



Rail Corridor: Infrastructure Preservation

Program Description

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) acquired the Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBRL) in 2012 for \$14.2M to expand transportation options and alternatives to driving, and plan for the future mobility needs of Santa Cruz County residents and visitors. The 135-year-old rail corridor spans 32-miles from Davenport to Watsonville and connects to regional and state rail lines.

The short-line railroad operator, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad, currently provides freight rail service to a number of local construction, agricultural, beverage, and biofuel companies through an Administration, Coordination, and License Agreement with the RTC. Freight rail service helps to reduce traffic and greenhouse gases as one rail car load generally removes four truck trips from roadways and freeways. Big Trees & Pacific Railroad currently operates seasonal and special event recreational rail service on a portion of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

Measure D funds are used for inspections and repairs to the 29 railroad bridges, as well as repairs and upgrades to railroad signals, grade crossings, and the railbed to meet the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Requirements for a short-line railroad.

In 2017 and again in 2022/2023, severe winter storms damaged the line at several locations. The RTC has completed several storm damage repairs and debris removal projects and has programmed repairs for the remaining damaged sites.



Program Highlights

Rail Preservation Efforts:

- ▶ Inspections and repairs of railroad bridges on an ongoing basis
- ▶ Storm damage repairs and clean up resulting from the 2017 and 2022/2023 winter storms, the majority of which will be funded by state and federal disaster assistance relief funds
- ▶ Capital Maintenance efforts to comply with FRA requirements, including repair and rehabilitation of railroad track infrastructure, grade crossings, signals, and signage as needed
- ▶ Railbed repairs including repairs to coastal erosion near Manresa State Beach

Total Programming

Total Funding Secured	\$	15.67M
Funding Sources		
Measure D (Rail)	\$	12.42M
Other Sources*	\$	3.25M

*Includes RSTPX, short-line railroad improvement program, and FEMA funds.



PROJECT FACT SHEET

Updated April 2024

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