PUBLIC HEARING: 2018 Unmet Paratransit and Transit Needs

-----Original Message-----
From: Virginia Mickelson [mailto:ginmick@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 5:07 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Disabled Parking at Metro Center, Scotts Valley

The disabled parking at the Metro Center in Scotts Valley (Kings Village Road at Blue Bonnet) has been moved to the other side of the Center, by the ramp. Now the disabled persons using the former parking have no close place to park to go to the Farmers’ Market.

Will you please address this concern?

Thank you,
Ginnie Mickelson
Scotts Valley resident

-----Original Message-----
From: Cara [mailto:ratbert@cruzio.com]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 2:36 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Unmet transit needs

I understand that you’re collecting information on unmet transit needs. I thought I’d contribute a recent story.
On April 16, after an incident of my heart racing, I contacted my “care team.” They told me to go to urgent care at once. They seemed to feel that this was an emergency. Oh, and it was raining.

I live on Serra Court, off Grandview, on the West side of Santa Cruz. There is a bus that stops nearby on Grandview that, after wandering about the Seymour Marine Center, does eventually get to the urgent care center. But this bus goes every two hours.

I am not disabled, in the usual sense of the term. I’m merely a 73 year old woman who does not drive.
I called two friends to see if either could take me to urgent care. Neither responded. I walked.

Mission Street is a corridor. It is one of the main streets of our town. It’s also a street with more than one medical center, and several dentists offices. If you were concerned about the ability of seniors to see their medical providers, there would be regular transit on Mission. It will cost the county far more if I, and others like me, have to resort to Paratransit or something just to see our doctors.

Thank you.
I live at the bottom of Mount Madonna Rd. The closest bus stop is 2 miles away. There are no sidewalks on Mount Madonna or Casserly, not even a bike lane. Although the speed limit is posted at 35, most drivers go much faster. It is not safe for a senior (or anyone else) to walk in the roadway. I don’t see much hope for a decrease in auto traffic under these conditions. We have to drive to safely go to the nearest grocery store, 4 miles away. Much of the unincorporated county functions under the same conditions. A passenger train won’t solve the problem because we will still need a car to travel the miles to the station. A pedestrian/bike trail would be nice for younger people but the old and disabled rarely are able to ride bikes. A small bus/van that made at least 4 roundtrips each day thru the unincorporated areas from one end of the county to the other might help.

We live 3 miles from the nearest bus stop, so my handicapped husband cannot use the Paracruz services unless I drive him somewhere first. I am not always available to drive him.

I would love a service that could at least pick him up and drop him off at a ParaCruz pick up/drop off site. Rural needs are definitely unmet in this respect.

Thank you for the consideration.

Marianne Mejia
### PROJECT INFORMATION

#### PROPOSED PROJECT
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in partnership with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission is proposing to construct a wildlife undercrossing on State Route 17 near Laurel Road in Santa Cruz County. Two core wildlife habitat areas on either side of Highway 17 at Laurel Road have been identified in several landscape-scale wildlife connectivity modeling efforts as a critical linkage for mountain lion and other wildlife species. Using GPS/radio telemetry, wildlife cameras, and roadkill data, the curve at Laurel Road has been identified as one of the locations along the Highway 17 corridor where a wildlife crossing structure would provide the greatest benefit. At the project location, 460 acres of mostly undeveloped land on both sides of the highway have been preserved in a conservation easement by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

#### PURPOSE
The purpose of the project is to connect important wildlife habitat on both sides of the highway and provide for safe movement of wildlife under Highway 17.

#### NEED
High Annual Average Daily Traffic volumes (61,500 vehicles per day) combined with a concrete median barrier and a lack of adequate culvert or bridge undercrossings contributes to a high frequency of animal-vehicle collisions along Highway 17.

#### TIMELINE
Construction is anticipated to begin in the Fall of 2021.

#### PROJECT COST
The current construction estimate for the proposed project is $5.6 million. Some of the construction funding has been secured through the voter approved 2016 Santa Cruz County Tax Measure D. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is also raising funds for the project.

