

# Central Coast Region

### INTRODUCTION

The Central Coast Region in Caltrans District 5 covers five counties along California's Central Coast: Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz.

The population of the five-county Central Coast region of California was approximately 1.4 million in 2010. In total, the population of the five-county region grew by 5.1 percent, or by nearly 70,000 people, from 2000 to 2010, which is about one-half the rate of the State's overall population growth. Santa Barbara and Monterey Counties are the largest economic engines in the Central Coast region at about \$17.7 billion gross regional product (GRP) and \$16.0 billion GRP, respectively. The five-county Central GRP was nearly \$54 billion in 2009.



The region's population and economic trends will impact freight demand in several ways. For example, there is a connection between GRP and freight volumes on regional roads. As a result of this expected increase in regional GRP, additional freight tonnage moving to, from, and within the Central Coast region is expected. It is important for Central Coast policy-makers and agency planners to be responsive to this expected growth, and to proactively address regional transportation challenges that will result from this growth.

### IMPORTANCE OF GOODS MOVEMENT AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The Central Coast region's key freight-dependent industries, *Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Truck Transportation/Warehousing*, are critical to the region in terms of jobs and contribution to the regional economy. They also are critical to one another. Without a strong agricultural crop, it would be difficult for regional truckers and food processors to make a living. Without local carriers to move goods, it may become more expensive to ship goods from the region to outside producers, making the region's products less competitive. Agriculture is one of the most important industries in California and is the leading agricultural state in the United States (U.S.). The State produces nearly one-half of U.S. grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables. California also is a major producer of livestock and livestock products. The Central Coast is known both for the volume and the variety of agricultural products it grows. Salinas Valley is known as "America's Salad Bowl" due to the amount of crops grown there and exported to other regions. The region is also a key producer of wine. Manufacturing is a key and diverse industry in the region with food manufacturing being of particularly importance.

## Freight Planning Regional Summary

### REGIONAL OVERVIEW

<b>COUNTIES</b>	<b>DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS</b>
<b>MONTEREY</b>	Agriculture and tourism are the key industries for Monterey County. The County is known as “America’s Salad Bowl” due to the volume of lettuce grown there, and it also is home to a thriving wine industry. In fact, much of the tourism in Monterey County is driven by agriculture as visitors come from all over to experience the wine country and coastal regions. Cut flowers also are grown and exported from the County. Other key industries include retail and wholesale trade, food manufacturing, warehousing (including agricultural coolers), health care, and accommodation and food services. In 2012, the <a href="#">Monterey Crop Report</a> showed a production value of \$4.14 billion for the County.
<b>SAN BENITO</b>	Located directly to the east of Monterey County, San Benito County is also highly dependent on agriculture and farming. The County retains significant activity in retail trade, wholesale trade, manufacturing (especially food manufacturing), and construction. Manufacturing is the largest freight-dependent industry in the County by both employment and earnings. Most of this activity is concentrated in food manufacturing and various durable goods manufacturing activities. Due to the County’s unique climate and fertile soil, agriculture is the County’s largest industry with overall value agricultural production in 2012 at \$263.3 million. This is an increase of \$34 million from 2011. Vegetable and row crops made up 70 percent of the production followed by fruit and nut crops at 14 percent.
<b>SAN LUIS OBISPO</b>	Key freight-dependent industries in the County include retail trade, construction, manufacturing, farming and farm support activities, and utilities. Manufacturing activity is diverse in the County and includes machinery, metal products, beverage and tobacco products (mainly wine), and electrical equipment. The top commodities for the County are strawberries and wine grapes. The northern portion of the County benefits from the Napa Valley-San Luis Obispo County wine trade. Grapes produced in Paso Robles are frequently sold to Napa Valley winemakers. Agricultural tourism – including wine tastings, golf, resort and spin-off activities – is a key growth industry for the region. Olive growing and olive oil production is another growth sector for the economy. The County also imports large quantities of sand and gravel for the local construction industry.
<b>SANTA BARBARA</b>	Santa Barbara County has the largest population in the Central Coast region at nearly 424,000 people in 2010. Top goods movement-dependent industries by employment include retail trade and manufacturing. Agriculture is an important activity, especially in the North County area from Buellton to Santa Maria. Top commodities for 2012 were strawberries, broccoli, wine grapes, head lettuce and avocados. County farms employ more than 9,000 people. Fruits and vegetables are produced in the Santa Maria Valley, wine in Santa Ynez and other locales, and flowers in Lompoc Valley. Although manufacturing employs fewer people than retail trade, it is the largest freight-dependent industry by earnings in the County. Manufacturing includes computers, electronics, miscellaneous manufacturing, beverage and tobacco products, and chemicals. Vandenberg Air Force Base is a key driver of the local economy, supporting a thriving aerospace and high-technology cluster. Construction (seasonal) in the area has begun to rebound.
<b>SANTA CRUZ</b>	The top four freight-dependent industries in Santa Cruz County are retail trade, construction, manufacturing, and farming. Agriculture also plays a key role for the County with strawberries, raspberries as the top ranking crops for 2012. There are numerous agricultural cooler and packing facilities for agricultural products in and around Watsonville, which has substantial freight traffic in farm products. Granite Rock operates a quarry in Santa Cruz and ships large quantities of sand by truck. There is also logging in the County.

