

Investment Study goals align with the MTP/SCS to foster efficient development patterns that optimize travel, housing, and employment choices and encourage active transportation and the MTP/SCS includes projects identified in the UCS Preferred Scenario. Consistent with the MTP/SCS, the UCS also evaluates equitable transportation solutions to make the Watsonville – Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program a safe and accessible corridor for all transportation modes.

[Watsonville Climate Action and Adaptation Plan \(2021\)](#)

Watsonville adopted their 2030 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) in October 2021, and on July 6, 2021, the Watsonville City Council voted unanimously to support the Climate-Safe California Campaign goal of net-negative emissions by 2030, setting an aspirational goal for the community of Watsonville to remove more greenhouse gases than it emits by 2030. In order to meet the City’s climate goals, the CAAP addresses reducing emissions in transportation, natural gas, electricity use, and food waste disposal. Some of the strategies and programs to reduce emissions in transportation include increasing active transportation use that includes incorporating more walking and biking trails, e-bike share program, carpool programs, and promoting the use of mass transit. The Unified Corridor Investment Study and the Watsonville – Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program projects will provide safe bike and pedestrian facilities and will increase transit frequency promoting sustainable transportation options reducing carbon emissions. In order to meet the city’s aggressive carbon emission reduction goals, these projects will be essential increasing reliability and accessibility of alternative transportation options connecting Watsonville to Santa Cruz.

[Santa Cruz County Climate Action Strategy \(2013\)](#)

Santa Cruz County Climate Action Strategy (CAS) was adopted in 2013 and outlines a course of action to reduce GHG emissions produced by governmental operations and community activities within unincorporated Santa Cruz County. Implementation of the CAS will build on the fact that Santa Cruz County has already met the 2020 emissions reduction target recommended by the state and will set the County on a path toward reducing emissions to 59 percent below 2009 levels by 2050. Strategies are included to reduce emissions in the major focus areas of transportation, energy, and solid waste. Transportation strategies to reduce carbon emissions focus on reducing VMT and encouraging active transportation, transit, and carpooling. This includes promoting multimodal transportation improvements, supporting the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Project (i.e. Coastal Rail Trail), and to prioritize safe active transportation amenities and connections between and among neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools and recreation sites. The UCS and the Watsonville – Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program projects will work to reduce VMT in the unincorporated county of Santa Cruz aligning with the goals of the CAS to incentivize and empower individuals to use active transportation and take transit rather than driving alone.

[Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan \(2014\)](#)

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan was adopted in 2014. Its study area was the central urban core of the unincorporated County, between Live Oak and Aptos. The plan establishes a community-based vision for a more sustainable future. The plan integrates the County’s land use and transportation policies in a way that protects environmental resources, supports economic growth, and increases access to opportunity for all County residents. The plan includes suggestions for specific amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and other policies. Its recommendations are intended to reduce VMT and

implement key strategies of the Santa Cruz Climate Action Strategy (above). The routes of the UCS all pass through the plan area and are critical components of a sustainable future. Soquel Drive is the primary local transit corridor of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan, with recommendations for walkable infill development along it centered at key commercial/service neighborhood and regional nodes. The UCS recommendations for operational, transit, and bicycle improvements on Soquel Drive are consistent with the complete streets type goals and recommendations of this plan.

[Measure D Expenditure Plan and Strategic Implementation Plan](#)

In November 2016, Santa Cruz County voters approved Measure D, a half-percent (0.5%) transaction and use tax dedicated to transportation projects identified in the Measure D Expenditure Plan. The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's (RTC) Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) identifies policies, procedures and financing strategies to expedite the implementation of the Expenditure Plan, including projects identified in the UCS Preferred Scenario. The SIP, which the RTC updates at least every five years, identifies bonding and inter-program loans as potential strategies to accelerate the construction of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network/Coastal Rail Trail, bus-on-shoulder/auxiliary lanes on Highway 1, and priority transit projects. The next SIP update will also focus on long-term maintenance of the rail and trail corridor that is included in the Watsonville – Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program.

