Rail Corridor Maintenance Program

RTC staff has been working diligently to repair and resolve storm damage, establish a preventative maintenance program, and respond to ongoing issues along the rail line. Staff is putting the tools and protocols in place to manage the corridor through three major areas: storm damage repair, maintaining the right-of-way, and creation of a web-based issue reporting system. A Request for Qualifications for on-call engineering services will soon be issued. It is broken it up into three categories: (1) Civil Engineering, (2) Structural Engineering/Inspections, and (3) Construction Management. Details on the entire program will be provided at the March RTC meeting.

Visualizing Sustainable Transportation

We are now entering Phase 2 of the Visualizing Sustainable Transportation project. Staff has partnered with the City of Watsonville to support their Downtown Complete Streets planning efforts. An RFP was released last month and we expect to be underway on the project by early March. In this phase we will produce visualizations that will be used during the outreach phase of the planning process for the City’s Complete Streets plan.

CCC Leg Day

On January 30 I will join RTC Chair John Leopold and representatives from the other four Central Coast Coalition counties for a day in Sacramento to visit our delegation and transportation officials from the CTC.
From: Nancy Gmail [mailto:ncasterson@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 12:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail trail

Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am an Aptos resident and I support the RTC staff recommendations. The traffic in South County has become horrific! I fully support a biking and walking trail, but also feel that other alternate transportation mode are vital. A rail service would go a long way toward helping transport workers from the south to Santa Cruz and beyond.

I want the Rail Trail to be built as soon as possible and for the tracks to be preserved for the future. Please accept the RTC staff recommendations, build the Rail Trail ASAP and keep our options open for the future.

Sincerely,
Nancy Cabral-Casterson

From: Derek R. Whaley [mailto:author@santacruztrains.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 12:03 PM
To: General Info
Subject: Support a Railroad on the Santa Cruz Branch Line

Greetings Commissioners,

The history of the construction of the Santa Cruz Branch Line is one of a community working together to accomplish a common good despite overwhelming odds from within and without. Its construction had as much opposition as its retention does today. But rest assured that preserving the rails for future use and selecting a common carrier for the immediate present is the correct path to take. For well over a century, the railroad created a bond between our coastal communities, something a trail alone could never achieve. Continue the fight to preserve the rails and uphold the promise the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission took when the line was purchased. This rail line is our road to the future.

Sincerely,
Derek R. Whaley
Author, Santa Cruz Trains: Railroads of the Santa Cruz Mountains
author@santacruztrains.com
www.santacruztrains.com

-----Original Message-----
From: Patricia Mc Veigh [mailto:pmcveigh@baymoon.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:56 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Support of the Rail Trail

I urge you to once and for the last time decide to support the recommendation for the Rail Trail. This issue has been discussed for several years without resolution. The overwhelming support is to maintain the rail line for potential future use, which this county will badly need in years to come AND to build the trail along the right of way of the Rail line.

Please settle this issue and implement the work designed as soon as possible
Thank you  
Patricia McVeigh  
Santa Cruz  
95065

-----Original Message-----
From: Millitaryforman [mailto:iangapplegate@gmail.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:50 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Santa Cruz branch line.

Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Replacement

Dear Commissioners,

Please continue in selecting and negotiating a contract with a qualified Operator of Freight and Recreational Passenger Rail Service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. I highly recommend Roaring Camp Railroads since they are a Local Railroad and they have the equipment to maintain the Railroad. Don't let opponents to rail service talk you down, and remember why we bought this line and remember our duty to state and local voters and taxpayers to do our best to pursue modern rail transit service consistent, i would like to see both Rail and Trail. Everyone needs to work together and work 50/50. The Railroad is what brought us here in the First place. It played a huge roll in History and we can't let that go. My grand parents worked for Southern Pacific from the 1930’s till the 1960’s. The Railroad on the Santa Cruz Branch is run by Local family’s who all live around Santa Cruz county. We don't want to loose our jobs and history of the Railroad. Thanks and Keep up the Good Work.

Ian Applegate.

From: Michael A. Lewis [mailto:malewis@calcentral.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:47 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: UCIS First!

Dear Commissioners:

I am 68 and I have been a County pedestrian and bicyclist for 18 years. I do not drive a car so I depend on safe and convenient bicycle and walking routes for all of my interactions with County and City businesses, government offices, and friends and neighbors. I constantly seek routes to avoid unhealthful vehicular traffic, noise and air pollution.

I support including the analysis of a Trail Only Option for the Rail Corridor as part of the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) that will determine the best use of the corridor. It is my understanding that the RTC is planning to sign a new rail operator contract for use of the railroad bed prior to the completion of the UCIS.

This proposed action calls into question whether or not the RTC is serious with its promise to include a meaningful analysis of a Trail Only Option.

Please wait for the completion of the UCIS process to determine whether or not it will be necessary to find a new rail operator. We all need a level and safe place for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages. We do not need a 10 - 20 year contract for a tourist train.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael A. Lewis  
Live Oak
Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am a local resident and I support the RTC staff recommendations because I want the Rail Trail to be built as soon as possible and for the tracks to be preserved for the future. Please accept the RTC staff recommendations, build the Rail Trail ASAP and keep our options open for the future.

Sincerely,

Dave Stoltz

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Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am a local resident and I support the RTC staff recommendations because I want the Rail Trail to be built as soon as possible and for the tracks to be preserved for the future. Please accept the RTC staff recommendations, build the Rail Trail ASAP and keep our options open for the future.

Sincerely,

Jim Polizzi
Aptos, CA

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Dear Commissioners:

Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) determines the best use of the corridor.

Signing a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion of the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

Matt Hyde
From: 4n6rn@earthlink.net [mailto:4n6rn@earthlink.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:26 AM
To: General Info
Subject: Re: RE: No trains

I apologize for this automatic reply to your email.

To control spam, I now allow incoming messages only from senders I have approved beforehand.

If you would like to be added to my list of approved senders, please fill out the short request form (see link below). Once I approve you, I will receive your original message in my inbox. You do not need to resend your message. I apologize for this one-time inconvenience.

Click the link below to fill out the request:

From: Claudia Schlachter [mailto:claudiaschlachter@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:26 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail and Trail

Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am a local resident and I support the RTC staff recommendations because I want the Rail Trail to be built as soon as possible and for the tracks to be preserved for the future. Please accept the RTC staff recommendations, build the Rail Trail ASAP and keep our options open for the future.

Sincerely,

Claudia Schlachter

-----Original Message-----
From: jeclaassen@gmail.com [mailto:jeclaassen@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:25 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Trail

Dear RTC Commissioner,

I'm a local resident and property owner and strongly support maintaining tracks for passenger and commercial use while moving forward on the bike/pedestrian trail. A train option is needed to reduce traffic, promote commerce and protect future options for improved technology in light rail. Rail and cycling are used extensively in Europe. Trains are great for teens, seniors, commuters and tourists. Keep our train tracks please!

Thanks,

Jane Claassen
1925 46th Ave #123 Capitola
890 West Cliff Dr. #3 Santa Cruz
Sent from my iPhone
Hi-

I live in Aptos and want to get this project going! Adopt your staff recommendations and get a move on, so I can ride my bicycle and hike along the corridor that just sits there unused.

Sincerely,
John Carothers

From: Pamela Cox [mailto:knoshing@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:17 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Accept RTC staff recommendations

To the RTC Commissioners,

I am a resident of Santa Cruz County. I support the recommendation of the RTC staff to grant Progress Rail the operator's contract for the branch line and urge you, the commissioners, to accept the RTC staff recommendations. I think it is important to preserve the tracks to keep our options open for future use and urge the commission to keep moving forward on building the rail/trail asap.

Sincerely,
Pamela Cox
Aptos, CA

From: tammy Bye [mailto:tammybye@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:16 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: RTC Commissioners meeting

Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am an Eastside resident and I support the RTC staff recommendations because I want the Rail Trail to be built as soon as possible and for the tracks to be preserved for the future. Please accept the RTC staff recommendations, build the Rail Trail ASAP and keep our options open for the future.

I live on the east side of town but work on the west side. Although I don't travel more than 5 miles, my commute can be 45 minutes long! You probably are thinking, "Why don't you bike?" I drive because there is no safe or easy alternative to riding my bike down Soquel Avenue. If there was an alternative path with no cars, I would ride my bike everyday. However, I am not willing to risk my life or take a substantially longer route to avoid the traffic.

Please accept the RTC staff recommendations to build the trail and keep options for future rail.

