

## VI-9. REGIONAL PLANNING

Collaborating, in mutually beneficial regional partnerships, is the key for ensuring sustainable transportation and land use investments that will affect the future of Santa Cruz and the greater region.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Successful regional collaboration can address:

- Existing and future regional vehicle traffic congestion problems on Highway 1
- The location, extent and balance of future employment and population growth, including the provision of mixed-use development and affordable housing near transit, to preserve open space
- The type and availability of transit services and accessible routes to expand person-trip travel options
- Managing multi-modal travel way capacity more efficiently
- Managing parking availability and cost to increase carpooling and transit, and to encourage more efficient, compact land use
- Expanding regional bicycle and recreational trail networks.

Key partners include UCSC, Metro, SCCRTC, Santa Cruz County, Caltrans, Downtown Merchant's Association and major Santa Cruz employers.

The challenge of transportation planning is that solutions to one issue generally have both beneficial and negative consequences for related issues. Therefore, success relies upon regional collaboration and relying on the principles of sustainable transportation planning. Applying the principles will reflect core community values and help achieve balanced and integrated regional transportation and land use solutions. This approach offers a comprehensive perspective to frame issues and solutions. Santa Cruz should:

- 1. Support regional funding and implementation of key regional projects that can significantly benefit the city, including:**
  - Metrobase Transit District Consolidations Operations Facility
  - Right-of-way acquisition on rail corridor
  - Bike and pedestrian path on rail right-of-way
  - Local bike projects
  - Expanding local and regional bus service
- 2. Ensure, as the proposed Regional Transportation Commission Highway 1 widening project moves forward, that the following criteria are sufficiently**

**evaluated so selection and funding of future projects are consistent with the MTS vision and community needs.**

- *New travel choices.* Make a major regional transportation investment to provide new travel choices to ensure high-occupancy, high-frequency regional transit service and carpooling that serves local and regional activity centers as the primary means to address vehicle traffic congestion and increase person-trip mobility.
- *Funding availability for transit.* Ensure that Highway 1 widening project capital, operating and maintenance costs, which would be covered by an increase in sales tax, do not reduce funding for bus and transit services. In addition, ensure that sales tax funds are annually available to support other priority transportation projects.
- *Acceptable levels of local street vehicle congestion.* Ensure that there are no significant local street vehicle traffic congestion and increased SOV traffic impacts induced by Highway 1 widening or as a result of construction impacts related to the widening project.
- *Support local transit, carpooling pedestrian and bicycle travel.* Ensure that the design and operations of the widening project connect to the local street system in a manner that can support transit and carpooling operations as a priority on local arterial streets. Additionally, support pedestrian and bicycle connections across the highway to interconnect north and south neighborhoods.
- *Demonstrate sufficient benefits relative to other feasible alternatives to justify project costs and impacts.* Ensure that the future travel benefits and travel time savings for transit and carpooling are sufficient to justify the costs and environmental impacts of a Highway 1 widening project when compared with other feasible alternatives, including a BRT system on the rail corridor.
- *Minimize auto-oriented land use impacts both regionally and locally.* Conduct an evaluation of the land use impacts of a Highway 1 widening project. It should monitor progress in promoting compact, walkable, mixed-use and transit-oriented development (moving away from inducing low density, auto-oriented development). The evaluation should identify other feasible alternatives that support sustainable land use.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Regional Setting**

The City of Santa Cruz is located on the Monterey Bay between the San Francisco Bay Area to the north and the Monterey Peninsula to the south. As the home for the University of California at Santa Cruz, county government, and several of the County's largest employers, Santa Cruz is an employment center for Santa Cruz County. With coastal mountains, sandy beaches and a vibrant downtown, Santa Cruz is also a major tourist destination and recreation attraction for the San Francisco Bay Area and the Monterey Bay Area.