State Plans

[Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure](#) (2021)

In July 2021, the State of California adopted the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), which prioritizes sustainable transportation projects in funding decisions as part of the new statewide climate action strategy. The CAPTI details how the state recommends investing billions of discretionary transportation funds annually to aggressively combat climate change through prioritization of projects that advance goals towards mode shift, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and providing equitable benefits for all.

Through its multimodal approach towards congestion relief, the UCS and Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program align directly with the following guiding principles of the CAPTI:

- Building toward an integrated, statewide rail and transit network
- Investing in networks of safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Strengthening our commitment to social and racial equity by reducing public health and economic harms and maximizing community benefits
- Making safety improvements to reduce fatalities and severe injuries of all users towards zero
- Assessing physical climate risk
- Promoting projects that do not significantly increase passenger vehicle travel
- Promoting compact infill development while protecting residents and businesses from displacement by funding projects that address affordability to reduce the housing-transportation cost burden and auto trips
- Protecting natural and working lands
- Meaningful public engagement: Throughout its development and implementation, the UCS and Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program have provided

meaningful public engagement opportunities by intentionally engaging with historically marginalized communities.

After a thorough and extensive vetting of how well the Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program aligned with CAPTI, Caltrans scored the program very highly based on state screening criteria. Caltrans found that the UCS and Watsonville-Satna Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program represents a transformative solution for reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[California Transportation Plan 2050](#) (2021)

In February 2021, the State of California adopted the California Transportation Plan 2050 (CTP 2050). CTP 2050 is California’s long-range plan for achieving its vision of a safe, resilient, and universally accessible transportation system that supports vibrant communities, advances racial and economic justice, and improves public and environmental health. CTP 2050 was a multi-year effort involving cross-sector coordination with State, regional, and local partners, extensive research, public engagement, technical analysis, and oversight from multiple committees. CTP 2050 builds on concurrent efforts included in Caltrans’ six modal plans, regional transportation plans (RTPs), other statewide plans. It also draws from research on demographic shifts, technology trends, and economic growth to help inform what strategies to employ and identify challenges and opportunities. CTP 2050 establishes people-focused policies, strategies, and investments designed to improve the lives of all Californians. CTP 2050 is different from similar corridor management plans in that it is statutorily fiscally unconstrained and does not contain projects, but policies and strategies required to close the gaps identified by partnering RTPs.

The UCS and Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program align with all eight goals identified in the CTP 2050 on the topics of safety, climate, equity, accessibility, quality of life & public health, economy, environment, and infrastructure.

[Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan](#) (2021)

The Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP) was adopted by Caltrans in 2021 and an addendum was prepared in August 2022. The ITSP is one of the six California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) statewide plans that implement the California Transportation Plan 2050 (CTP). The ITSP identifies eleven Strategic Interregional Corridors that connect California’s major regions and designates priority interregional highways and railways within each corridor. The 2021 ITSP adopts the CTP’s eight goals: Safety, Climate, Equity, Quality of Life and Public Health, Accessibility, Economy, Environment, and Infrastructure. The 2021 ITSP identifies 18 strategies to accomplish these eight goals. The 18 strategies are applied in various combinations across the 11 Strategic Interregional Corridors, according to the specific needs of that corridor.

The 11 Strategic Interregional Corridors are: (1) United States/Mexico Border Region - Inland Empire Connections Corridor; (2) South Coast - Central Coast Corridor; (3) Central Coast - San Jose/San Francisco Bay Area Corridor (4) San Jose/San Francisco Bay Area - North Coast Corridor; (5) San Jose/San Francisco Bay Area - Central Valley - Los Angeles Corridor; (6) Sacramento Valley - Oregon Border Corridor; (7) High Desert - Eastern Sierra - Northern Nevada Corridor; (8) Southern California - Southern Nevada/Arizona Corridor; (9) Central Coast - San Joaquin Valley East-West Connections Corridor; (10) San Jose/San Francisco Bay Area - Sacramento - Northern Nevada Corridor; (11) North Coast - Northern Nevada Connections Corridor.

The Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor most closely aligns with the Central Coast – San Jose/San Francisco Bay Area Strategic Interregional Corridor. The [Draft 2022 ITSP Addendum](#) features the Coastal Rail Trail project as a model interregional solution to increasing multimodal connectivity and accessibility to multimodal options.

[California Smart Mobility Framework](#) (2010)

The California Smart Mobility Framework is a planning guide that furthers the integration of smart growth concepts into transportation planning. Goals of the Smart Mobility Framework include moving people and freight more efficiently, while enhancing economic, environmental, and human resources in California. Consistent with the principles of Smart Mobility, the UCS and Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program address climate change impacts, advances social equity and environmental justice, and supports economic and community development. The UCS and Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program align closely with the Smart Mobility Framework’s goals to address the reduction in greenhouse gases, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and provide for a safe transportation system.

[California Freight Mobility Plan](#) (2020)

The California Freight Mobility Plan (CFMP) was adopted in March 2020. The CFMP is a statewide plan that governs California’s immediate and long-range freight planning activities and capital investments. The CFMP was developed to comply with the freight provisions of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which requires each state that receives funding under the National Highway Freight Program to develop a freight plan. The CFMP was also developed to comply with California Government Code Section 13978.8 pertaining to the State freight plan. Freight is a critical component of the global, national, and state economies. Californians depend on a goods movement system that provides communities with their most vital necessities including food, medicine, and inputs for manufacturing in a timely, efficient manner. The freight sector is rapidly changing due to technological advancements, economic fluctuations, increasing demand, and environmental concerns. In the face of these changes and challenges, the CFMP articulates a vision of California having “the world’s most innovative, economically-competitive multimodal freight network that is efficient, reliable, modern, integrated, resilient, safe, and sustainable, where social and environmental impacts are considered equally.” The CFMP reinforces California’s leadership role in innovation and sustainability. The CFMP aligns with and supports many of the actions proposed within the UCS and the California Sustainable Freight Action Plan including the State’s transition to a zero- and near-zero emission freight fleet, supporting marine highways and short line rail, and proposing alternative modes for last mile deliveries. Caltrans is currently developing the 2023 California Freight Mobility Plan (CFMP) to provide a long-term vision for California’s freight future.

[California Sustainable Freight Action Plan](#) (2016)

In July 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-32-15, which provides a vision for California’s transition to a more efficient, more economically competitive, and less polluting freight transport system. The Governor’s Executive Order directed various State agencies to collaborate in developing a California Sustainable Freight Action Plan (Action Plan). This Action Plan is not intended to replace other planning processes and documents such as the California Freight Mobility Plan or regional goods movement plans, but rather is intended to inform those efforts by providing a new perspective regarding the sustainability of the

freight system and framework for ongoing collaborative processes. The Action Plan establishes guiding principles to inform ongoing and future planning documents as well as freight targets to measure and report progress on meeting said goals. The Action Plan includes recommendations on:

- A long-term 2050 Vision and Guiding Principles for California’s future freight transport system.
- Targets for 2030 to guide the State toward meeting the Vision.
- Opportunities to leverage State freight transport system investments.
- Actions to initiate over the next five years to make progress towards the Targets and the Vision.
- Pilot projects to achieve on-the-ground progress in the near-term.
- Additional concepts for further exploration and development, if viable.

The Santa Cruz Branch Line is an active single track freight railroad that is owned by the RTC. It currently is only used for freight along the first three miles, located in Watsonville. The UCS Preferred Scenario recommends preservation of the branch line to accommodate possible future freight needs via temporal separation from planned passenger rail operations. The Coastal Rail Trail project element is being designed to be compatible with rail use on the branch line.

Goods movement by trucks along Highway 1 is relevant and vital to the vision of the UCS. The UCS supports the Action Plans goals through providing freight benefits along Highway 1. Project elements such as bridge widening will upgrade existing bridges to meet a state of good repair and align with Caltrans bridge standards. The UCS supports improved travel time reliability for goods movement on trucks and congestion relief along the corridor, which will help improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to the existing conditions on Highway 1.

