

**From:** [Amy Naranjo](#)  
**To:** [rebeccad@transparentseas.com](mailto:rebeccad@transparentseas.com)  
**Cc:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** RE: A couple of Suggestions for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 1, 2022 11:52:50 PM

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Hello Rebecca,

Thank you for your suggestions. A revised copy of the final draft, which incorporates your comments, is available on the RTP project website, [www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp](http://www.sccrtc.org/2045rtp).

Regards,  
Amy

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**From:** Rebecca <[rebeccad@transparentseas.com](mailto:rebeccad@transparentseas.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 1, 2022 11:39 AM  
**To:** Regional Transportation Commission <[info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org)>  
**Cc:** Guy Preston <[gpreston@sccrtc.org](mailto:gpreston@sccrtc.org)>  
**Subject:** A couple of Suggestions for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

Dear SCCRTC Staff,

The 2045 Regional Transportation Plan for our county is a huge document. Full of so many components, it is very thorough and includes excellent work on our resident's behalf.

I wish to make a couple of suggestions to change some language. Below are two pages with some editions. One adds Nisene Marks State Park to the list of parks. The other includes more specific language to the freight situation in Watsonville.

These are small changes but details are important to include in the overall plan.

Kind regards and well done!

Rebecca Downing

Aptos

pedestrian path and completed studies on potential uses of the corridor.

This 135-year-old transportation corridor is a federally regulated freight railroad that parallels Highway 1, extending almost 32 miles from just south of the county line near Watsonville, to Davenport in north Santa Cruz County (Figure 2.4). The right-of-way is generally 50 to 60 feet wide with over 100 culverts and grade crossings, and 37 bridges and trestles, including major crossings of the Pajaro River, Highway 1, Soquel Creek, the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, and the San Lorenzo River. Adjacent land uses include residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and park land/open space.

The corridor links major activity centers as it traverses downtown Watsonville, Aptos Village, Capitola Village, and the Santa Cruz Beach area near downtown Santa Cruz. Also adjacent to the corridor are many parks and recreational facilities including Marres State Beach, Seacliff State Beach, New Brighton State Park, Simpkins Swim Center, Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, Natural Bridges State Park and Wilder Ranch State Park. The rail corridor enhances public access to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary at several key locations consistent with the CA Coastal Act objectives.

**Preservation of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line**

Measure D provides 8 percent of revenue, approximately \$1.6 million a year, for rail infrastructure preservation and analyses to determine the future potential use of the corridor to better serve Santa Cruz County residents and visitors. In 2013, the RTC completed a rail transit feasibility study which analyzed a range of public transportation service scenarios on the SCBRL and how well each scenario advances community goals and objectives. In 2019, the RTC accepted the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) which identified priority transportation investments on Highway 1, Soquel Avenue/Drive, Freedom Boulevard, and the SCBRL that maximize mobility and environmental benefits. The UCS acts as the RTC's Multimodal Corridor Plan, making projects along the 3 routes eligible for Senate Bill 1 (SB1) competitive funds, including the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) and Local Partnership Program (LPP). The UCS also directed RTC staff to collaborate with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) to develop a scope of work for additional analysis of high-capacity public transit alternatives on the SCBRL.

Add Nisene Marks State Park



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Watsonville and is currently serving about half a dozen active freight rail customers. Currently freight service operates from the western boundary of the City of Watsonville along West Beach Street east to the town of Pajaro connecting to the Union Pacific main line. There are no active customers north of Watsonville. Some of the goods shipped on the rail line include construction materials and agricultural products. Shipping goods on the rail network is more efficient, cost effective, uses less fuel, and emits significantly less greenhouse gases. Freight rail volumes have decreased significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic but are starting to ~~come back up~~ <sup>recover</sup>. SPPR/PCGR continues to provide freight service to existing customers but has indicated that they would like to terminate their operating agreement with the RTC and reserves the right to file for abandonment at any time. If the operator was to file for abandonment, the RTC could railbank the rail line to preserve the continuous transportation right-of-way for future freight reactivation and other transportation uses.

Furthermore, in 2017, serious storm damage put the SCBRL out of service, a few miles north of Watsonville. RTC is required in the agreement with the rail operator to complete the 2017 storm damage repairs and make initial repairs to track, bridges and culverts that are needed for freight and recreational rail service beyond Watsonville. RTC has completed all storm damage repair work, but significant work remains to repair bridges, culverts and track. The RTC plans to seek reimbursement of disaster relief funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) for the completed 2017 storm damage projects.

Roaring Camp is the owner of the Felton Branch Rail Line which connects to the SCBRL near the Santa Cruz Wharf and extends up the San Lorenzo Valley to Felton. Roaring Camp Railroads operates excursion and seasonal passenger rail service between Felton and Santa Cruz during the summer and during the end of the year holidays and provides freight rail service to the San Lorenzo Valley area when needed.



Photo Credit: [www.roaringcamp.com](http://www.roaringcamp.com)