### GOODS MOVEMENT GATEWAYS, CORRIDORS, HUBS, AND FLOWS

Major freight corridors (highway, rail, inland waterways); hubs (seaports, ports of entry, airports); freight generators (warehouse areas, distribution centers, intermodal facilities)

#### AVIATION

Air freight is a small component of regional freight movement and is at less than one percent of total regional tonnage and approximately two percent of total regional value of freight moving by air. Freight moving by air tends to be focused on time-sensitive, high-value freight. For this region, this could involve the shipment of high-value, specialized fruits and vegetables, as well as machinery, to domestic or international locations.

#### Key Cargo Airports:

- Santa Barbara Municipal Airport
- San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport
- Monterey Peninsula Airport

#### TRUCKING

##### *Central Coast North-South Routes*

- SR 1, SR 9, SR 17, SR 25, SR 33, SR 135, SR 154, SR 183, SR 217, SR 229, U.S. 101  
U.S. 101 is the primary goods movement route and corridor in the Central Coast region. It provides direct connectivity to major markets and intermodal facilities in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay Area regions.

##### *Central Coast East-West Routes*

- SR 41, SR 46, SR 68, SR 129, SR 146, SR 152, SR 166, SR 198, SR 236, SR 246  
These routes connect freight-dependent industries to the U.S. 101 corridor and also provide East-West goods movement routes from the region to the Central Valley.

##### *Trucking Issues*

- There is minimal truck parking available along most of the U. S. 101 corridor and for routes east and west. Illegal truck parking is mostly not enforced by California Highway Patrol and local law enforcement. Two truck parking facilities are being examined in western Santa Barbara County and just south of Salinas. Caltrans District 5 continues to meet with local trucking firms and freight organizations to seek solutions.
- Most of the key truck routes in the region are designated as being part of the National Truck Network or the STAA network.
- The top 10 locations in the region for daily five-axle truck trips are all on U.S. 101.
- The peak truck location is north of Salinas on U.S. 101.
- Congestion on U.S. 101 can be seasonal in some locations such as Monterey County during the agriculture harvest season.
- U.S. 101 connects all of the counties within the region and is a major freight facility. It also connects the region to the major California markets in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay region.

### MOST COMMON REGIONAL FREIGHT ISSUES FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Truck parking concerns (numerous counties).
- SR 166 – provide more passing opportunities.
- U.S. 101 general traffic congestion from Carpinteria through Goleta during AM and PM peak hours issues with Rail Infrastructure.
- Main Street (SR 166) in Santa Maria experiences congestion. This is a regional truck route through urban neighborhoods and the city center.
- SR 156 from U.S. 101 to exit for Hollister is congested; freight carriers describe it as a bottleneck area.
- Salinas: Heavy truck traffic and congestion throughout Salinas.
- U.S. 101 in the Prunedale region north of Salinas consists of horizontal and vertical curves and at-grade intersections. The Prunedale Improvement Project is under construction.
- U.S. 101 between King City and Salinas – This was described as a highway that needs to be converted to a freeway. Comments addressed a) at-grade intersections on U.S. 101 and b) short acceleration lanes. Comments made about on/off ramps in King City, Greenfield, Gonzales, and Soledad.
- SR 156 from Castroville to U.S. 101 experiences congestion.
- SR 68 between Salinas and Monterey is an often congested 2-lane road.
- SR 1 between Santa Cruz and Aptos experiences congestion. Lack of East-West capacity between U.S. 101 and I-5 contributes to congestion on SR 46.

# Freight Planning Regional Summary

## Map of Key Regional Highway Infrastructure U.S./State Highways



Source: Based on the *Central Coast California Commercial Flows Study, February 2012*, Prepared for the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (updated April, 2014)

### FREIGHT RAIL

The Union Pacific (UP) Railroad is the only Class I carrier in the region. UP's Coast and Santa Barbara Subdivisions run from the North end of the region to the South. There are various industrial rail leads which serve areas such as Santa Cruz, Hollister, Lompoc, White Hills and Montalvo. This route primarily serves the regions agricultural and manufacturing industries. Lumber and fertilizer is also moved over this route. In this region all of the freight moved is of a mixed carload variety, no intermodal freight is moved over this route by the UP.

- **Two primary short line railroads** interface with the UP to move freight in the area including the **Santa Maria Valley Railroad** and the **Santa Cruz Branch Line**, operated by Iowa Pacific. Primary commodities moved include: lumber, coal, frozen foods, construction materials, fertilizer, steel, machinery and other goods. The Santa Maria Valley Railroad is a 14-mile long shortline that moves goods in the Santa Maria Valley. It serves the Betteravia Industrial Park and interfaces with the UP mainline.
- The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) had a study prepared by TranSystems, the *Salinas Valley Truck to Rail Intermodal Facility Feasibility Study (August 2011)*. The purpose of the study was to “analyze the potential for building and operating a truck-to rail intermodal facility to support the movement of perishable, agricultural products from the region.” Areas studied included: 1) site selection for an intermodal facility; 2) coordination with UP; 3) market feasibility and supply chain analysis; 4) preliminary business model with operations planning, terminal site layout and truck trip reduction analysis; and 5) preliminary environmental assessment of the two sites selected in the site selection analysis. The anticipated benefits, if implemented, would be to shift most of the truck trips to rail greatly reducing roadway wear, improving safety, and reducing truck emissions. Rail service would also be less costly than trucking.
- Key findings from the study were:
  - Using intermodal rail will provide an alternative transportation option allowing the product industry to remain competitive.
  - By taking a certain portion of trucks moving produce from this region off the road, significant emissions reductions will be realized.
  - Best intermodal facility sites would be Chualar and Gonzales.
  - Although refrigerated boxcar service or intermodal rail service was explored, it was found that UP was precluded from providing service for refrigerated boxcars due to contract commitments already in place in California.
  - The study found that the “only viable solution is to use rail service for a portion of these (the) shipments, not only to provide enough transportation capacity and reduce costs but also to mitigate some of the risk associated with relying on one mode of transport for the agricultural products that form such a critical part of the Salinas Valley economy.”

# Freight Planning Regional Summary

## Regional Class I and Shortline Railroads



Source: Based on the *Central Coast California Commercial Flows Study, February 2012*, Prepared for the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (updated April, 2014)

### SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- Truck congestion throughout the region is the number one issue on all goods movement routes. Improvements and key issues relating to various routes are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of the Central Coast study in tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 by county. These tables also indicate where there are gaps in the system, freight bottlenecks, and system performance challenges.
- Aging infrastructure is also frequently mentioned as another area of concern throughout the region. Many of the goods movement routes have aging interchanges, poor pavement conditions, pavement, and other highway structures that need to be updated. .
- East to West connectivity to the Central Valley is also an issue due to the topography of region being extremely mountainous in places.
- Goods movement and land use incompatibility issues should be addressed through regional comprehensive planning processes.
- Crops are served primarily by trucks which deliver materials for growing the crops and then pick up the harvested crops. Truck vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in agricultural communities such as this are typically very high.
- A key driver of population in the region is the external demand for shipments of agricultural products produced that other regions of the State and Nation consume.
- Monterey County in the Central Coast Region supplies 80 percent of the nation's lettuces and nearly the same percentage of artichokes. Broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, strawberries, peppers, squash, carrots, asparagus, celery, tomatoes, mushrooms, brussel sprouts, garlic, onions and flowers are also grown in abundance.
- In addition, Monterey County has become one of the largest premium grape growing regions in California, with over 40,000 acres of wine grapes. The Salinas Valley is the State and National leader in agricultural exports.

### CENTRAL COAST WAREHOUSING AND DISTRIBUTION CENTERS

- Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County: Industrial commercial areas of Blosser and Betteravia Roads; products either arrive from the farms or are manufactured in the area and are transported by truck on SR 166 or Betteravia Road to U.S. 101. Betteravia Industrial Park has agricultural, lumber, energy and other industry clients.  
<http://www.smvrr.com/bip.html>  
<http://www.smvrr.com/misc/smvr-system-map.pdf>
- Salinas, Monterey County: Distribution occurs from farms, greenhouses and various manufacturing. Firestone Business Park is one of the largest, non-agricultural specific distribution centers in the region.  
<http://www.showcase.com/property/340-El-Camino-Real-South/Salinas/California/1593904>
- Watsonville, Santa Cruz County: Distribution shares geography with manufacturing and agricultural processing and dominates south Watsonville largely concentrating along SR 129 and SR 1.
- In the Central Coast Region most agricultural products are grown, processed and packaged by a large number of individual growers and individual facilities. The industry is highly regulated from an environmental and health standpoint and the organizations affected are actively involved in quality control to address those requirements. Consequently there are relatively no large, centralized centers that process produce in the region for growers.

## Freight Planning Regional Summary

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### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Regional transportation planning agencies in the Central Coast Region include:

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)

<http://www.ambag.org/index.html>

Council of San Benito county Governments (SBCOG)

<http://www.sanbenitocog.org/>

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG)

<http://www.sbcag.org/>

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)

<http://slocog.org/cm/Home.html>

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC)

<http://sccrtc.org/>

Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).

<http://www.tamcmonterey.org/>

- Within these planning organizations are freight related groups including: U. S. 101 Central Coast Coalition, Freight Action Strategy Taskforce (FAST).

<http://www.centralcoastcoalition.com/about-US101.htm>

### RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AMBAG in association with Caltrans District 5, Council of San Benito County Governments, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and Transportation Agency for Monterey County worked collaboratively in on the *Central Coast California Commercial Flows Study* (February 2012) which was prepared by Cambridge Systematics. This study was partially funded by a Caltrans Partnership Planning for Sustainable Transportation Grant and was a major source of information for this summary. Also, due to a severe shortage of truck parking space on U. S. 101 in the Central Coast region there is currently ongoing discussion about doing another study which will focus on this specific issue. Discussion of freight and goods movement is also included briefly, but not a primary focus in Central Coast Regional Transportation Plans, Overall Work Programs and other primarily planning and environmental documents. Caltrans Headquarters and district staff works with these organizations by providing technical review, analysis and input.

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/planning/pdf/CentralCoastFreightFlowsStudyFinalReport.pdf>

Caltrans District 5 <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/>

Caltrans HQ Office of System and Freight Planning:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/index.html>

California State Rail Plan: <http://californiastaterailplan.dot.ca.gov/>

Union Pacific (UP): <http://www.up.com/>

BNSF Railway: <http://www.bnsf.com/>