Sincerely,
Tammy Bye
From: Tom Hearn [mailto:dehranch@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:16 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: rail trail

I'm a resident of north county Santa Cruz and I fully support the RAIL trail. Simply stated, the county has a transportation crisis, not a recreational trail crisis and one of the major ways out of this is to implement rail service between Davenport and Watsonville. I support the pedestrian / bike path as well, but not at the expense of eliminating or delaying any part of the rail option.

Thanks
Tom Hearn

From: Jean Brocklebank [mailto:jeanbean@baymoon.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:07 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train!

Dear Commissioners:

As a Countywide pedestrian, who walks 2 - 6 miles daily - 95% for practical errands, 5% for recreation - I am always jeopardized by vehicular traffic. Noise and air pollution are the worst costs to my health.

I am almost 73 and soon will want to supplement my practical walking for practical cycling, where I can have a basket for groceries rather than shoulder them.

I fully support the analysis of a Trail Only Option for the Rail Corridor.

I am therefore anxious for completion of the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) that will determine the best use of the corridor. I am greatly concerned that the RTC is planning to sign a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion of the UCIS, because I fully support the analysis of a Trail Only Option for the Rail Corridor.

The proposed contract makes no sense. It also calls in to question whether or not the RTC was serious, or just tossed a perfunctory crumb to the public, when it said it would include a Trail Only Option in its analysis.

Please wait until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor before considering a new rail operator, especially one devoted to tourist trains. We need a level and safe place for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages first and foremost. We need a functioning bus system. We do not need a 10 - 20 year contract for a tourist train.

Jean Brocklebank
Live Oak resident

From: Liam Zarri [mailto:zerriliam@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 11:02 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Support for rail trail

Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am a local resident and I support the RTC staff recommendations because I want the Rail Trail to be built as soon as possible and for the tracks to be preserved for the future. I bike to work every day and my health and mental well-being would greatly benefit from a safe trail. Please accept the RTC staff recommendations, build the Rail Trail ASAP and keep our options open for the future.

Sincerely,

Liam Zarri
From: Rail Transit [mailto:railtransitsc@gmail.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 10:54 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Stay the course for rail usage in Santa Cruz

Be assured many people are wanting to see the Santa Cruz Rail corridor up and running with rail usage sooner than later. So much potential especially with future UCSC and population growth!

Santa Cruz County Rail Supporters

From: Toby Gray [mailto:lifesong@gmail.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 10:44 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Onward and upward with Rail usage please

Please do the common sense and right thing for the greater population and keep our rail line active and not give in to pressure from trail only groups!

Thank you,
Toby Gray

From: Mark Mesiti-Miller [mailto:mark@dm5.biz]  
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018 9:39 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: FORT supports selection of Progressive Rail as replacement branch line operator

Greetings Commissioners,

Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT) unequivocally supports the selection of Progressive Rail to operate the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; and, to authorize your Executive Director to negotiate an agreement for your further consideration. FORT supports this recommendation because Progressive Rail:

- Is committed to facilitating the beloved, approved Coastal Rail Trail ASAP
- Is committed to facilitating “Quiet Zone” technology wherever desired in our neighborhoods
- Will bring many needed, good paying jobs to our County
- Is planning to invest in the well-being of our community
- Is a well-qualified operator with a proven successful track record

Furthermore, selection of a new branch line operator is essential to meeting all existing legal obligations to provide freight and passenger rail service and most importantly, avoiding all risk and liability to the taxpayers for failing to meet those obligations.

Please move forward with replacing Iowa Pacific today.

Thank you,

Mark

Mark Mesiti-Miller, P.E.  
(831) 818-3660  
Board Chair, Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail  
www.railandrailtrail.org  
Imagine: https://youtu.be/qe3gRU-bpWY  
Top 10 Reasons to Build the Rail Trail ASAP: http://tiny.cc/TopTenReasons
Dear Commissioners:

If you give direction to prepare a new rail operator administration, coordination and license (ACL) agreement, as staff recommends, then please do not totally exclude pedestrians from the right-of-way. As you know, there are several unpaved trails within the right-of-way that pedestrians have been using for years. Some of these, like one in Live Oak, provide important connections between schools and home. Although an official paved trail is planned, it will take many years to complete. The current rail proposals demonstrate that sections of the corridor may not have train service for many years and that such train service will be infrequent. Thus, walking in the rail right-of-way should not be illegal when and where pedestrian use will not interfere with train operations. Rail operators should not have a problem with this suggestion. For example, Progressive Rail Inc’s proposal recognizes such coexistence; e.g., “There are locations where stairs have been placed to allow for pedestrians to walk to public beaches.” If a provision is included in the ACL agreement to allow for some level of pedestrian use of the rail right-of-way prior to completion of the paved rail trail, then details can be worked out in the future between you and the chosen rail operator. No matter which operator that you select, please also ensure that citizens can continue to walk in the corridor when and where it is safe to do so without fear of arrest for trespass.

Rick Hyman

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From: Carey Pico [mailto:carey.pico@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 8:32 PM
To: Sccrtc Info
Subject: an analysis of Progressive Rail's proposal

To the RTC:
Here's the problem. It's extremely attractive! However, it's extremely unachievable. I've broken it down by looking at their 5-year revenue plan for a) Rail car storage, b) Watsonville Freight, c) Davenport Tourist train, and d) the Suntan Special (San Jose to Santa Cruz)

Progressive Rail Co.'s 5-year Plan By Topic
1) Rail Car Storage:
   a. Plan ramps rail storage income to $1,402,000 in 2022
   b. At $5/day and 300 days/year, this reduces to 935 oil tankers per day. Note: if not oil tankers, the storage price/day is much lower and more cars to be stored.
2) Freight Service:
   a. Fact: Watsonville freight carloads is limited by need, not service, to under 200 carloads/quarter.
3) Passenger Service:
   a. Davenport: Plan assumes $3.5M/year (60,000 passengers) in 2022 (5th year).
   b. Iowa Pacific reached $764,000/year (less than 10,000 passengers) in 5th year.
   c. Suntan Special: predicts 140,000 passengers in 2022 - good luck!!!

Why would the RTC extend a contract to Progressive Rail Co that has no benefit for the County?

Key issues with the proposed contract (i.e. same as Iowa Pacific's):
Essentially, it is a no-cost contract to the operator. Here are the key items (from Sec. 7 of ACL agreement) and results:
1) Freight Service: RTC income all years: $0
   (contract states: no fee up to 500 carloads/quarter, then 5% of revenue above 500 carloads)
   a. 2014 average: 87 carloads/quarter
   b. 2015 average: 32 carloads/quarter
   c. 2016 average: 165 carloads/quarter
2) Rail Car Storage: RTC income all years: $0
   (previously use for storing oil tankers in Watsonville, unenforced contracted by RTC)
3) Tourist Service: Total Fee Payments: $0
   (contract states: 5% passenger ticket revenue above $300K/quarter)
   a. 2012-2015 Annual average: $136,000/year (max year: $165,000)
   b. 2016: $764,000 (note: based on illegal use of “Polar Express” franchise resulting in lawsuit)
This Contact Request Form has been submitted by a member of the public to http://sccrtc.org/contact-us/.

Name
Janice Arcaro

Email
arcaro.janice@gmail.com

Subject
Please keep the rail lines active!

Your Message
The people against the rail lines are well-funded and very good at manipulating others in order to get their way in regards to their "Trail only" plans. Please rise above their noise and remember this is about a transportation option that will serve the most citizens of our county, and not just the loud and wealthy few. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to keeping this project on track!

From: malabar7 [mailto:malabar7@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 7:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: SC Branch Mainline Open

Dear Commissioners,

I am sending this email to you today to ask you to please keep the Santa Cruz Branch Mainline an active rail line. No one knows what Mother Nature has in store for us. With the latest fires in southern California followed by mudslides from rain the uses of Amtrak trains to transport people stuck in the area came in handy.

A day after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake in the Bay Area SF BART ridership rose 125,000 more passengers. Passengers that felt the affects of the earthquake and were able to still get to their jobs, school, hospitals, shopping. What have you.

Please consider keeping the rail line open so we can continue connecting people.
In a city and county where people talk about Diversity and Equality for all this is what that's all about.
Sincerely,

James F. Long
Capitola

-----Original Message-----
From: Kurt Rosenberger [mailto:rosenberger.kurt@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 6:34 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: New Rail contract

Hello
I want to write to express my support for continued negotiations with Progressive Rail to provide interim service on the Santa Cruz Branch line while we scope out the possibility of permanent commuter service. We need to keep this an active line in order to keep our options open. Thanks

Kurt
Hello RTC
Please select a new carrier to replace Iowa Pacific and keep the rail with Trail it study moving forward

Thank you,
Malcolm

Bill Spence
La Selva Beach

Dear Commissioners: Please do not initiate another contract for a tourist train. We are lucky the last guys pulled out or we would be wed to rail for all the wrong reasons.