## Population and Employment Growth

As shown in Table 1, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) forecasts for population and employment growth for the City and County of Santa Cruz indicate that:

- Local programs can influence 74% of Santa Cruz peak hour travel demand. 50% are local trips and 24% are commute trips into the City.
- 26% are commute trips out of the City, which are significantly less influenced by local programs.
- The City of Santa Cruz contributes less than 20% to total regional PM peak hour trips, declining from 18% in 2000 to 17% in 2020.
- Santa Cruz County's population, residential housing construction and employment are projected to increase at a greater rate than the City's between 2000 and 2020.
- 69 percent of regional population growth by 2020 will be in Watsonville and the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County, increasing by 31,561 from 180,334 to 211,895 by 2020.
- Approximately 211,895 people will live in South County, approximately 70 percent of the County's projected 2020 population. Due to South County's low-density development pattern, future growth will continue to contribute to increased auto dependence and is less responsive to transit services.
- A net 19% of the County workforce commutes to areas outside of the County for employment in areas such as Monterey County and the Bay Area, with the majority of these trips going to the Silicon Valley area in Santa Clara County.
- Population in Santa Cruz County is anticipated to increase by 17,8% between 2000 and 2020 growing from 257,739 to 303,646.
- Employment in Santa Cruz County is anticipated to increase by 19% between 2000 and 2020, growing from 140,589 to 168,532 jobs.

**Table 1: Population and Employment Growth, Santa Cruz County 2000 - 2020**

	2000	Size in Region	2020	Growth	Rate	Percent of Region	Percent of Growth
<b>Employment</b>							
Santa Cruz County	140,589		168,532	27,943	19.9%		
<b>Population</b>							
Capitola	11,172	4%	11,750	578	5.2%	4%	1%
Santa Cruz	55,013	21%	64,386	9,373	17.0%	21%	20%
Scotts Valley	11,218	4%	15,615	4,397	39.2%	5%	10%
Watsonville	43,620	17%	55,875	12,255	28.1%	18%	27%
Unincorporated	136,714	53%	156,020	19,306	14.1%	51%	42%
<b>Santa Cruz County</b>	<b>257,737</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>303,646</b>	<b>45,909</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Unincorporated + Watsonville</b>	<b>180,334</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>211,895</b>	<b>31,561</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>69%</b>

## TRANSPORTATION SETTING

### Network

Regionally, State Highway Route I is the major inter and intra county route for the County, following the coast from San Francisco and San Mateo County south through the City of Santa Cruz. Within the city, Highway 1, traverses from the recently improved Mission Street, traverses east to its junction with Highway 17. At Highway 17 Highway 1 forms a four-lane freeway extending south to Watsonville and Monterey County. State Highway 17, which traverses the Santa Cruz mountains, terminates in Santa Cruz and connects Santa Cruz County to the greater San Francisco Bay area.

Highways I and 17 experience average annual daily traffic volumes of up to 110,000 and 66,000, respectively. The two highways serve regional traffic, motorists who commute every day to the high-tech job centers in the Silicon Valley, and motorists who travel into Santa Cruz County to enjoy the scenic recreation opportunities offered by the region. Highway 17 is often subject to high accident rates, primarily due to motorists driving faster than is safe for conditions.

### Traffic Volume/Capacity

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) along Route I range from 36,000 near the Monterey County line to in excess of 110,000 near the "fishhook" interchange with Route 17. Between State Park Drive and Morrissey Boulevard, current AADT ranges from 83,000 to 110,000 with the highest daily volumes occurring between the Soquel and Morrissey interchanges.

Peak hour travel demand in the study area exceeds the carrying capacity of the highway. Route 1 operates at Level of Service (LOS) "F" for multiple hours each day. Typical northbound AM mid week recurrent morning congestion lasts for over 3.5 hours; mid week southbound PM congestion lasts for over 4 hours.

Recurrent congestion related queuing on State Route 1 extends for several miles during peak hours. In the PM, southbound traffic queues from the Bay Porter Interchange back through the 1/17 Junction towards Pasatiempo Drive and north on Route 1 towards the Route 9 Junction. In the AM peak period, northbound congested queuing typically extends from Morrissey Drive to beyond Freedom Boulevard. Accidents, events, and other incidents in the corridor can further increase congestion related delays in either direction, on any day, including weekends.

The AMBAG travel forecasting model projects that the 2020 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes in the study area will range from 115,000 near State Park Drive to 144,000 between Morrissey and Soquel. With this projected increase in travel demand, the extent and duration of congestion in the study area will significantly increase. The duration of daily northbound congested conditions would increase by several hours with weekday recurrent congestion related queues extending as far back as Watsonville during both the AM and PM peak periods. In the southbound direction, the anticipated increase in travel demands will further impact Route 17, Route 9, Ocean Street, and Mission Street as congestion queues extend north. Soquel Avenue, Seabright neighborhood, Morrissey Boulevard and the Hwy 1/9 intersection also experience high levels of vehicle traffic.

