



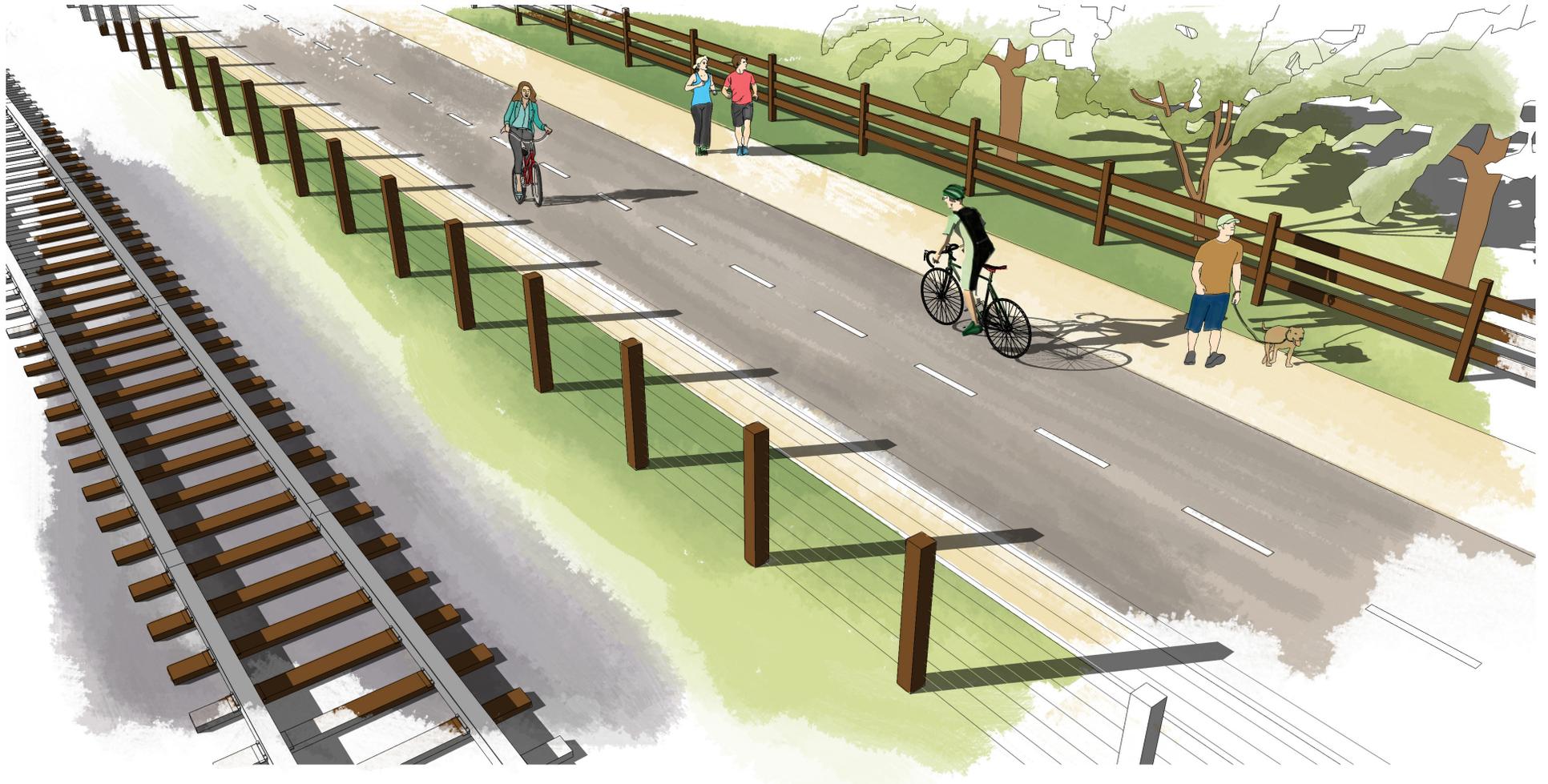
## SECTION ONE CONTENTS

---

1.1 Project Introduction	1-3
1.2 Document Organization	1-9
1.3 Relationship to Other Plans and Policies	1-11
1.4 Public Outreach	1-11

*This section presents the project's history and the process that led to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's planning efforts.*

# SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION



*Rail with trail concept*





Congressman Sam Farr

*Implementation of this key 32-mile-long transportation corridor will allow greater transportation options to 88 parks, 42 schools, and over half of the county's population ...*

*... the rail corridor [will serve] as the "spine" to which all other facilities will connect.*

## 1.1 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.1 OVERVIEW

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST Network) is a two-county pedestrian and bicycle pathway project that is envisioned to run from the Santa Cruz/San Mateo County line to Pacific Grove in Monterey County. It was initially conceived by the Santa Cruz Sanctuary Interagency Task Force (Task Force) and championed by Congressman Sam Farr to foster appreciation for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and provide a non-motorized coastal path for walkers, joggers, cyclists, people with mobility impairments, families, locals, and visitors.