[Climate Change Scoping Plan](#) (2017)

In September 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. The event marked a critical moment in California’s history. By requiring in law, a reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, California set the stage for its transition to a sustainable, clean energy future. This historic step also helped put climate change on the national agenda and has spurred action by many other states. The California Air Resources Board (ARB or Board) is the lead agency for implementing AB 32, which set the major milestones for establishing the Scoping Plan. The Scoping Plan, developed by ARB in coordination with the Climate Action Team (CAT), proposed a comprehensive set of actions designed to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in California, improve our environment, reduce our dependence on oil, diversify our energy sources, save energy, create new jobs, and enhance public health. The Scoping Plan has undergone various updates throughout the years. The most recent update of the Scoping Plan, 2022 Scoping Plan Update, is currently still in development with a public draft posted on the ARB website. The 2022 Draft Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (Draft 2022 Scoping Plan or 2022 Scoping Plan) is the most comprehensive and far-reaching Scoping Plan developed to date. It identifies a technologically feasible and cost-effective path to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 while also assessing the progress California is making toward reducing its GHG emissions by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, as called for in SB 32 and laid out in the 2017 Scoping Plan.

The UCS and the Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program addresses strategies considerate of the transportation sector’s impacts to climate change. They reflect the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the reduction in countywide vehicle miles traveled, as warranted by the WSC-MCP’s travel time savings benefits and mode shift to low carbon modes, while furthering the capital needs around the transition to zero emission transportation infrastructure.

[California State Rail Plan](#) (2018)

The California State Rail Plan establishes a long-term vision for prioritizing state investment in an efficient, effective passenger and freight rail system, which supports the goals and policies of the California Transportation Plan 2040. The Rail Plan identifies service goals, capital costs, and a phased strategy for achieving the vision. This ambitious plan identifies a coordinated, statewide passenger rail network that will get Californians where they want to go, when they want to go, and enhance the movement of goods by rail to support California’s industries and the economy. With this focus, the Rail Plan expects passenger rail trips to increase more than tenfold by 2040 to over 1.3 million rail trips each day. The Rail Plan also describes how California's rail system will improve its ability to move freight cleanly and efficiently by expanding freight rail capacity to handle a more than doubling of intermodal rail freight demand from ports.

The Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL) is one of the three paralleling transportation routes of the UCS. The Branch Line is identified in the State Rail Plan for future rail service. The Coastal Rail Trail project, which utilizes the Branch Line corridor, is being developed to accommodate both rail and trail uses, consistent with the UCS, the State Rail Plan, and the RTC’s [Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study](#) (2021).

Broadband and ITS Implementation (2021)

In July 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 156 into law to create an open-access middle-mile network to bring high-speed broadband to all Californians. Caltrans is the agency tasked to deliver construction of the middle-mile infrastructure along state highways and in state right of way. The State Route 1 corridor in Santa Cruz County is identified as part of the Caltrans Middle Mile Project, whereby broadband will be delivered through construction of the Caltrans project 05-1Q280.

Caltrans District 5 Plans

[District 5 Active Transportation Plan](#) (2021)

The District 5 Active Transportation Plan advances the Vision, Statement, and Goals in Toward an Active California, the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan, and is part of a comprehensive planning process to identify locations with walking and bicycling needs in each Caltrans district across California. The Plan identifies challenges and potential solutions for walking and bicycling along and across Caltrans roadways. It recognizes that many people rely on Caltrans roadways to walk, bicycle, and connect to transit, and also acknowledges that people of color and people with lower incomes experience disproportionately higher crash risks than other groups do. The Plan seeks to enhance safety and make it more comfortable and convenient for everyone to walk and bicycle more often by identifying needs and priorities for future investments. The Plan includes a

prioritized list of bicycle and pedestrian needs along and across the SHS to help identify opportunities to incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements into projects.

