

AGENDA: February 4, 2016

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director
RE: Director's Report

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Watsonville Office will Move

The City of Watsonville has given notice they will terminate the lease for office space to the Monterey Bay Air Pollution and Control District, as of February 29, 2016 to make room for the City's Accounting Department. The RTC currently subleases space from the air district. However, the City has committed to providing office space at their old building. Details are pending, but RTC staff does intend to maintain a presence in Watsonville and move to the old building.

CTC Leader Steps Down

Will Kempton, Executive Director of the California Transportation Commission has recently announced that he will leave that position at the end of March. Mr. Kempton has held a long series of leadership positions in transportation in both the public and private arena. Kempton came to the position in January 2015 with over forty years of experience in transportation, public service and governmental affairs. Before taking this position he served as the executive director of Transportation California, the executive director of the Orange County Transportation Authority, director of the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) and executive director of the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority. Will's tenacity and dedication will be missed by many.

New Staff

Please welcome Raquel Trinidad, recently hired as a Transportation Planner Technician. She graduated from UCSC. She has extensive experience in community outreach, a Masters degree in regional planning, and brings a nice palette of skills to the RTC at a critical time.

Dedication and Endurance

Senior Planner Karena Pushnik has recently completed 25 years of service to the RTC. She worked for a transportation consulting firm prior to joining the RTC. Her dedication and professionalism is evident in every project or task that she completes. She is the first person to stay with the RTC this long. We appreciate her many, many contributions over the years.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC

Add on: Items 20

From: Brian Peoples
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2016 8:06 PM
To: info@scrtc.org
Subject: RTC Meeting for Feb 4th - comments

Please find attached Trail Now comments to RTC Agenda items 20, 21 and 22 for Feb 4th meeting.

Brian



Newsletter February, 2016

FORMER RTC CHAIRMAN ELLEN PIRIE EXPLAINS HER POSITION ON THE RAIL CORRIDOR

Former Supervisor Ellen Pirie acted as RTC Co-Chairperson during both the purchase agreement and negotiations to acquire the rail corridor. In a recent interview, she explains her rationale as to why she recommended purchasing the property, and why she believes a passenger train is not economically viable for a small community like Santa Cruz County. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiy7X1yF-0Q>



MYTH BUSTER: REMOVAL OF TRACKS WILL DELAY TRAIL FOR DECADES

Advocates of the train publicly stated that "if we pull the tracks, it will take decades to build the trail". To prove these assertions are not correct, Trail Now worked with a company, [Iron Horse Preservation Society](#), which specializes in replacing old railroad tracks with trails. Iron Horse's proposal outlines how a gravel trail could be built in 18 months. The proposal includes the recycle value of the rails and ties (\$1.45 million), and the costs associated with building the gravel trail. Iron Horse's fee for doing the work associated with building the gravel trail and removing the rails and ties would be paid for by the funds received from the recycled materials. You can find the detailed proposal by Iron Horse on our website (www.trailnow.org)

MORE TAXPAYER FUNDED PASSENGER RAIL RESEARCH?

In 2014, RTC initiated a Passenger Rail Study with the intent to provide cost estimates, ridership projections, operating costs and other analyses to determine if use of the rail corridor for a passenger train would have an impact on traffic within the County and be economically viable. The Passenger Rail Study was completed in November, 2015 and the results showed it could accommodate 3% of the current traffic on Highway 1 and cost \$450M over a 30-year period. As a comparison, upgrades to Highway 1 with HOV lanes and Bus Rapid Transit could reduce traffic delay by over 85% and would cost approximately \$675M.



Train advocates suggest that the corridor cannot be used for a world-class trail NOW because the railroad tracks should remain in place while more passenger rail studies are conducted. These organizations suggest that the rail corridor should be used for tourist train excursions while more taxpayer-funded passenger train studies are performed. Trail Now believes that the rail corridor should remain as a potential future mass transit resource, but while such analysis and decisions are determine, we should use the corridor NOW for improved mobility by removing the railroad tracks and building a world-class trail. If it is determined in the future that sections of the corridor should accommodate a mass transit vehicle, such a system could be constructed. In the meantime, Trail Now believes we should use the rail corridor NOW for improved mobility.

SETBACK REQUIREMENTS PREVENTS A CONTINUOUS TRAIL

The new SMART train in Sonoma/Marin is a railline that is similar to Santa Cruz County's rail corridor. The approved required setback for SMART is 15 feet for trains with speeds below 25 mph and 25 feet for trains with speeds up to 50 mph. It is likely that the Santa Cruz rail corridor will have similar requirements for separation of train and trail.