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For more project related information, contact Aaron Henkel, Caltrans Project Manager by email: aaron.henkel@dot.ca.gov or by phone: (805) 549-3084

For more environmental related information, contact Cecilia Boudreau, Associate Environmental Planner by email: cecilia.boudreau@dot.ca.gov or by phone: (805) 549-3376
QUESTIONS

- For more project related information, contact Aaron Henkel, Caltrans Project Manager by email: aaron.henkel@dot.ca.gov or by phone: (805) 549-3084
- For more environmental related information, contact Cecilia Boudreau, Associate Environmental Planner by email: cecilia.boudreau@dot.ca.gov or by phone: (805) 549-3376
May 1, 2018

Dear Santa Cruz County RTC Commissioners and Staff:

To ensure that the proposed Measure D: Five-Year plans for Regional Projects for the Active Transportation and Rail Corridor categories do not stand in the way of a fair and transparent Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCIS) Santa Cruz County Greenway recommends the following changes:

1. **Rail Corridor**—All track and railroad related infrastructure repair projects should be put on hold until after the completion of the UCIS.

2. **Active Transportation (Trail Program)**—No funding should be spent on retaining walls or other infrastructure projects that would be unnecessary with a nonrail use of the corridor until the best use of the corridor has been determined in the UCIS.

3. **Active Transportation (Trail Program)**—Right-of-way research and surveying should be prioritized since this information is integral to any use of the corridor. Any other preliminary work (design, etc.) done prior to the completion of the UCIS must include UCIS nonrail scenarios.

4. **Active Transportation (Trail Program)**—The $519,250 currently allocated for annual corridor encroachments and maintenance should not be included as an active transportation line item. It should come from the RTC general fund. If Measure D transportation funds are to be spent on this non-transportation maintenance, the funds should come from the Rail Corridor category.

Additionally, regarding using Measure D funds for “possible installation of conduit for internet and electrical service,” We recommend staff reach out to Cruzio and other local utility providers to explore partnerships that might help with conduit installation and be potential sources for ongoing trail maintenance funds. Rails to Trail Conservancy outlines the benefits of such partnerships:

“Earning revenue through the collection of annual fees is one of the main benefits of a partnership between a trail-owning agency and a utility company. On the W & OD Trail in suburban Virginia outside Washington, D.C., AT&T pays $250,000 a year ($7,000 per trail mile) for their telecommunications easement. In this case, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority owns the corridor but allows the utility full access on the condition of compensation.”

[https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/basics/utilities/](https://www.railstotrails.org/build-trails/trail-building-toolbox/basics/utilities/)
Since the Measure D Oversight Committee has yet to form and will only be looking at expenditures in hindsight, we ask that you make these changes to ensure that taxpayer money is put to meaningful use.

Thank you for spending our Measure D funds wisely to help ensure that the Measure D campaign promise to “Get Santa Cruz County Moving” is realized.

Sincerely,

Gail McNulty
Executive Director
Dear Chair Leopold and RTC Commissioners,

As Watsonville residents, we applaud your support for rail transit along the Santa Cruz Branch Line. South County residents need you to keep this as a viable option along the coastal corridor. Since the current operator, Iowa Pacific, is no longer a good fit, we urge you to expedite the agreement with Progressive Rail as the operator along this corridor.

We know that the negotiation process with various rail companies has been comprehensive, taking in the needs of the Santa Cruz County community as a whole. Progressive Rail seems to be a good fit for our county. Expediting the agreement with Progressive Rail as the operator along this corridor, will bring us closer to the vision of healthier, more efficient and more cost effective transportation choices!

The Santa Cruz Branch Line is a very valuable public resource. Please work to bring Progressive Rail under contract as soon as possible. Moving this process forward in a timely manner will give us the transit options we need for building a future of multiple transportation alternatives in Santa Cruz County. We thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Anna Kammer and Dan Fallorina
Watsonville Residents
May 2, 2018

**Support for Appointing Rail Operator**

Dear RTC Commissioners:

One step at a time keeps important projects moving forward. Take an important step this week and hire Progressive Rail to operate the Santa Cruz Branch Line as an economic and community asset for Watsonville and the entire county.

You, your attorneys and staff have done due diligence that should remove risk and uncertainty. It is time to proceed with hiring a rail operator.

Delay puts citizens and businesses at risk.

Sincerely,

D.M. Murphy
City of Santa Cruz
From: M [mailto:marymiller12@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 01, 2018 7:07 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please execute agreement w/ Progressive Rail

Dear RTC

Progressive rail appears to fit our needs and has satisfied all due diligence checks. The selection and negotiation process has been completed. We need to replace Iowa Pacific.

Thank you,

Mary Miller
May 1, 2018

Chair Leopold and Commissioners
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Progressive Rail as the new operator of the Santa Cruz Branch Line

Dear Chair Leopold and Commissioners,

The process for selecting a new rail operator for the Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL) began last December – five months ago.