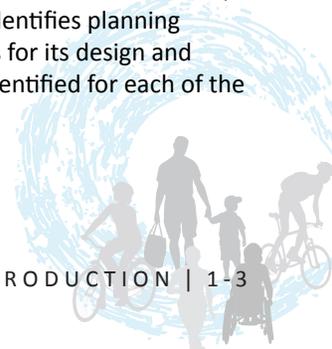
The Transportation Agency for Monterey County is responsible for Monterey County segments (starting from Lover's Point in Pacific Grove), while the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for the segments in Santa Cruz County in partnership with various local government entities. This document, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan (Master Plan), is the result of a directed effort by the RTC to develop the braided bicycle/pedestrian MBSST Network along Santa Cruz County's coast.

The MBSST Network can be differentiated into the Coastal Rail Trail portion and associated spur trails. The proposed Coastal Rail Trail portion of the network will be located within the right-of-way of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor, and will serve the MBSST Network's continuous trail "spine" to provide multi-use alternative transportation and coastal access. The spine, or primary alignment, of the MBSST Network will be built parallel to (not in place of) the operational rail line, within the rail right-of-way, so that freight rail and future passenger rail service may be provided. A network of associated spur trails is identified that will connect the spine with other origins, destinations, and activity sites in the region. Unless otherwise noted, the terms "trails" and "paths" in this document are used synonymously to refer to paved bike/pedestrian multi-use facilities defined by Caltrans as a "Class I Bikeways (Bike Paths)" in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 1000, Bicycle Transportation Design, Topic 1003 - Bikeway Design Criteria.

The Coastal Rail Trail promises to be a highly valuable asset to the Santa Cruz County community for transportation, recreation, education, health, eco-tourism, coastal access, economic vitality, and other visitor-serving purposes. Implementation of this key 32-mile-long transportation corridor will allow greater transportation options to 88 parks, 42 schools, and over half of the county's population who live within one mile of the corridor (per 2010 Census tract information).

### 1.1.2 MASTER PLAN

The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish the continuous alignment and set of design standards for the Coastal Rail Trail and its associated spur trails within the context of existing physical constraints of the railroad, coastal access requirements, highway, and public street rights-of-way. The Master Plan identifies planning issues associated with the Coastal Rail Trail's construction and presents feasible solutions for its design and long-term operation and maintenance. In addition, a preliminary set of costs has been identified for each of the trail segments based on the higher-altitude level of analysis in this Master Plan.



