

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)
Santa Cruz City Council Chambers
June 27, 2019

Item 18: Alternative Analysis for High Capacity Public Transit on the Rail Right-of-Way – Scope of Work for Request for Proposals
Background: Acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line by the RTC in 2012 provides a unique opportunity for Santa Cruz County to utilize this right-of-way for a dedicated transit facility that runs the length of the county.

The Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) identified priority transportation investments on Highway 1, Soquel Ave/Dr and Freedom Blvd and the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) that will maximize mobility and environmental benefits. The outcome of the UCS, completed in January 2019, directed staff to:

1. protect the rail right-of-way for a high-capacity public transit service next to a bicycle and pedestrian trail and continue to consider passenger rail service on the rail right of way consistent with Prop 116 requirements; and
2. Work jointly with Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District to develop a scope of work for additional analysis of high-capacity public transit alternatives on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line including their cost, operations, and funding plans and a plan to protect METRO's current funding sources.

An Alternatives Analysis will be performed to evaluate transit investment options that provide an integrated transit network for Santa Cruz County utilizing all or part of the length of the rail right-of-way as a dedicated transit facility. Transit alternatives will be compared utilizing a performance-based planning approach to define a transit project that will provide the greatest benefit to the Santa Cruz County residents, businesses and visitors. Proposed future inter-county and interregional connections to the Bay Area, Monterey, Gilroy and beyond will be considered.

More information about this plan can be found here:

https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-06-27-rtc-agenda-special_PACKET.pdf

Discussion:

After the presentation was held, Commissioner Rotkin raised questions to further the discussion about the scopes intent. Commissioners Leopold, McPherson, Brown, and Friend's alternate, Mulhearn, discussed the language of the motion around the proposed RFP and the draft scope of work. After discussion, Commissioner Leopold motioned to amend the draft scope and for it to incorporate and include input from the commissioners and the public at this June 27th meeting.

Action:

The Commission reviewed the draft scope of work to be released in the request for proposals for the Alternatives Analysis of High Capacity Public Transit on the Rail Right-of-Way and directed staff to incorporate input received in a revised scope of work and return to the Commission in August for further discussion. The RTC staff will revise and update the scope of work will be then returned to the RTCCommission for the August meeting for further discussion.

Vote: The Commission voted unanimous in favor of revised report by the RTC staff and bring back a recommendation at the RTC's August meeting.

Chamber Position:

The Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce supports the motion to review and revise of the draft scope and to include input from the Commission and the public.