Tourist would far prefer and enjoy a trail to ride bikes or walk on. Leaving the rail component for a tourist train in this precious corridor is not compatible with bikes and people walking! We have to stop trying to force rail into this county. We can ill afford a subsidized rail system in this county and even the rosy projections showed subsidies were required.

We have a transportation corridor. Not a rail corridor. Bikes, skateboards, scooters, Segways, and the hundreds of electric personal transportation devices that will be coming in the next decade can leverage a trail WITHOUT rail.

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor. Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

Bill Spence
La Selva Beach

Robert Stephens

Dear RTC Commissioners:

At your January 18th meeting you are being asked by your staff to select a rail operator, who is requesting a 10 to 20 year contract. I urge you to vote NO on this recommendation.

Here is why I am recommending this:

As a community we need to pull together to look at this issue and try to come to some sort of consensus. I supported Measure D with my money and vote with the belief that there would be a “fair and open study of the rail corridor”. By picking an operator, your $800,000.00 UCS will be a waste of money and not necessary, as you will have already voted for a train.
What I have learned is the RTC staff is happy that we voted for Measure D but they really have no intent of having a fair study, otherwise they would have tried to build in some ways to make the study fair and open, such as: having some form of peer review, bringing in experts from both a train perspective to a trail only perspective, bring in others from different communities to see what they have done and establishing a community study group to help the process along. The RTC has done none of this. Why? Because they want a train at the expense of everything else, including a trail that in reality is just a very poor and expensive place holder for a train. Have you walked the tracks? Do you understand the cost of building a poor trail to accommodate a train? Have you looked at your own staff estimates for the trail with rail. It is so low to be laughable. Will the study show the cost difference and time difference between rail with trail and trail only, will the study show a timeframe for a train and where the funding will come from, no because this will not support a train outcome.

I was a little paranoid with comments from the RTC staff like “116 funds can not be returned”, “it will take 10 years to build a trail if we abandoned the current plan” “rail banking does not work” and “we will have a fair and open study.” But now I and the rest of the community see the facts. The RTC will go to any lengths to get their train. At least now it is out in the open.

Please take a moment to look at your staff and how they have performed. First and foremost, this controversy in our community is due to their lack of leadership with this study. Secondly, almost every attempt to build a trail on the easiest sections has been full of problems: the north cost section, and section 7. Lastly, they selected Iowa Pacific as an operator, they gave them a very sweet deal and now we find that IP owes our county almost $60,000.00. Another failure. Do you think the new operator from Minnesota will really hit $13.1 million in business by 2022?

We need immediate solutions to traffic and safe routes to schools not tourist trains. Please help restore some faith in the public process by voting NO to a new operator until your own study is finish and please make the study “fair and open”. We are looking to you for leadership.

Sincerely,
Robert Stephens
Aptos, CA

From: polycube@gmail.com [mailto:polycube@gmail.com] On Behalf Of david van brink
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 4:37 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: In Support Of New Rail Operator

Dear Sccrtc --

I am writing to express my ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT of assigning a rail operator to our wonderful rail corridor branch line. (Personally I liked PROGRESSIVE RAIL's proposal the best, it read positive and professional, but I'm no expert on this.)

I've lived on the West Side of Santa Cruz for 30 years, and owned my home here for 20. I'm quite close to the tracks and look forward to the trail there, and, one day, rail transit for travelers of all kinds.

Warmly --> David Van Brink

From: Daijaku [mailto:daijaku@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 4:35 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Re: Tourist Train

Dear SCCRTC Commissioners:

I appreciate your efforts and your careful attention to the impact of a tourist train on the quality of life here in Santa Cruz - trains that do nothing to address our transportation needs and have a substantial negative impact on neighborhoods. At the very least, we need to complete the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) to
determine the best use of the corridor. Only then can we make a thoughtful decision. In my opinion that will be an emphasis on clean, flexible bus service and a trail only along the rail corridor. Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor. Sincerely, Judith Kinst, Capitola

From: Bud Colligan [mailto:bud@colligans.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 4:21 PM
To: Zach Friend; John Leopold; Bruce McPherson; Ryan Coonerty; Greg Caput (greg.caput@santacruzcounty.us); Cynthia Chase; Donald Hagen; Randy Johnson; Bertrand, Jacques; ed bottorff; Oscar Rios (oscar.rios@cityofwatsonville.org); Sandy Brown
Cc: George Dondero; info@sccrtc.org; Miles Reiter; Jullie Packard; Sibley Verbeck Simon; Doug Erickson; Ted Burke; Ashley Winn; Bobbi Burns; Gayle Ortiz; william simpkins; Patrice Boyle; Gary Griggs and Deepika Shrestha Ross; Terri Mayall; Peter Meehan; Buzz & Jennie Anderson; Keri Waters; Toby Corey; Enda Brennan; Robert Quinn; Robert Stephens
Subject: Input from Concerned Community Members about RTC's Actions on Rail Operator Contract

Dear Commissioners,

To say that most people are flabbergasted by the rushed RFP during the holidays and the recommendation of Progressive Rail's proposal for consideration at the January 18th RTC meeting would be a gross understatement!

After hearing from all of you for more than a year about the importance of the UCIS in order to ensure an objective analysis of the various options for the rail corridor (and spending $849,000 on the study), we are amazed that you would even consider for review the Progressive Rail proposal. If anything close to this proposal were accepted, it would eliminate several options in the UCIS before they are even considered. It would also constitute an egregious breach of public trust. It would doom any semblance of fairness and preordain outcomes for the rail corridor. It would be extremely bad public policy and a terrible blot on the reputation of the Regional Transportation Commission.

First, we suggest you table this conversation for a couple months until there is adequate time to inform the rail operators of the current Unified Corridors Study and how no decision has been made about the ultimate disposition of the corridor (from the proposals, this does not seem to have been adequately done). Second, we think it would be prudent for all of us to better understand how we got here, including why the decision to solicit RFPs was made in a closed session meeting without any public input and rushed to Thursday's RTC meeting? Finally, if there is a need to continue freight in Watsonville to points south, we suggest you consider the following:

1) Request that Iowa Pacific continue freight operations for 2018.
2) Negotiate a very short-term contract for freight operations in Watsonville with a reputable operator willing to provide the service.
3) Explore the availability of truck service with the few shippers in Watsonville currently using the rail line.

Rail operators are NOT required to provide shipping services at a loss. There are a number of remedies available to the RTC in both the Union Pacific and Iowa Pacific contracts should it decide to wait to enter ANY contract until the UCIS is completed at the end of 2018. Very little freight service has been provided in 2017, and to use a "legal" reason for rushing into another bad contract is specious at best. In regards to passenger rail, the line is unusable at this point and safety issues, particularly at Capitola trestle, prevent further use.

On top of bad public process and policy, we are being asked to trust a staff and its surrogates which clearly did poor due diligence on the last operator. After turning a blind eye when Greenway and Trail Now have pointed to issues re car storage, unpaid bills and dangerous safety issues, we are now being asked to forget the past several years of ineptitude, and taxpayers are left holding the bag of unpaid bills.

The level of hyperbole and lack of community understanding in the Progressive Rail proposal is shocking. With a community strongly divided (and where the majority now favors Greenway as witnessed from recent public meetings and an 8:1 difference in petition signatures), there is little support for reinstituting tourism trains in the county. The electorate wants TRANSPORTATION solutions, not 6 person trolley cars and Sunset Specials! The fact that RTC staff spends an inordinate amount of time on these superfluous one-offs raises serious questions about the RTC's leadership.

If the above weren't enough, who will foot the bill for $3.2 MILLION of immediate repairs outlined in the Progressive Rail proposal (surely an underestimate based on the few days of inspection and engineering analysis done) and the $3.4 MILLION in maintenance anticipated in the next 3 years? And until 2017, Progressive had 4 CONSECUTIVE YEARS
OF DECLINING REVENUE from $49 million to $25 million during one of the longest business expansions in the U.S. It has no experience outside the Midwest, and we've already had plenty of experience with a Midwest based operator in IP. Progressive's plan for expanding freight is refrigerated produce, which is done by trucks today and for good reason--produce of the Pajaro Valley (read: mostly berries) typically moves from the field to shipment in less than 24 hours, a process difficult to duplicate by a rail operator.