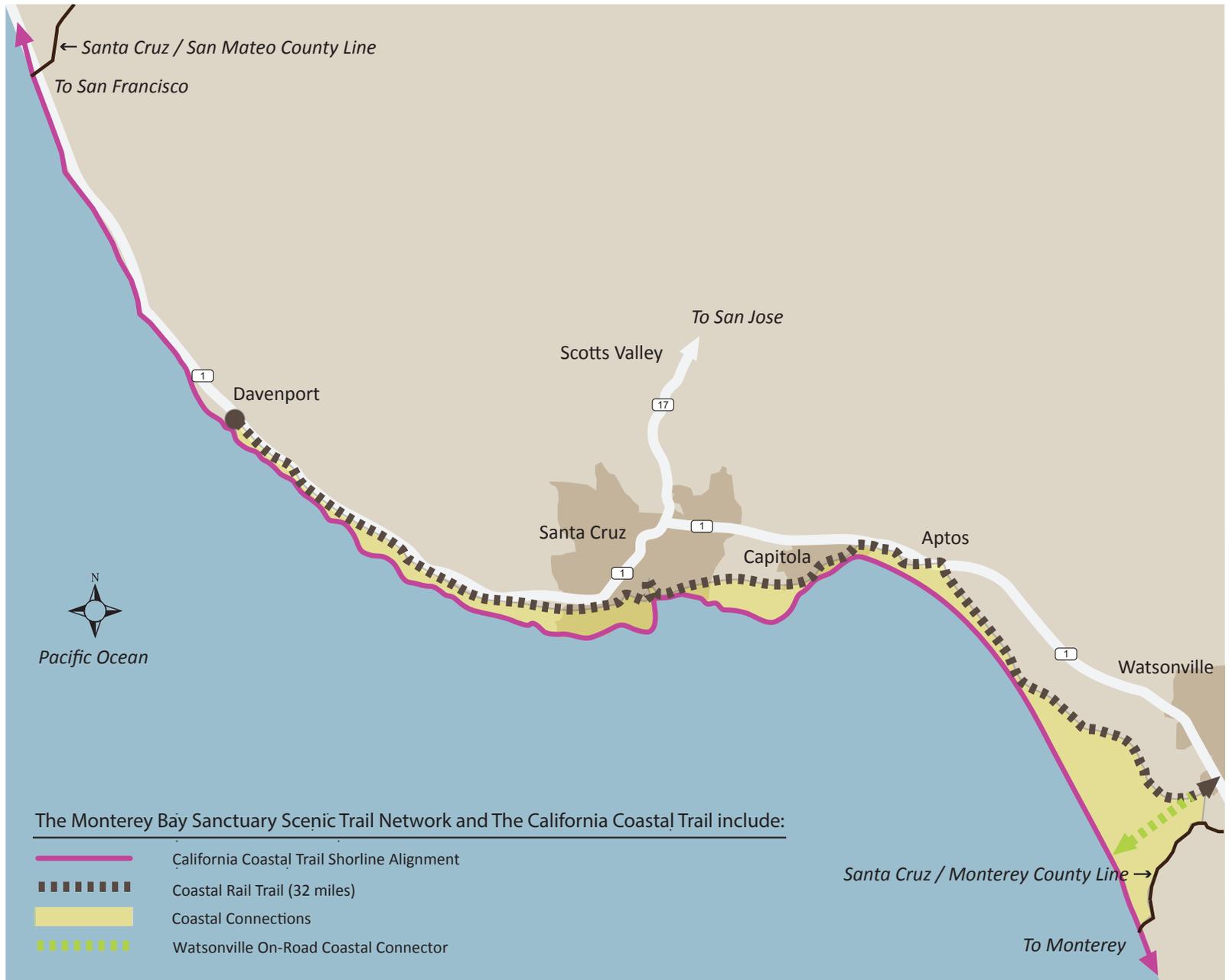


Figure 1-1 Braided trail network



*The Master Plan has been developed through an extensive public outreach program designed to involve all those interested and affected by the proposed MBSST Network. It does not consider use of private property, does not presume any eminent domain actions, and does not prohibit continued agricultural and rail operations.*

The focus of this Master Plan is on the proposed alignment of the 31-mile-long Coastal Rail Trail in Santa Cruz County as the spine of the broader Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST Network), with additional spur trails and natural surface paths providing connectivity to the coast and to activity centers which will bring the total of bike/pedestrian trails in the MBSST Network to approximately 50 miles. These trails and other existing on-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities form the braided network of trails that is the MBSST Network project.

The planning effort for the Master Plan has been conducted within the framework of an extensive public outreach program designed to involve all those interested and affected by the proposed trail. It does not consider use of private property, does not presume eminent domain actions, and does not prohibit continued agricultural and rail operations.

### 1.1.3 EARLY PLANNING EFFORT

The County of Santa Cruz established a Sanctuary Scenic Trail Interagency Task Force (Task Force) in 1993, following federal designation of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) in 1992. The early vision was to bring public agencies and key partners together to identify and promote a continuous coastal trail within Santa Cruz County as the primary means for maximizing the positive economic, educational, and interpretive benefits of the nationally recognized bay. Members included the following:

- Congressman Sam Farr
- then-Supervisor Gary Patton
- then-State Senator Bruce McPherson
- then-State Senator Henry Mello
- then-Assembly Member Fred Keeley
- then-Assembly Member John Laird
- elected officials and staff from Santa Cruz County, and the cities of Capitola and Santa Cruz
- City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency and Parks and Recreation Department
- Santa Cruz Port District
- California State Parks - Santa Cruz District
- County of Santa Cruz Parks
- Santa Cruz County Office of Education
- Santa Cruz County Convention and Visitors Council
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency)
- Seymour Discovery Center at UC Santa Cruz Long Marine Laboratory
- Save Our Shores
- Santa Cruz Seaside Company
- Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
- California Coastal Commission
- and many others



The Task Force met over a period of ten years and established various strategies by which to maximize access to the coast—one of which was to designate and develop a trail system that will bring the public as close to the coast as possible and provide interpretive displays to feature local highlights. The Task Force also produced a Sanctuary Scenic Trail Standards Manual that was to serve as the blueprint for the system’s implementation, as well as types and locations of interpretive and wayfinding signage.

