FINAL INITIAL STUDY
for the
SANTA CRUZ RAIL LINE ACQUISITION

State Clearinghouse #2002012069

April 2002

Prepared for:

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
1523 PACIFIC AVENUE
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 460-3200

Prepared by:

DENISE DUFFY & ASSOCIATES, INC.
947 CASS STREET, SUITE 5
MONTEREY, CA 93940
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www.ddaplanning.com

Notice of Determination

TO: Santa Cruz County
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From (Lead Agency): Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95060

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21152 of the Public Resources Code

Project Title: Santa Cruz Rail Line Acquisition
State Clearinghouse Number: 2002012069

Contact Person: Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director **Phone:** (831) 460-3200

Project Location: 31.8 miles of rail line from Davenport, through Santa Cruz, to the Watsonville Junction at Salinas Road.

Project Description: The proposed action is the acquisition of the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch rail line rights-of-way, which constitute 31.8 miles of track from Davenport to Watsonville Junction. The SCCRTC is proposing the acquisition as a means to preserve the rail corridor for future uses by the public at large.

This is to advise that on April 4th, 2002, the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The project: ☐ will have a significant effect on the environment.
   ☒ will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☐ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared and certified for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
   ☒ A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

   This is to certify that the Final IS with comments and responses and record of project approval may be examined at: the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission office at 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95060.
3. Mitigation Measures ☐ were, ☒ were not, made a condition of approval of the project.
4. A statement of Overriding Considerations ☐ was, ☒ was not, adopted for this project.

Date Received for Filing and Posting at the Clerk of the Board: _____

APR 2002
RECEIVED
CLERK OF THE BOARD
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

Name: Linda Wilshusen **Title:** Executive Director

Signature: _____

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1.0 RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

1.1 Introduction

This document provides responses to comments received on the Draft Initial Study (IS) for the Santa Cruz Rail Line Acquisition project. Included within this document are the comment letters received during the 45-day public review period, responses to these comments, revisions to the text of the Initial Study, and the original Draft Initial Study.

The IS was prepared to assess the environmental impacts associated with acquisition of the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch rail lines. The purchase includes the rights-of-way, track, signal system, yard facilities, structures (including bridges), and all appurtenant facilities. The purpose for the acquisition is to provide a means to preserve the rail corridor for future uses by the public at large.

1.2 Public Participation

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission filed public notice that a Draft IS had been completed for the project on January 10, 2002 at the Santa Cruz County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. On January 10, 2002, the Draft IS was distributed for public review to responsible and trustee agencies, interested groups, and individuals. The public review period for the Draft IS ended on February 25, 2002. The notice of availability of the Draft IS, along with a press release, was published in the local newspapers, and copies of the document were made available for review at the public libraries.

1.3 List of Comment Letters

The following is a list of comment letters received on the Draft IS/ND and the dates these letters were received:

State Agencies

A. Governor's Office of Planning and Research . . . . . February 26, 2002

Local Agencies

B. Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District . . . . . January 25, 2002

Organizations and Individuals

C. RMC Pacific Materials . . . . . February 25, 2002
D. Michael Shaw . . . . . February 25, 2002

1.4 Response to Comments

Comment letters are attached. Individual comments in each letter are numbered. Correspondingly numbered responses to each comment are provided following each letter. Some comments do not raise environmental issues, or do not require additional information. A substantive response to such comments is not required within the context of CEQA.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH

State Clearinghouse

Gray Davis
GOVERNOR

Steven A. Nissen
DIRECTOR

LETTER A

February 26, 2002

Linda Wilshusen
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Santa Cruz Rail Line Acquisition
SCH#: 2002012069

Dear Linda Wilshusen:

A-1 The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on February 25, 2002, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

RECEIVED
FEB 28 2002

1400 TENTH STREET P.O. BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95812-3044
916-445-0613 FAX 916-323-3018 WWW.OPR.CA.GOV/CLEARINGHOUSE.HTML

Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 2002012069
Project Title Santa Cruz Rail Line Acquisition
Lead Agency Santa Cruz County

Type Neg Negative Declaration

Description The proposed action is the acquisition of the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch rail line right-of-way, which constitute 31.8 miles of track from Davenport to Watsonville Junction. The SCCRTC in proposing the acquisition as a means to preserve the rail corridor for future uses by the public at large.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Linda Wilshusen
Agency Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Phone 831/460-3200 **Fax**
email
Address 1523 Pacific Avenue
City Santa Cruz **State** CA **Zip** 95060

Project Location

County Santa Cruz
City Santa Cruz, Capitola, Watsonville
Region
Cross Streets
Parcel No.
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways 1/9/17/129/152
Airports Watsonville Municipal
Railways UPRR/SCBT&PRR
Waterways San Lorenzo River/Pajaro River
Schools
Land Use Railroad Righ-of-way/Public Facility/Quasi Public Facility

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Coastal Zone; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Forest Land/Fire Hazard; Geologic/Seismic; Minerals; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Schools/Universities; Septic System; Sewer Capacity; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Solid Waste; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Wetland/Riparian; Wildlife; Growth Inducing; Landuse; Cumulative Effects

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Boating and Waterways; California Coastal Commission; Department of Fish and Game, Region 3; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Caltrans, Division of Aeronautics; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 5; Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 1; Department of Toxic Substances Control; Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission; Public Utilities Commission

Date Received 01/18/2002 **Start of Review** 01/18/2002 **End of Review** 02/25/2002

A. RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH, STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

A-1 This letter confirms that the Draft Initial Study was submitted by the State Clearinghouse to selected state agencies for review, and that no state agencies submitted comments to the State Clearinghouse by the close of the review period on February 25, 2002. The letter acknowledges that the lead agency has complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

LETTER B

MONTEREY BAY
Unified Air Pollution Control District
serving Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER
Douglas Quetin

24580 Silver Cloud Court • Monterey, California 93940 • 831/647-9411 • FAX 831/647-8501

DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

CHAIR:
Edith Johnsen
Monterey County

VICE CHAIR:
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Santa Cruz County

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Del Rey Oaks

Anna Caballero
Salinas

Lou Calcagno
Monterey County

Tony Campos
Santa Cruz County

Bob Cruz
Santa Cruz County

Tony Gualtieri
Capitola

John Myers
King City

Judy Pennycook
Monterey County

Keith Sugar
Santa Cruz

January 25, 2002

Linda Wilshusen
Executive Director
SCCRTC
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

SUBJECT: ND FOR SANTA CRUZ RAIL LINE ACQUISITION

Dear Ms. Wilshusen:

Staff has reviewed the referenced document and has the following comments:

B-1. Page 19. The discussion references air monitoring data from the Carmel Valley station. Data from Santa Cruz County stations would be more appropriate to reference.

