

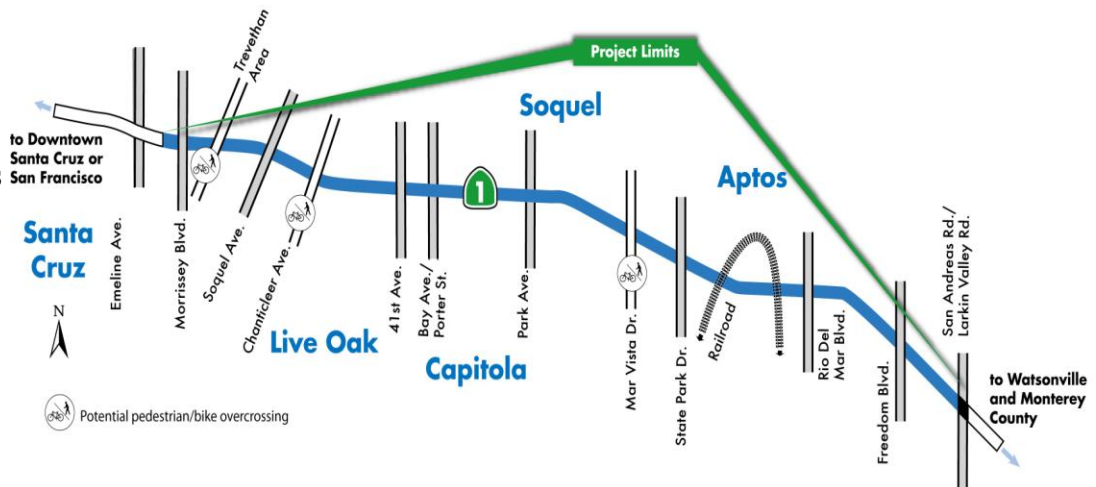


Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program

Fact Sheet
September 2016

Program Elements

- ❖ Auxiliary Lanes
- ❖ 3 Pedestrian/Bike Bridges
- ❖ Upgraded Interchanges
- ❖ Ramp Metering
- ❖ HOV/Carpool Transit Lane



The RTC, in cooperation with Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration, has released the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the improvement of Highway 1 between Santa Cruz and Aptos in November 2015. The findings of the DEIR including technical studies can be found on-line at: www.sccrtc.org/hwy1eir. The Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program is designed to provide solutions to the deficiencies known to exist with the central artery of the county's transportation system.

Needs and Challenges

The goal of the Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program is to address several different needs to the backbone of the county's existing transportation network:

- Bottlenecks along Highway 1 causing increasing congestion during peak travel times.
- Unpredictable travel times experienced by commuters, commerce, visitors, and emergency vehicles on a daily basis.
- "Cut-through" traffic on local streets as motorists increasingly seek "short-cuts" to avoid congestion on Highway 1.
- Limited opportunities for protected pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Highway 1 in the urbanized area of the county.
- Create a viable transportation upgrade program given limited and unpredictable funding from state and federal sources.

Key Findings of the Draft Environmental Impact Report

- Affordable incremental improvements (such as auxiliary lanes) will provide congestion relief for the morning commute and increase the efficiency of the highway (vehicles and persons carried per hour) in the evening.
- If nothing is done, highway congestion is projected to become far worse than current conditions leading to even more traffic diverting to local streets and roads.
- There are significantly more collisions on Highway 1 compared to similar facilities in the state leading to even greater congestion and travel delays.
- Three new bicycle/pedestrian crossings plus sidewalks and bike lanes on all new structures crossing the highway are included in the Highway 1 construction plans.
- Air quality "criteria pollutants" are projected to be significantly reduced in the ultimate improvement scenario (High Occupancy Vehicle – HOV Alternative) – a 36% decrease in nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide and 44% reduction in reactive organic gas.

Project Funding and Phasing

Existing and projected transportation revenues are insufficient to fully fund the Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program as a single project (estimated to cost \$600 million). The DEIR recognizes this reality and includes a strategy for phased construction as funds become available. The RTC proposes to increase mobility in Highway 1 corridor, through what has historically been the most congested and heavily traveled thoroughfare for residents, visitors, goods movement, and emergency services. This approach will avoid disruption associated with constructing disconnected segments in the northbound and southbound direction.

The RTC has approved a transportation sales tax measure for the 2016 ballot that would fund the construction of three sets of auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 from Soquel Drive to State Park Avenue and pedestrian/bike overcrossings at Chanticleer and Mar Vista Avenues. Funding would also be provided for Traveler Information (Cruz511), Safe on 17, and the Freeway Service Patrol.

Future project phases would continue to construct auxiliary lanes down the Highway 1 corridor and reconstruct highway interchanges (such as Morrissey Boulevard, Soquel Drive, and 41st Avenue). These projects would be prioritized based on traffic conditions to relieve congestion and minimize or avoid traffic hot spots. Interchange improvements would include widening of local roadways, structures, and ramps for future ramp metering with transit and emergency vehicle by-pass lanes.

Next Steps

If voters approve a local, reliable source of transportation funding (as has been done in 19 counties throughout the state representing over 80% of the state's population), projects on the corridor can be delivered quicker and take advantage of economies of scale. The annual average of state transportation improvement funds coming to Santa Cruz County is \$3-5 million, however, this year the state is diverting most of the revenues to non-transportation projects and the county's regional share is zero.

Project Phases

- ✓ **Prepare Draft Environmental Document of the Entire Highway 1 Corridor**
- ✓ **Identify a Project Phasing Program**
- ✓ **Initiate Detailed Draft Environmental Documents for the Next Project Increments:**
 - **41st Avenue to Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes,**
 - **Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing at Chanticleer Avenue, and**
 - **Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing at Mar Vista Avenue**
- **Caltrans Approval of the Final Environmental Document for the Entire Highway 1 Corridor**
- **Secure Funding**
- **Final Design, Secure Right-of-Way and Complete Utility Relocation**
- **Start Construction (Winter 2018/2019, subject to available funding)**

Stay Informed About Highway 1 Projects

If you wish to receive information, contact the SCCRTC at:

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060
phone (831) 460-3200 ~ fax (831) 460-3215
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To continue receiving information about Highway 1 and other projects, subscribe to the E-newsletter on the SCCRTC website: www.sccrtc.org/enews.