#### 1.1.4 FUNDING

Through Congressman Sam Farr’s leadership and effort, the project was solidified as a two-county system in order to establish a trail around the full arc of the Monterey Bay. Congressman Farr secured \$9 million through federal appropriations and earmarks towards the project to be split equally between the two counties. Through the RTC’s discretionary funding sources, an additional \$2.2 million was designated for the project. Finally, the California Coastal Conservancy granted the RTC \$250,000 toward the preparation of the Master Plan so the trail will span the length of the Santa Cruz County coast from the San Mateo County line to the Monterey County line. Federal transportation dollars mandate the Trail Network serve the mobility needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. Additional funding will need to be identified to bring the project into full implementation.

#### 1.1.5 CONSOLIDATION OF MULTIPLE PROJECTS INTO A TRAIL NETWORK UMBRELLA

Once federal transportation funds were dedicated to the project and the RTC became the lead agency for implementation, the RTC consolidated a number of other funded, proposed, and/or constructed trails into one umbrella project. Those projects included the Coastal Rail Trail, the California Coastal Trail, and the original 11-mile alignment of the MBSST Network.

All these projects shared the goal of developing accessible bicycle and pedestrian trail facilities on or near the coast. For improved planning, administration, coordination with state and federal entities, connectivity to existing facilities, and to benefit from the economies of scale, the MBSST Network was identified. This approach provides many benefits from a comprehensive system-wide planning perspective, as well as for administrative costs.

#### 1.1.6 CALIFORNIA COASTAL TRAIL

The MBSST Network will serve as the California Coastal Trail (CCT) through Santa Cruz County. Additional alignments will also be identified to serve as the CCT by the State Coastal Conservancy, Coastal Commission, State Department of Parks and Recreation, and State Department of Transportation—the state agencies responsible for assisting local communities in completing and signing the MBSST Network. Since not all existing or planned foot paths are shown, more detailed follow-up mapping will be necessary to more completely document and plan the pedestrian strands of the CCT system, most notably where it is located seaward of the Coastal Rail Trail corridor.

*Through Congressman Farr's leadership and effort, the project was solidified as a two-county system in order to establish a trail around the full arc of the Monterey Bay.*

*The MBSST Network will serve as the California Coastal Trail through Santa Cruz County.*