## Accident Data

During the five year period, there were a total of 921 accidents on Hwy 1 from Morrissey-St. Park with no fatalities and 281 injuries resulting in a total accident rate of 1.22, which is below the statewide average rate of 1.60. The types of collisions were rear end (287), hit object (66), and sideswipe (47). The primary collision factors for these types of accidents were speeding (263); improper turn (40), and tailgating (45). The times of the day when a large percentage of these accidents occurred were 8:00 a.m. (60), 9:00 a.m. (36), and 5:00 p.m. (70).

## Transit Services

Regional bus routes provide service to destinations in Santa Clara and Monterey Counties. Weekday service is provided by the Highway 17 Express Bus, which serves Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and San Jose (destinations include the Caltrain Station and San Jose State University). Amtrak buses provide service to downtown Santa Cruz's transit center and to the San Jose Caltrain station, with train connections to San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton and intermediate cities. Limited Amtrak bus service is also available between Watsonville and San Jose. Greyhound buses serve downtown Santa Cruz, Los Gatos and the San Jose Airport.

## **Modal Choice/Transit**

Although the urbanized portions of the County, especially University oriented areas of Santa Cruz, exhibit support for alternative transportation modes including transit and bicycling, the preponderance of new growth has been at lower, less transit conducive densities in communities and unincorporated area lying south of Santa Cruz. As a result, a recent survey indicates that 83% of the County's workers commute in single occupant vehicles. Those who live in Santa Cruz County and work elsewhere also impact Highway 1. According to the 1990 Census approximately 20% of employed Santa Cruz County residents travel to jobs in Silicon Valley and beyond; a significant proportion of these travelers use Highway 1 to access Highway 17 over the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The Route 1 facility currently includes park and ride lots in support of transit use, vanpools, and high occupancy vehicles. "Express Buses", including Route 17 Express Service are trapped in mixed flow lanes with all other traffic, and no incentives such as ramp meter HOV bypass lanes or mainline HOV lanes exist to encourage ridesharing.

## **Lack of Alternative Routes**

Owing to geography, topography and historical development patterns, Route 1 is the lifeline for transportation through the County and its urbanized areas. While Route 1 is the only continuous route through the County, Soquel Drive/Soquel Ave and other local arterials including Capitola Road and Murray Street/East Cliff Drive, serve as parallel routes within certain sections of the urbanized area. These roadways, however, are themselves congested during peak hours and little opportunity exists to expand their capacity. An underutilized branch rail line provides potential for future transit growth in the corridor, and including potential use for as a bicycle and pedestrian path. The closest parallel State highway for interregional travel is U.S Route 101, which is separated from Route 1 by coastal mountains.

# **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

## **Institutional Context**

The regional transportation planning agency for Santa Cruz County is the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC). SCCRTC oversees planning and funding programs for local & regional projects using state and federal transportation funds. The City of Santa Cruz has one City representative on the 12-member SCCRTC board and many City transportation projects are funded through grant programs administered by the SCCRTC.

## Adopted Plans and Programs

Three regional transportation planning efforts directly affect the future of transportation planning for the City of Santa Cruz:

1. The Master Transportation Investment Study (MTIS), approved by the RTC in 1999, which sets forth a program of \$260 million in transportation projects for the Watsonville - Santa Cruz - UCSC corridor to be pursued over the next 15 years.
2. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), adopted by the RTC in October 2001, which is the comprehensive regional transportation planning document providing guidance for transportation policy and projects to improve mobility through 2025 and incorporates the MTIS decision.
3. The 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), adopted by the RTC in December 2001, which implements the RTP, proposes how regional funds should be spent to the California Transportation Commission, and is the summary document which tracks state and federal transportation funding through fiscal year 2006/07.

## Key Regional Projects

The adopted RTP confirmed the recommendations of the MTIS, with the following projects having significant potential to affect the mobility future for the City of Santa Cruz:

- **Acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch rail line** for future transportation resource for the community.
- **Development of a bicycle and pedestrian pathway adjacent to the rail line**, where freight operations will continue and future transit options will not be precluded.
- **Implementation of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project**. This project provides operational improvements by widening the existing to add merge lanes between Highway 17 and Morrissey Blvd. It is funded with \$52 million in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds and is scheduled to start construction in 2004. It can be characterized as the next step toward full highway widening (with Mission St. widening as the first step).
- **Planning for Highway 1 widening from four lanes to six lanes to add HOV lane both ways is beyond the limits of the upcoming Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project**. This project would modify six interchanges and ten structures, including three additional structures for pedestrian over crossings and sound walls. The extended Highway 1 widening project is not yet funded and will require a local sales or gas tax to enable future construction.