B-2. Page 19. The most recently adopted AQMP is the 2000 plan, not the 1997 plan as referenced.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the document. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Janet Brennan
Supervising Planner
Planning and Air Monitoring Division

RECEIVED
JAN 28 2002

B. RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM MONTEREY BAY UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

B-1 An appropriate change has been made to page 19, paragraph two, of the Draft IS to reflect this correction.

B-2 An appropriate change has been made to the last paragraph on page 19 of the Draft IS to reflect this correction.

RMC PACIFIC MATERIALS

700 HIGHWAY 1
DAVENPORT, CALIFORNIA 95017
(831) 429-7200
www.rmcpacific.com

LETTER C

February 25, 2002

Linda Wilshusen
Santa Cruz county Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Public Comment Of Draft Initial Study And Notice Of Intent To Adopt A Negative Declaration For Acquisition Of The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Ms. Wilshusen,

C-1

In reviewing the Draft Initial Study For The Acquisition Of The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, we are pleased with the following comments listed in the document:

- The study points out on page 8 and 9 that the SCCRTP supports policies including the encouragement of the diversion of goods movement from truck to rail.
- In the 1994 Santa Cruz General Plan the Commission stated that the transportation system should provide "convenient, safe, and economical transportation system for the movement of people and goods, promoting the wise use of resources particularly energy and clean air, and the health and comfort of residents".
- The draft points out in the Transportation Systems Programs that the county requires the use of rail for the movement of goods to the maximum extent possible.
- As part of the Transportation System Objectives it states that the county intends to "preserve and protect existing rail facilities for... recreational and transportation purposes...."

Page Two
Re: Public Comment on Rail Acquisition

As you know by moving our product and materials by rail, an untold number of trucks have avoided the busy public road system. The statements in the study emphasizing goods movement by rail encourage us. We certainly hope that with the county purchase of the rail line we can continue to move goods in and out of the plant economically and reliably. In this light, RMC Pacific Materials, Inc wishes to make note of the following issues and items:

C-2 • RMC Pacific Materials, Inc will want assurance that the company will retain the right to use the track and request that the following items be addressed in the purchase agreement (contract).

C-3 • Routine and emergency track maintenance should be spelled out.

C-4 • Economic movement of material by rail must be competitive with other modes of transportation and with utmost reliability.

C-5 • Liability should be clearly stated in event of track damage, product damage or impediment of product delivery.

C-6 • Note that Item 22 on page 6-30 of the Preliminary Environmental Study (PES) is incorrect. The purchase of the rail line will, without doubt, require the county to "conduct future construction to fully utilize the design capabilities included in the proposed project."

C-7 • Rail service is a minimum of three (3) days per week (as stated in the survey), however, at times we have required service up to five (5) days per week for the movement of goods.

RMC Pacific Materials, Inc requests that Santa Cruz County retain a consultant to do a track inspection of the entire rail system from Watsonville to Davenport. The survey should itemize, mile by mile, the condition of the rail to include:

C-8
- Rail weight (mismatched service duty rail)
- Tie conditions
- Switch condition, including frogs and switch mechanism
- All bridges and trestles
- Curve gauge and ties
- Etc.

Page Three
Re: Public Comment on Rail Acquisition

C–8 (cont.) This survey will provide the county with a clear understanding of the maintenance condition of the rail line and the financial liability associated with maintenance of and requirements for bringing the back to standard conditions for this grade of rail.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns.

Sincerely

Ken Kannegaard
RMC Pacific Materials, Inc

PC: Eric Woodhouse – RMC Pacific Materials, Inc
Satish Sheth – RMC Pacific Materials, Inc
Brad Wilson – RMC Pacific Materials, Inc
Tom Gibbons – RMC Pacific Materials, Inc
Doug Guerrero – RMC Pacific Materials, Inc
Rick Gooch – Union Pacific

C. RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM RMC PACIFIC MATERIALS

C-1 Comment is acknowledged.

C-2 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

C-3 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

C-4 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

C-5 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

C-6 Item 22, on page 6-30, of the Preliminary Environmental Study states:

"Will the project require future construction to fully utilize the design capabilities included in the proposed project?"

Section **VI. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION**, on page 5 of the Initial Study, describes the proposed project as being "a transfer of ownership only". There are no changes to the rail line or the services provided by the rail line proposed as part of this project. No future construction is required to facilitate the purchase of the rail line from Union Pacific. If, at a future time after the transaction is complete, other uses of the rail line and rights-of-way (including construction) are proposed, those projects would be subject to separate environmental review.

C-7 An appropriate change has been made to page five, paragraph two, of the Draft IS to reflect this correction.

C-8 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

LETTER D

Faxed 2/25/02

February 25, 2002

Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director
Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA
95060-3911

Dear Ms. Wilshusen,

This letter is to object to the county government's effort to acquire the rail line.

I offer two bases for my objection:

D-1 1) The residents have clearly expressed their displeasure with the idea of rail service. I recall a meeting several years ago in La Selva where the overwhelming public outrage at the prospect of a government run passenger rail system was so adverse that you were in tears. No facts have risen which indicate a change in public sentiment.

D-2 2) The continued pursuit of this program appears to further the implementation of the local United Nations Agenda 21 (a mirror of the Board adopted Measure C) which seeks the elimination of private property and the undermining of the US Constitution replacing it with allegiance to the principles of the UN Charter. Local U.N. Agenda 21 calls for the elimination of personal use of the automobile and the provision of government (so-called affordable) housing along rails and trails.

D-3 If, or as, this quiet and seemingly deceptive program to undermine the institutions of freedom becomes apparent, those responsible will be held accountable by an angry public. I request that a full and actual public disclosure be made of 1) the line acquisition, 2) the Commission's future intentions regarding use of the line and 3) the Local UN Agenda 21. The lack of public awareness is very disconcerting.

D-4 Would you please inform me and the record of your level of awareness of the U.N. Agenda 21 and the local U.N. Agenda 21?

D-5 Would you please inform me and the record as to the influence that the local U.N. Agenda 21 has had in S.C.R.T.C.'s policies?

Sincerely,

Michael Shaw/cd

Michael Shaw

D. RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM MICHAEL SHAW

D-1 The proposed project does not involve the addition of passenger rail service. The project only proposes the acquisition of the rail line from Union Pacific. There are no additions or changes to the rail line, or the services provided, proposed at this time.

D-2 The comment does not raise any issues relevant to the CEQA environmental analysis. No further response is required.

D-3 As explained on page eight of the Initial Study, the SCCRTC was not required by law to complete the CEQA process for this project, but chose to in support of their philosophy of full public disclosure. The fact that the public is being made aware of this project, and being given the opportunity to provide comment on it through the CEQA environmental review process, demonstrates the SCCRTC's public accountability. The public was also provided a longer than usual review period of 45 days, instead of the standard 30 days, so that all concerned parties could have adequate time to respond.

The SCCRTC is currently in closed negotiations with Union Pacific concerning the acquisition. The terms of the purchase of the rail line will not be made public until they have been finalized.

