



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

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## Coastal Rail Trail Project Confirmed to Receive Multi-Million Dollar Grants

Earlier today, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) accepted a grant award of \$6.3 million in funds from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Federal Lands Access Program for design, environmental review and construction of a 5-mile north coast segment of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network. As a condition of the grant, the RTC also committed today to provide an additional \$300,000 in matching funds for the \$10,550,000 project. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and the California Coastal Conservancy each provided matching funds in the amounts of \$3 million and \$950,000 respectively. The grant's success was largely due to the unprecedented local match provided.

"Putting up \$3 million was a big leap of faith for the Land Trust," said Land Trust President Terry Corwin, "We're elated to see that it paid off."

The trail will run adjacent to the rail line from the Wilder Ranch State Park parking area, 5 miles north to rail mile post 28.6. The RTC originally applied for a project length extending from Wilder Ranch to Laguna Road but was notified that the grant would fund an extension 0.4 miles beyond Laguna Road. The northern most point of the trail will be accessed via a large parking area near Panther and Yellow Bank Beaches.

"Extending the rail trail from Wilder Ranch State Park up the coast will provide exceptional recreational and transportation opportunities to one of the most beautiful areas on the California coast. I have been working hard to advocate for this grant and am thrilled we were selected", said Ryan Coonerty, County Supervisor and Regional Transportation Commissioner. With this segment funded, approximately 25% of the 32 miles of the coastal rail trail project that the RTC approved just one and a half years ago will be constructed in the near future.

The project will provide access to the California Coastal National Monument, the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Coast Dairies property, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Wilder Ranch and Coast Dairies State Parks including many bluffs and beaches along the spectacular coastline. The project will also provide a safer alternative to Highway

1 for access to north coast destinations for bicyclists and pedestrians. FHWA's Central Federal Lands Highway Division will implement the project with construction scheduled to start in the fall of 2018.

Coastal Rail Trail implementation efforts have been greatly expedited by broad community engagement and active multi-party collaborations with FHWA, the Coastal Conservancy, the Land Trust, BLM, Friends of the Rail and Trail, Bike Santa Cruz County (formerly People Power), California Department of State Parks, and the County of Santa Cruz.

### **Project background**

The RTC owns the railroad right-of-way on behalf of the community and is evaluating ways to maximize use of this transportation corridor including potential passenger rail service. The RTC also manages the bicycle and pedestrian "rail trail" project. The rail line runs from Davenport to Watsonville and passes within one mile of half of the county's population. The RTC adopted an award winning [master plan](#) for the 50-mile Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network in 2014. The Master Plan identifies the "rail trail" as the system spine and defines its location adjacent to the train tracks along the 32-mile rail corridor. All four neighboring coastal jurisdictions adopted the Master Plan in a show of support and endorsement. The trail will also serve wheelchair users and other non-motorized active transportation needs. Through natural surface trails and other on-road facilities, the trail network will connect to activity centers, schools, coastal access points and other key destinations.

### **For more information**

For more information about the trail network project or to sign up for e-news, please visit the [RTC website](#) or email [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org).

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*The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for delivering a full range of convenient, reliable, and efficient transportation choices for the community. While promoting long-term sustainability, the RTC provides transportation services, planning, and funding for all travel modes. Information about the Regional Transportation Commission's projects and programs can be found at [www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org) or by calling 831-460-3200.*