In sum, there are deep policy and business issues which the RTC staff does not seem to understand. Let's stop this waste of time and money now, take a deep breath to address clear process issues, and only then focus on one of the short-term solutions enumerated above as a stopgap until the UCIS is completed and a deliberate and well thought out plan can be made.

Best regards,

Bud Colligan
Miles Reiter
Julie Packard
Sibley Simon
Doug Erickson
Ted Burke
Ashley Winn
Bobbi Burns
Gayle Ortiz
Bill Simpkins

Patrice Boyle
Gary Griggs
Terri Mayall
Peter Meehan
Buzz Anderson
Keri Waters
Toby Corey
Enda Brennan
Robert Stephens
Dr. Robert Quinn

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From: abcappraising@comcast.net [mailto:abcappraising@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 4:05 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail right of way

Dear Commissioners:

Please do not sign a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion of the UCIS at the end of 2018. That would be negative for our community, and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for Santa Cruz County residents.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

Barrett James

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From: Jackie McDow [mailto:jackiemcdow@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 3:21 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Rail and Trail

Whatever you do, do not tear up the rail.

Can you imagine how wonderful it would be to go over hwy. 17 by train? That was no foresight. They said then it cost too much and we don't need it. Well, now we do and it cost a whole lot more now then it would have then. Greenway people are greedy and selfish and have no foresight. They want self gratification now. Even if a train is not in the near future, it will never happen if the tracks are removed.

Please keep the rail.

Sincerely,

Jackie McDow

P.S. Santa Cruz County resident since 1946.
From: Barry Scott [mailto:barry_scott@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 3:02 PM
To: Scrrtc Info
Subject: In support of the staff recommendation: selection of and negotiations with Progressive Rail.

Dear commissioners,

I am encouraged by the range of responses from local and national carriers to the RFP, "An Operator of Freight and Recreational Passenger Rail Service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, December 8, 2017".

I trust the judgement of RTC staff and support the recommendation that the Commission select Progressive Rail to operate freight and passenger rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate an agreement with Progressive Rail and return to the RTC for consideration of the negotiated agreement.

Further, I fully expect that any contract resulting from negotiation:
• Satisfies terms of current agreements for rail services and for trail construction;
• Includes terms consistent with the Unified Corridors Study process;
• Provides for conditional uses of the rail line by others including Santa Cruz Rail Tours (the Daisy) and Rail Explorers;
• Honors the letter and the spirit of the terms of the original purchase of the rail line and development of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network.

I remind the commission that we are pursuing rail transit and have an associated rail trail project underway. Rail transit is the leading project that offers the most opportunity for the most people, especially with a parallel trail.

Trail only options are inconsistent with our past work, the funding, Measure D, and the needs of our community for alternatives to driving and congestion.

Many thanks,
Barry Scott
Coastal Rail Santa Cruz
www.coastalrail.org

From: Linda Rosewood [mailto:lindarosewood@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 3:01 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: please select a rail operator, not greenway's propaganda

Dear SCC RTC,

I am on email lists of both Rail+Trail groups and "Trail Now."
It's like getting mail from two different realities.

Thanks for your work to choose a new rail operator. I hope you choose one that will continue to operate a train, so that we can continue to explore using our rail line for rail transit.

The Trail Now people keep coming up with new lies. So bizarre.

thanks,

Linda Rosewood
Dear Commissioners:

Please do not enter any contract for a new rail operator until the Unified Corridor Study is complete. All possible scenarios need to be considered before any long range contacts are entered into.

I think a continuous, multi user bike-ped path using the existing trestles and bridges, as per the Greenway Proposal is the best use of the corridor and the UCIS will confirm that. I’m watching and I vote.

Sincerely,
Bob Landry
Santa Cruz

Hello RTC Commissioners:

I am heartened by the significant response of prospective rail operators for the Santa Cruz Branch Line. Two of the proposers are especially compelling.

Progressive Rail has clearly done their homework and they have identified in great detail what it will cost to fix and maintain the line and they seem very capable of doing so. Keeping the line in top shape involves a significant amount of money, but looks to me that it can be accommodated within Measure D allocations for the rail line. They also appear to run a financially tight ship and are large enough to grow the freight business in Watsonville, something that would benefit our agricultural business as well as remove thousands of truck trips from our beat-up roads. My one concern is that Progressive is far from their other operations in the Midwest and therefore local operations might put a strain on their logistics and manpower.

Big Trees Railroad is of course a beloved local favorite and has managed to keep a short line operation going for many decades, which is no mean feat. They are smaller than Progressive, but they are deeply committed and longstanding members of our community. I can see that the RTC faces a difficult choice between excellent options.

I implore the RTC not to be swayed by forces in the community that seek to tear up the rails and disrupt use of the rail line. At this point there are obligations to be met pursuant to RTC’s ownership of the rail line, and I trust that these will be honored. I also want to see future passenger service in the County, both for tourists and for people who live here.

Thanks for your attention,

Bruce Sawhill, PhD
Santa Cruz
From: Leslie Arens [mailto:lesliearens@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 2:00 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Replace Iowa Pacific

I am in favor of replacing Iowa Pacific! Please do not bend to pressure from trail only groups. We have existing tracks, let's be smart and use our current resources in away that will benefit us all!
Leslie Arens
Aptos, CA

From: Catherine Marino [mailto:c.e.marinos@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 1:35 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please select a Rail Carrier

Hi, SCCRTC board members!
I’m urging you to PLEASE select a new Rail Carrier for our existing branch rail line! PLEASE don’t give in to the trail only groups! Our branch rail line belongs to our entire citizenry, and ANY use of the rail line will ease even a little bit of our traffic congestion!
Thank you,
C.E. Marino
P.O. Box 1891
Aptos, CA 95001

From: Anderson Shepard [mailto:andersonshep@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 1:33 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: no new train contracts until after the UCIS

Dear Commissioners:

I live along the rail corridor and have been closely following the various transportation studies and debates as they've been unfolding over the past few years. I strongly support the current Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) and believe that it will provide a modern, updated, clear look at how best our region can and should move forward with use of the rail corridor, whether or not that option includes trains.

However, the news that the RTC is opening up bids to renew the tourist train contract that IP pulled out of - prior to completion of this study - is disingenuous, and honestly, stinks of political motivations.

Perhaps a tourist train is a good option for the corridor in the short term, but that decision MUST wait until after the UCIS so we don't get stuck in a contract with a tourist train if the UCIS determines that we should move forward instead with other, non-train uses.

Please help keep our, the public's, trust and let this corridor study play out before signing any new contracts for use of the rail.
Sincerely,

Anderson Shepard

-----Original Message-----
From: ratbert [mailto:ratbert@cruzio.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 1:14 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: replacing Iowa Pacific

Greetings,
I've been pleased to learn that we have several companies hoping to replace Iowa Pacific to run our trains. I admit that I was hoping Big Trees would do it, because they're local, but from what I've learned, Progressive looks the best.
Whatever you choose, please don’t let the Greenway people sabotage the project. they do not speak for us.

Thank you!

Caroline Lamb

The Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Sensibletransportation.org

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Re: Item 20, Selection of new rail operator

Dear Commissioners,

My organization has concerns about the proposed negotiation of a contract between the RTC and a new rail operator. We are concerned that the new rail operator would need a minimum ten year term in order to profitably run its service on the line and this would conflict with a community goal to run transit on the corridor in the near future.

We also are concerned about the impact of entering a contract with a rail operator on the outcome of the Unified Corridors Study. The UCS is considering bus rapid transit as well as rail transit on the right of way. Results of that study are due late this year. We wonder if entering into a contract with a new rail operator would commit the RTC to the rail option in a way that would be difficult to reverse if the UCS recommends a different option. The potential impact of a premature rail operator contract goes beyond financial considerations. It could harm the public’s confidence in the integrity of the process.

We urge you to postpone contract negotiations with a rail operator until after the RTC decides on the best use of the corridor, informed by a completed Unified Corridors Study.

Thanks for your consideration,

Rick Longinotti, Co-chair

-----Original Message-----
From: Kathleen M Bortolussi [mailto:kbortolussi@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 9:23 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Public Comment to Agenda item 20 F, SC Branch Replacement to Railway Operator

Dear Commissioners,

As a 20 year residents of our home in Aptos, as avid cyclists, and promoters of alternative transportation, we must urge you to vote against this proposal. We currently have the Unified Corridors Investment Study pending to investigate the best use of the corridor. Why would we want to waste the already committed and invested tax payer dollars and not conduct this study-to-completion, and instead move forward with a new rail line operator? That makes no sense except to forward a rail only agenda.