Therefore, the proposed Santa Cruz Rail-Trail Corridor width requirement would be 10 feet train (1/2 Right-of-Way) + 10 feet (trail width) + 25 feet (setback requirement) + 4 feet (fencing & buffer) = 49 feet. With the trail 10 feet wide, the rail corridor would still

needs to be 49 feet wide to accommodate a train and a trail. The majority of the Santa Cruz County rail corridor is approximately 30 feet wide from the Santa Cruz Boardwalk to Manresa resulting in trail not being continuous. Then again, we can keep reducing size of trail ☹️

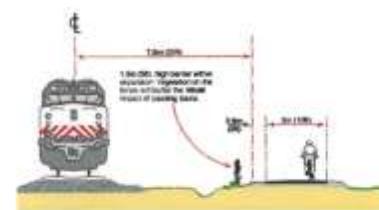


Figure ES-5: Rail-with-Trail Typical Setback

DUAL TRACKS REQUIREMENT PREVENTS CONTINUOUS TRAIL

A passenger train system running along the rail corridor will require dual-track sections to enable north and south direction trains to pass one another. There are no sections from the Santa Cruz Boardwalk to Manresa that would allow for two tracks and a trail.



RTC AND FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION TRENDS NOT ALIGNED

RTC's primary investment strategy has been centered on passenger rail service rather than on investments in Highway 1 or Bus Rapid Transit. The RTC legislative efforts are focused on increasing the State Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) – which is a major new source of funds for rail transit, rather than any of the highway transportation funding programs. For example, RTC changed the Santa Cruz County Master Transportation Plan by incorporating passenger rail service and eliminating Highway 1 upgrades and Bus Rapid Transit.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is issuing requirements that vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communications technology be incorporated into new vehicles. "Safety is our top priority, and V2V technology represents the next great advance in saving lives," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "This technology could move us from helping people survive crashes to helping them avoid crashes altogether – saving lives, saving money and even saving fuel thanks to the widespread benefits it offers." By warning drivers of imminent danger, V2V technology has the potential to dramatically improve highway safety and efficiency. A 2012 Columbia University Study showed highway capacity could increase by 273% with V2V systems, essentially creating "cartrains" along the highway. V2V technology has the potential to be fused with existing vehicle safety features to further improve the effectiveness of many crash avoidance safety systems currently being developed and implemented in the vehicle fleet and serve as a building block for a driverless vehicle.

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed a new 5-year federal transportation act called Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), authorizing funding for highway systems. Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) announced initiatives to accelerate the development and adoption of safe vehicle automation and vehicle technologies – with the goal to building a common multistate framework for connected and autonomous vehicles. Federal transportation strategies are moving towards leveraging vehicle technology to help reduce traffic congestion. As a suburb of the Silicon Valley, we are hopeful that Santa Cruz County would align itself to vehicle technology and modern transportation strategies.

NEXT RTC MEETING:

Thursday, Feb 4th; 9 am

Watsonville City Council Chambers

275 Main St., Ste 450

Please submit comments (info@scrtc.org) on Agenda Item #22 (2016 Legislative Program and Funding Updates) asking that RTC align their investment strategy to current transportation trends.

STICKER CAMPAIGN

Trail Now logo is available as a 4" x 4" sticker that is printed on both sides for placement on bumpers, inside windows or other media that individuals can use to express support. Also available are sticker holders that retail stores can place on their count for customers. Stickers are free. Please ask for holder and stickers (Brian@Trailnow.org)



DONATIONS AND SUPPORT

We are a grass-roots effort with limited resources. We need volunteers to help us with social media communication (Twitter), event planning, website development and fund raising. Beginning in the Spring, we are planning to have a presence at the Santa Cruz Farmer's Markets and need volunteers to staff our Trail Now booth. If you have the interest, time or expertise, please let us know!

We are also reaching out to our supporters for donations. We use funds for promotional stickers, business posters, renting of conference rooms for Neighborhood Meetings, advertising in local media, TRAILNOW.ORG webpage development and marketing programs. Any amount is appreciated. Donations are not tax deductible.