- **Funding for a 15-year growth plan for increasing bus service**, including new buses, bus stops, equipment and upgraded maintenance/operations facilities.
- **Funding for high priority local bike projects**, including around schools, and an **electric bike program** allowing discounted distribution and sale of electric bikes to people committed to driving less.

None of these projects are fully funded yet.

## CONSISTENCY WITH MTS GOALS

Table 2 presents 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Program funded projects and longer-term RTP projects that will affect future City of Santa Cruz travel. The table provides a conceptual evaluation for consistency with the MTS goals. All identified RTIP and RTP projects are consistent with the MTS, with the following comments:

### MTS High Priority Projects

The following projects are MTS high priority projects:

- Metrobase Transit District Consolidations Operations Facility.
- Right of Way Acquisition on rail corridor.
- Bike and pedestrian path on rail right-of-way.
- Local bike projects.
- Expanded Bus Service

### Projects Requiring Further Evaluation

The proposed Highway 1 widening projects, both the 1) widening of existing on-ramps, adding auxiliary lanes and ramp metering, and 2) adding one HOV lane each direction - widening Highway 1 from 4 to 6 lanes - modification to 6 interchanges and 10 structures, including 3 pedestrian over crossing and sound walls, require additional design and operational information to evaluate project impacts and ensure consistency with MTS goals.

*Key questions to be analyzed in the environmental analysis are:*

1. The potential effect of increasing SOV use with the addition of HOV lanes.
2. Local street system peak hour traffic impacts associated with increased HOV and SOV traffic including the Highway 1 and Mission Street corridors, as well as on Soquel Avenue.
2. Operational efficiency and travel timesaving with the design of the transitions from Hwy 1 HOV lanes to local city streets including the flow of transit and ridesharing to UC, downtown and employment center locations.

4. Opportunities for new bicycle lanes and pedestrian connections across Highway 1 to link the north and south areas of Santa Cruz together.

**A proposed Route 1 strategy for MTS is to**

1. Recognize the regional problem;
2. Raise questions regarding the problem and potential solutions for consideration;
3. Identify issues, solutions and alternatives to address potential impacts for environmental analysis. Items identified by the Steering Committee are:
  - Park and ride at Hwy 1/9 is critical.
  - Park and ride all along the Hwy 1 corridor.
  - Transit stops directly along Hwy 1 corridor (on the freeway).
  - Consider Hwy 1 corridor/ROW as accommodating other very high occupancy transit systems (fixed guide way).
  - Increase efficiency of Hwy 1 corridor.
  - Provide better housing opportunities for those working in the City and currently residing in the County.
  - Balance jobs & housing.
  - Widening of all bridges across the corridor to accommodate bike lanes and pedestrian facilities.
  - Parking pricing options.
  - Consider appropriate transit technologies given regional distribution of land use, i.e. that 50% future growth is in low density, auto dependent unincorporated areas of county.
  - Provide land use alternatives in EIR analysis for region.
  - Providing alternatives, including HOV lanes, improve SOV travel.
  - City hire separate EIR consultant to independently evaluate HOV lane impacts.
  - Offer choices.
  - Recommend rationale to council.
  - Ensure that if there is a 1/2 cent sales tax to pay for the widening, that it does not eliminate funding for transit.
  - What are the local street impacts of the Highway 1 widening?