Although studies have been produced concerning proposed future uses of the rail line right-of-way, such as a bicycle-pedestrian path, there are no other uses planned or programed at this time. If and when other uses are proposed, they will be subject to a separate environmental review, including the public review process. See also response to C2, above.

D-4 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

D-5 Comment is acknowledged; the comment is referred to decision-makers for their consideration.

2.0 REVISIONS TO DRAFT IS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section includes revisions to the text of the Draft IS/ND, in amendment form. The revisions are listed by page number. All additions to the text are underlined and all deletions from the text are ~~stricken~~.

2.2 TEXT REVISIONS

Page 5, the last sentence of the second paragraph is revised as follows:

UP runs at least three round trips each week to and from RMC.

Page 19, the second paragraph is deleted and replaced with the following four paragraphs:

Baseline Air Quality: The project site is within the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB), which is comprised of Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey Counties and is regulated by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD). The MBUAPCD operates a network of monitoring sites throughout the District, including several in Santa Cruz County (Davenport, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville) that measure ozone and PM_{10}. For the last three complete years of data (1998 - 2000), there were three violations of the state ambient air quality standard (AAQS) for ozone in Santa Cruz County. One exceedance was in 1998 (Scotts Valley), one was in 1999 (Santa Cruz) and one in 2000 (Scotts Valley). There were 10 violations of the state PM_{10} standards during this time period in Santa Cruz County, all of which occurred at the Davenport monitoring site in 1998 and 1999.

In the NCCAB as a whole, the hourly state ozone AAQS was exceeded 10 times in 1998, three times in 1999, and three times in 2000. As of February 13, 2002, there have been three reported exceedances of the hourly state ozone AAQS in the 2001 monitoring year (the results of the entire year have not yet been reported). Although the federal hourly ozone AAQS was not exceeded between 1998 and 2001, the federal 8-hour AAQS was exceeded six times in 1998, once in 1999, no days in 2000, and with an incomplete reporting year for 2001, twice in that year.

In the NCCAB, PM_{10} federal AAQS exceedances include seven station days in 1998 and one station day in 1999; and PM_{10} state AAQS exceedances include 12 station days in 1998 and three station days in 1999.

A good summary of the status and trends of California air quality can be found at http://www.arb.ca.gov/aqd/aqtrends/trends1.htm. In addition, information about local air quality and the MBUAPCD can be found at http://www.mbuapcd.org/.

2.0 Revisions to Draft IS

Page 19, the last paragraph is revised as follows:

Air Quality Planning: The MBUAPCD shares responsibility with the CARB and EPA for ensuring that the State and national ambient air quality standards are met within Monterey County. The District is responsible for developing regulations governing emissions of air pollution, permitting and inspecting stationary sources, monitoring air quality and air quality planning activities. Federal-mandated air quality planning is regulated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA). The District adopted Air Quality Management Plans in 1991 and 1994 to address attainment of the state air quality standards. In ~~1997~~ May 2001, the MBUAPCD published its ~~1997~~ 2000 Air Quality Management Plan, the most recent adopted plan.

3.0 DRAFT INITIAL STUDY

DRAFT INITIAL STUDY
for the
SANTA CRUZ
RAIL LINE ACQUISITION

January 2002

Prepared for:

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
1523 PACIFIC AVENUE
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 460-3200

Prepared by:

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APPENDICES

A. Previous Railroad Corridor Studies.

B. Letter from Caltrans District 5; Preliminary Environmental Studies Form; signed Programmatic Categorical Exclusion.

C. Preliminary Biological Resources Assessment, Melanie Mayer Consulting, December 2001.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Initial Study for the
Santa Cruz Rail Line Acquisition

I. PROJECT DATA

Lead Agency:	Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission 1523 Pacific Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Contact Person:	Linda Wilshusen / Luis Mendez
Phone Number:	(831) 460-3200
Project Location:	31.8 miles of rail line from Davenport, through Santa Cruz, to the Watsonville Junction at Salinas Road
Project Description:	The proposed action is the acquisition of the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch rail line rights-of-way, which constitute 31.8 miles of track from Davenport to Watsonville Junction. The SCCRTC is proposing the acquisition as a means to preserve the rail corridor for future uses by the public at large.

Please note: *Within this Initial Study, numbers in parenthesis after a paragraph refer to the sources used to develop information that are listed in numerical order in section* ***XII. REFERENCES****.*

II. INITIAL STUDY REQUIREMENT

This Initial Study (IS) has been prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of this IS is to determine whether the proposed action could significantly affect the environment, requiring the preparation and distribution of an Environmental Impact Report for public review. If it is determined that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, it is eligible for a Negative Declaration. If it is determined that the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, however, the significant effects of the project have been reduced to a less-than-significant level because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project applicant, then the project would be eligible for a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This IS has been distributed for review to the agencies and organizations listed in section **XIV. DISTRIBUTION LIST**. Public comments will be accepted for 30 days prior to taking any action.

IV. PROJECT LOCATION

Santa Cruz County is located in central California, on the Pacific coast, with San Mateo County to the North, Santa Clara County to the East, and Monterey County to the South (Figure 1). The sections of Union Pacific Rail Line right-of-way proposed for acquisition are known as the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch Lines. The entire section stretches 31.8 miles from just north of Davenport (at milepost 91.08), through Santa Cruz, to the Watsonville Junction at Salinas Road (at milepost 100.5), which sits just inside Monterey County (Figure 2).

Right-of-way and track maps that detail the alignment of the rail line as well as the boundaries of the rights-of-way, and aerial photographs of the entire alignment are available for review at the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) office at 1523 Pacific Avenue in Santa Cruz.

V. EXISTING SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The width of the right-of-way varies from 30 to 80 feet, with most sections between 40 and 60 feet wide. There are 37 bridges and trestles included in the project area, including crossings of the Pajaro and San Lorenzo Rivers, Soquel Creek, Highway 1 and the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor. The line is essentially all single track, with selected sidings and turnouts, manual switches and grade crossing warning systems.

Insert Figure 1 - Regional Map

Insert Figure 2 - Vicinity Map

The Davenport Branch Line travels southeast along the coastline from just north of Davenport until it reaches the City of Santa Cruz. It then goes through an industrial area for several miles followed by a residential area, until it turns towards the coast again and down to the Santa Cruz Wharf and Beach Boardwalk. The Santa Cruz Branch Line runs east from the Boardwalk, across the San Lorenzo River, then through mostly residential and light industrial. It continues traversing neighborhoods through the City of Capitola, the community of Aptos, crossing Highway 1 twice, and then on towards the City of Watsonville. From just north of Watsonville to the end of the line at the Watsonville Junction, the tracks travel through agricultural and coastal lands with one crossing over Highway 1. Figures 3 and 4 show photos of the various areas the rail line passes through.