DONATE ONLINE AT <http://www.trailnow.org/donate/>

OR BY CHECK TO:

TRAILNOW.ORG

P.O. Box 2492

Aptos, CA 95001

Like us on Facebook: TRAIL NOW

www.trailnow.org

From: carey pico
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2016 9:15 PM
Cc: info@sccrtc.org;
Subject: Fw: Form Submission - 1-4-16 - Railbanking the central corridor

Christy, in response to you e-mail to Brian (see below):

The Federal Railroad regulator, the Surface Transportation Board, does not allow "orphaned" tracks. It is not possible to railbank a portion of the tracks that would leave another portion inaccessible. This applies to freight and major passenger service, but not to tourist trains such as Roaring Camp, the Train to X-mas town, or a potential tourist dinner train from Santa Cruz to Davenport. As to a 10-20 years of commuter train study, there is nothing about that timeframe other than the pace of government. There are, however, efforts right now by the RTC (e.g. per proposed 2016 tax measure) to upgrade the tracks to less than 30 mph which would enable what I call a "poor man's" commuter train as was done in Austin, TX. This would be a long, costly haul down a difficult path. The Austin Capital Metro is extremely expensive in terms of the supporting shuttle buses, let alone operation, and covers 32 miles in one hour, 42 minutes (18 mph average) for 2800 daily riders (about 1400 commuters). Austin budget documents list the costs/subsidy of Austin's CapMetro (they separate bus and rail) as \$4/passenger by bus compared to \$22/passenger by train with no ridership advantage compared to bus. In stark comparison, Austin is also planning Bus-Rapid-Transit (BRT or bus on an HOV lane at the lower \$4/passenger bus operating cost). It is expected to dwarf the rail ridership the first year by many factors. Still, there are efforts underway to find the \$1B to upgrade the rail to a full commuter line. Call it Texas Pride. From my vantage point, it looks as if the RTC is taking this approach (even if the commissioners don't understand this). On a positive note, the best case scenario suggested by the RTC would have double the Austin ridership. Relatively speaking, it's a relative bargain. As to Don Lane's comments, I am unfamiliar with the ones you refer to. I owe Mayor Lane a response to a remark (I'm guessing this is the comment) that "No decision has been made" regarding the rail. What Mayor Lane does not recognize is that a "no decision" is a decision. It is a decision that retains the rail impediment and increases the cost of constructing the so-called trail from the present day standard of \$1M per mile (as is found on the "Rails-to-Trails" websites) to a much more costly \$5M per mile without the ability to economically retrofit the trestles to pedestrian bridges. The cost jumps from about \$30M (there is no true estimate as the RTC opted to bypass this alternative, but it is based on the \$1M/mi plus published costs of trestle transformations) to \$127M (the assumed cost being used in public by the RTC). The higher cost is because the "trail" cannot use the existing space occupied by the tracks, so a completely new parallel corridor would need to be created next to the existing tracks, requiring excavation, grading, retaining walls, etc. None of this includes overpasses/underpasses at streets for the proposed path/trail, which are quite costly. Personally, I just want an economic gravel path, wide enough to walk or bike on, without the grand hurrahs and costly amenities. In addition, it is highly probable the central section from 7th Ave. through to 47th Ave. (Live Oak/Capitola) as well as several other key sections (e.g. Aptos) will be inaccessible to a trail as long as the tracks remain viable. This is because the corridor is too narrow in those sections (and has been independently pointed out as such before my time (See Ron Marquez (SC traffic planner), 2009 in the Sentinel)). While Trail Now argues there is a required 25 ft setback from the center of the tracks for speeds below 50 mph (the upper region of speed used to study the commuter train) based on State rail authorities regarding the SMART (Sonoma Marin) train, it is uncertain because setbacks are based on a case-to-case basis. However, the geographical similarities between Santa Cruz County and Sonoma/Marin are such that one would expect the same requirements. If so, many more sections of the corridor would not accommodate both a trail and rail. Surprisingly, the RTC has not requested any recommendation. I'm guessing that the initial planned trail builds in the north and south are already planned with setbacks beyond a 40 ft range. If not, someone has started a project unwisely based on faith. Lastly, it is highly improbable that a commuter rail will be built. It would require the 67% yes vote passage of three cumulative (i.e. they add on top of each other) and separate tax measures adding to 1.5% sales tax. Freight service is not economical nor is a tourist train. Otherwise, you would have these services already. While you didn't ask for it and it's a bit rambling, I wanted to address the many issues as best I can.

Carey Pico, Ph.D.

