluebonnet Lane as work arounds to avoid the congestion and traffic lights on the arterials.

Traffic calming measures along with the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians should be a high priority for our residential streets.

In particular, the round-about at Bean Creek and Bluebonnet and the implementation of the Active Transportation Plan recommendations for these two streets should be a high priority for funding and implementation.

Thank you for making these recommendations in the Draft 2045 Plan.

David Jones

831 234-6704

**From:** [David Addison](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Re: RTC Releases Draft 2045 RTP for Public Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, December 16, 2021 12:16:36 PM

---

Hi again,

We are in the process of getting them cataloged and sending them back out to the branches. No need to go pick them up. Watsonville has a separate library system so no worries on that end as well. I'll look for an email next year and we'll make sure to get the Final copies out to where you would like them.

Best,  
David

On Wed, Dec 15, 2021 at 4:54 PM 2045 RTP <[2045rtp@sccrtc.org](mailto:2045rtp@sccrtc.org)> wrote:

Hello David,

Thank you for your email and I apologize for just now getting back to you. I am so sorry I did not check-in with you prior to dropping off the RTP and EIRs at the library branches. I'm new to this project and was not aware the documents had to be cataloged so I hand delivered each document on Wednesday, 12/8 to the following branches: Downtown, Felton, Capitola, La Selva, and Watsonville.

Do you need me to pickup each document and return all back to the downtown branch for cataloging?

I'll be sure to contact you in advance when we circulate the FINAL 2045 Regional Transportation Plan for public review in mid-2022.

Kind regards,

Amy

---

**From:** [Amanda Marino](#)  
**To:** [Amy Naranjo](#)  
**Subject:** E&D TAC comment on RTP  
**Date:** Thursday, December 16, 2021 11:02:38 AM

---

Hi Amy,

Below is a comment from a E&D TAC member who will not be able to attend the next E&D TAC meeting with a comment on the RTP.

Thanks!

Amanda

---

**From:** DEBORAH BENHAM <deborah05@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 16, 2021 7:37 AM  
**To:** Amanda Marino <amarino@scrtc.org>; Veronica Elsea <veronica@laurelcreekmusic.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Special 1/11 E&D TAC Meeting

Hi you(s),

Just looked over the 'Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)'; and focusing on Appendix E, "Project List." I am so gratified to see the Scotts Valley Active Transportation Plan (SV ATP) sited in many of the listed projects for Scotts Valley ! I also looked at Hwy 17 CalTrans corridor projects and have one comment:

Hwy 17 - Project ID CT-P49 - include City of Scotts Valley for operational improvements ie: offramp/onramp Scotts Valley Dr/Granite Creek Rd; traffic signal and intersection design improvements (re-design of 5 way intersection).

Thank you, Debbie  
Dist 5 E&D TAC Rep

PS: Meeting today with the CTSC and Bluebonnet Neighborhood Group to discuss traffic calming measures along Bluebonnet Lane in Scotts Valley (once again ... will it never end??).

**From:** [Peter Thomas](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** corrected comments on draft plan  
**Date:** Monday, December 6, 2021 7:29:13 AM

---

In a perfect world we would fund and implement all the suggested items.

This world is not perfect and so all projects will not get funded.

I personally would like to see the priorities as follows:

Repair all currently existing roads.

Create a north south transportation corridor along the rail line **for transporting passengers** - choose the option that can currently be implemented the soonest regardless of if it is the “best” option or not.

Safe bike lane/path to ride from santa cruz to Boulder Creek

Yours,

Peter Thomas

Cell phone # 831-515-2757

**From:** [Peter Thomas](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** comments on draft plan  
**Date:** Sunday, December 5, 2021 8:21:18 PM

---

In a perfect world we would fund and implement all the suggested items. This world is not perfect and so all projects will not get funded. I personally would like to see the priorities as follows: Repair all currently existing roads. Create a north south transportation corridor along the rail line - choose the option that can currently be implemented the soonest regardless of if it is the "best" option or not.

Yours,

Peter Thomas  
Cell phone # 831-515-2757



**From:** [fred geiger](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Draft plan  
**Date:** Friday, December 3, 2021 3:25:16 PM

---

We need a trolley on the rail line similar to the one recently demonstrated , using green hydrogen and ALSO a link from the Boardwalk to the downtown and UCSC areas .

Without these links the ridership will not be sufficient to justify the rail line being used.

A PRT or similar system is key to making this link and ensuring success of the rail trail!

Fred J. Geiger

Santa Cruz Ca

**From:** [2045 RTP Project Ideas](#)  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from PAUL PETERSON  
**Date:** Thursday, December 2, 2021 10:45:00 AM

---

**Name**

PAUL PETERSON

**Email**

[paulepeterson2000@yahoo.com](mailto:paulepeterson2000@yahoo.com)

**Describe a specific project that could improve transportation in Santa Cruz County.**

Re-surface Rio del Mar Blvd. It has been in very poor condition for years. Visitors get the first impression that the area is depressed, and not a good place to visit. It is also unsafe to ride bicycles on.

