

Comments from the Public

From: Steve Piercy - Website Builder
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 2:32 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Surface Transportation Block Grant Program

Dear RTC commissioners,

I am writing to ask for your consideration of providing funds toward projects that:

- * Provide a better chance to secure future funding
- * Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- * Reduce injuries and fatalities of all transportation users
- * Provide choices in transportation without encouraging more solo driving
- * Preserve the environment
- * Preserve our neighborhoods
- * Improve our local economy

I urge you to exclude funding for any project that leads to the addition of lanes to highways. Highway expansion is the most expensive type of transportation project in cost, life and limb, and to the environment, neighborhoods, and local economy.

Furthermore, the State Legislature passed laws last week, SB-32 and AB-197, which Governor Jerry Brown looks forward to signing as he expressed in this statement.
<https://www.gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=19506>

Yesterday, big oil bought a full-page ad in the capital city's newspaper of record to halt action on climate. Today, the Assembly Speaker, most Democrats and one brave Republican passed SB 32, rejecting the brazen deception of the oil lobby and their Trump-inspired allies who deny science and fight every reasonable effort to curb global warming.

I look forward to signing this bill - and AB 197 - when they land on my desk.

With these bills, California's charting a clear path on climate beyond 2020 and we'll continue to work to shore up the cap-and-trade program, reduce super pollutants and direct more investment to disadvantaged communities.

SB-32 puts into law Governor Brown's Executive Order B-30-15, which sets a deadline of December 31, 2030 for achieving a reduction in GHG by 40% of 1990 levels. Widening Won't Work to achieve that goal.

AB-197 requires the California Air Resource Board (ARB) to prioritize direct emission reductions and consider social costs when adopting regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond the 2020 statewide limit, and requires the ARB to prepare reports on sources of GHGs and other pollutants. Widening Won't Work to achieve these goals.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission cannot continue to ignore the direction that the State is taking with funding projects. The RTC supports dirty air with its obsolete plans for highway widening. RTC leadership must change course in this direction, else be left behind with fewer sources of revenue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Piercy
WideningWontWork.org

Comments from the Public

From: Jim W. Blain
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 7:26 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comment on the notion of rail trail.

Thanks for the great communication you have developed with the community regarding future county transportation issues.

As mentioned before, expense of a long rail trail from Watsonville, through Santa Cruz, to Davenport might make a few, young, die-hard bikers happy at a huge expense to tax payers. This is a fair weather trail. Consider the usage when the weather is bad. Further, the question of public liability and security would be a concern with considerable gang activity in the county. Who would safely ride the bike trail or walk during the night or in the rain and wind? It might make sense to have a recreational rail trail between Santa Cruz and the Wilder Ranch. To me, what really needs consideration is a real rail connection between Santa Cruz and Seaside-Monterey. The tracks are in excellent condition for a commute service that would be a great ride and a tremendous hit. The Santa Cruz and Monterey branch lines could be reconnected as they were years ago.

With the population of the area increasing with corresponding growth in tourist and industrial business, not to mention the jammed freeways, we need to retain and reactivate the two county rail connection in the coming years.

All this to say we need to avoid a "stovepipe" mentality when it comes to Santa Cruz rail assets and the big picture in public transportation.

Sincerely,
Jim Blain, Scotts Valley, Ca

From: Brian Peoples
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 3:34 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Cc: dlane@cityofsantacruz.com; Zach Friend; rlj12@comcast.net; 'Patrick Mulhearn'; lmendez@sccrtc.org
Subject: Agenda #20

RTC,

When the Highway 1 Corridor Tier I Final Environmental Document is completed, would this project be considered "shovel ready" that could be used to obtain additional funding from State / Feds?

If Highway 1 Tier I is determined to be the most effective long term solution for transportation, what is the likelihood that funding can be obtained from State / Feds for this project? Is there a greater likelihood that funding could be obtained if we are a self-help county?

For agenda #20 (Analysis of Transportation Options for the Rail Corridor), what is the estimated date of completion?

For agenda #20, if rail is determined to be the preferred option, what is likelihood State / Fed funding could be obtained? Is there a more likelihood to obtain funding for rail or Highway 1 Tier I upgrades?

Thanks,
Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Memorandum

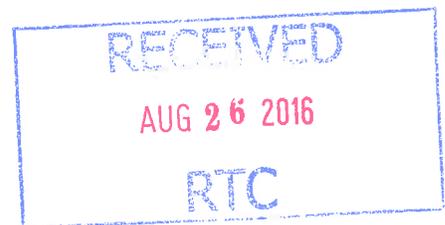
to: Don Lane and Zach Friend

re: Rail trail

From: Howard Sosbee *H. J. Sosbee*

Date: August 21, 2016

I am writing to you to as important individuals in the public transportation milieu of Santa Cruz County. The whole subject (rail or trail or both) has become so complex with so many diverse viewpoints and goals, it's difficult to see a path satisfactory to everyone. However, if the SCCRTC could settle on the MODE of transit, (i.e. train, light rail, trolley, bus, or trail only) then work could begin to make the chosen mode become reality. Whatever mode is chosen, cost, both initial and ongoing, will almost certainly be a controlling factor. For this reason, I would urge an early decision by the Commission as to exactly what that mode will be. Considering there have already been two comprehensive, and expensive, studies conducted by experienced consultants, the result has only been myriad differences of opinion (as expressed in the media) and a final decision does not appear to be near at hand. If I could have a few minutes of your time, either individually, together, or at an official Commission meeting, I could fill in some of the blanks in favor of the "MetroLink" proposal. It should be possible to avoid the cost obstacle altogether, and acquire a system that achieves all the goals of the various interest groups involved without waiting for public funding. I am available any time except on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from 10 AM to 3 PM (dialysis) and look forward to the privilege of meeting with you. I can be reached at 831, 818, 0847 or email at <hfs@sosbee.com>.