Since then, I understand the RTC received several proposals; evaluated all the proposals and selected Progressive Rail’s proposal as the most favorable of the bunch; received a public presentation from Progressive Rail regarding their proposal; performed a due diligence review of their company including, but not limited to, reference checks, visiting their existing rail operations, interviewing customers and community leaders where they are now operating; brought them back to Santa Cruz for an additional public presentation with public questions, answers and scrutiny; and finally, negotiated a mutually acceptable agreement.

It is now time to close the deal and replace the existing operator, Iowa Pacific. As the owner of the SCBL entrusted with the responsibility of managing and protecting this valuable public asset, further delay in executing an agreement with Progressive Rail should be prudently avoided. Please do not put our community nor the SCBL at further risk, rather, promptly execute the agreement to put Progressive Rail under contract thereby maximizing the benefits offered by the SCBL to our people, our planet and our economy.

Should you wish to discuss this matter in more detail, please contact me.

Respectfully yours,

Mark Mesiti-Miller, P.E.
Board Chair, Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail
Professional Civil Engineer
35 year resident of the City of Santa Cruz

cc: George Dondero, RTC Executive Director
Chair Leopold and Commissioners
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Operator Choice on the Santa Cruz Branch Line

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge you to expedite the choice of a new rail operator for the Santa Cruz Branch Line. I understand that the term of the previous operator (Iowa Pacific) expired April 1, an event that causes our County to be in non-compliance with Federal regulations requiring continuous assigned operator coverage for an active rail line.

I understand that several operator proposals were received, and that the leading contender is Progressive Rail. I also understand that Progressive Rail was subjected to extensive due diligence by the SCCRTC in the form of site visits, interviewing customers and community leaders, etc., and that no substantive problems were discovered.

There are customers waiting to be served and liability issues in the wings, situations that can be rapidly remedied by signing a well-structured contract with Progressive Rail. I understand that a mutually acceptable agreement has already been arrived at. There is no justifiable reason for further delay. Please approve the contract at your upcoming May meeting.

Sincerely,

Bruce K Sawhill, PhD
Dear RTC Commissioners,

I am writing you today asking that the RTC Commission finalize an agreement with Progressive Rail. Based on the RTC staff’s proposed schedule, Iowa Pacific was supposed to vacate the RTC property and hand over common carrier responsibility on April 1, 2018 to Progressive Rail, but that has not happened due to delays on a vote to approve an agreement.

Since then a series of regulatory compliance dominos have fallen and as every day passes it will be more difficult to undo the damage already done by delaying a vote on an agreement with Progressive Rail. The situation is now dire and jobs at existing Watsonville rail customers and the safety of railroad workers and Watsonville residents are at risk. State and Federal agencies have taken notice of the situation the delay on a vote has created. I urge the RTC Commission to move the agreement out of closed session on May 3, 2018 and vote on it no later than the May TPW meeting.

Sincerely,

Howard Cohen
Aptos Resident

FROM: Janie Soito

April 30, 2018

Dear RTC Commissioners

I am writing to encourage you to approve the short term agreement with Progressive Rail (PGR). It has come to my attention that the current rail operator, Iowa Pacific Holdings (IPH), has neglected the right of way creating safety concerns. An example is the crossing signal on W. Beach Street in Watsonville that was knocked down several months ago; it was left to be picked clean by the scavengers seeking rail souvenirs. This very busy street is now without an east bound warning signal and the old one cannot even be reinstalled because it is gone. I’m sure this is a concern for federal regulators and the potential liability should be a concern to the RTC.

Another reason that you should approve the contract with PGR is that there is plenty of commerce available for servicing but IPH has loaded the tracks with rail cars in storage. This makes it difficult to access customers who want service including those who want refrigerated service for agricultural products. In order to stop this rail car storage, IPH has to be immediately terminated as the rail operator so that PGR can take over. PGR has stated that they prefer to make their money by increasing commerce and not by storing rail cars.

PGR is well capitalized and has an outstanding history of improving both the infrastructure and profitability of short lines. They have an excellent safety record. Their willingness to negotiate with the RTC under the hostile environment that has been created by certain organizations in the community is commendable. They are also going out on a limb to enter
into an agreement where 85% of the rail line is not even accessible. I hope that the RTC is cooperating fully with the Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the issuance of a permit to repair the negligent washout at Mile Post 5.1. It is imperative that the washout be repaired as soon as possible so that freight service may commence on the rest of the Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL). There are prospective customers who are at a competitive disadvantage because Watsonville has rail service for deliveries and they do not. Also, Roaring Camp has been waiting for more than a year to take delivery on equipment that was purchased but cannot be delivered because of the lack of repairs.