From: christy martin
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2016 9:28 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org;
Subject: Question on rail banking

Hi, I have been closely following the trail and passenger rail progress. While it is possible, it is clear that the number of at grade crossings, narrow bridges / underpasses and close proximity to residences makes it particularly challenging and expensive to support both rail and trail through the central corridor from the Westside Station to Aptos. It is disappointing that the downtown Santa Cruz to Aptos trail segment is not a top priority because it would have the greatest impact on active transportation options; however, it is understandable given the challenges. Has a hybrid solution been explored where freight and recreational rail continues to operate in the south end of the line but the north end is rail banked and converted to a trail to fully utilize the corridor while preserving the right of way for the future when rail becomes more cost effective, clean and quiet? If possible, this could accelerate the trail development to unleash the economic engine that Congressman Farr described without significant expense and time to construct additional bridges, retraining walls and separation barriers that may or may not be necessary. And, it seems like it would satisfy the Proposition 116 funding requirements and still allow San Jose and Monterey rail to connect with Santa Cruz County with metro connections to North County destinations. The RTC FAQ talks about the short sighted decisions to sell the Hwy 17 right of ways and the need to preserve future rail options for the future. But, the Rails to Trails Conservancy endorses railbanking for exactly this purpose. And, the Rail Feasibility study sounded like replacement of some or all of the track would be required future rail service either way. So, I'm trying to understand why we can't utilize this critical section of the corridor as quickly and cost effectively as possible while still preserving our options for the future.

Thank you for your consideration,
—Christy Martin

From: Dan
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2016 8:25 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail trail

Build the trail dump the rail. Let's stop wasting funds!
Sent from my iPhone



Fact Sheet

Transportation Investment Plan

November 2016 Ballot Measure

New transportation investments are needed throughout Santa Cruz County.

Transportation funding is insufficient. Revenues to operate, maintain and improve our transportation system have not kept up with community needs. State and federal funding has decreased and is unpredictable.

Transportation needs for everyone are increasing. Over the term of this Plan, Santa Cruz County's population will grow and the senior population will almost triple. This means more demand on our transportation network including streets, highways and transit.

Doing nothing is not an option. Without new funds, Santa Cruz County will experience increased traffic, degraded streets and highways, and transportation service cuts for youth, seniors and people with disabilities.

Joining together is the only way to succeed. Transportation needs in our community vary by age, location, ability and interest. Like a restaurant, we all chose the same place but appreciate having a menu of choices to meet our different needs and taste. Polling shows that a menu of transportation options appeals to the greatest number of voters.

In November 2016, voters will consider a ½ cent sales tax to address these needs.

Communities that have local transportation funds are able to do more themselves and are more successful in competing for funding, bringing in larger shares of state and federal dollars. Visitors are also large contributors to sales taxes.

This Plan benefits people who live in Santa Cruz County.

Whether you're headed to work, school, the grocery store or doctor, we all need to get around. This Investment Plan will preserve our existing transportation system, increase mobility options, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. It will fill potholes, provide transit for seniors and people with disabilities, provide traffic relief on city streets and highways, improve safety for bicyclists and people walking, improve air quality, and create good quality jobs. It supports an environmentally sustainable future, transforming our transportation network over the coming decades to meet our growing needs, while supporting economic vitality.

Transportation projects create jobs.

Transportation investments create good quality jobs while delivering transportation solutions. This measure will fund local street maintenance, bicycle and walking safety projects for youth and seniors, paratransit operations, and highway efficiency projects to relieve traffic and provide commuter choices. The Investment Plan will undergo ongoing reviews through independent audits and a citizen's watchdog committee.

This Plan will:

- **Preserve existing infrastructure**, by repaving streets and filling potholes
- **Improve neighborhoods**, providing funds to every city and the County for local projects
- **Provide active transportation**, reducing pollution and improving children's health with safe bike and pedestrian paths to schools, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) Rail Trail and two new bicycle and pedestrian bridges over Highway 1.
- **Protect transportation for seniors and people with disabilities**, including reliable paratransit services that help keep everyone independent and integrated in the community.
- **Provide traffic relief**, invest in our aging highway corridors to upgrade on and off ramps, improve reliability for how long it takes to get places, manage traffic and improve safety.
- **Create jobs** that support residents and businesses in Santa Cruz County.