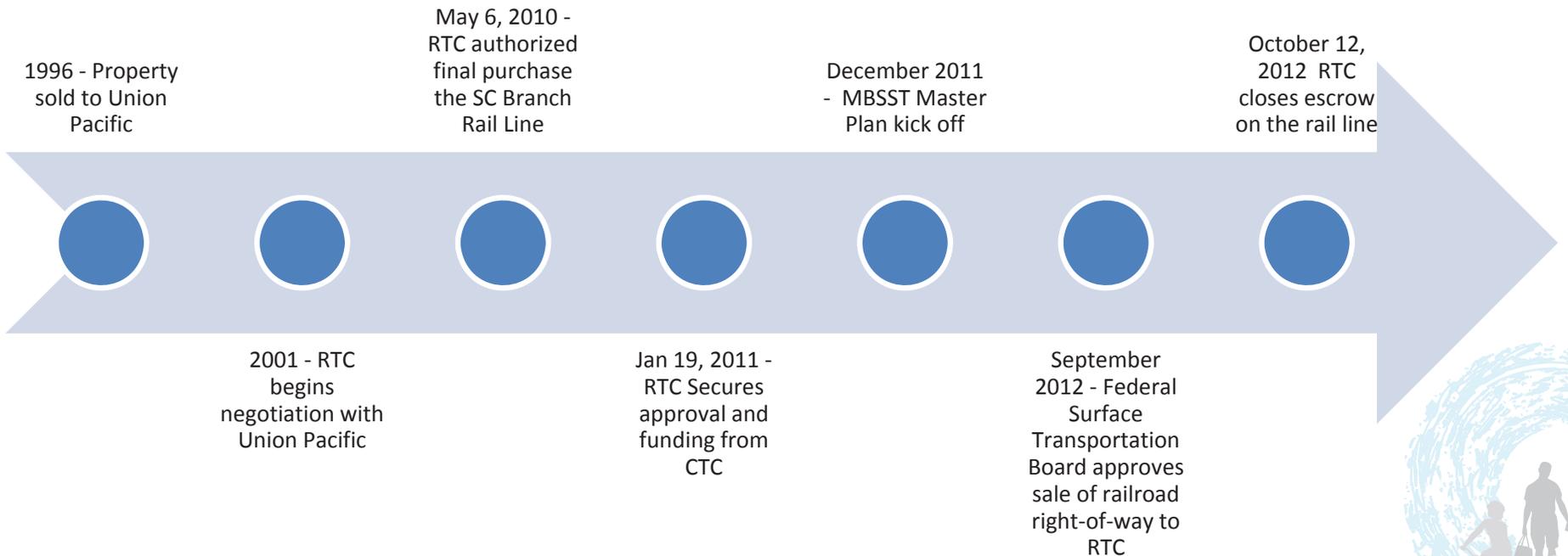


*The Coastal Rail Trail, serving as the system's spine, is a result of a 20-year-long effort to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, which was established in 1876.*

### 1.1.7 RTC PURCHASE OF THE SANTA CRUZ BRANCH RAIL LINE

The Coastal Rail Trail, serving as the system's spine, is a result of a 20-year-long effort to purchase the over 135-year-old Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. In the early 1990s, the RTC began efforts to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way. Originally owned by Southern Pacific, the property was sold to Union Pacific in 1996. In 2001, the RTC officially began negotiating with then-owner Union Pacific. Over the next decade, negotiations and due diligence work were conducted. On May 6, 2010 the RTC board took action to approve purchasing 31 miles of the 32-mile Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line from Union Pacific for \$14.2 million, of which \$11 million came from the California voter-approved Proposition 116. On January 19, 2011, the RTC secured approval and funding from the California Transportation Commission for purchase of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. On October 12, 2012, the RTC successfully closed escrow, placing title of the branch line into public ownership with the commitment of supporting passenger and freight service, as well as creating a coastal trail. As part of the agreement, the RTC also secured approximately \$5 million in state funding to upgrade some rail structures.

Iowa Pacific Holdings was selected as the railroad operator and is doing business locally as the Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay Railway. According to the agreement with the RTC, the Chicago-based railroad company owns a 20-foot-wide easement along the length of the rail line for rail operations and is responsible for ongoing maintenance on all railroad infrastructure. The RTC will work to maintain and further develop existing freight and recreational rail service. The RTC will also investigate future uses of the rail corridor including commuter passenger service.



## 1.1.8 PROJECT BENEFITS

The proposed Coastal Rail Trail and its network of connecting trails will open up a popular new way to appreciate the extraordinary coastline and the coastal areas of Santa Cruz County. Residents and tourists alike will benefit as both will be drawn to this pleasant new form of access “to and along the coast” (a significant goal of the California Coastal Act). Along with agriculture, tourism is one of Santa Cruz’s two largest economic sectors, whether measured by annual revenues or by employment. The Coastal Rail Trail as proposed by the Draft Master Plan will be a boon to tourism and, therefore, to the local economy.

A lifestyle in which motorized transportation has largely replaced non-motorized trips has created a sharply adverse trend in health. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of U.S. adults are now obese, roughly double the percentage only three decades ago. Obesity has also become prevalent at a remarkably young age. Seventeen percent (17%) of children and adolescents in the U.S. are already obese, and that percentage has roughly tripled in the past three decades. Obesity is a major contributor to medical problems, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and several kinds of cancer. It thus contributes not only to reduced quality of life and mortality, it also raises medical costs as obese individuals incur medical costs approximately 42% higher than do persons of normal weight. Nationally, that adds up to \$147 billion in additional medical costs per year attributable to obesity. The proposed MBSST Network, by making non-motorized transportation and recreation available and attractive to a broad spectrum of the community, can produce very real benefits in improved health, improved quality of life, and reduced medical costs.

The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) estimates that about 40% of all car trips are three miles or less. These short trips also use more fuel per mile, generate more emissions per mile, and, most notably, cause more climate change per mile than any other trips. It is these shorter trips that can most readily be converted, given facilities attractive to the general population, to non-motorized alternatives. Particularly given California’s tightening limits on climate-changing emissions (Assembly Bill 32 and subsequent legislation and regulations), a project such as this that reduces local greenhouse gas emissions, and does so in the sector that generates most of the local emissions (transportation), offers many benefits to the local economy, as well as to the environment.

With roughly half of the County’s total population living within a mile of the Watsonville-to-Davenport rail line, the number of local trip origins and destinations the proposed Coastal Rail Trail will potentially serve is enormous. For its entire length, the Coastal Rail Trail corridor is a route that is separate from motor vehicle traffic and offers a gentle gradient. Separation from vehicles and gentle gradients are two characteristics necessary to make non-motorized local trips an attractive alternative to driving. The MBSST Network offers considerable potential for reduced congestion on local streets, time savings, improved efficiency, and enhanced quality of life.

