



Zero Emission Rail Transit & Trail Project



Project Description

The project proposes new high-capacity passenger service and stations on approximately 22 miles of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, from the City of Santa Cruz in the north to the Union Pacific Coast Route in the south. The project also proposes to construct 13 miles of Coastal Rail Trail Segments 13-20 (as defined in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan) primarily within the rail right-of-way from Rio Del Boulevard, through the community of La Selva and City of Watsonville, to Pajaro in northern Monterey County.

The new rail service will take advantage of a publicly-owned rail right-of-way to provide all-day service connecting the most populated areas of Santa Cruz County to each other and to the greater region. At the Pajaro Junction, existing Amtrak and planned expanded regional service to the north and south will provide a seamless intercity travel option for riders on the Central Coast. The dedicated right-of-way will bypass highly congested Highway 1 and local arterials and re-connect cities to each other.

The trail will complete the 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail which provides a dedicated travel facility that serves all of the rail stations and is a part of the California Coastal Trail. A part of this project (a portion of Segment 18) was accelerated ahead of the rest of the segments and was completed in 2021 to connect the City of Watsonville downtown area to the Watsonville Slough Wetlands.

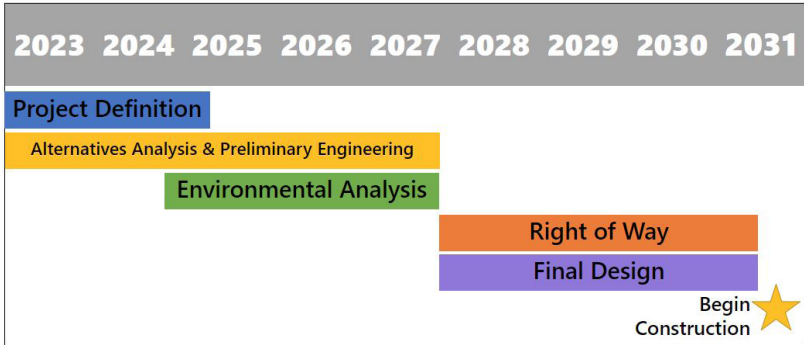
Project Highlights

- ▶ Provides high-capacity rail transit service and stations on approximately 22 miles of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
- ▶ Connects the most populated areas of Santa Cruz County to each other and to the greater region
- ▶ Provides a public transit network built on frequency and predictability
- ▶ Provides new bicycle and pedestrian access along 13 miles of the rail right-of-way
- ▶ Includes new bicycle and pedestrian bridges across Hidden Beach Gulch, Bush Gulch, and La Selva Gulch
- ▶ Improves safety and mobility of non-automobile users, and provides high-quality connections to key destinations and recreational facilities
- ▶ Passes within only 1 mile of more than 90 parks, 40 schools, and approximately half of the county's population



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Project Schedule



Project Delivery Strategy

The RTC is currently advancing Zero Emission Rail Transit on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line from the planning phase to the design and environmental phase of project development. Development of Segments 13-20 of the Coastal Rail Trail is being done as part of the Electric Rail Transit Project in order to achieve efficiencies and expand the bicycle and pedestrian network. The RTC is funding development of Segments 13-20 through the Measure D Active Transportation Program. The RTC is seeking state and federal funds to advance the combined Zero Emission Rail Transit and Trail project. Further development and construction of Segments 13-20 can be phased to smaller sections as funding becomes available.

