



## PLANNING FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF THE SANTA CRUZ BRANCH RAIL LINE CORRIDOR

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) purchased the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) in 2012 to preserve as a future transportation corridor. This 32-mile corridor, running near or along the coast from Pajaro Junction to Santa Cruz, is proposed for passenger and freight rail, as well as bicycle and pedestrian trails. Portions of the Coastal Rail Trail have been constructed or are in development along the SCBRL corridor.

Like many communities in California and nationwide, Santa Cruz County is facing the effects of climate change and sea level rise. Stronger storms, rising tides and coastal erosion are expected to intensify, requiring thoughtful

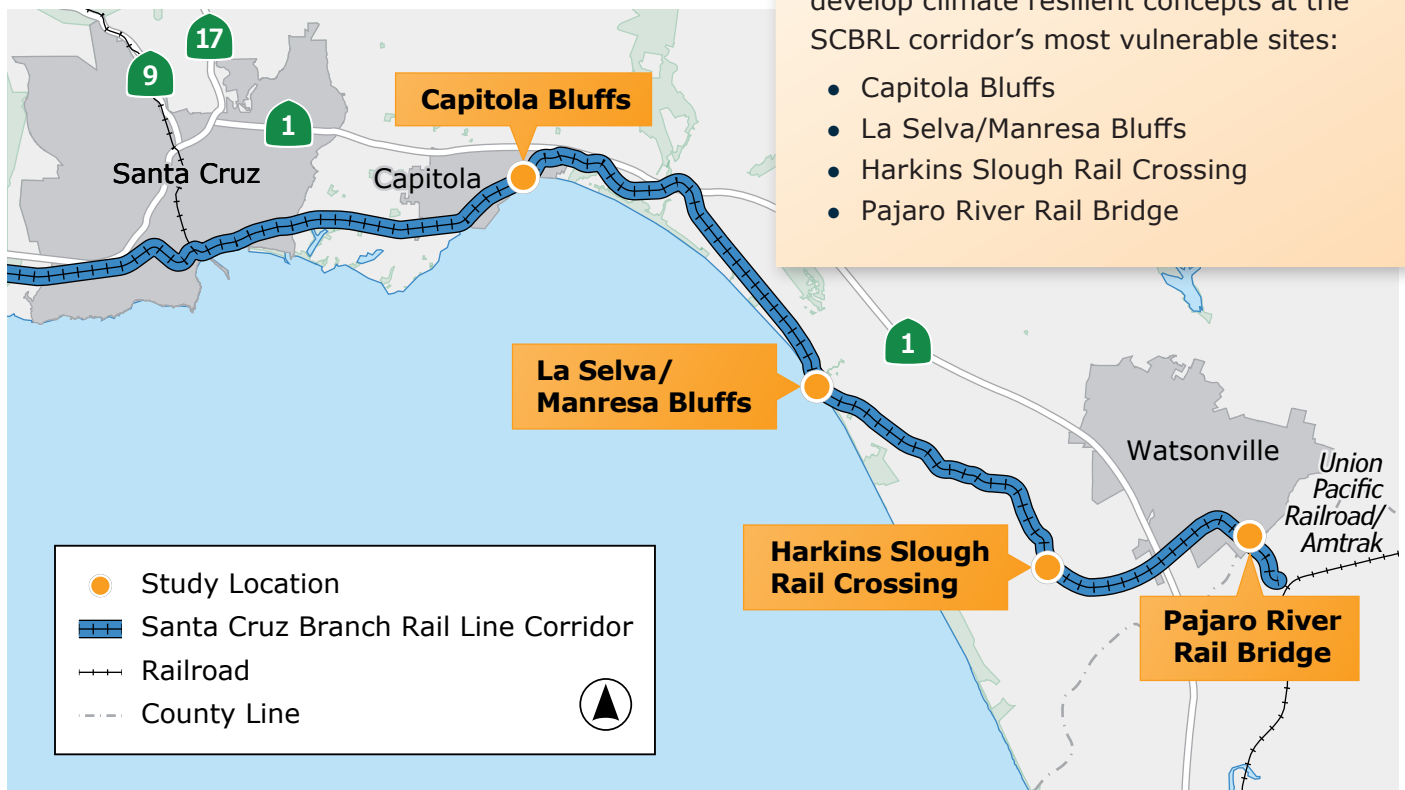
planning to ensure the future of our vital transportation corridors.

The RTC has initiated a climate resiliency study for the SCBRL to understand potential impacts to future transportation uses, including an interim trail in the short term and passenger and freight rail alongside a trail in the long term. The Study, called the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail (ZEPRT) Climate Resilience Study, will analyze climate threats and develop strategies to adapt infrastructure with a focus on improving resiliency.

### Study Locations

The Study will assess climate threats and develop climate resilient concepts at the SCBRL corridor's most vulnerable sites:

- Capitola Bluffs
- La Selva/Manresa Bluffs
- Harkins Slough Rail Crossing
- Pajaro River Rail Bridge



# STUDY OBJECTIVES AND SCHEDULE

**ASSESS** climate stressors including sea level rise, storm surge, coastal erosion, and flooding, and how those impacts could damage transportation infrastructure in the future.

**DEVELOP** concepts that consider potential future impacts of climate hazards on the SCBRL corridor. Concepts may include alternatives such as rock slope protection, beach nourishment, drainage improvements, or elevation or relocation of the rail and trail infrastructure. Concepts will be developed for use of the SCBRL as an interim trail in the short term and passenger and freight rail alongside a trail in the long term.

**EVALUATE** concepts, using a standard set of criteria to compare preliminary concepts at each site and inform decision on which to move forward. Criteria may include measures such as resilience to coastal hazards, cost,

environmental impacts, and public access and transportation benefits.

**DOCUMENT** a Draft Climate Resilience Plan that recommends specific concepts for each site. The Draft Plan will include a summary of how preliminary concepts were evaluated and a roadmap for implementation and potential funding sources.

**RECOMMEND** selected concepts that are cost-effective, technically robust, and support environmental protection, community access and the region’s mobility objectives in the Final Climate Resilience Plan.

The timeframe of each of the Study’s milestones is shown in the schedule below. Community outreach will take place throughout each phase, with opportunities for community review and input.

## Study Schedule

WE ARE HERE			
<b>PHASE 1</b> Fall 2025 – Winter 2026	<b>PHASE 2</b> Spring – Summer 2026	<b>PHASE 3</b> Fall 2026 – Winter 2027	<b>PHASE 4</b> Summer 2027
<b>Existing Conditions Assessment</b>	<b>Alternative Concept Identification</b>	<b>Climate Resiliency Plan Development</b>	<b>Final Climate Resiliency Plan</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection</li> <li>Hazard analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept development</li> <li>Feasibility &amp; opportunities analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept recommendation &amp; plan development</li> <li>Publish Draft Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish Final Plan for acceptance/ approval</li> </ul>

## STAY CONNECTED

The RTC and its project partners are committed to meaningful public engagement. There are many voices in our community, and we want to hear yours.



Visit [sccrtc.org/projects/rail/scbrlclimatestudy](https://sccrtc.org/projects/rail/scbrlclimatestudy) for updates and to sign up for the project’s mailing list.



Email [zeprtCR@sccrtc.org](mailto:zeprtCR@sccrtc.org) with comments or questions.

