



County of Santa Cruz

Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

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Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project

Project Title: Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project

The County of Santa Cruz, as Lead Agency, in coordination with the City of Capitola, and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project.

Project Location: The Project alignment extends along the Santa Cruz Branch Line rail corridor from the eastern side of 17th Avenue in the unincorporated Live Oak area on the west, to the western side of State Park Drive in the unincorporated Aptos area on the east, in Santa Cruz County.

Project Description: The Project is an approximately 4.5-mile new multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trail proposed to extend along the Santa Cruz Branch Line rail corridor from the eastern side of 17th Avenue at the western limits of the Project to the western side of State Park Drive at the eastern limits of the Project, excluding a 0.5-mile section following surface streets through the incorporated City of Capitola from Opal Street/Cliff Drive Plaza to Monterey Avenue/Park Avenue. The EIR evaluates the Ultimate Trail Configuration (Trail Next to Rail), as well as an Optional Interim Trail (Trail on the Rail Line) whereby the railroad tracks would be removed and the trail would be located on the rail bed, at an equal level of detail.

The goals of this project are to increase the numbers of people biking and walking, improve safety and mobility of non-motorized users, and provide high-quality connections to schools, parks, and community facilities. When constructed, this project will be part of the planned 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail that traverses the entire coastline of Santa Cruz County.

For more information about the project, please visit the project website: <https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/RailTrail>

Potential Environmental Impacts: The Draft EIR provides an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level where possible. As known at the time of this notice, anticipated significant and unavoidable impacts (potentially not mitigable to a level below significance) include effects to aesthetics, monarch butterfly habitat, wildlife movement, and greenhouse gas emissions (inconsistency with GHG reduction plans) resulting from tree removal. Additional environmental effects anticipated include impacts to sensitive habitat and wildlife; hazardous materials (due to the presence of contaminated soils); noise and vibration (impacts to sensitive receptors from project construction); and cultural, tribal, and paleontological resources (including potential impacts to unknown resources from ground disturbance).

Public Review Period (60 days): The public review period for the Draft EIR begins Monday, October 16, 2023, and ends Friday, December 15, 2023 at 5:00pm. The County must receive all written comments regarding the adequacy of the Draft EIR within this period. Comments on the Draft EIR should be submitted in writing to Rob Tidmore at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062 or via email to RailTrail@santacruzcountyca.gov

Public Meeting: The County is scheduled to receive comments on the Draft EIR at a public meeting on Thursday, November 16, 2023, 5:00pm – 7:30pm. Information regarding participation will be available via the project website: <https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/RailTrail>

Lead Agency: County of Santa Cruz

Departments: Department of Community Development & Infrastructure
Santa Cruz County Parks

Address: 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Contact Person: Rob Tidmore, Park Planner IV
Email: RailTrail@santacruzcountyca.gov
Phone: 831-454-7947

Address Where Copy of Draft EIR is Available: Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm except on specified holidays, at the County of Santa Cruz, Planning Department, General Information Desk, 701 Ocean St., 4th Floor, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. The Draft EIR is also available at Santa Cruz County Parks Department, 979 17th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, and online, at the project website: <https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/RailTrail>

Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project Location Maps