This corridor would be best served as a pedestrian and bike only corridor. Unfortunately the sustainability and viability of a tourist type train from Watsonville to Santa Cruz does not exist. It would create an ugly fenced corridor, and you would have to use eminent domain to obtain private citizen’s houses for the width to make this possible. There is NOT room in my neighborhood for a train and a trail. The county maps do not bely the actuality of existing properties over the years. A fence and train would create neighborhood blight, decrease our property values, be an environmental health and noise issue, and is not financially solvent.

There are other options that would best serve the greater good, and we urge you again to vote against contracting with a new rail line operator, and to see the Unified Corridors Investment Study to completion.

Thank you,

Kathleen Bortolussi and Livia Peras

From: kookson@aol.com [mailto:kookson@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 8:39 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Tourist Train
Dear Commissioners:
Please table any consideration of new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until UCIS has
determined the best use of the corridor.
Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for
our county. Sincerely, Jeff Gideon

From: Brian Peoples [mailto:brian@trailnow.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 4:11 AM
To: lmendez@sccrtc.org
Cc: psilkwood@horanlegal.com; Rodoni Farms; Zach Friend; ebottorff167@yahoo.com; John Leopold;
bruce.mcpherson@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; ryan.coonerty@santacruzcounty.us; greg.caput@co.santa-cruz.ca.us;
jeimny.dutra@cityofwatsonville.org; cc4wd@sbcglobal.net; cchase@cityofsantacruz.com; rlj12@comcast.net;
info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Tourist Train make EIR void

Hi Luis,

An EIR is currently being performed by the Federal Highway Administration on the North Coast Rail-Trail
(Wilder Ranch to Davenport). Three rail-trail plans (Rail with Trail, Trail Only, Farmers' Plan) are being
assessed and the EIR is scheduled to be completed by end of 2018. At the kickoff of the EIR, RTC stated that
there was no plans for a train to Davenport and accommodating a train was not a requirement in the EIR
assessment. If RTC signs a long-term agreement for a Tourist Train to Davenport, it will result in the EIR being
voided.

We strongly recommend that you do not sign a long-term License Agreement for a tourist train along the
Coastal Corridor.

Best regards,

Brian Peoples
Executive Director
Trail Now

-----Original Message-----
From: rod.mendelsohn@yahoo.com [mailto:rod.mendelsohn@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 11:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train!

Dear Commissioners:

Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to
move forward once the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) determines the best use
of the corridor.

Signing a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion
of the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity
to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in
Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy
transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

Rod Mendelsohn
Dear Commissioners:

I do not support a train through Santa Cruz. I want a trail WITHOUT RAIL to make biking and walking through our county safer and easier. Signing a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

Melinda White

-----Original Message-----
From: Karen Menehan [mailto:karenmenehan@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 9:03 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No Train!

Dear Commissioners:

I’m writing to say that I am completely opposed to any train running along the Coastal Corridor. The lifestyle and culture of Santa Cruz county would support and benefit from a trail that all people can utilize for healthy transportation and recreation. Please be forward thinking about this.

Sincerely,

Karen Menehan
110 Palo Verde Terrace
Santa Cruz ca 95060

-----Original Message-----
From: Debra Jones [mailto:dbrjns@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:55 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train!

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to remind you of the obligation you have to your constituents. We passed Measure D because we were concerned with the county’s increasing traffic problems. We trusted that the RTC and the commissioners would examine all possibilities and potential solutions. Personally, I feel that the rail corridor is a fantastic opportunity to have a world-class linear park and active transportation option through our beautiful county. To offer a contract to a rail company that plans to run a tourist train does not approach any solution to transportation problems. It also flies in the face of your obligation to conduct a fair survey.

If you’d like to make use of the corridor while the best steps are considered, planned and funded, then let the people use the corridor as it is now, with minimal cost and impact on the environment. To start a rail service without completing the UCIS shows only that the RTC and commissioners have already made up their mind. A simple trail through the corridor
lets us see if active transportation can ease traffic, while serving as a place-holder for a future mass transit option, if
selected as appropriate in that location.
Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS
has determined the best use of the corridor.
Thank you for respecting the wishes and the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation
future for our county.
Sincerely,
Debra Jones

From: Devin Carlson [mailto:devin@archercomponents.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:12 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please wait until UCIS is complete!

Dear Commissioners:

I'm a small business owner in Scotts Valley and I believe strongly that you should be a responsible civic institution and
hold off on engaging in any contracts before you have the UCIS study in hand. Come on people, it's the smart, responsible
thing to do. Give it a few months, take a look, go from there.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county
and thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Devin Carlson
Co-founder
Archer Components

From: Debby Molina [mailto:dlmolina_2000@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:12 PM
To: Sccrtc Info
Subject: Trail, no train

Dear RTC Members-
Please do not waste this incredible opportunity to have a safe, active, beautiful transportation option running from one end
of the county to the other. The train idea is a boondoggle- underused and over priced. By your own report, a train would
not reduce Highway 1 traffic in any significant way. Please do not sign us up for a new train contract. Let's decide to use
the rail corridor now, a cheaper, faster, more efficient option.
Thank you.
Deb Molina

From: Terri Mayall [mailto:terri@mayall.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 6:17 PM
To: Supervisor John Leopold
Cc: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Operator

Dear John and commissioners,

I'm writing to you to make sure that the RTC does not get locked into a new contract that would prevent trail-
only. As a concerned voter, I take the commission's decisions very seriously and use it as a major basis for how
I vote and I encourage my neighbors, colleagues and clients to vote. Please do the right thing and do not
enter into a long term agreement with any rail operator along the rail corridor.

Yours,
Terri Mayall

From: John - Linda Brown [mailto:brown1978@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 5:15 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train Contract
Dear Commissioners:

We have just retired to Santa Cruz and live near the proposed corridor. We'd ask that you please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor. We'd much prefer the corridor in the end be made into a bike path, at least in the area of Santa Cruz to Aptos.

Sincerely,
Linda & John Brown
Santa Cruz CA 95062

-----Original Message-----
From: Randy Repass [mailto:randyscr@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 4:55 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comment on New Tourist Train Contract!

Dear Commissioners:

Unfortunately I am not able to attend the meeting on the 18th.

But I do care deeply about putting the train corridor to the highest and best use for the benefit of our residents and the environment!

Why would you sign a contract prior to the UCIS?

Sincerely,

Randy Repass
Founder West Marine
Property Owner

-----Original Message-----
From: Kelly Shafsky [mailto:kshafsky@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 4:04 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: VOTE NO TO A 10-20 YEAR TOURIST TRAIN CONTRACT!

Dear Commissioners:

Given the recent decision of Iowa Pacific to end its contract we now have the opportunity to move forward once the best use of the corridor is determined in the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS).

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will hamstring our community and eliminate the opportunity to for real transportation solutions NOW.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

Kelly Shafsky
406 Mott Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA

-----Original Message-----
From: Contact Request Form [mailto:admin@sccrtc.org]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 3:59 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: New submission from Contact Form

This Contact Request Form has been submitted by a member of the public to http://sccrtc.org/contact-us/.
-----Original Message-----
From: Don Simpson [mailto:dsimpson02@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 2:52 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train!

Dear Commissioners:

Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) determines the best use of the corridor.

Signing a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion of the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,
Donald E Simpson

From: James Susaimuthu [mailto: james.susaimuthu@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 2:42 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train Contract

Dear Commissioners:

Please stop any considerations to run a tourist train on the unsafe rail corridor. We need sensible transportation option not a fancy tourist train. Please use your common sense and not waste tax dollars on unwise pet projects. Your decision to properly use the corridor (a trail only) is being closely watched by much of the voting and paying public!

Sincerely, James Susaimuthu

From: Damon Clark [mailto: damon@damonclark.io]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 2:38 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please, no tourist train contract

Dear Commissioners,

Please stop any considerations to run a tourist train on the unsafe rail corridor. We need sensible transportation option not a fancy tourist train. Please use your common sense and not waste tax dollars on unwise pet projects. Your decision to properly use the corridor (a trail only) is being closely watched by much of the voting and paying public!

Sincerely, James Susaimuthu
Dear Commissioners:

Please don't bring another low value tourist train into our community. Signing a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks will stop us from making biking and walking in Santa Cruz safer for people of all ages.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Damon O'Hanlon

----Original Message-----
From: Jim Dumont [mailto:jimdumont@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 2:25 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please NO new tourist train!