VI. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

Santa Cruz County has had rail service, in one form or another, for 125 years. The Santa Cruz Branch Line was originally owned by the Santa Cruz Railroad, which reportedly began operation in 1876 with passenger and freight service. The railroad was purchased by Southern Pacific Railroad in 1881, which then constructed the Davenport Branch Line to connect with the Santa Cruz Branch. As freight traffic and use of automobiles increased, passenger service decreased and was discontinued in 1938. Southern Pacific Railroad was bought and merged with Union Pacific Railroad (UP) in September of 1996. UP is the current owner of the rights-of-way proposed for acquisition in this project. The railroad is currently being used for freight service, primarily by RMC Pacific Materials (RMC) in Davenport. UP runs three round trips each week to and from RMC.

The SCCRTC is proposing the acquisition of the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch rail lines. The purchase includes the rights-of-way, track, signal system, yard facilities, structures (including bridges), and all appurtenant facilities. The purpose for the acquisition is to provide a means to preserve the rail corridor for future uses by the public at large. Ten million dollars in state transportation funds have been allocated toward this project, which has received full support from groups such as the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, the University of California at Santa Cruz, union members and various employer groups. The purchase of the Santa Cruz and Davenport Branch Line rights-of-way will be funded through a combination of sources, including 2000 STIP funds.

The proposed acquisition of the rail lines does not involve any type of construction or any other physical changes. This is a transfer of ownership only. All other projects involving use of the rights-of-way are not yet designed or funded, and would be subject to separate environmental review. Because of this, the proposed project is not expected to have any environmental impacts. Prior consultation with Caltrans District 5 and the Federal Highway Administration determined that a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion would satisfy the NEPA requirement for this project. Unless there are changes to the proposed project that would incorporate additional development of the rail line rights-of-way at this time, no additional NEPA environmental documentation will be required (see letter from Caltrans and supporting documentation in Appendix A).

Figure 3 - Site Photos

Figure 4 - more site photos

This Draft Initial Study is being prepared to support the philosophy of full public disclosure, however, this is not a "project" as defined by CEQA, and thus is not required to undergo environmental review. The 2001 CEQA Guidelines define a project as "...an activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment...".

VII. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

State Highway 1, which is the only automobile route that traverses the entire county, continues to experience increasing travel demands. Some factors contributing to the travel demand are development of California State University of Monterey Bay, an increasing number of commuters to Santa Clara County/Silicon Valley, and a general jobs/housing imbalance throughout the region. During peak periods, this section of Highway 1 operates at a level of service F. Options to expand its capacity are limited, but are currently being analyzed. Acquisition of the rail rights-of-way preserves the option for future additional east-west capacity that is not dependent upon the existing congested freeway and arterial street system and which could accommodate and promote non-auto dependent transportation choices.

In the past two decades, several studies have been conducted to examine opportunities provided by the railroad corridor property for regular public transit service, commuter and weekend rail service connecting with the San Francisco Bay Area and Monterey, as well as potential for a bicycle and pedestrian path adjacent to the rail line. These studies are listed in Appendix B.

The proposed project is identified in the 2001 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (2001 Plan) as a "programmed project". This means that funds have already been allocated for the project's implementation by the year 2010. The 2001 Plan establishes transportation goals and policies for Santa Cruz County that "provide a regional vision to guide the development of project lists and funding expenditures" (2001 Plan, pg. 49). This project supports those policies, including the following:

- 1.3.11 Encourage the diversion of goods movement from truck to rail.
- 1.5.3 Prohibit use of existing railroad rights-of-way which would prevent their use for rail or transit purposes in the future.
- 2.2 Implement the 1999 Watsonville-Santa Cruz-UCSC Corridor Major Transportation Investment Study program of projects at the approved funding levels: Santa Cruz Branch Rail right-of-way acquisition ($15 million).
- 2.3.4 Protect the potential for future commute transit service on existing rail lines.
- 2.4.6 Retain the option of future in-county passenger rail service for when it is financially feasible, acceptable to the community, and only after completion of the environmental impact report that concludes that all the significant impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 5.4.5 Assign high priority to projects approved during the 1999 Major Transportation Investment Study decision-making process.

VIII. LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

In addition to compliance with the above mentioned 2001 Plan policies, the acquisition of the rail line also conforms with General Plan and other policies governing the area. A partial listing of the applicable goals and policies is below.

1994 Santa Cruz County General Plan

Transportation System Goals:

Transportation System: Provide a convenient, safe, and economical transportation system for the movement of people and goods, promoting the wise use of resources, particularly energy and clean air, and the health and comfort of residents.

Mode Choice: Provide the public with choice in transportation modes on a well-integrated system.

Efficiency: Provide for more efficient use of existing transportation facilities.

Regional Goals: Meet the requirements of regional plans, such as the Congestion Management Program, Air Quality Management Plan and Regional Transportation Plan. Integrate planning for transportation, land use, and air quality goals.

Transportation System Programs:

3.17.f Adopt as part of regular updates of the General Plan and LCP Land Use Plan, land use policies and programs which:
- Increase the potential for movement of goods by rail.
- Require use of rail for the movement of goods to the maximum extent possible.

Transportation System Objectives:

3.7 To preserve and protect existing rail facilities for recreational travel, for possible future passenger rail transportation and intra-County commuter use and other recreational and transportation purposes and to provide for appropriate rail connections to the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Transportation System Policies:

3.7.3. Support planning for a rail/fixed guideway system for the Santa Cruz/Watsonville corridor. Protect right-of-way.

3.7.4 Support a station at Watsonville Junction to be used by inter-region Amtrak (Pacific Coast and San Francisco Bay Area - Monterey County) and commuter trains. Support extension of Metro bus service and private bus service to station.

3.7.7 Support the study of passenger rail service between the San Francisco Bay Area and Santa Cruz via Gilroy and Watsonville to serve recreational travel.

3.17.1 Encourage minimum movement of goods by truck during peak traffic flow hours.

3.17.3 Encourage commercial, industrial, and agricultural developments to utilize rail and/or air cargo for commodity movement.

1996 Santa Cruz County Congestion Management Program

35. Study the feasibility of a fixed guideway transit service.

42. Continue the cooperative fixed guideway planning process with the participation of Santa Cruz Metro, the SCCRTC, local jurisdictions, public agencies, legislators, private companies, Transportation Management Associations, major institutions, and community groups.

City of Santa Cruz General Plan and Local Coastal Program 1990-2005

Mass Transit Goals, Policies and Programs

4.2 Protect existing and potential railroad lines and rights-of-way from land uses that would prevent the development of rail or fixed guideway services or other transportation related uses in the future and require developments near existing and potential rights-of-way to dedicate locations for future passenger stations and mitigate for noise and views in preparation for future transit.

4.3 Work to increase the use of the rail transit as a means to distribute commodities to and from the City.

1989 General Plan City of Capitola

28. Develop creative and innovative transit opportunities in the City of Capitola, including the use of existing and extended rail facilities.

