

Transit Corridors Alternatives Analysis
Milestone 2 - Email Received After 5/11/2020

From: Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 8:32 AM

Mr. Preston,

Over the last couple of days, there have been numerous letters published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel from the public on their frustration with the RTC's management of transportation within the County. Below is the latest letter that illustrates how poorly managed the transportation system has been managed over the last 10 years. With the RTC and county tax revenue about to hit a major financial barrier from the pandemic, we ask you to shift gears and look for realistic solutions to the Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor. The continued goal of proving a train can operate on the corridor is pulling critical resources from our community. It is time to shift to realistic uses of the corridor and open to the community.

Best regards

Brian Peoples
Executive Director
TrailNow.org

I live in Aptos Hills and have property in Moss Landing which sustains grass-fed beef and organically grown vegetables. I need to commute there a couple times a week and want to use public transportation that meets all your triple bottom-line criteria.

So, can you build a wind-powered funicular from my house down to Trout Gulch Road? I could catch a gondola there, to a train station in Aptos Village. Then I could catch a fusion-powered train to Watsonville, where I could transfer to a solar-powered train to Salinas. From there, it'd be a quick hyper-loop trip back to Moss Landing. I could grab a unicorn and ride to the ranch. I could pasture the unicorn until I repeated my journey in reverse.

If you can't make this happen, maybe you could at least fix the five crumbling blow-outs on Trout Gulch Road before it's completely lost next winter.

— *Robert Stephens, Aptos*

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2020/05/13/letter-an-idea-for-rtcs-rail-corridor-plan/>

[Letter | An idea for RTC's rail corridor plan – Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

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www.santacruzsentinel.com

From: ar.ucsc@everyactioncustom.com <ar.ucsc@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 5:18 PM

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Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

I'm writing to let you know that I support the rail transit options rather than a bus option on the rail corridor. The rail options are better than bus, because

Coming from Europe, I have learned to appreciate the safe, reliable and convenient local rail systems there. I find them much more effective and appropriate for our modern time than a bus system. I miss such rail systems here and am excited that we might be able to establish one here in Santa Cruz and lead the way for other communities.

I believe a rail transit system will move more people faster and for less money than bus transit. Rail transit will operate in a dedicated corridor free of any traffic congestion, so it provides the most reliable service: on time every time.

I believe rail transit is more comfortable, more enjoyable especially for families with children and quieter for riders and neighbors.

Thank you for leading the way in transforming our transportation system and making our community more equitable, more sustainable and more prosperous for everyone.

Sincerely,
Andreas Rechtsteiner

Brett Garrett brett@dolphyn.com 5/13/2020

Hi Shannon,

I appreciate the updated FAQ, but it does not explain the somewhat low ridership expectation for Personal Rapid Transit and elevated PRT.

PRT would have among the best characteristics for hourly capacity, service frequency, (average) speed, and (potential) number of station stops, so -- unless I'm missing something -- it should achieve top scores for ridership and emissions reduction.

Just to clarify, with regard to speed, the fastest average speed suggested in the 2015 Rail Feasibility Study was 33.9 miles per hour (specifically, 20.5 miles in 36.2 minutes). Many PRT systems are designed for at least 35 miles per hour (and some much faster), with no need to stop at intermediate stations. Unlike conventional transit modes, a PRT system can include more stations without any need to compromise trip times.

Meanwhile, I'll admit I'm perplexed by the argument that we want to maximize O&M costs in order to create more jobs. Does that mean that unreliable infrastructure is preferred, because additional employees would be required for maintenance?

Thank you,

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Brett

From: mpastick@everyactioncustom.com <mpastick@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2020 2:58 PM

Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

I'm writing to let you know that I support the rail transit options rather than a bus option on the rail corridor. The rail options are better than bus, because

- Rail transit will move more people faster and for less money than bus transit.
- Rail transit is more accessible, more comfortable, and quieter for riders and neighbors.
- Rail transit will operate in a dedicated corridor free of any traffic congestion, so it provides the most reliable service: on time every time.
- Rail transit can be implemented sooner than bus transit, meaning we can travel car-free, lower our emissions, fight global warming, and escape traffic congestion sooner.
- Rail transit absolutely protects 100% of the existing 32-mile rail corridor from easement threats.
- Rail transit means construction of the Coastal Rail Trail will not be delayed and could be completed within 10 years.
- Rail transit offers South County riders the same access to improved public transportation as North County riders.
- Rail transit is predicted to double the use of public transportation county-wide.
- Rail transit is less expensive to operate and maintain so, over time, rail transit will be the best investment of tax dollars.
- Funding to implement passenger rail service is identified in the State Rail Plan.
- Tearing up the existing tracks to replace them with a road for buses would create environmental trauma such as demolition waste, grading, miles of new pavement, and digging for storm drainage systems.
- Rail provides the easiest access and maximum amount of bike storage per vehicle.
- Rail provides the easiest access for wheelchairs and accommodates more people with personal mobility devices.

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Thank you for leading the way in transforming our transportation system and making our community more equitable, more sustainable and more prosperous for everyone.

Sincerely,
Mark pastick

From: ljandreatta@everyactioncustom.com <ljandreatta@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 16, 2020 5:57 PM

Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

I'm writing to let you know that I support the rail transit options rather than a bus option on the rail corridor. The rail options are better than bus, because,

I visit my sister often in Santa Cruz. Keeping the rail would be more appealing than more buildings or more congestion on the trail.

-Rail transit will move more people faster and for less money than bus transit.

-Rail transit is more accessible, more comfortable, and quieter for riders and neighbors.

-Rail transit will operate in a dedicated corridor free of any traffic congestion, so it provides the most reliable service: on time every time.