The Active Transportation Plan identifies needs to improve bicycle and pedestrian crossings at 13 locations on Highway 1 between Freedom Boulevard and Morrissey Boulevard. Addressing an identified need, the UCS recommends auxiliary/bus-on-shoulder and rail trail projects which include construction of four new bicycle and pedestrian crossings of Highway 1. Local roadway overcrossings within the WSC-MCP include new bike lanes and sidewalks as well.

[District 5 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Report](#) (2019)

The District 5 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment identifies segments of the State Highway System vulnerable to climate change impacts including precipitation, temperature, wildfire, storm surge, and sea level rise. These reports include a prioritized list of potentially exposed assets in each Caltrans District. The prioritization methodology in these reports considers, amongst other things, the timing of the climate impacts, their severity and extensiveness, the condition of each asset (a measure of the sensitivity of the asset to damage), the number of system users affected, and the level of network redundancy in the area.

State Route 1 is one of the three routes of the UCS. It is mostly located within half a mile inland from the coast and within an urbanized area. It may be susceptible to climate change impacts primarily due to flooding from increased levels of precipitation as both Trout Creek and Aptos Creek are adjacent or beneath it in Aptos. The UCS's proposed projects, as being implemented via the WSC-MCP, replace the SR 1 structures at Trout and Aptos creeks for long-term climate resiliency, consistent with the Climate Change Vulnerability Report.

State Route 1 Transportation Concept Report (2019)

The Highway 1 Transportation Concept Report (TCR) evaluated current and projected conditions along the route and communicated the vision for the development of each route in each Caltrans District during a 20- to 25-year planning horizon. The TCR is developed with the goals of increasing safety, improving mobility, providing excellent stewardship and meeting community and environmental needs along the corridor through integrated transportation network management, including the highway, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, freight, operational improvements and travel demand management components of the corridor.

The Highway 1 elements of the UCS and Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program, including the Highway 1 auxiliary lanes and reconstruction of the railroad bridges, are reflected in the Highway 1 TCR. The TCR also recognized and recommended coordination between Caltrans and the RTC on development of the Unified Corridor Investment Study with identifying multimodal transportation investments for the Highway 1, Santa Cruz Branch Line and Soquel Drive corridors.

[District System Management Plan](#) (2015)

California's State Highway System needs long-range planning documents to guide the logical development of transportation systems as required by CA Gov. Code §65086 and as necessitated by the public, stakeholders, and system users. The purpose of the District System Management Plan (DSMP) is to develop the District's vision of how the

transportation system will be maintained, managed, and developed over the next 20 years and beyond. It provides a vehicle for the development of multimodal, multijurisdictional system strategies. The DSMP is developed with the goals of increasing safety and health, stewardship and efficiency, sustainability, livability, and economy, system performance, and organizational excellence.

The DSMP was developed in close partnership with the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in the District, pulling from each of the Regional Transportation Plans and Corridor Plans developed at the state, district or regional scale. The DSMP includes a project list that identifies priority transportation enhancements. Elements of the UCS recommendations and the Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program, including the Highway 1 auxiliary lanes and paralleling bicycle and pedestrian improvements, are reflected in the final 2015 DSMP.

Congestion Management Process

Congestion Management Programs

One of the original intents of the State Congestion Management Programs implemented by Congestion Management Agencies was to link transportation, land use, air quality, and regional economies. Elements of the programs included monitoring and thresholds for Level of Service, multi-modal performance measures, travel demand element, consideration of land use decisions' impact on the transportation system, and development of a capital improvement program. While the RTC is no longer designated as a CMA and does not prepare a CMP, the UCS considers automobile travel time delay by way of analyzing peak period mean automobile travel time and person trips across screen-line. The UCS also evaluated automobile vehicle miles traveled as a measure for changes in automobile travel. Multi-modal performance was analyzed in the UCS by way of peak period mean transit travel time, transit vehicle miles traveled, and mode share. Travel demand management strategies were included in all of the scenarios evaluated in the UCS and included in the Preferred Scenario. Travel demand modeling considered impact of land use on travel patterns. The UCS also identified a list of transportation projects for implementation.