*[The trail will be] a boon to tourism and, therefore, to the local economy.*

*... the number of local trip origins and destinations the proposed Coastal Rail Trail will potentially serve is enormous.*

*The MBSST Network offers considerable potential for reduced congestion on local streets.*



## 1.2 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This Master Plan document describes, in detailed terms, the proposed alignment, how the bicycle/pedestrian facilities are proposed to be built, the order in which they should be built, and how the segments will be financed. This Master Plan is divided into seven sections. The content of each section is as follows:

### SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

This section briefly presents the project's history and the process that led to the Regional Transportation Commission's planning efforts.

### SECTION TWO - GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

This section provides the framework around which the Master Plan will be implemented.

### SECTION THREE - MASTER PLAN SETTING

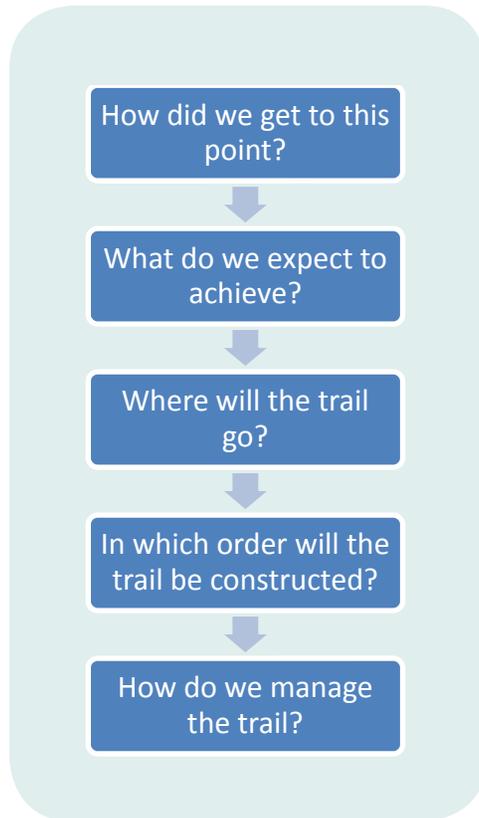
This section provides a detailed description of the Master Plan area with supporting key maps identifying the three overarching reach maps. This section summarizes the major opportunities and constraints and identifies each segment's proximity to 13 different types of activity centers.

### SECTION FOUR - TRAIL ALIGNMENT

This section focuses on the recommended trail alignment maps. The recommended alignment has been studied to determine the most appropriate, functional, and cost-effective option for each trail segment. Potential "spur" routes have also been identified, such as connections to scenic vistas, retail destinations, employment generators, transit, residential, trails, and other origin/destination areas.

### SECTION FIVE - TRAIL DESIGN STANDARDS

This section establishes trail facility design standards, such as typical path construction and layout, wayfinding signage and marking, rail and road crossings, rail-with-trail design standards, on- and off-road bikeways, security and landscape fencing, lighting, bridges and crossings, habitat enhancement, and any operational and management specifics that might be warranted as result of proximity to sensitive biological resources. The design standards are presented in list form and are supported with photos, graphic sections, and elevations.



## SECTION SIX - PROJECT PRIORITIZATION AND COSTS

This section consists of matrices and tables that describe each potential trail segment, its character, major opportunities or constraints, connections to other facilities, permit requirements, nature of property ownership, etc. This section provides information necessary to evaluate, rank, and recommend the “most promising” trail alignments. The type of trail that is feasible has been identified for each segment. Each trail segment has a designated priority listing, cost breakdown, potential funding source, and other key project information in a user-friendly reference table.

## SECTION SEVEN - OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

This section addresses the strategies the RTC could employ to identify and implement portions of the project over time, working toward the completion of the MBSST Network. Specifically, this section includes information such as the following:

- Trail operation and management
- Agricultural and rail service operations interface
- Operating responsibilities and procedures
- Relationship with adjacent property owners
- Administration and cost
- Implementation memoranda of understanding

Appendices follow the Master Plan and include a summary of the documents reviewed in preparation of this Master Plan, opportunity and constraints maps, and detailed cost analysis.