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-Rail transit is predicted to double the use of public transportation county-wide.

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-Rail provides the easiest access for wheelchairs and accommodates more people with personal mobility devices.

Thank you for leading the way in transforming our transportation system and making our community more equitable, more sustainable and more prosperous for everyone.

Sincerely,
Lorna Andreatta

From: dmclain@everyactioncustom.com <dmclain@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 23, 2020 8:07 PM

Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

I'm writing to let you know that I support the rail transit options rather than a bus option on the rail corridor. The rail options are better than bus for all of the reasons below. But primarily for two reasons.

1) Rail is more efficient per passenger mile than buses as it uses less land and less fuel than buses. A modern light-weight electric tram can carry more passengers than a bus with less noise and air pollution.

2) We need to support an integrated rail network in California. The coastal rail line will connect to Watsonville, Monterey, Gilroy, and beyond. Once the line is operating, Santa Cruz will want a direct rail connection to San Jose. Rail would be economically and environmentally preferable to widening Highway 17.

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Thank you for leading the way in transforming our transportation system and making our community more equitable, more sustainable and more prosperous for everyone.

Sincerely,
Douglas McLain

From: Henry Hooker <henry.hooker@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 12:15 PM

Dear Staff and Commissioners,

Thanks so much for your ongoing work on this project.

I would like to point out what I consider to be a serious flaw in an otherwise open and healthy process: a conspicuous lack of information and discussion of the threat to the entire project if the rail right of way is jeopardized by the choices that the public discussion yields. My reading of the materials and discussions with staff at the February public meeting leaves me with the feeling that commission and staff understand that litigation is almost certain for any right of way use that does *not* include rail, but there is so much uncertainty regarding outcomes that no one wants to have a public debate of this looming problem.

How can we have a realistic discussion of alternatives without doing some serious research and public comment on the one thing that could delay any forward movement for a decade and possibly end up giving us nothing?

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Hire the attorneys who specialize in these matters now, so we can fully evaluate the risks as we make choices.

Thank you,

Henry G. Hooker
Santa Cruz

From: Jack Brown <jack.b.brown@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 6:04 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Let's not repeat the mistake of SMART

The massive failure of the other local suburbia rail system, Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (or SMART), should be a lesson to Santa Cruz County regarding risky financing of expensive transit system. With a 95% decline in ridership for a system that was financed with risky bonds being paid back with sales tax revenue that is being wiped out by the pandemic shut down, why in the world would we want to repeat this disaster in Santa Cruz? Also with the sudden change to work-from-home model for many of us over the long term, there is zero justification to continue with studies and building yet another transit system that our county government cannot manage, nor integrate. The simple solution is to cut our losses and use the corridor for active transportation and look to improve our existing bus system to work as a Bus On Shoulder/Bus Rapid Transit system. Bus transit is the right-sized solution for our county.

Respectfully,

Jack Brown

From: Thomas Carr <skyeranch@me.com> **Sent:** Friday, May 29, 2020 6:56 AM

Please put in a walking and biking trail along the whole coast. No train. thanks, Anne Carr

From: mtmarin203@everyactioncustom.com <mtmarin203@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 12:02 PM

Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

Hello,

I'm writing because I believe a rail would work better than a bus on the rail corridor.

I have lived in many cities that had a rail option and it was/is always the preferred method of travel throughout the city.

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- Rail provides the easiest access for wheelchairs and accommodates more people with personal mobility devices.

Thank you for leading the way in transforming our transportation system and making our community more equitable, more sustainable and more prosperous for everyone.

Sincerely,
Maria Marinaro

From: Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org> **Sent:** Tuesday, June 2, 2020 12:27 PM

RTC Commissioners,

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We request that the Alternative Analysis include Micro-shuttles as one of the down-selected transit modes assessed.

The Alternative Scoring Matrix is very subjective and the values given to the selected modes (large transit, fixed rail systems), specifically ridership estimates, are questionable based on other similar operating systems (SMART, VTA, WES Commuter Rail). We believe eliminating Micro-shuttles from the down-selected transit modes is not justifiable from the Alternative Scoring Matrix and request Micro-shuttles be included in the alternative analysis.

As a way to increase public awareness of the best use of the Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor, we have recruited Steven DeCinzo (local artist) to provide illustrations to help voice our position on the best use of the Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor for mass transit.

Our first illustration called "RTC WALL" (attached) helps inform the public of the major physical barrier of the continuous fences that separate the train from the trail. A shortcoming of the Alternative Scoring Matrix is there is no criteria assessing the impact of a continuous fence (RTC WALL) that separates mass transit vehicle from trail. The RTC WALL or fence is a major issue for the community, creating many access barriers for many properties along the corridor, separating neighborhoods, reducing access points to the beaches and significantly reducing the effectiveness of the trail as a transportation resource. All four of the transit modes (1 big bus, 3 trains) will create the "RTC Wall". For an appropriate analysis, there must be transit modes that **do not require the RTC Wall**. For this reason, it is essential that micro-shuttles be included as an alternative.

Our second illustration highlights the impact a passenger train will have on Roaring Camp Boardwalk operations (attached). The Alternative Scoring Matrix should have included criteria that assesses the impact to Roaring Camp Boardwalk Railroad operations, as well as any other commercial or residences along the corridor. For example, a rail transit system operating 60 trains a day will require Roaring Camp to relocate their Boardwalk on/off-boarding operations because it would not be possible to park the large Roaring Camp train on the tracks. The impact on Roaring Camp by the selected transit mode should be included in the Alternative Scoring Matrix.

Again, we believe it is critical to include Micro-shuttles in the down-selected Alternative Analysis list.

Best regards,

Executive Director
TrailNow.org