**Table 2: Regional Projects**

Project	Cost	Consistent MTS	Remarks
Hwy 1 widening - merge lanes cost increases	\$52 million	- Projects Funded in the RTIP that Affect the City --	need additional information to evaluate impacts & insure consistency with MTS goals
Metrobase - Transit District Consolidated Operations Facility	\$31 million	Yes	<b>MTS high priority</b> <i>needs additional funds</i>
Traffic management - Hwy 1 freeway service patrol	\$240,000	Yes	non capacity increasing project that improves safety and traffic flow
Traffic management - Commute solutions	\$444,000	Yes	regional carpool program
Project management - SB45 planning funds	\$230,000	Yes	helps track funding for all projects
Sanctuary Scenic Trail	\$1.5 million		Only \$150,000 currently funded
Santa Cruz Metro Center Rehabilitation	\$6 million		
Highway 17 Bus Purchases	\$4 million		
Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition <i>needs additional funds</i>	\$15 million	yes	<b>MTS high priority</b>
Regional Vanpool Incentive Program	\$100,000		
Santa Cruz Area TMA Program	\$90,000/yr		
Electric Bicycle Commuter Incentive Program	\$1 million	yes	<i>needs additional funds</i>
One in Five (Don't Drive) Rideshare Promotion	\$1 million	yes	<i>needs additional funds</i>
Bike & pedestrian path on rail right-of-way only environmental and planning phase funded	\$12 million	yes	<b>MTS high priority</b>
Battery Backup of Signals program	\$200,000		
<b>City of Santa Cruz Projects</b>			
San Lorenzo River bike/pedestrian bridge <i>needs additional funds</i>	\$3 million	yes	<b>MTS high priority</b>
Santa Cruz Multimodal Station at Depot Site	\$4 million		
Broadway-Brommer Bike Path	\$2 million		
Beach Street Contraflow Bikeway	\$600,000		
Front St. pavement rehabilitation	\$325,000	yes	
High St./Highland Ave. pavement rehabilitation	\$611,000	yes	
Water St. pavement rehabilitation	\$195,000	yes	
EastCliff/Murray St. pavement rehabilitation	\$395,000	yes	

Project	Cost	Consistent MTS	Remarks
San Lorenzo/E. Cliff/Riverside pavement rehabilitation	\$900,000	yes	
West Cliff Dr Path Widening	\$888,000	yes	<i>may need additional funds</i>
Mission St/Hwy 1 Lighting	\$1 million	yes	<i>needs additional funds</i>
Water, Soquel, and Broadway pavement rehabilitation	\$395,000	yes	aka "arterial roadway rehab"
Mission St/Hwy 1 Landscaping	\$625,000		

### RTP Projects that may be implemented/constructed 2002-2025 (Not currently funded)

Bus service improvements		yes	MTS high priority
-Bus stop improvements	\$7.5 million		
-Fleet preventative maintenance	\$1.1 million		
-Hwy 17 Express Service Expansion	\$21 million		
-Local transit service expansion	\$32.2 million		
-Replacement Buses	\$69 million		
-Metro System Automated Customer Service	\$200,000		
-Transit Alternative Fuel Conversions	\$3.2 million		
-Transit Mobility Training Program Expansion	\$1.2 million		
-Transit Service Operations and maintenance	\$732 million		
-Transit Technological Improvements	\$5 million		
-UCSC Bus Service Expansion	\$12.3 million		
-Web-based Transit Rte Info	\$300,000		
-ADA Paratransit fleet and service	\$21.5 million		
-Countywide Specialized Transportation	\$34.5 million		
-Liftline Consolidated Op Facility	\$10 million		
-Non-ADA Paratransit Service Expansion	\$17 million		
<b>Hwy Improvements</b>			
Adding 1 HOV lane each direction by Widening Hwy 1 from 4 to 6 lanes, Morrissey Blvd to State Park Drive	\$300 million		need additional information to evaluate impacts & insure consistency with MTS goals
Hwy 1/9 intersection modifications and park and ride lot	\$6 million	yes	
Intelligent Transportation Systems on Hwy 1	\$3 million		
Bike/Ped bridge on Hwy1 @ Mattison	\$2 million		
Hwy 1 Ramp Metering	\$2.5 million		

Project	Cost	Consistent MTS	Remarks
Hwy 1/San Lorenzo Bridge Widening	\$10 million		
Hwy 17 ITS	\$7 million		
Hwy 17 Operational Improvements	\$50 million		
Hwy 17 CHP Safety Program	\$2.5 million		
<b>local road improvements (MTS project listing)</b> evaluate impacts & ensure consistency with MTS goals		yes	need additional information to
Neighborhood Traffic Management	\$2.5 million		
Countywide bicycle projects	\$75 million	yes	MTS high priority
Local Arterial EMS and HAR System	\$600,000		
Intracity Rail Transit	\$10 million		Passenger rail in City of SC
Other Regional Projects/Programs			
Bike to Work Project (Ecology Action)	\$620,000		
Electric Vehicle Recharging Stations	\$2 million		
Integrated Transportation Info Center			
Park and Ride Lot Development	\$8 million		
Transit Oriented Development Program	\$5 million		
Car sharing Program (SC TMA)	\$2.5 million		