APPENDIX A - EXISTING JURISDICTIONAL GOALS

APPENDIX B - MASTER PLAN RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING DOCUMENTS SUMMARY

APPENDIX C - TRAIL SEGMENT COSTS

APPENDIX D - TRAIL CROSSINGS DESCRIPTIONS

APPENDIX E - TRAIL FUNDING SOURCES

APPENDIX F - CUSTOM CROSSING TREATMENTS

APPENDIX G - CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION AND CONSERVANCY

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

APPENDIX H - RAILS-WITH-TRAILS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX I - REVISED SEGMENT 17





*Workshop participants providing input regarding potential trail alignment*



*Several stations for the public to review trail information*



*Many bike advocates attended the workshop series*

## 1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND POLICIES

Information used in the preparation of this Master Plan includes existing general plans, circulation elements, local coastal programs, master plans, parks and recreation plans, bikeway master plans, rail service plans, environmental documents, demographic and land use data, traffic volumes, and other reports and plans. A summary of each relevant plan is presented in Section 2.4 and in Appendix B of this document.

The need to fit within the framework of these guiding documents is taken into consideration in the creation of this Master Plan. Where local ordinances and codes do not address the specific design and development standards for trail facilities, this Master Plan will function as a means to bridge that gap, and will become the appropriate tool for each community's implementation of a regional transportation effort.

The Master Plan supports other plans and elements by focusing on development of the rail corridor as the "spine" to which all other facilities will connect.

## 1.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH

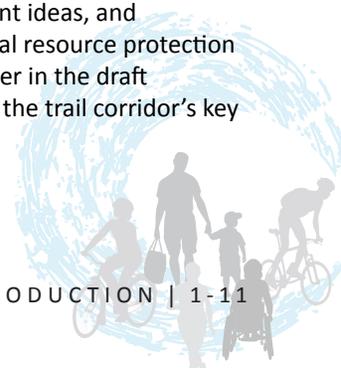
The information gleaned from the outreach identified below was used by the planning team to refine the opportunities and constraints analysis, evaluate alignment alternatives, and inform project prioritization criteria.

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The majority of the interviews were conducted over a three-day period (October 25, 26, and 27, 2011) at the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's office. Following the initial meeting series, two additional stakeholder groups were interviewed—one on November 16, 2011 at RRM Design Group's office and the other on December 1, 2011 via telephone.

A total of 68 people representing 52 stakeholder groups were interviewed. The interviews began with a summary of the project by RTC staff. Following this introduction, the consulting planning team discussed with each stakeholder group their interest in the project, specific technical issues, perceived opportunities and constraints, and, finally, their key desired outcomes. The stakeholder's comments were noted on interview forms by planning team members.

The information received ranged from specific trail design standard suggestions, alignment ideas, and destination linkages to adjacent land use compatibility issues, safety concerns, and natural resource protection needs. Overall, the interviews yielded useful information for the planning team to consider in the draft alignment plan. The interviews also afforded a unique opportunity to meet and talk with the trail corridor's key participants.



## WORKSHOP SERIES #1

This workshop series occurred on three consecutive evenings in north, mid and south county locations from December 13, 2011 to December 15, 2011; approximately 200 members of the public attended. The goal of the workshop series was to bring the community into the MBSST Network development early in the process, with the focus on soliciting ideas for new alignment opportunities, connection points, and design elements.

Workshops began with an overview by RTC staff of the Master Plan’s evolution and goals, followed by an update from the consultant on the field work, corridor analysis and initial trail alignment effort completed so far. Following this introduction, the MBSST Network was defined to help illustrate the concept of a “braided” trail system with a well-defined, off-street, paved, multi-use trail following the rail corridor, and serving as the spine for the MBSST Network. With the MBSST Network defined, the consultant team then presented constraints, opportunities, and the emerging trail alignment(s) within the Master Plan area.

Following the presentation, workshop participants were invited to join break-out groups to share their ideas for refining the trail alignments, identify additional key connections to and from the trail, and to discuss and map further constraints or opportunities. This exercise was valuable in that each of the break-out group facilitators was able to talk one-on-one with participants and record pertinent information directly on the preliminary alignment maps. As a result of interaction in the break-out groups, the planning team was able to confirm the following key items about each of the three projects’ reaches:

### NORTHERN REACH (SAN MATEO COUNTY LINE TO WESTERN SANTA CRUZ CITY LIMIT)

- Overall, the alignments shown were supported by workshop participants.
- Participants liked the idea of continuing a paved multi-use trail all the way up to Davenport along the rail right-of-way.
- Some refinement is necessary between Waddell Bluffs and Davenport with respect to coastal access.
- Clear mapping of the off-street, multi-use trail is needed from the rail right-of-way to West Cliff Drive.