Watsonville 2005 General Plan

Goals for Transportation and Circulation:

10.3 Plan and provide for the continued use of rail to move industrial/agricultural commodities and encourage the establishment of passenger service to the Watsonville area.

Policies and Implementation Measures:

10.G.3 Other Fixed-Route Service — The City shall consider fixed route transit options other than the bus for major travel corridors adjacent to urban development.

10.I The City shall support existing and future use of rail facilities for both commodity and passenger transportation.

10.J The City shall consider all options for future fixed guideway passenger service.

IX. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, and would involve at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or that is "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

” Aesthetics	” Agriculture Resources	” Air Quality
” Biological Resources	” Cultural Resources	” Geology/Soils
” Hazards/Hazardous Materials	” Hydrology/Water Quality	” Land Use/Planning
” Mineral Resources	” Noise	” Population/Housing
” Public Services	” Recreation	” Transportation/Traffic
” Utilities/Service Systems	” Mandatory Findings of Significance	

X. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. **U**

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared. **G**

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required. **G**

I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed. **G**

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required. **G**

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed name _____ For _____

XI. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on project-specific screening analysis).

2) All answers must take into account the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analysis," may be cross-referenced).

5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

   a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.

   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8) The explanation of each issue should identify:
   a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

1. AESTHETICS

Environmental Setting

The physical character of Santa Cruz County is extremely diverse. The north and northeastern portions of the County are dominated by the Santa Cruz Mountains, coastal terraces make up the mid-County region, and the south end of the County is primarily farmland. With tourism being one of the County's major economic industries, the remarkable beaches in the region are also an important physiographic feature (Santa Cruz County General Plan).

Highway 1, which runs along the coast from San Francisco, south through Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville and then on to southern California, is designated a state scenic highway. The railroad crosses Highway 1 in three places along the section proposed for acquisition. Two of the crossings are in Aptos, and the third is just before Highway 129, near Watsonville.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

1.a) Due to the nature of the project, the transfer of ownership of the rail lines, there will be no impact on any scenic vistas. (2)

1.b) Although the project area is within site of and crosses state scenic Highway 1, the project will not have an adverse effect on any scenic resources near or within the highway. (2)

1.c) The project will not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings. (2)

1.d) The project will not create a new source of light or glare. (2)

2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Environmental Setting

Santa Cruz County ranks as one of the top 25 counties in the state for agricultural production. The top revenue producing crops for the County include strawberries, lettuce, landscape plants, raspberries, and apples (California Department of Food and Agriculture, 1998). The Pajaro Valley area produces the most agricultural income for the County. This southern portion of Santa Cruz County has very rich soil that allows a large variety of crops to be produced. The food processing plants in the City of Watsonville distribute more fruits and vegetables than any other area in the United States (2001 Plan). The rail line traverses through agricultural areas in both the northern and southern portions of the County.

Impact Evaluation

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	"	"	"	**U**
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	"	"	"	**U**
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	"	"	"	**U**

<u>Explanation</u>

As the rail line is pre-existing, and no construction is proposed as a part of the current project, there would be no environmental impacts to the agricultural resources in the area.

2.a) No agricultural uses will be converted to non-agricultural use as a part of the current project. (2)

2.b) The project would not cause a change in existing uses and will therefore not cause any zoning conflicts. (2)

2.c) No changes to the environment will occur as part of this project that could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. (2)

3. AIR QUALITY

Environmental Setting

Ambient Air Quality Standards: Both the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have established ambient air quality standards for common pollutants. These ambient air quality standards are levels of contaminants which represent safe levels required to avoid specific adverse health effects associated with each pollutant. The ambient air quality standards cover what are called "criteria" pollutants because the health and other effects of each pollutant are described in criteria documents. The federal and California state ambient air quality standards are summarized in Table 1. The federal and state ambient standards were developed independently with differing purposes and methods, although both processes attempted to avoid health-related effects. As a result, the federal and state standards differ in some cases. In general, the California state standards are more stringent. This is particularly true for ozone and PM_{10} (particulate matter).

Baseline Air Quality: The project site is within the North Central Coast Air Basin, which is comprised of Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey Counties and is regulated by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD). The MBUAPCD operates a network of monitoring sites throughout the District, including one in Carmel Valley (Ford Road) that measures two pollutants: ozone and PM_{10}. For the last three complete years of data (1996-1999 for ozone, 1995-1998 for PM_{10}), no violations of the state and federal ambient standards were recorded at the Carmel Valley monitoring site, with the exception of one day in 1999 when the state PM_{10} standard was exceeded, most likely due to the Los Padres Forest fires. Within the North Central Coast Air Basin, there were three (3) exceedances of the state ozone standard in 1999, ten (10) in 1998, one (1) in 1997, and sixteen (16) in 1996. Exceedances of the state PM_{10} standards were also recorded elsewhere in the MBUAPCD during that period. No violations of the federal one-hour ozone standard have been recorded anywhere in the District during that period. The air basin is classified as a Federal Maintenance Area for ozone and either unclassified or attainment for all other pollutants (Table 2). In 1997, the EPA adopted new federal standards for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. The new eight-hour Federal ozone standard has been exceeded in the North Central Coast Air Basin in the same three year period, including one (1) time in 1999, six (6) times in 1998, and one (1) in 1997. Currently, both the one-hour and eight-hour federal ozone standards apply; however, due to a current lawsuit, regulation compliance cannot be enforced for the new ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ standards.

Air Quality Planning: The MBUAPCD shares responsibility with the CARB and EPA for ensuring that the State and national ambient air quality standards are met within Monterey County. The District is responsible for developing regulations governing emissions of air pollution, permitting and inspecting stationary sources, monitoring air quality and air quality planning activities. Federal-mandated air quality planning is regulated by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA). The District adopted Air Quality Management Plans in 1991 and 1994 to address attainment of the state air quality standards. In 1997, the MBUAPCD published its 1997 Air Quality Management Plan, the most recent adopted plan.