You (the commissioners) are the stewards of a very valuable piece of real estate. The SCBL was purchased with state funding expressly for the purpose of expanding rail transit in Santa Cruz County to benefit the whole population and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Whether or not you personally agree with the use of the SCBL for rail transit is irrelevant. The SCBL was purchased for transit and it should not be co-opted for use as a trail only corridor. Certain entrepreneurs are vested in and committed, with large monetary investments, to use the line selfishly and greedily to promote their own profits in "personal transportation." They want the taxpayer to supply the "linear park" for them to personally profit. They also publicly state that they are working with the consultants who are performing the UCS and that they have advance knowledge of certain results. You have no obligation to bend to their whims or demands. Your responsibility is to the people of Santa Cruz County and to protect this amazing piece of infrastructure. News releases last week show that there are large amounts of money available for rail transit. Monterey County will get $10 million to extend the Capitol Corridor to Salinas. This expansion will also benefit Watsonville. Santa Cruz County received exactly zero dollars because, shamefully, none were applied for.

The commissioners need to approve a short term contract as soon as possible so that normal freight commerce can commence in Watsonville and so that the safety and integrity of the SCBL is maintained. The RTC also needs to cooperate fully with the Army Corps of Engineers to expedite issuance of a permit and complete repairs to the washout so that PGR may fully access the SCBL.

Sincerely,

Janie Soito
North Monterey County Homeowner

From: Deborah Culmer [mailto:debkakes@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 4:15 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please contract with Progressive Rail

As a resident of the West Side of Santa Cruz, I urge you to move forward with the contract with Progressive Rail. Let's get this train a-movin'!

Best,
Deborah Culmer

From: Derek R. Whaley [mailto:author@santacruztrains.com]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 3:52 PM
To: General Info
Subject: Progressive Contract Must Go Ahead

Greetings commissioners,

I would just like to express my support for Progressive Rail as the new common carrier for the Santa Cruz Branch Line. Iowa Pacific Holdings has allowed the line to fall into disuse and disrepair, even while exploiting our hospitality and untenable position by moving storage...
cars onto country tracks. This is unacceptable. The only way to resolve this issue is to approve a short-term contract for Progressive Rail while the Unified Corridor Study is being completed. I trust in the wisdom and authority of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's leaders to do the right thing regarding this issue. Please approve this agreement this May so that Iowa Pacific can get out of the county and progress can finally be made on repairing and restoring the Santa Cruz Branch Line.

Sincerely,

Derek R. Whaley
www.santacruztrains.com

From: Nadene Thorne [mailto:nadenetd@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 2:10 PM
To: openup@cats.ucsc.edu; john.leopold@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; bruce.mcperson@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; cchase@cityofsantacruz.com; ebottorff167@yahoo.com; greg.caput@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; jbertrand@ci.capitola.ca.us; rlj12@comcast.net; Ryan Coonerty; sbrown@cityofsantacruz.com; zach.friend@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; Sccrtc Info; trina.coffman@cityofwatsonville.org
Subject: Response to Commissioner Rotkin's email of 17 April 2018

I found Commissioners Schiffrin and Rotkin’s commentary during the Transportation Workshop on April 19th enlightening with regard to the attitudes of the RTC and staff concerning the prospects of a train on the rail corridor, and recognize that this public perception is of course largely due to the fact that the RTC bought a rail corridor, with tracks, and an agreement to maintain rail service. In contrast however, Measure D, to my reading, did not specify that the RTC would arrange to initiate rail service, but rather to further “transportation projects” and “preserve rail options” which, with the UCIS, they are doing.

Consequently, perhaps, there has been some mixed messaging. One seldom hears the commissioners or staff assert that they are examining all options unless specifically pressed by citizens. There seemed to be little or no credence given to the notion of a trail alone on the corridor, (certainly not when Measure D was on the ballot) to my perception, until citizens promoted the idea and suddenly, without apparent RTC comment or fanfare, it was added to the UCIS. [I attended one of the Live Oak public information sessions and there was essentially no public comment or question period, and the process of sticking dots on preferred transportation options appeared highly corrupt – just my view of the event.]

