Gloria Garing, Santa Cruz County resident, prefers Scenario B with auxiliary lanes and freight service in Watsonville, and she expressed concern that Bus Rapid Transit Lite on Soquel Avenue/Drive and Freedom Boulevard is excluded from the draft Preferred Scenario.

David Jacob Van Brink, City of Santa Cruz resident, congratulated the RTC on the San Lorenzo Trestle Trail project. He also stated that misleading facts are circulating in the community regarding passenger rail and asked the RTC to commit to the UCS decision timeline.

Carey Pico, Rio del Mar resident, stated that there is insufficient funding for all the draft Preferred Scenario projects, that rail is too expensive, and asked for a scenario that is within the county’s budgetary constraints.

Brad Mills, Freedom resident, stated that the state of the train tracks was an impediment to the previous rail operators, that there is a bird habitat in Harkings Slough that should be protected, and that there needs to be safer bicycle paths in Watsonville.

Bud Colligan, Greenway, strongly recommended that the new Executive Director provide input on the UCS prior to a decision by the RTC and that Commissioners consider the potential impacts of the draft Preferred Scenario to the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO). Mr. Colligan also recommended that the RTC should delay a decision on the UCS until newly elected Board members assume their positions.

Jack Carroll, Santa Cruz County resident, stated that all scenarios analyzed would require additional taxes, that a train would be costly, and that the population density of Santa Cruz County does not justify a train. Mr. Carroll noted that the most equitable solution would be for the county to provide school buses and free METRO bus fares, that voters would not approve a tax increase to fund a train, and he asked that the RTC not consider a train option for the rail corridor.

Nishan Mutafian, City of Watsonville resident, discussed the negative impacts of Highway 1 traffic congestion on his family. He stated that a train seems impractical and expensive, and that it would not serve the Watsonville residents. Mr. Mutafian urged the RTC to take the time to make the right decision and to concentrate on Highway 1 improvements, and stated that he supports the trail only option.

Robert Stephens, Aptos resident, supports additional funding to Highway 1. Mr. Stephens stated that the UCS has not been a fair and open study, that the RTC should consider railbanking and allow multi-modal experimentation on the rail corridor, and that a train would impact the METRO funding.