Table 1
Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Federal Primary Standard	State Standard
Ozone	8-Hour 1-Hour	0.08 PPM 0.12 PPM	-- 0.09 PPM
Carbon Monoxide	8-Hour 1-Hour	9.0 PPM 35.0 PPM	9.0 PPM 20.0 PPM
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual 1-Hour	0.05 PPM --	-- 0.25 PPM
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual 24-Hour 1-Hour	0.03 PPM 0.14 PPM --	-- 0.04 PPM 0.25 PPM
PM_{10}	Annual Geometric Annual Arithmetic 24-Hour	-- 50 µg/m^3 150 µg/m^3	30 µg/m^3 -- 50 µg/m^3
$PM_{2.5}$	Annual Arithmetic 24-Hour	15 µg/m^3 65 µg/m^3	-- --
Lead	30-Day Avg. Calendar Quarter	-- 1.5 µg/m^3	1.5 µg/m^3 --

PPM = Parts per Million
µg/m^3 = Micrograms per Cubic Meter

Table 2
NCCAB Attainment Status

Pollutant	Federal	State
Ozone - 1 hour	Maintenance	Moderate Non-attainment
Ozone - 8 hour	Attainment	N/A
Carbon Monoxide	Unclassified/Attainment	Monterey: Attainment San Benito: Unclassified Santa Cruz: Unclassified
Nitrogen Dioxide	Unclassified/Attainment	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Unclassified	Attainment
PM_{10}	Attainment	Non-attainment
$PM_{2.5}$	Unclassified	N/A

Impact Evaluation

	Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	”	”	”	**U**
e)	Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

3.a) Due to the nature of the project, it would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the applicable air quality plan. (2)

3.b) The acquisition of the rail line would not violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. (2)

3.c) The project would not cause any increase of criteria pollutants. (2)

3.d) The sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations. (2)

3.e) The project would not create objectionable odors. (2)

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Environmental Setting

There are several sensitive habitats along the Davenport and Santa Cruz Branch Lines, and the rail line itself is a potentially important wildlife corridor. The rail line crosses more than 25 waterways, mostly north and south of Santa Cruz, including the Pajaro River, Watsonville Slough, Harkins Slough, Aptos Creek, Soquel Creek and the San Lorenzo River. The railway also passes immediately adjacent to Ellicot Pond, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Reserve near Aptos, and one of only a few locations where the Federally Endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*) is known to exist. The sections of the rail line within Santa Cruz and Capitola are the most highly urbanized, with little significant habitat, except for fragmented riparian areas associated with waterway crossings.

North of Santa Cruz, the rail line not only crosses several waterways, but is also adjacent to numerous small wetlands which are supplied either by freshwater springs or agricultural runoff. California red-legged frogs (*Rana aurora draytonii*) have been found in these areas and were also noted during a recent survey performed by Melanie Mayer Consulting. The survey results are presented in Appendix C. Many special-status plant and animal species are reliant upon, or associated with, wetland habitats and riparian areas.

Several other sensitive wildlife species have been documented in the area, but are not necessarily directly associated with the railway. These species include: southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), western pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), and western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*). In addition, there are also about 20 sensitive plant species known to occur in the region, some of which may occur along the route. There are a number of areas along the railway dominated by stands of native vegetation, which may support one or more of these plant species.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	”	”	”	**U**
e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	”	”	”	**U**
f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

There would be no new or additional impacts to the habitats in the vicinity of the rail line, nor to any special status species, from the proposed project as it involves no new disturbance or change of use. If, in the future, other projects along the railway are proposed, they would include a separate biological assessment and environmental review at that time. If future projects may result in impacts on sensitive habitats, special-status plant and/or animal species, or the potential take of any federally listed species, consultation with appropriate agencies (U.S. Army Corps, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.) will be required.

4.a) The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on any species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special-status, nor will the project cause any habitat modification. (2, 15)

4.b) The project would not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community. (2, 15)

4.c) The project does not involve direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or any other means of disturbing federally protected wetlands. (2)

4.d) The project would not interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors. It would not impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. (2)

4.e) The project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances. (2 - 10)

4.f) The project would not conflict with the provisions of any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. (2)

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Environmental Setting

In general, the areas of Santa Cruz County with the highest archaeological resource sensitivity are generally located in the flatter sections, where the Ohlone Indians made their homelands approximately 150 years ago. The upland areas of the County have lower sensitivity levels. There are also a number of historic resources, as recorded with the California Office of Historic Preservation, found in the region (2001 Plan EIR).

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in 15064.5?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to 15064.5?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation:

Although they are abundant in the County, there would be no impacts to the cultural or archaeological resources in the vicinity of the rail line because there is no construction element to this project, nor any other type of environmental disturbance.

5.a) Due to the nature of the project, there would be no adverse change in the significance of any historical resource. (2)

5.b) The project would not cause a change in any archaeological resource. (2)

5.c) The project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. (2)

5.d) The project would not disturb any human remains. (2)

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Environmental Setting

The project area is subject to hazards associated with the seismically-active Monterey Bay area. The rail line, along with the surrounding region, would be subject to strong ground shaking in the event of an earthquake on any of the regional fault systems. There are at least six major seismic fault systems in the Santa Cruz County region: San Andreas, Zayante, Ben Lomond, San Gregorio, Butano, and the Monterey Bay Fault Zone. There are also many areas in the County that are subject to liquefaction, mostly along the numerous drainages, and erosion hazards where there are excessive slopes.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
	i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	”	”	”	**U**
	ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	”	”	”	**U**
	iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	”	”	”	**U**
	iv) Landslides?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	”	”	”	**U**

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d)	Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	”	”	”	**U**
e)	Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

The proposed project would not increase the risk of loss from geologic hazards because there is no soil disturbance or construction involved.

6.a.i) Due to the nature of the project, it would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects due to rupture of a known earthquake fault. (2)

6.a.ii) The project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects due to strong seismic ground shaking. (2)

6.a.iii) The project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects due to seismic-related ground failure. (2)

6.a.iv) The project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects due to landslides. (2)

6.b) The project would not cause soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. (2)

6.c) The project would not cause soils to become unstable. (2)

6.d) The project would not cause risks to life or property due to expansive soils. (2)

6.e) The project does not involve the use of septic tanks or waste water disposal systems. (2)

7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Environmental Setting

A Preliminary Site Assessment (Phase I) was performed for the Davenport and Santa Cruz branch lines by Geomatrix Consultants in March of 1997 to identify features or historical uses or activities that could be associated with environmental impairment of soils and/or groundwater in the vicinity of the rail line. The Phase I program included: field reconnaissance; historical review; review of agency files; interviews with UP personnel regarding general railroad operations; and review of geology and hydrogeology. The report is available for review at the SCCRTC office.

The findings of the Phase I are listed along with recommendations for additional analysis, in particular a Phase II evaluation, in the event of future construction projects along the rail line. The document review portion of the report identified 76 listed environmental cases within 1/8 mile of the branch lines, where there were possible toxic and fuel leaks.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	”	”	”	**U**

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	”	”	”	**U**
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	”	”	”	**U**
g)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	”	”	”	**U**
h)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

Due to the fact that the proposed project involves no construction or soil disturbance of any type, there would be no impacts from hazardous materials.

7.a) The project does not involve the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. (2)

7.b) The project will not involve the release of hazardous materials. (2)

7.c) The project does not involve hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or wastes. (2)

7.d) The project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment due to the proximity of identified hazardous materials sites. (2, 14)

7.e) The rail line does not lie within an airport land use plan or within two miles of any airport. (2)

7.f) The project does not lie within the vicinity of a private airstrip. (2)

7.g) The project would not impact implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. (2)

7.h) The project would not increase the risk of exposing people or structures to wildland fires. (2)

8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Environmental Setting

Water is supplied throughout Santa Cruz County by both surface water and groundwater. There are numerous watershed systems in the County that include the San Lorenzo River, the Pajaro River, Soquel Creek, and their tributaries.