Further, there seems to be little discussion of work approved or anticipated or proposed for Highway 1, Soquel Drive, or Mission Street, some of which I am aware is planned regardless of the outcome of the UCIS. It appears that our METRO system has been thrown into the gutter, and can hardly get funding for one new bus, much less any kind of route expansion or a new fleet of electric or battery-powered buses – I find this situation bewildering, regardless of any studies being done. Should I have to tell you that buses are a “if you build them they will come” commodity? We seem to be intentionally creating our own failure in dismissing the most obvious transportation improvements that could be made the fastest and cheapest. [n.b. I note most recently that some limited funded has been received for a small number of gas or electric buses – but of course this is only replacement equipment, not expansion.]
Even more significantly, the promotion of a train in the corridor by organizations like the Land Trust which has raised a substantial amount of money for a trail conditioned on keeping the rail lines, Ecology Action, partially funded by the RTC and which gives financial support to Friends of the Rail Trail, similarly funded Bike Santa Cruz County, and most recently the Sierra Club and the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce cannot be seen by the public as anything other than reflecting the views and direction of the RTC.

Further, it appears that these organizations’ messages are determined not necessarily by a predominance of members’ views, but rather by the executives’ proclivities themselves (The Chair of FORT’s wife serves on the Land Trust Board, the FORT Chair is President of the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce and on the Sierra Club board; the Chamber of Commerce representative joined a field trip with the RTC to view the SMART train, prior to any discussion of field trips to successful bike paths. Further, the FORT Chair’s company website notes the rail and trail as one among their project list.). How can all this NOT be seen by us citizens as anything other than quasi-corrupt support of the pre-determined view of the RTC, which clearly must be that for a train, regardless of ridership or cost – or, for that matter, of the outcome of the UCIS?

I get that the RTC staff is supporting the mission as it was presented to them with the purchase of the corridor, but note that it was not RTC staff who contacted the CTC about paying back the Proposition 116 funds to go forward with a nonrail option. And despite a 2011 RTC FAQ that outlines railbanking as a viable alternative plan should passenger rail prove unsuitable, lately the RTC executive director and FORT have been proclaiming to the public that railbanking is a myth. He and FORT point to a lawsuit in Kirkland, Washington which conflates railbanking with abandonment but do not follow up with clarification. An RTC staff member attended, and served as a panel member at a recent Sierra Club presentation in promoting rail and “transit,” as did the Executive Director of the RTC-funded Bike Santa Cruz County. There were no other points of view presented. Yes, the RTC website conveys the expected limited ridership of a train, and the unfunded and undetermined costs of trail widening, and various other facts and assertions on the subject, but they remain silent when their representatives overlook and misrepresent these subjects. So when the RTC does not take action to distance itself from these viewpoints, presentations, and FUNDING, it can’t help but convey assent.

Having expressed what I perceive to be a significant communications breach, and which, I reiterate, appears to sully the outcome of the UCIS, the following questions remain:

Doesn’t Big Trees use of the tracks meet the requirements of the CTC? After all, it’s an excursion train. So why issue an RFP and invite Progressive Rail whose intentions in coming here may not entirely support this county’s goals and attitudes? Note the uninvestigated letters from their constituents in Lakeville and Chippewa Falls.

What freight operations might Progressive Rail pursue north of Watsonville? There was no exploration of this in the meeting on the 19th, but I did understand Progressive to state that they would not contract solely for Watsonville freight service.

Why are we keeping tracks that are damaged in some places and illegal for trains travelling more than 10 miles per hour? We’re spending money to maintain them, and they will still have to be repaired or replaced for any future train service, other than on our existing excursion train line.

Why NOT take out the tracks in the areas where they’re damaged and put in as wide a trail as soon as possible as an inexpensive experiment? Wait for funding and a community
mandate to do anything else. If the community decides not to reinstall the tracks, as Commissioner Rotkin asserts, isn't that the mandate?

The City of Santa Cruz is getting considerable blowback from the e-bike stand proposal near the coast. If we had a wide, separated corridor for multi-speed travel, even if only on the most engineering challenged sections, wouldn't this be a win for both the city and the county?

Finally, I can't help but comment as an aside that it was woefully inept for the Progressive Rail representatives to have been scheduled to leave during the one meeting giving the public the opportunity to question them on their intentions for the county. Writing down the questions was about as lame and fruitless as it could possibly be. Having read the fervent and in-depth complaints of citizens in two of their operating areas back east, it was inexcusable for the RTC not to have examined them in a public forum, and further, required responses from Progressive Rail.

Thank you, Commissioner Rotkin, for your personal and considered response to my earlier query. I hope this one adds beneficially to the decision-making process in which you commissioners are engaged.