I'm 63 yr. old 30 year Soquel resident - 5 yrs Capitola before that - father of 4 (all Soquel High grads) and grandfather of 2.

NO TRAINS! NO TRAIN TRACKS.

Everyone in my family supports Santa Cruz County Greenway!!!

Jim Dumont
3093 Hannan Lane
Soquel, CA 95073
831-454-6056

----Original Message-----
From: John Gallagher [mailto:msu1988@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 2:13 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train Contract

To Whom it Concerns:

Why would you move forward before having all of the information? The best use of the corridor should be determined in the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS).

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,

John Gallagher
Felton

----Original Message-----
From: Daniel Wenger [mailto:DanielWenger@att.net]
Hello,

I have lived in Santa Cruz since 1970 and have often wished for a trail along the rail to Davenport. My walks in the Wilder area have been peaceful and quiet.

I would greatly prefer that the area be kept that way, without a tourist train. Santa Cruz has enough tourist draws. We do not need more.

Thank you.

Daniel Wenger
831-477-1091
Santa Cruz

-----Original Message-----
From: Larry Bercovich [mailto:lberco@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 12:59 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: What Is Your Duty?

Dear Commissioners:

You have a solemn responsibility - to ensure public property is used to its highest and best purpose; and in doing so, to act in and fulfill the best interests of our community.

This Community desperately needs a safe, efficient, and effective trail that everyone can use. Whether one likes to walk, to ride, or is wheelchair-bound, a pedestrian/bike pathway is the highest and best use for the existing trail.

This Community is blessed to have access to the best of our natural habitat. Ocean, redwood trees, and weather that permits year-round use. Let’s act together and create what nobody else can: A world-class pathway that takes advantage of the pristine Monterey Bay; that everyone can use without fee. In so doing, you may find that tourism and business flourish as folks flock to a unique and free outdoor experience.

Larry Bercovich
408-483-0494
4th generation Bay Area & Aptos Resident

From: John Paulsen [mailto:paulsenstudio@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 12:26 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No train on old route. At least wait for UCIS.

Dear Commissioners:

I'm writing as a citizen to advise you not to commit to or contract with any rail operator before the Unified Corridors Investment Study is completed at the end of this year.

My opinion is that the best use of the rail corridor is to eliminate rail, and convert the route to a walking and biking trail only. Let me explain my reasons.

Commuter improvements:
It's clear Santa Cruz County needs transportation improvements to ease traffic flow and provide more options. But the agricultural-era tracks along a route that is useless for commuters will not help the situation. If a train or light-rail were put along that route, the ridership would be tiny. The County would be spending our taxes (millions or billions of dollars) on a complete boondoggle.

If a commuter train or light-rail is put along that route the county would have to create stations and big parking lots among the residential neighborhoods, and after all that investment the ridership would be tiny. Billions of dollars spent, based on no evidence commuters would use this method.

Starting a commuter rail line on that path will not suddenly make that path valuable to commuters. Commuters would have to first commute from their home to a station along the tracks. Then wait for the train, and ride the train. Then, they'd need to commute from the rail drop-off location to their workplace.

There are no logical commuter pickup station locations (no single central or dense living area), nor any logical work drop-off locations (no single dense job center). Our county is not like a region that has bedroom communities all commuting to one job center.

Given the relatively short distance (compared to true commuter regions) of any particular commuter to their job "somewhere in the county," by the time a commuter navigates to the rail, takes the train, then navigates to their workplace, they're going to discover it'd be faster just to drive to work or take a bus.

Also, by the time a poorly-utilized commuter rail system were implemented on those tracks, we'll be in the middle of the transition to autonomous vehicles, which will vastly improve traffic flow even on existing streets (making a train even more irrelevant).

A cheaper, simpler and more effective public transit solution would be no-emission buses (autonomous buses, when that becomes the norm,) Instead of investing in a huge train infrastructure (stations, parking lots, rail upgrades, trains) on one narrow irrelevant agricultural train route — we should invest in clean buses that can drive along any variety of easier routes where people actually live and actually want to get dropped off. And and perhaps expand asphalt on tight routes to give buses quicker passage. This would be vastly cheaper than rail, and far more effective.

Tourism improvements:
The cheaper and better use for the current rail corridor is to retake that land and make it into a world-class walking and biking trail like they have in San Diego and Monterey. Some local commuters already bike across town and this would take them off the road and make biking super easy, convenient and more pleasant so that more local commuters would decide to bike.

A world-class walking and biking trail will make the local beauty and wealth of options more visible to and available to tourists, which will bring greater numbers of tourists here more often. And they'll visit more parts of the county as they discover how easy it is to reach downtown, Seabright, the Harbor, Capitola and Aptos and our various beaches and state parks all in one day on bikes. That also brings more business to a greater number of our eateries, wineries/breweries and shops county-wide (instead of just the boardwalk and a single tourist-train company). Because we've opened up more opportunities for things to do here, we'll have more tourists returning more often.

More tourists would discover the magnificent trail over time, bringing more outdoorsy healthy tourists here more often, adding to our local economy.

To sum up:
A rail project will disrupt and diminish many of the positive attributes we currently have along the ancient former rail corridor, whereas a trail-only project will enhance them. And, a train project will be obsolete before it's built.

Sincerely,
John Paulsen
2215 Lagoon Court
Santa Cruz CA 95062
(831) 325-6028
From: christy martin [mailto:cmartin@cm-squared.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 11:32 AM
To: General Info; zach.friend@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; cchase@cityofsantacruz.com; Ryan Coonerty; sbrown@cityofsantacruz.com; ebottorff167@yahoo.com; dnhagen1939@gmail.com; rlj12@comcast.net; bruce.mcpherson@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; john.leopold@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; greg.caput@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
Subject: Question on Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Replacement Operator RFP

I am trying to understand why the RTC is recommending a 10-20 year agreement for freight and excursion rail services before the Unified Corridor Study is completed. This proposal seems to make the trail only and BRT scenarios impossible for the duration of that agreement. Likewise, the proposed Progressive Rail plan indicates significant investments will need to be made in track improvements starting immediately. These improvements would be a waste of taxpayer money if one of the non-rail UCS scenarios is chosen.

Can you please tell me if there is a time limit for the RTC to select a new operator? Can this contract wait until after the UCS is complete?

Director Dondero is quoted as saying: "Before drawing any conclusions on the best use of the rail line, the Unified Corridor Investment Study needs to be completed. It will inform RTC Commissioners and the public about a recommended use for the rail corridor based upon clear performance metrics." (In https://sccrtc.org/2017/11/tracks-trails-truths-and-myths). Signing a long term agreement and investing in rail improvements before the study is complete is in conflict with this statement and raises serious questions about the transparency and objectivity of the UCS.

I appreciate your help clarifying the requirements around selecting a replacement operator.

Thank you
—Christy Martin

From: Glenn Stewart [mailto:stewartfalcon@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 11:31 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train Contract!

Dear Commissioners:

I just don’t think that RAIL SERVICE on the current rail corridor is a benefit to the county. We DON'T NEED A TOURIST RIDE but we DO NEED A SAFE WALKING/BIKING CORRIDOR. Don’t authorize a contract with a rail company. Do abandon plans for rail—and its attendant high costs—by making the corridor bike/hike only.

Thanks,

Glenn R Stewart
1210 King Street
Santa Cruz

From: Stanley Sokolow [mailto:stanleysokolow@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 11:25 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Item 20 on RTC Agenda of Jan 18 2018 meeting (Selection of new railroad operator)

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to point out that if you adopt the staff recommendation to select a replacement railroad operator with the timeline proposed, you will be rendering moot the portion of the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCS) which deals with the best use of the rail right-of-way. The suggested timeline culminates with the new rail operations beginning in April 2018 although the results of the UCS are not expected until this fall with approval this winter. The recommended operator's proposal seeks a contract running for 10 years with a 10 year option to renew, so regardless of the outcome of the UCS, by adopting the new railroad operating agreement before the best use is approved by you, you would be committing the RTC to railroad operations.

At your December 7 2017 meeting, you approved the staff-recommended scenarios for the UCS. The approved scenarios for further study in Step 2 of the UCS are published here: https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/2017-12-07-rtc-PACKET-1.pdf. They include scenarios A, B, C, E, and no-build. Only scenario E includes passenger and freight service
on the whole corridor, which is what the railroad operating agreement would provide. Scenarios A & B exclude both passenger and rail service. Scenario C includes rail service only in Watsonville with bus rapid transit (BRT) on other portions of the corridor. Since BRT would require a paved bus lane or lanes instead of the rails, BRT is incompatible with continued rail service in the BRT zone. The right-of-way isn't wide enough for the trail (in all scenarios), BRT, and tracks too. Obviously, trail-only would be precluded if you adopt the railroad agreement. Therefore, by executing a railroad operating agreement with a new operator before the UCS is approved this winter, you would be precluding the implementation of scenarios A, B, and C, and of course the no-build scenario. Studying them on the rail corridor would be futile.