Water supply in the County has historically been limited, which has made water conservation a major concern. In some critical areas, groundwater resources have already been overused causing a decline in water quality. For example, the Pajaro Valley is battling a saltwater intrusion problem due to the intensity of irrigation. The main source of surface water contamination is impervious surface runoff, or non-point source pollution. This pollution includes oil, grease, pesticides, pathogens, and air pollutants (2001 Plan EIR).

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	”	”	”	**U**

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e)	Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	”	”	”	**U**
f)	Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	”	”	”	**U**
g)	Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	”	”	”	**U**
h)	Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	”	”	”	**U**
i)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	”	”	”	**U**
j)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

8.a) Due to the nature of the project, it would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. (2)

8.b) The project would not deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge. (2)

8.c) The proposed project would not alter the course of a stream or river and would not alter the existing drainage patterns. (2)

8.d) The proposed project would not increase the rate or amount of surface water or alter drainage such that flooding would result on or off-site. The proposed project would not add additional surface water runoff to existing conditions. (2)

8.e) The project would not contribute runoff water. (2)

8.f) The project would not degrade water quality. (2)

8.g) The proposed project will not create new housing. (2)

8.h) The project does not include the addition of any structures. (2)

8.i) The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding. (2)

8.j) The project would not expose people or structures to significant risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. (2)

9. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Environmental Setting

The General Plan designation for the rail line right-of-way is Public Facility/Quasi Public Facility. The rail line is zoned for public facilities, with portions of it falling in the Coastal Zone.

The proposed project is consistent with all applicable County and City General Plan and other policies. See section **VIII. LAND USE COMPATIBILITY** for a partial listing of policies supported by the rail line acquisition.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Physically divide an established community?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

The proposed project does not involve acquisition of land outside of the rail line right-of-way, and therefore will not present any designation issues or changes.

9.a) Due to the nature of the project, it would not cause any division of a community. (2)

9.b) There are no land use plans, policies, or regulations that conflict with the proposed project. (2)

9.c) The project would not conflict with any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. (2)

10. MINERAL RESOURCES

Environmental Setting

There are a number of mining and mineral resource extraction operations in Santa Cruz County. The north end of the Davenport Branch Line terminates near the RMC Pacific Materials (RMC) plant, a cement manufacturing facility. The rail line is currently used solely for freight service, with a majority of the runs originating from RMC to transport their materials.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

10.a) The project would not result in a loss of availability of known mineral resources of value to the region and the residents of the state. (2)

10.b) The project would not negatively affect any delineated mineral resources that are locally important. (2)

11. NOISE

Environmental Setting

Environmental Noise Background

Sound is mechanical energy transmitted by pressure waves in a compressible medium such as air. Noise is defined as unwanted sound. Environmental noise is frequently measured in decibels (dB). The A-weighted decibel (dBA) is used to reflect the human ear's sensitivity to sounds of different frequencies. On this scale, the sound level of normal talking is about 60 to 65 dBA. Because people are more sensitive to night time noise, sleep disturbance usually occurs at 40 to 45 dBA.

The most commonly used measurement scale used to account for a person's increased sensitivity to night time noise is the community noise equivalent level (CNEL). The CNEL is a noise scale used to describe the overall noise environment of a given area from a variety of sources. The CNEL applies a weighting factor to evening and night time values.

Excessive noise cannot only be undesirable, but may also cause physical and/or psychological damage. The amount and nature of the noise, and the amount of ambient noise present before the impacts may be categorized as auditory or non-auditory. Auditory effects include interference with communication and, in extreme circumstances, hearing loss. Non-auditory effects include physiological reactions such as a change in blood pressure or breathing rate, interference with sleep, adverse effects on human performance, and annoyance.

Generally, noise levels diminish as distance from the noise source increases. Some land uses are more sensitive to noise than others. Noise sensitive land uses are generally defined as residences, transient lodging, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, meeting halls, and office buildings.

Existing Noise Setting

Major roads, highways, airports and rail lines all contribute to the ambient noise levels in Santa Cruz County. These levels vary widely, depending on location. Motor vehicle traffic is the single largest noise contributor in the region. The individual city general plans also report vehicle traffic as being the most substantial noise source in their respective areas, except for in the vicinity of Watsonville Municipal Airport.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	”	”	”	**U**
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	”	”	”	**U**
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

11.a) Due to the nature of the project, it would not generate or expose persons to noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plans and noise ordinances. (2)

11.b) No long term or otherwise excessive ground borne vibration or noise impacts would occur with implementation of the project. (2)

11.c) The project would not cause a permanent increase in ambient noise levels. (2)

11.d) The proposed project would not change the existing noise levels. (2)

11.e) The project would not expose people within the vicinity of any airports to excessive noise levels. (2)

11.f) The project would not expose people within the vicinity of any private airstrips to excessive noise levels. (2)

12. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Environmental Setting

The Davenport and Santa Cruz Branch Lines run through the Cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville, as well as the unincorporated urban areas of Live Oak, Soquel, Aptos and La Selva. Because the rail line has serviced the area for over 125 years, the existing residential neighborhoods and communities have generally grown up around it.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	"	"	"	**U**
b)	Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	"	"	"	**U**
c)	Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	"	"	"	**U**

Explanation

Change in ownership of the rail line will not cause any impacts to the population and housing issues of the area.

12.a) This project would not extend infrastructure and would not induce population growth. (2)

12.b) As the project does not propose any additional service or track for the rail lines, no housing would be displaced. (2)

12.c) No people would be displaced by the project. (2)

13. PUBLIC SERVICES

Environmental Setting

Santa Cruz County public services include police protection, parks and recreation, drainage and library services. Fire protection, educational facilities, sewer and water services are provided by special districts. Funding for these public services, for both the County and the special districts, is provided through special taxes and assessments, as well as through fees collected.

There are five school districts in the County of Santa Cruz: Live Oak Elementary, Pajaro Valley Unified, Santa Cruz City, Soquel Unified Elementary, and Scotts Valley School Districts. Most of these Districts are currently running above capacity.

Impact Evaluation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	”	”	”	U
Police protection?	”	”	”	U
Schools?	”	”	”	U
Parks?	”	”	”	U
Other public facilities?	”	”	”	U

Explanation

13.a) Because the project does not involve physical changes to the rail line or the surrounding areas, and is solely a transfer of ownership, it would not cause a change, or a need for change, in any of the public services available in the area. (2)

14. RECREATION

Environmental Setting

The Santa Cruz County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department operates the parks and recreation programs in the unincorporated areas of the County. The Cities of Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville also operate their own Parks Departments. The rail line is in the vicinity of several state and local recreation areas, including Natural Bridges State Park, the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, Capitola State Beach, and New Brighton State Beach.