### CENTRAL REACH (WESTERN SANTA CRUZ CITY LIMIT TO SEASCAPE BOULEVARD)

- Overall, the alignments shown were supported by workshop participants.
- Participants strongly supported developing a paved multi-use trail along the rail right-of-way.
- Getting over Soquel Creek utilizing either the existing bridge or a new bridge is imperative because of the steep grades.
- There is a need to look seriously at adding new bike/pedestrian crossings over the rail line in dense, urban areas.



*Evaluating trail opportunities and constraints*



*Public workshop participants in Watsonville*



*Sanctuary Scenic Trail advocates in Watsonville*





*Workshop participants young and old*



*Evaluating the Watsonville Reach*



*Workshop crowd*

## WATSONVILLE REACH (SEASCAPE BOULEVARD TO MONTEREY COUNTY LINE)

- Overall, the alignments shown were supported by workshop participants.
- Participants strongly supported developing a paved, multi-use trail along the rail right-of-way to provide a direct connection between Watsonville and Santa Cruz County's other coastal communities.
- Where the rail right-of-way and San Andreas Road are adjacent, there is a need to explore a creative approach to allow for a paved multi-use trail in this area.
- Participants encouraged exploring a levee-top alignment to the beach.

At the conclusion of the break-out session, workshop participants regrouped and were asked to provide any additional comments and ideas to help guide the Master Plan's development. Their comments and ideas were recorded by the planning team for reference in preparing the Draft Master Plan. RTC staff then discussed the project's next steps and tentative project schedule. The workshop adjourned with an invitation to attend the next workshop series.

## WORKSHOP SERIES #2

This workshop series occurred on four consecutive evenings in north, mid and south county locations from November 26, 2012 to November 29, 2012. The workshops were attended by approximately 300 members of the public. The workshop series' goal was to provide an overview of the Draft Master Plan, demonstrate how community input provided at the first workshop influenced the trail alignments, and solicit the community's preferences for trail segment implementation prioritization.

Workshops began with an overview by RTC staff of the Master Plan's evolution and goals, followed by a summary from the consultant of the field work, corridor analysis, trail alignment development, design standards establishment, and cost analysis efforts completed for the Draft Master Plan. Following this introduction, the organizational structure of the Draft Master Plan was presented along with a synopsis of each section contained within the document. With the Draft Master Plan's contents presented, the consultant team then described the "look and feel" of the MBSST Network's various components through renderings and photographs to help workshop participants visualize the project's build-out.

The consultants then presented the MBSST Network system's implementation priority. First, they discussed how and why the trail was broken into 20 segments, and then identified each segment's reach location (Northern, Central, or Watsonville), boundaries, and general characteristics. Next, segment implementation prioritization criteria were described to the workshop participants. Finally, each of the 20 segments was presented in order from highest to lowest priority based on their prioritization analysis scores.



Following the presentation, workshop participants were provided segment priority preference surveys and asked to list their first and second segment priorities for implementation. To facilitate this exercise, RTC and consultant team members staffed Trail Reach Stations set up around the perimeter of each workshop room. Community members were invited to visit their geographical area (or reach) of interest to ask questions and gather additional information about trail segments before listing their prioritization preferences.

As a result of this interactive process, Table 6.9 in Section 6 was developed to represent community preferences. Table 6.10 includes the cumulative sum of each participating community member’s top two preferences. Community input was one of nine prioritization criteria utilized to determine the top segments per trail reach.

The community’s priority preferences per trail reach were as follows:

NORTHERN REACH (SAN MATEO COUNTY LINE TO WESTERN SANTA CRUZ CITY LIMIT)

Segment 5, followed by Segment 4, followed by Segment 2, followed by Segment 1, followed by Segment 3

CENTRAL REACH (WESTERN SANTA CRUZ CITY LIMIT TO SEASCAPE BOULEVARD)

Segment 9, followed by Segment 11, followed by Segment 10, followed by Segment 8, followed by Segment 12, followed by Segment 7, followed by Segment 13, followed by Segment 14, followed by Segment 6

WATSONVILLE REACH (SEASCAPE BOULEVARD TO MONTEREY COUNTY LINE)

Segment 18, followed by Segment 17, followed by Segment 20, followed by Segment 15, followed by Segment 16, followed by Segment 19.

At the conclusion of the break-out session, workshop participants regrouped and were asked to provide any additional comments and ideas to help guide the Master Plan’s development. Their comments and ideas were recorded by the consulting team for reference in preparing the Draft Master Plan. RTC staff then discussed the project’s next steps and tentative project schedule.