Approval of the new railroad operating agreement before the results of the UCS are approved would be a blatant statement that the decision has already been made behind the scenes to select scenario E and that the UCS is only a sham with respect to the rail corridor. I urge you not to do that.

You could accept the staff proposal to authorize the Executive Director to enter negotiations with the chosen operator but push the timeline into the future beyond the completion date of the UCS so you could decide upon the railroad operating agreement and upon the best-use scenario at the same time.

Sincerely,

Stanley M. Sokolow

From: Dana Jones [mailto:danajones@cruzio.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 10:11 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: Kathleen Jones
Subject: Saying no to the tourist train

Dear Commissioners:
Signing a new rail operator 10-20 year contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion of the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.
The "T" in RTC means Transportation not Tourism!

I think a public vote would be a good idea, just a simple yes or no to the tourist train.
Sincerely,

Dana Jones

From: Jack Brown [mailto:jack.b.brown@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 9:43 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please do not enter into a long term rail contract when replacing Iowa Pacific

Dear Regional Transportation Commission,

I was delighted to see that Iowa Pacific will be leaving the Santa Cruz Branch Line and that you are planning to finally put them in default after waiting for over a year without payment. However, after reviewing the proposals for replacement, I am highly concerned that we will be looking at another long term engagement with tourist train operators that will lock the community into rail tourism and non-existent freight transport on what is supposed to be a transportation corridor.

There is currently the EIR for the northern portion and Uniform Corridor Investment Study being performed on the corridor now. Entering a long term contract that preempts decisions and analysis from these two ongoing studies is not something the commission should be considering.

I believe selecting a new provider for freight service is fine for the actual freight customer of Watsonville and should be addressed as quickly as possible, but please limit the decision to that area only. Rail advocates are using this RFP to lock us into rail transportation for the foreseeable future (Just like how they incorrectly noted how Iowa Pacific would never want
to break their contract). Locking into a long term contract will prevent Santa Cruz County from participating in better, more advanced, healthier and green solutions that are available.

As a concerned voter, I take the commissions decisions very seriously and use it as a major basis on how I vote and how I encourage my neighbors to vote. Please do the right thing and do not enter into a long term agreement along the entire line.

Jack Brown
523 Townsend Drive
Aptos, CA 95003
831-708-2120

From: Corey Chrysler [mailto:chrysler.corey@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:58 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Transportation and tourism

Dear commissioners

It has come to my attention that the tourist train contract with Iowa Pacific will be coming to an end. I personally believe this is an opportunity to better serve the citizens of Santa Cruz. A rail to trail option would do just that, and at far less environmental cost. This issue is very important to me and many other citizens, and I hope you will consider us when making your decision.

Thank you for your time.

From: Heather Paul [mailto:hpbuy@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:50 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train Contract!

Dear Commissioners:

Please consider a trail only option for the train corridor. I find it shameful that we take such progressive stands on transportation and we have one of the most dangerous communities for bike riders. We have an awful track record for car vs bike accidents. We have no incentives for people to ride share. The money and time it will take to provide a rail/trail is impractical and will not ease our traffic problem. If the tracks were pulled up and sold the trail project would pay for itself and if we installed an HOV/Toll Lane from Mar Monte exit to the Fish Hook you would be giving people more incentive to ride share. This seems like a much better solution to our transportation/traffic needs in the county.

Sincerely,
Heather Braga

From: Dylan Aramburu [mailto:aramburu33@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:41 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Local support for bike/pedestrian path instead of railroad tracks

Hello,

My name is Dylan Aramburu and I love Santa Cruz. I grew up here and would love to see a bike trail put in in place of the existing train tracks.

I'm a big supporter of reclaiming land and outdated paths and investing in new and exciting things like parks and bike paths that make Santa Cruz an even better place to live.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,
Dear Commissioners:

I have heard that you are considering, even recommending, the establishment of a new tourist train along our rail corridor. I'm writing to say that I am against this.

**Your job is to facilitate transportation, not expand tourism!**

A train will not reduce highway congestion. But it will wreak havoc on our communities in so many ways! That is plain and simple truth.

A trail, on the other hand, would open up a safe corridor for less invasive, low impact transportation, with no negative impact on neighborhoods and communities along the way.

By pulling out of its contract with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, Iowa Pacific handed us all a gift.

We need safer bike and pedestrian paths. And we need them now.

Sincerely,
Kathy Sinnott

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From: Monte Atherton [mailto:monte@mistercal.com]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 8:28 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train Contract

Dear Commissioners:

As a citizen of Santa Cruz, I’m not in favor of a train that’s only focused on tourism and not focused on giving the local people a healthy and safe way to commute around Santa Cruz on foot or by bike.

Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the best use of the corridor is determined in the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS).

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,
Monte Atherton

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From: Doug Huskey [mailto:doug.huskey@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 1:48 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Train Operator

Dear Transportation Commissioners,

It does not make sense to negotiate a contract for a rail operator now while we are in the middle of the transportation study for usage of the corridor. We need to complete the study and let the community weigh in on any rail usage of the corridor first.

Also, a tourist train especially does not make sense given the severity of our transportation problems. We need to be doing things which will improve traffic and encourage more bus ridership now. This means working towards dedicated bus/hov lanes so that more people will be encouraged to ride the bus and not use cars. In that light, usage of the corridor for a trail that runs the full length of the corridor and has a lane for faster ebikes, scooters and bicycles and a separate lane for pedestrians, will help with serious commuting usage of the corridor. Even allowing for one way bus travel on the fast lane of the trail would help if dedicated highway bus lanes are delayed.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thanks and regards,
Doug Huskey
701 Highland Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA.

From: Enda [mailto:casavivo@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 1:42 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Enda Brennan says No New Tourist Train Contract!

Dear Commissioners:
I am sorry I cannot be at the meeting this Thursday in person even though I strongly believe in delaying any decision on a train contract until you complete the unified Corredor study. I will be out of state and unable to attend Thursday but want you to know that I did attend the Capitola city Council meeting this last week and three the four council members expressed strong support for greenways but said they wanted to wait until the unified traffic study was done Before voting on telling their RTC member how to vote. The presentation at that meeting from Friends of the rail trail made it very clear that they also wished for there to be a delay in any real decision made The unified traffic corridor study was completed, you were spending almost $900,000 on the study and it seems ridiculous to predetermine the outcome by removing one of the possibile choices.
Sincerely,
Enda Brennan

From: CYNTHIA DZENDZEL [mailto:cyndzen@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 1:31 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Do not eliminate the rails

I do not support the removal of the tracks and the conversion of the rail corridor to a bike path without a public transportation option. Gridlock on the highway and congestion in our streets make it imperative that we find another way to move people that does not involve the highway. All those residents of south county who work at the University or in the City of Santa Cruz would benefit from public transportation using the rail corridor, freeing up the highway for those commuting over the hill.

I am sure that we as a community can envision a solution that makes use of the rail corridor for an all-weather disabled accessible and efficient means of transportation that would move people quickly from home to work or school and back safely. Small solar/battery powered vehicles rather than over-sized buses or
train cars could be coupled together electromagnetically to provide flexibility, and soon-to-be-developed self-driving technology will make entering and exiting the corridor safely and efficiently feasible in the near future.

Hiking and biking paths should be able to coexist with public transportation if everyone values the common goal of providing for the needs of all segments of the community, rather than just one group.

I support building the bike/walking path now adjacent to the tracks. There is much work that can be done immediately to clear the right of way of vegetation and debris and illegal encroachments. The public should be encouraged to walk the tracks and see for themselves what needs to be done to make use of the full width of the right of way. It should not be necessary to choose between bicycles and other vehicles.

Be creative!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Dzendzel
5600 Lincoln Way
Felton 95018

-----Original Message-----
From: Joell Hallowell [mailto:whittiers@mindspring.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 1:11 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No! to a Tourist Train

Dear Commissioners:

I have been so excited about the possibility of a rail trail to help our transit issues and make for safer biking and walking from Santa Cruz to Watsonville. Therefore, I was extremely disappointed to hear that the county is entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for something beyond freight. This will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages.

It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust!

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,
Joell Hallowell. Aptos

-----Original Message-----
From: Craig Wilson [mailto:crwilson1225@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 1:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Train

Dear RTC:

Please do not award a new rail operator contract.

More community members are engaging in the dialog about how we want to use the corridor than ever and it may be the majority prefer trail only.

At least wait until the completion of the UCIS is complete before committing toward a direction that may prove against the community interests.
Craig Wilson

From: danjobry@aol.com [mailto:danjobry@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 12:58 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No New Tourist Train!

Dear Commissioners: Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS) determines the best use of the corridor. Signing a new rail operator contract on the out-of-service tracks prior to the completion of the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to make biking and walking safer for people of all ages. It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust. Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor. Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county. Sincerely, Joni Steele

From: David Giannini [mailto:davidgiannini@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 12:57 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Best Use of the Rail Corridor

Dear Commissioners,

I could not state this any better than the Trail Now folks. The UCIS should not be compromised with a long term contract.

"Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the best use of the corridor is determined in the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS).

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to for real transportation solutions NOW. It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust."

David Giannini

From: Bill Gray [mailto:graybil@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 11:14 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please, do not contract with a RR provider for service prior to completion of corridor study and necessary EIS

To sign an agreement with a RR provider prior to the completion of studies would be sheer arrogance. What in the world will the provider do, run dinner trains to Cliff Drive? This is folly. Please stop the craziness now. We must focus on transportation not childish projects that will have only a negligible impact on congestion. I have lived in Portland, Seattle, and San Jose, all areas served by light rail (with Seattle only recently completing theirs). These areas have the demographics to support it; we do not and will not in the next 50 years. Please stop this lunacy.

Bill Gray
1440 Prospect Ave
Capitola

-----Original Message-----
From: Sebastian Frey [mailto:sebfrey@me.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 11:10 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: DO NOT SIGN ANY LONG TERM RAIL OPERATOR CONTRACTS

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you not to sign any new long term contracts for the operations on the Santa Cruz Branch Line before the UCS study is completed. Doing so would be a total breach of the public trust.
From: Donald Hicks [mailto:jayhicks@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 10:25 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail operator contract

Dear Commissioners:

It is my understanding that you are seeking proposals to replace the Iowa Pacific Contract. Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to for real transportation solutions. It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust. Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor. Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.

Sincerely,
Donald Hicks

From: Betty Kayton [mailto:betty@kayton.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 9:55 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: please say YES to the long term tourist train operation

This is a great idea. it will meet our requirements for use of the train tracks, while keeping usage (and disturbance of neighbors) at a minimum

Please don’t be swayed by the self-serving emails from the so-called “Trail Now” group. as you probably know, many of their members own property adjacent to the train tracks, and they hope to personally benefit from developing these parcels for their own gain.

SAY YES to the long term tourist train operators. Provided that they only operate a few tourist trains at xmas time (not a year round onslaught of trains)

From: Trail Now [mailto:brian=trailnow.org@mail128.suw14.mcdlv.net] On Behalf Of Trail Now
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2018 9:24 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: SAY NO TO A 10-20 YEAR TOURIST TRAIN CONTRACT!

We’ve reached a critical juncture in our County’s transportation future. Iowa Pacific Holdings is pulling out of its contract with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). RTC is currently recommending that a new tourist train operator be given a long-term contract (10-year plus 20-year option) to operate tourist trains along the Coastal Corridor. If a long-term contract is given for a tourist train, it will end the use of the Coastal Corridor for any real transportation solutions.

The RTC sent out a Request For Proposal (RFP) and received five proposals. All five proposals would operate freight in Watsonville and keep the railroad integrated with the California Rail Plan. Four
proposals were to operate tourist trains and Trail Now proposal is to use the Coastal Corridor NOW for transportation solutions. Our proposal would:

- Meet all regulatory requirements for the entire 32-mile railroad until a long-term decision is made for best use of the Coastal Corridor
- Creates a continuous trail from Watsonville (Lee Road) to Santa Cruz Boardwalk by 2019, with key sections (Capitola, Aptos, Harbor) built this year (2018)
- Allow our community to see how many people use the trail and solicit feedback from users, nearby business owners, and adjacent residents
- Eliminate liabilities and cost to Santa Cruz taxpayers
- No oil tanker rail storage
- Aligns with Measure D mandated Unified Corridors Investment Study
- Meets requirements of the North Coast Rail-Trail Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Ensures $6.5M in Federal Grant Funds for North Coast Rail-Trail are not forfeited
- Gives ownership to locals through a Community Shareholder Ownership Plan (CSOP)

If RTC is not willing to accept Trail Now proposal, we ask that no contract be signed until the North Coast Rail-Trail EIR and Unified Corridor Investment Study are completed in Fall/2018.

On Thursday, January 18th at 10 am at the Santa Cruz City Hall, RTC will be discussing their plans for a new tourist train operator. We need Trail Now supporters to voice their opposition to using the Coastal Corridor for a tourist train. We need SAFER bike and pedestrian paths and BETTER buses. The "T" in RTC stands for transportation NOT tourism.

Please send an email to info@sccrtc.org:

Dear Commissioners:

Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the best use of the corridor is determined in the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS).

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to for real transportation solutions NOW. It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our county.
The Proposals for Operator of Rail Service are insightful. They generally state that freight operations are not expected to increase much, especially beyond Watsonville. They lean heavily on Tourist/Seasonal Excursions to increase revenues.

The proposal from Progressive Rail (PR) is useful because it contains detailed information on costs, and the resulting contract stipulations required to make an investment worthwhile.

Freight operations in/near Watsonville are reasonable and make sense. And the Maintenance of Way (MOW) in this area (MP 1 to 4.6, p. 32) is sensible at $300k in immediate repairs. However, beyond MP 4.6 the costs add up quickly:

- MP 5.2 washout...Estimate $975,000-$1,200,000 for repair.
- This section has lots of vegetation and large trees overgrowing track. $315,000 in immediate repairs...
- Capitola bridge will need rivets replaced due to extreme rust. Bridge structure will need to be sanded and coated with a non-rusting enamel. Wooden stringers and floor beams need to be replaced or strengthened. Security should be upgraded. A detailed cost estimate would need to be undertaken.
- Estimate $200,000 immediate repairs...
- Bridge at 19.43 has reported earthquake damage. [No estimate provided.]
- Boardwalk clearance signs and cross bucks are needed to provide pedestrians with protection. Estimate $85,000.
- Requires two switches and track restoration for an estimated cost of $270,000.
- $350,000 in immediate repair
- Davenport has several industry & siding switches, that need to be rehabbed...estimated costing-$25,000
- Removal of industry switch and straight railing area-$50,000

These are just the immediate costs. The ongoing maintenance costs are much larger. PR proposes building on the existing contract, which would mean RTC would cover much of the immediate repairs, and then asks for a 10-20 year contract because of the maintenance and other required investments.

It is not clear who would pay for, or what the costs would be, for the proposed Quiet Zones (pp. 36-38).

The proposed Suntan Special route from San Jose to the Boardwalk would take over 2 hrs and 30 minutes each way, and would transit through Watsonville. Per Google maps data, driving from North San Jose on a Summer Weekend takes less than an hour when departing at 7:30am (the proposed train departure time). Even the 5pm return is faster by car, at 1 hr 20 minutes vs. 2 hrs 36 minutes by train. Tourists wanting to go to the boardwalk will not want to spend over 5 hrs of the day riding a train. This will not be a Tourist train, it will be a train for train enthusiasts.

The Unified Corridor Study is still underway. It does not make sense to commit to millions of dollars in repairs and a 10 or 20 year contract when we aren’t even sure what the plan is for the corridor. At this point in time it would be prudent to limit contracts for Rail Service to freight operations in the Watsonville area.

The Following email was sent by multiple individuals and their names and date of email is listed below:

Dear Commissioners:

Iowa Pacific handed us a gift by pulling out of its contract and giving us the freedom to move forward once the best use of the corridor is determined in the Unified Corridors Investment Study (UCIS).

Entering a new 10+ year rail operator contract for anything beyond freight in south Watsonville prior to completing the UCIS at the end of 2018 will handcuff our community and eliminate the opportunity to for real transportation solutions NOW. It would lead to a complete breakdown in public trust.

Please table any consideration of a new rail operator beyond freight operations in Watsonville until the UCIS has determined the best use of the corridor.

Thank you for protecting the rights of your constituents and helping to ensure a healthy transportation future for our
Submitted on the following dates by the individuals listed below:

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