Impact Evaluation

		Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

Although the railroad runs next to, and in some cases through, several recreational areas, the acquisition of the rail line will not change their uses.

14.a) The project would not increase the use of any existing recreational facilities. (2)

14.b) The project would not require the expansion of present recreational facilities. (2)

15. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Environmental Setting

Santa Cruz County has a large transportation infrastructure that includes major and minor roadways, bus transit, bicycle and pedestrian paths, specialized transportation for seniors and those with disabilities, railways, airports, waterways and trails. Due to the fact that the County is a popular tourist destination, the levels of congestion tend to vary somewhat with the season.

Impact Evaluation

	Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	"	"	"	**U**
b)	Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	"	"	"	**U**
c)	Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	"	"	"	**U**
d)	Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	"	"	"	**U**
e)	Result in inadequate emergency access?	"	"	"	**U**
f)	Result in inadequate parking capacity?	"	"	"	**U**
g)	Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	"	"	"	**U**

Explanation

The current project does not propose any changes in the transportation network. If, at a future date, additional uses are proposed for the rail line, they would be subject to separate environmental review.

15.a) Due to the nature of the project, it would not cause an increase in traffic. (2)

15.b) The project would not cause a negative impact on levels of service on local roadways. (2)

15.c) Air traffic patterns will not be affected by the proposed project. (2)

15.d) The project is not proposing to change any roadways or introduce any incompatible uses. (2)

15.e) The project would not change emergency access. (2)

15.f) The project would not change any parking facilities. (2)

15.g) The project does not conflict with any policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation. On the contrary, it supports these policies, plans, and programs. (2)

16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Environmental Setting

There are a number of sanitary sewer service providers in the County that include Sanitation Districts, treatment plants, and septic tank maintenance facilities. The Davenport Branch line runs immediately adjacent to the City of Santa Cruz treatment plant, just north of the Boardwalk.

Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works maintains the existing storm drain network for the entire County Urban Service Area. Funding for drainage infrastructure improvements comes from the developers, state and federal agencies, and in some cases, from the County Redevelopment Agency.

The County maintains two solid waste disposal sites: the Buena Vista Landfill, just west of Watsonville, and the Ben Lomond Transfer Station, near the community of Ben Lomond. The Solid Waste section of the County Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation of these disposal sites as well as administration of garbage and recycling collection franchise services, planning for future solid waste and recycling programs and facilities, and for household hazardous waste collection.

Impact Evaluation

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	”	”	”	**U**
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	”	”	”	**U**
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	”	”	”	**U**
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	”	”	”	**U**

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	”	”	”	**U**
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	”	”	”	**U**
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

16.a) The project would not result in exceeding any wastewater treatment standards. (2)

16.b) The project would not require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities. (2)

16.c) The project would not require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities, nor will it change existing facilities. (2)

16.d) No new entitlements for water would be required by the project. (2)

16.e) The project would not impact existing wastewater treatment providers. (2)

16.f) The project would not create new solid waste disposal needs. (2)

16.g) The project complies with all federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. (2)

17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impact Evaluation

		Potentially Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	”	”	”	**U**
b)	Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals?	”	”	”	**U**
c)	Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	”	”	”	**U**
d)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	”	”	”	**U**

Explanation

17.a) This Initial Study found that the proposed project and associated activities would have no impacts in all topical areas.

17.b) This Initial Study found that the proposed project would not have the potential to achieve short-term environmental goals to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals. On the contrary, long-term environmental goals are better served by preservation of the rail line rights-of-way, as noted above.

17.c) Because there are no potential impacts from the project, there would also be no cumulatively considerable impacts.

17.d) The project was determined to have no adverse effects on human beings directly or indirectly. The previous sections document the reasons for this determination.

XII. REFERENCES

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8. City of Capitola, *General Plan*, September 28, 1989.
9. City of Watsonville, *Watsonville 2005 General Plan*, May 24, 1994.
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11. Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines*, October 1995, as revised February 1997, August 1998, and August 2000.
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13. California Department of Fish and Game, *California Natural Diversity Data Base*, 1999.
14. Geomatrix Consultants, *Preliminary Site Assessment Davenport and Santa Cruz Branch Lines*, March 1997.
15. Melanie Mayer Consulting, *Biological Assessment of the Davenport and Santa Cruz Branch Lines*, November 2001.
16. Letter from Gary Ruggerone, Caltrans District 5 Environmental Planning Branch, to Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director SCCRTC, with attached Preliminary Environmental Studies and Programmatic Categorical Exclusion forms.

XIII. LIST OF PREPARERS

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XIV. DISTRIBUTION LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The IS and Mitigated Negative Declaration will be sent to the following agencies and entities:

FEDERAL

US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish and Wildlife Service

STATE

California Coastal Commission
California Department of Fish and Game
California State Clearinghouse, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (15 copies)
Caltrans District 5
Regional Water Quality Control Board

REGIONAL

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
City of Capitola
City of Santa Cruz
City of Scotts Valley
City of Watsonville
County of Monterey Planning & Building Inspection Department
County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
County of Santa Clara Planning Department
County of San Mateo Planning Department
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District
Transportation Agency for Monterey County

APPENDIX A

LETTER FROM CALTRANS DISTRICT 5
PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES FORM
PROGRAMMATIC CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

APPENDIX B

PREVIOUS RAILROAD CORRIDOR STUDIES

***Santa Cruz Fixed Guideway/Rail Corridor Refinement Study*, 1993**

This report examined ways to effectively utilize the existing rail corridor and tie it to the UCSC campus. It concluded that the development of rail service that utilized the railroad right-of-way and connected to the university campus would likely meet Federal guidelines for cost effectiveness.

***Major Transportation Investment Study*, 1998**

Following the 1993 study, the SCCRTC produced the Major Transportation Investment Study, which was a new federal planning requirement that replaced the earlier "Alternatives Analysis" rail planning phase. This study was for the corridor from Watsonville to Santa Cruz and the UCSC campus. The study concluded with the SCCRTC adaptation of a program of projects, including the rail line right-of-way acquisition.

***Intercity Recreational Rail Study for the San Francisco Bay Area to Santa Cruz Corridor*, 1996**

Funded by state planning and research funds, this study concluded that intercity weekend rail service along the "Suntan Special" corridor was feasible even with conservative ridership estimates.

***Around the Bay Rail Study*, 1998**

This document studied the development of rail service around the Monterey Bay between Santa Cruz and Monterey, with links to the San Francisco Bay Area. It included a comparison of diesel multiple unit and standard locomotive technology and the advantages/disadvantages of each for the service under study. The study recommended feasible strategies to effectively implement rail service between Santa Cruz and Monterey with connections to the San Francisco Bay Area.

APPENDIX C

PRELIMINARY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT