

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 from 2000 to 2010, or by nearly 70,000 people, 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 and \$16.0 billion, respectively. The five-county Central Coast Gross Regional Product (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, which is the leading state in the 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.

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REGIONAL OVERVIEW

COUNTIES	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS
<i>MONTEREY</i>	Agriculture and tourism are the key industries for Monterey County. The County is known as “the salad bowl of the world” 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.
<i>SAN BENITO</i>	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.
<i>SAN LUIS OBISPO</i>	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 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.
<i>SANTA BARBARA</i>	Santa Barbara County has the largest population in the Central Coast region at nearly 424,000 people in 2010. The top goods movement-dependent industries by employment include retail trade, and manufacturing. Agriculture is also an important activity, especially in the North County area from Buellton to Santa Maria. Farms employ more than 9,000 people in the County. 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 in the County revolves around computers and 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 in the area has begun to rebound and is also a key seasonal industry.
<i>SANTA CRUZ</i>	The top four freight-dependent in Santa Cruz County are retail trade, construction, manufacturing, and farming. 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.

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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)

TRUCKING

Central Coast North-South Routes

- SR 1, SR9, SR17, SR25, SR33, SR135, SR154, SR183, SR217, SR229
US 101 is the primary goods movement route and corridor in the Central Coast region.

Central Coast East-West Routes

- SR68, SR129, SR146, , SR198, SR236, SR246
SR41, SR46, SR152, SR156, SR166 are the primary East-West goods movement routes in the region and to the Central Valley.

Trucking Issues

- There is minimal truck parking available along most of the U. S. 101 corridor and routes east and west. Illegal truck parking is mostly not enforced by CHP 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.
- Chapter 5 of the Central Coast study details various trucking and route related issues in table 5.1.
- Caltrans Office of Truck Services provides information on truck routes, truck stops, roadside rest areas, truck traffic data, weigh in motion, truck scales and other topics pertaining to truck and commercial vehicle operations.
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/trucks/>

CENTRAL COAST WAREHOUSING AND DISTRIBUTION CENTERS

- Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County: Industrial commercial areas of Blosser and Betteravia Roads; products arrive from the farms or is manufactured and uses either SR 166 or Betteravia Road to access US 101. Betteravia Industrial Park has many agricultural, lumber, energy and other industry clients.
<http://www.smvrr.com/bip.html>
<http://www.smvrr.com/misc/smvrr-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 involved are actively

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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 RAIL

The Union Pacific Railroad is the only Class I carrier in the region. The 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 **Sierra Northern Railroad**. Primary commodities moved include: lumber, coal, frozen foods, construction materials, fertilizer, steel, machinery, and other goods. The Santa Maria Valley Railroad serves the Betteravia Industrial Park and interfaces with the UP.
- AMBAG is studying the feasibility of constructing an intermodal facility in the Salinas region that would move freight between Monterey County and the rest of the U. S. by rail. Agricultural and other products would be moved from the facility. Some 2,500 trucks per day leave the area, this study would 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.
- It is estimated that the site would be 150 to 200 acres near the city of Chualar on U. S. 101 just south of Salinas.

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. On many of the goods movement routes interchanges, roadways and other highway structures, and geometry are outdated.
- East to West connectivity to the Central Valley is also an issue due to the topography of region being extremely mountainous in places.
- In terms of relationships between goods movement and land use, including warehouse districts and effects on communities the region is typical of many agriculture based economies.
- Crops are served primarily by trucks which deliver materials for growing the crops and then pick up the harvested crops. Truck 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,

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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.

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>

AMBAG in association with the other Central Coast planning organizations completed the *Central Coast California Commercial Flows Study* in February 2012 which was prepared by Cambridge Systematics. 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 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 RTPs, OWPs and other primarily planning and environmental documents. Caltrans HQ and district staff works with these organizations providing technical review, analysis and input.

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

RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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/>

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