

AGENDA: October 6, 2005

TO: Regional Transportation Commission/Rail Trail Authority
FROM: Luis Pavel Mendez, Acting Deputy Director
RE: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project – Right-of-Way Maps

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rail Acquisition Task Force and staff recommend that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve the attached resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing the Executive Director to expend an additional \$9,000 to complete the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW maps; and
 2. Accept this status report on other activities regarding the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition project.
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BACKGROUND

The Regional Transportation Commission has been working on acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line for over four years. In December 2004, the RTC approved entering into a non-binding Letter of Intent with Union Pacific to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line for \$19 million. A number of reports and steps must be completed before the RTC can make a final decision on acquisition of the Branch Line and to obtain the necessary approvals from the relevant funding and regulatory agencies.

At its June 16, 2005 Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW) meeting, the RTC approved a resolution to expend \$4,000 to secure the services of the County Geographic Information Services (GIS) Department to produce maps of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way (ROW).

DISCUSSION

Rail Line Right-of-Way (ROW) Maps

The maps being produced by the County GIS Department of the Santa Cruz Branch Line ROW are intended to serve as a planning tool for the Rail Acquisition Project. The primary

intended use is to approximate the location and width of the rail line ROW. This includes displaying cross streets and other points of reference along the ROW, the approximate location and width of the rail ROW, the general land uses adjacent to the ROW, and the approximate location of abutting parcels.

Staff has been working with County GIS to produce the maps of the ROW using the available data sources (the County Assessors Parcel information, Union Pacific Valuation Maps, aerial photography and the Preliminary Title Report for the Santa Cruz Branch Line). In order to compile these data sources into working maps, the County GIS staff scanned 30 paper copies of the Union Pacific Valuation maps and registered them to the County Assessors Parcel layer and aerial images of the County to equip the maps with helpful points of reference. Due to the difficulty of reading the Union Pacific Valuation Maps, County GIS digitally drew in the width of the ROW as shown by the Union Pacific Valuation Maps. Examples of 20 of 60 customized maps including all of the data layers were presented to the August 2005 TPW meeting.

There are limitations to each of the data sources to accurately reflect the location and width of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW. The most obvious shortfall of the data available is that they visually do not all line up with each other. Reasons for this include inaccuracy of the Union Pacific Valuation Maps with relationship to the County Assessors Parcel data and the fact that in most of the county the Assessor's parcel data has not been calibrated to the newer ortho-rectified aerial photography. In order to be a valuable planning resource, staff and the Rail Acquisition Task Force (RATF) agree that additional work is needed to better line-up the data layers, where economically feasible to do so. However, even with these adjustments there will be mismatches on some maps between the rail ROW line, the assessor's parcel lines and/or the underlying photos.

Due to the deficiencies in the available , much more work than originally anticipated has gone into producing the draft maps. Staff shared full sets of the draft maps with the RATF at its September 19th meeting and provided a summary of the recommended revisions and additional work needed. The RATF and staff agreed that the maps will be a very useful tool, but that some refinements are needed. Staff discussed with County GIS staff the revisions necessary to refine the maps to reflect the best information available. The estimated additional cost for the revisions and additions to the maps is \$9,000. The quality and extensive level of work provided by the County GIS to date explains the overall increase in cost for customized map development. **The Rail Acquisition Task Force and staff recommend that the Commission approve the attached resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing the Executive Director to expend an additional \$9,000 to complete the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW maps.**

Once the maps are completed, they will be posted on the Commission's webpage. The County GIS Department estimates that the maps will be completed in mid to late October.

Proposals for Additional Structural Analyses

Kirk Trost of Miller, Owen and Trost continues to negotiate with Union Pacific amendments to agreements, potential cost sharing, and other details for production of the additional analysis recommended in the structural assessment reports produced by Biggs Cardosa and Systra. Miller, Owen and Trost and staff have been working to obtain plans of the structures and other information from Union Pacific, to obtain scopes of work and proposals from structural engineering firms, and develop a timeline for the work.

Timeline

Due to the results of the draft structural assessment report and additional work recommended, other elements of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition project had been delayed. However, Consultants and staff continue to negotiate details of the additional structural assessment work needed and other project elements. Once staff has a better understanding of the extent of the impact on the project timeline, staff will revise the timeline and present it to the RTC.

Kirk Trost and staff will provide an oral update on the progress of negotiations with Union Pacific regarding the additional structural analysis and other elements of the project. If any structural assessment proposals or other information are available by the date of this meeting, they will be distributed at the meeting with any relevant staff recommendations.

SUMMARY

Draft maps of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW have been produced by the County GIS Department. Due to deficiencies in the available data it has taken more work than expected to produce the draft maps and a significant amount of work remains to finalize the maps. The Rail Acquisition Task Force and staff recommend that the Commission approve the additional cost of \$9,000 to complete the maps of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW.

Attachment 1: Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Expend an Additional \$9,000 to Complete the Rail Line ROW Maps