Nadene Thorne

From: Josh Stephens [mailto: ***@immortal.events***]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 1:45 PM
To: info
Subject: Quit Moseying

SCCRTC Commissioners,

I write to you today about a little known thing called “Santa Cruz Time”. Santa Cruz Time is something that seems to be inherent in our county: when someone says they’ll meet a deadline or scheduled time, only to show up an hour or three late.

This happens all the time in local businesses in Santa Cruz county too. From the bar that says they are open until 2am kicking everyone out at 1:45, to the pizza and sub shop that has hours posted until 9pm and decides to close its doors an hour early and refuse to serve it’s full menu. Or the secondhand clothing store that was supposed to open at 10, only to open its doors half past noon.

It seems to me that this town is built off moseying and our commissioners at the RTC seem to be drinking the Santa Cruz time Kool-Aide when it comes towards handling our publically owned rail right of way.

To the RTC: stop moseying and get an agreement with Progressive Rail already. I am livid that our rail line has become a parking lot for Iowa Pacific at the expense of moseying commissioners bending into the whim of a few elite. No 60 day period to review, no inserting more provisions, no more excuses, NO MORE MOSEYING. Enough is enough. I expect better from you people.

Josh Stephens  
Partner/Promo Manager  
Immortal Events
Dear SCCRTC,

Thank you for all your working in supporting and maintaining our railing. I am writing in support of finalizing and signing the upcoming agreement with Progressive Rail ASAP. As a lifelong resident and home owner in Santa Cruz County I believe it is necessary that our community continue to maintain and use the very valuable rail way and that moving forward with Progressive Rail will benefit our community enormously.

Thanks again!

Faina
From: David Van Brink  
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 9:03 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Please expedite Rail Operator Contract

Dear Commissioners,

It is understandable that negotiations with a rail operator may be complex and nuanced. It is admirable to address the details and edge cases unique to our situation. But also, responsible stewardship of our valuable, irreplaceable transportation asset is urgent!

I support moving forward with Progressive Rail with a suitable short-term agreement, so we may again move forward with our county's use of the corridor for freight and future uses.

Best // David Van Brink // Santa Cruz, West Side

From: Catherine Marino  
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 8:26 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Please expedite Progressive Rail agreement!

Dear RTC Commissioners,

Thank you for your commitment to preserving our invaluable rail corridor. I like the idea that you and Progressive are considering both short term and longer term agreements for Progressive to replace Iowa Pacific as Freight and Passenger/Excursion provider on our rail line.

I urge you to complete and vote upon the short term agreement with Progressive Rail as soon as possible. We need to provide continuity of service to our freight customers, initiate passenger/excursion, and move forward with repairs and upkeep of the rail line as you stated at the most recent RTC meeting and Progressive Rail presentation, in order to satisfy Federal and State funding requirements and to achieve the economic and transportation benefits that the rail corridor will bring to our county.

I realize that detractors of the railway have not been listening to the facts that you lay out before them. But I, and the majority of our citizens hear you and have faith in your ability to do the job that you are there to do. The short term idea of protecting the rail corridor’s value to our community and our state by preserving its funding and economic integrity is obviously the right choice. Our longer term options remain to be clarified, but for now it is imperative to get the agreement with Progressive Rail in place and get the railway and structures restored to use as soon as we can. To further this action, I ask you to now move the new operator agreement out of closed session and voted upon no later than the next Transportation Workshop meeting in May.

Respectfully,
Cathy Marino
Santa Cruz
From: Patricia Elaina Fohrman [mailto:patriciaelaina@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 8:21 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Pacific Rail Agreement

Please reach an agreement with Pacific Rail as soon as possible. There is a genuine concern about damage to the line under Iowa management.

Pat Fohrman

From: Barry Scott [mailto:barry_scott@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2018 7:26 AM
To: Sccrtc Info
Cc: Zach Friend
Subject: Urgent need to move forward with Progressive Rail agreement

Dear Commissioners,

Every day that passes the condition of our rail line grows worse. Iowa Pacific brings more tank cars in, crossing and signal equipment repairs go unaddressed, and the risk of losing continuity of service increases.

Please expedite completion of the near term agreement with Progressive Rail so that we can quickly replace Iowa Pacific and move toward restoring the line to its full capacity for our freight customers and the economic and other benefits they bring to our county.

Time is of the essence, please work toward having an agreement in place as soon as possible.

Best regards,

Barry Scott