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RTC)

1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

phone (831) 460-3200 | fax (831) 460-3215

email: info@sccrtc.org | website: www.sccrtc.org

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED INVESTMENTS

(Transportation Investment Plan ballot measure)

Investment Category		Percent of Funds	Estimated Fund Allocation (\$millions)*
Neighborhood Projects	<p><i>Eligible neighborhood projects include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Street/Road - Maintenance and Repairs ▪ School Traffic Safety Projects ▪ Bike and Pedestrian Projects ▪ Neighborhood Safety - reduce speeding and cut-through traffic ▪ Operational Improvements (signal timing, intersections) <p><i>Specific projects:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SLV/Highway 9 Corridor Improvements ▪ Wildlife Undercrossing on Hwy 17 	30%	\$135
Highway Corridors	<p>Highway 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 Auxiliary Lane projects: 41st Ave-Soquel Dr; Bay/Porter-Park; Park-State Park ▪ 2 Bicycle/Pedestrian over-crossings <p>Highway 17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safe on 17 Program and Freeway Service Patrol 	25%	\$113
Mobility Access	Elderly/Disabled/Veterans Paratransit Service	16%	\$72
Active Transportation	Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (<i>Rail Trail</i>)	15%	\$68
Rail Corridor	Property Management, Repair & Maintenance Environmental analysis of rail transit options Watsonville Junction/Pajaro Train Station (contribution) Conduit for internet and/or utility lines	14%	\$63
	Total	100%	\$450

**Note: Dollar amounts shown in millions reflect amount from a 1/2 cent sales tax generating an estimated \$15M/year for 30 years; while % per category would not change, actual amount generated by a local sales tax per year may fluctuate based on inflation and local retail sales.*

Strict accountability and performance measures ensure delivery. The 30-year Plan will include strict accountability measures to ensure the funds are spent as directed by voters. It requires open and transparent public processes to allocate funds, annual independent audits, an independent watchdog committee, and annual compliance reports distributed to the public that detail costs and how specific performance measures are met.





The Campaign for Sensible Transportation
SensibleTransportation.org

YES to Sustainable Solutions

in a transportation sales tax ballot measure

NO to Highway Widening

Thurs, Feb 4th

**6:20pm potluck 7pm program
Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave.**

Wed, Feb 24th, 7pm

YWCA Watsonville, 340 E. Beach St

Bruce Van Allen & Rick Longinotti will discuss:

- Studies of the effectiveness of highway widening on relieving congestion.
- Highway widening's impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
- The potential of solutions such as rail transit, express buses on the Highway 1 shoulder, incentives for reducing travel demand, and safe routes for pedestrians and bicycles.
- The economic justice consequences of investing in highway widening when Metro faces serious cutbacks in service.

Co-sponsors: 350 Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network



Good Morning Commissioners,

My name is Joe Martinez. I am part of an organization called Trail Now. Our goal is simple: Use the rail corridor, now, to build a trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz.

This morning, I wanted to make a few comments regarding some of your specific agenda items.

Agenda Item 20: City of Santa Cruz Rail Trail Project

Trail Now recently issued its February newsletter, which now reaches over 22,000 people in Santa Cruz County. In the newsletter, we discuss why we advocate using the rail corridor now for a trail, and discuss that it shouldn't take years to remove the tracks.

Raising millions of dollars for a train and trail is going to be difficult and take decades. The engineering and design work required for a trail running parallel to the tracks is much more complicated and expensive than removing the tracks and building a trail. With the RTC plan, the trail will not be continuous and it won't be an effective solution for improving mobility across the county. The plan that we advocate does not preclude using the corridor for a future mass transit vehicle, but it does allow us to start using this property NOW for improved mobility.

The proposed trail setbacks and separation from the train tracks are not safe. Best practices indicate that the trail design should take into account the type, speed, and frequency of the train. However, despite a lengthy review period, the RTC hasn't yet decided on these factors. If the goal of the RTC is to run a train in the corridor, the factors need to be determined. Public safety cannot be compromised.

Prior to moving forward with the current Master Plan for the trail, we urge the RTC to consult with an independent expert to determine the safety of the proposed setbacks, relative to train speed and frequency.

Thank you



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This morning, I wanted to make a few comments regarding some of your specific agenda items.

Agenda Item 21: Distribution Formulas to Local Jurisdictions

The current Transportation Investment Plan is not the most effective approach to reducing traffic congestion and will result in no continuous trail being built from the Santa Cruz Boardwalk to Watsonville. We believe that Bus Rapid Transit on highway 1 is a more practical investment.

Thank You



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This morning, I wanted to make a few comments regarding some of your specific agenda items.

Agenda Item 22

Within our current newsletter, we discuss concerns with the RTC's strategic direction in transportation investments. Specifically, we see the RTC focused on antiquated transportation systems. A diesel engine train going through our community at 45MPH on a fixed rail system is not a modern approach to traffic congestion

Let's keep the big transit vehicles along the Highway 1 corridor, away from our homes and neighborhoods. Let's incent our community to use alternative modes of transit, such as e-scooters, bikes and walking. Let's continue to plan and seek ways to make use of the corridor for a modern transit system – but let's use the corridor NOW for a trail.

Thank you.