From: Bud Colligan

Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 1:22 PM

To: ryan.coonerty@santacruzcounty.us; greg.caput@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; dnortondesigns@msn.com; Don Lane; rlj12@comcast.net; jimmy.dutra@cityofwatsonville.org; ebottorff167@yahoo.com; karina.cervantez@cityofwatsonville.org; cchase@cityofsantacruz.com; tim_gubbins@dot.ca.gov; John Leopold; Zach Friend; bruce.mcpherson@santacruzcounty.us

Cc: George Dondero; info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Open, transparent and timely process re Rail Trail Corridor

Dear Commissioners,

Per Don Lane's suggestion, I have given some thought to what I would do regarding the public process you have tasked the RTC staff with running (Item 20 in your September 1 agenda entitled "Roadmap for Rail Corridor development"). I don't think it's as complicated as the staff report would suggest. There are essentially two options that Don Lane and Zach Friend articulated in their Sentinel Op Ed piece (those options are Trail Only vs. Rail with Trail). The RTC can focus on a side by side comparison of the two options and see which one provides the most benefit at a cost the county can afford in a reasonable timeframe. The RTC has already outlined its goals:

Goal 1: Provide a convenient, competitive and accessible travel option

Goal 2: Enhance communities and the environment, support economic vitality

Goal 3: Develop a rail (added: and/or trail system) that is cost effective and financially feasible

I have attached a modified version of a framework I developed about a year ago looking at various factors under each of these three goals. The staff can add/subtract items to this list of factors; it is not meant to be the final list. However, I would limit it to the MOST IMPORTANT items in order not to muddle the comparison (examples of other items that might be added: contracts that will need to be renegotiated, payback or not of Prop 116 funds, user experience grades of the narrow vs. wide trail, level of stress analysis and safety concerns of off-trail biking; etc.) All final data should be footnoted so that any person can understand how numbers were derived (or, like the Water Commission, the Commissioners can actually form a balanced group of citizens to agree on the data to ensure an objective work product).

What I am suggesting is a simple framework for Commissioners to look at the data and make an informed decision: what strategy provides the most benefit at a cost the county can afford in a reasonable timeframe.

There is no reason this process should take years. The process outlined in the staff report will lead to interminable delays and waste millions of dollars of hard earned taxpayer money unnecessarily. Seven of the eleven studies/documents referenced in the staff report are DONE. My understanding is that the Unified Corridors Plan will not be completed until early 2019! We have enough data NOW. Six to twelve months would be a very reasonable time to create a final work product for the Commissioners to review and make a decision. When we discussed our support for TRIP, the idea of an open transparent process to determine the disposition of the corridor was assumed to be limited in time. I urge you to set a reasonable timeframe and process so that we can move forward as a community. I am happy to help in any way I can.

Best regards,
Bud Colligan

GOAL 1

Provide a convenient, competitive and accessible travel option

	<i>Rail with Trail</i>	<i>Trail Only</i>
<i>Rail ridership roundtrip Bike ridership</i>	2,750 per day/ TBD	6,105 per day
<i>Pedestrian Usage</i>	TBD	7,462 per day
<i>“Last mile” (e.g. stations too far from home, business)</i>	+20-30 minutes	No issue
<i>Ticket cost</i>	\$5.00 roundtrip	Free
<i>Probable timeframe to complete</i>	~20 years	~5 years

GOAL 2

Enhance communities and the environment, support economic vitality

	<i>Rail with Trail</i>	<i>Trail Only</i>
<i>Impact on traffic congestion: projected number of cars removed from Hwy 1</i>	TBD	TBD
<i>Increase in pollution, noise, traffic</i>	60 diesel locomotives per day, train horns, increased freight usage	None
<i>Grade crossings</i>	2,400 per day (60 trains x 40 grade crossings)	None
<i>Parking accommodations</i>	Not budgeted, will impact costs, local neighborhoods	Limited
<i>Public safety</i>	High costs of adequate safety measures	No increased costs
<i>Impact to residential property values along railway</i>	Detrimental	Improved
<i>Eco-tourism, economic development</i>	Few examples	Many examples
<i>Recreational asset / healthy lifestyle</i>	Good	Excellent
<i>Takes advantage of new technologies</i>	Limited	Robust

GOAL 3

Develop a rail or trail system that is cost effective and financially feasible

	<i>Rail with Trail</i>	<i>Trail Only</i>
<i>Capital Costs</i>	\$176M – Train \$127M - Trail	\$51M
<i>Operating and Maintenance Costs (30 years)</i>	Train - \$420M (\$14M per year) Trail - \$10M (\$320K per year)	\$10M (\$320K per year)
<i>Unbudgeted costs</i>	\$ Tens of Millions	Minimal
<i>Funding risks</i>	Many	Limited
<i>Santa Cruz has the money to build it</i>	No	Yes

From: Coastal Rail Santa Cruz
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 5:41 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Thank you for the Rail and the Trail!

Dear Commission and Staff,
Coastal Rail Santa Cruz thanks the Commission and partner organization Land Trust of Santa Cruz County for your tireless combined efforts in planning and funding parts of the Monterey Bay Scenic Trail Network. We know that there are forces that resist progress on the trail, that would have us stop cold and start from scratch, thus adding 10 or 20 or more years to realization of this important trail.

Stay firm, stay strong, and lead with resolve and when possible please consider expanding your educational efforts to fight the profound misinformation that persists among our county residents regarding the benefits of expanding our access to alternative forms of transportation.

Cheers,
Barry Scott
Coastal Rail Santa Cruz
A not for profit organization
CoastalRail.org
[Facebook.com/CoastalRail](https://www.facebook.com/CoastalRail)