**What jurisdiction is this potential project located?**

- Unincorporated County

**Drop a pin on the project location**



**Provide any other project location details**

Rio del Mar Blvd from the HWY 1 to Aptos Beach Drive.

**How will this project improve the transportation system in Santa Cruz County?**

The road is in poor condition, and is deteriorating. The worse it gets, the more expensive it will be to repair. Roads should be maintained at about 70 PCI, to make optimal use of scarce funding.

**Get 2045 RTP Project Updates**

- Check this box to join the RTP email distribution list

**Geocoder**

- **Place Name:** N/A
- **Street Number:** 758
- **Street Name:** Rio Del Mar Boulevard
- **Street ( number + name ):** 758 Rio Del Mar Boulevard
- **Street ( name + number ):** Rio Del Mar Boulevard 758
- **Premise:** N/A

**From:** nelson333@baymoon.com  
**To:** [2045 RTP](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Draft 2045 RTP  
**Date:** Monday, January 31, 2022 4:51:44 PM

---

Friendly greetings,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2045 RTP.

My overview reaction to the 2045 RTP is that it is well-supplied with aspirational "green" language about livable communities, climate and sustainability. Unfortunately, then come the contradictions and capitulation. Lurking down in the basement, in Appendix E's RTP Project List (at the "SCCRTC/Caltrans" section, beginning on pdf page 250) we see The Greenhouse Goliath, a steady sequence of planned Highway 1 expansion projects, poised to continue incrementally turning the urban portion of the highway into an 8-lanes-wide river of cars, trucks, and poisons. The Goliath is positioned to capture a lion's share of future expenditures, while confounding any side-show attempts to escape the unsustainable, climate-ruinous dominance of the automobile.

Figure 7.6 on page 7-8 (pdf page 128), a graph showing Santa Cruz County Commute Trips Mode Share, shows no meaningful progress in shifting away from driving, in the first two decades of this century. Is it to be deemed infeasible to change course, and save ourselves from ourselves?

The preceding page reports, "The 2045 RTP target to decrease single occupancy vehicle trip mode share by 6.5% by 2030 and increase active transportation trips to 16% of total commute trips by 2030 and to 24% of total commute trips by 2045 will likely not be met given this current trend [shown in Fig. 7.6]."

So it's something of a split-personality, psychologically distressed RTP, like a very good person on a mistaken suicide mission.

There will be environmental impacts from the 2045 RTP, evaluated in the Draft EIR issued by AMBAG. Following, please find the comments I submitted to AMBAG about the EIR.

Sincerely,

Jack Nelson, Professional Environmental Planner & Land Use Planner, retired

127 Rathburn Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Submitted to AMBAG:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2045 MTP/SCS, and its Draft EIR.

As I consider what to focus on here, I come to a halt on the following on page 4.15-26 of the Draft EIR:

THE 2045 MTP/SCS WOULD RESULT IN AN INCREASE TO DAILY VMT [vehicle miles traveled] PER CAPITA BETWEEN THE BASELINE 2020 CONDITIONS AND 2045 CONDITIONS. PER CAPITA VMT IMPACTS FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2045 MTP/SCS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE.

plus the following on page 4.8-25:

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2045 MTP/SCS WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE STATE'S ABILITY TO ACHIEVE SB 32, EOS S-3-05 AND B-55-18, AND APPLICABLE LOCAL GHG REDUCTION PLAN TARGETS AND GOALS. IMPACTS WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE.

Please recognize, these impacts will not be so "unavoidable" if our region turns away from auto-centric transportation planning business-as-usual and dedicates the resources to all the innovative alternatives we can muster!

I experience these impact findings a sad and unacceptable statement of failure to protect fundamental necessities for our common future together.

Those necessities which I expect we all treasure include, the stable climate that we know. Rain, and not induced drought, nor too much rain all at once from a powered-up winter atmosphere, bringing floods. Warmth, but not record-breaking heat that withers crops, desiccates wild lands, and precedes devastating wildfires. Sea level, that does not keep accelerating in its rise. A safe home, on this Goldilocks Earth. In Chapter 7, the Draft EIR identifies alternative scenarios which would certainly perform better on this essential climate concern, especially if Alternatives 2 and 3 were combined in a single concept-plan for how to escape from automobilism. Yet, I see Alternatives 2 and 3 scarcely analyzed, and hand-waved away, partly with frankly absurd statements like the following on page 7-16 (pdf page 677):

Although this alternative [2] was designed to reduce VMT by providing or promoting alternative transportation modes, it did so by eliminating many roadway improvement projects, some of which would reduce congested and total VMT.

This vague "some of which" statement contradicts our common experience and the State of California's findings about the correlation of highway capacity expansions with VMT growth and failure to achieve lasting congestion reduction, and then no further reference, evidence, or science basis is given here for how the report authors came to this improbable conclusion. How is this consistent with CEQA requirements?

Perhaps it will not be time for the AMBAG Board of Directors to adopt a CEQA Statement of Overriding Considerations to approve this flawed MTP/SCS and its EIR. Are we to capitulate and say it is infeasible to save ourselves from ourselves?

Sincerely,

Jack Nelson, Professional Environmental Planner & Land Use Planner, retired

127 Rathburn Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95062