



## MILESTONE 3 LIVE CHAT #1 RECAP

Thursday, November 12, 2020 | 12 – 1:30 p.m.

15 TOTAL CHATTERS

### #1 David Van Brink - [david.van.brink@gmail.com](mailto:david.van.brink@gmail.com)

david van brink Hello! I'm of course delighted to see that "Rail (TBD)" is the recommended choice...

**Proj. Team  
Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

david van brink I have a question though.

How is it that light rail has higher VMT reduction, but BRT has higher ridership? (And yes it seems reasonable to prioritize VMT more than sheer ridership)

**Proj. Team  
Member 1**

Hi David, thanks for your question. Glad you are joining us in this chat. You are correct that VMT reduction is greater for rail than BRT and that is due to the typical length of a rail trip is longer than a BRT trip.

david van brink Ah! So, Would it be correct to say that Number Of Passenger Trips is higher for BRT, but Number Of Passenger Miles is higher for LR?

**Proj. Team  
Member 1**

Yes, that is correct!

david van brink Thank you! one more question coming...

It appears that BRT has lower costs, but rail is identified with Best Potential Funding. Can I find more details about that dynamic?



**Proj. Team  
Member 1**

There is an appendix in the draft report that provides a table of the funding sources that are likely to be available for each of the 4 alternatives. I believe it is the last appendix.

**david van brink**

Ooops thank you.

Another question. What should I say to friends who have gotten the idea that, "There's no room for transit and a bike trail"?

**Proj. Team  
Member 1**

There is room for transit and trail along the rail right of way with possible exception of locations for stations and passing sidings. You could refer them to the draft report, Chapter 5 as there is a performance measure that discusses the impact on the trail from each transit alternative that is evaluated.

**david van brink**

thank you! Just the thing.

EEK, the link on this web page for TCAA DRAFT REPORT seems broken  
[http://sccrtc-tcaa-milestone3.com/resources/5\\_TSA\\_Draft\\_Report.pdf](http://sccrtc-tcaa-milestone3.com/resources/5_TSA_Draft_Report.pdf)

(Not to burden you with tech support or anything. Thanks for all your works on this project!

**Proj. Team  
Member 1**

Thank you for letting us know. We will fix it immediately.

We have fixed the link and it should now be working.

**david van brink**

works for me!

(Thank you for the open house and chat, great stuff, looking forward.)



## #2 Sally - [sallya@cruzio.com](mailto:sallya@cruzio.com)

Sally Is it possible to see the whole conversation in this chat or is this just a 1:1 experience?

Proj. Team Member 1 Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Hi Sally. Thank you for joining the Live Chat. It is a one-on-one conversation between you and our project team.

Sally Thank you. Will the contents of the chats be part of the public record?

Proj. Team Member 1 We will be posting all the questions/answers from this live chat session as well as any that we receive through the website and online meeting to the Website after we consolidate them.

Sally Thank you. I think that's all I have for now. Just those process questions. I appreciate you doing what you can to accommodate the public in these weird covid-times. If I think of any more questions I'll log back in.

## #3 Chris Benz - [ccbenz@gmail.com](mailto:ccbenz@gmail.com)

Chris Benz We live (half time) in Trestle Beach (La Selva) right next to the rail corridor and regularly find myself bogged down in the worsening Hwy 1 gridlock from SC to Watsonville just for routine day-to-day activities because no alternative routing is feasible. So, I definitely favor commuter or LRT as the preferred alternative, although I



understand that many of my neighbors don't want the return of trains. My 3 questions are:

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

**Chris Benz**

1. Is there a significant noise difference between commuter train and LRT?
2. When will a Milestone 4 decision be made?
3. The commuter train appears not to have any stops between Aptos and Watsonville, while the LRT would have one stop just south of La Selva Beach. Is this configuration fixed; ie. is there no possibility at this point of having the commuter train stop midway between Aptos and Watsonville?

Thanks,

Chris Benz

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you Chris. I am gathering your answers and will respond shortly

Hi Chris, generally CRT is quieter than LRT but this depends on equipment used which will not be determined as part of this current study. Noise can also be mitigated through quiet zones. The goal is to continue gathering input and working towards a decision in February 2021.



The stations are not finalized at this point so there is possibility to look at additional locations as the project moves forward. Your comment is documented and we appreciate your input.

Thank you for this open house and chat opportunity. I am following SCCRTC progress with great interest, compliment your entire evaluation team for your comprehensive and inclusive approach. Wishing you swift progress!

Chris Benz

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you Chris.

#### **#4 Joni - [danjobry@aol.com](mailto:danjobry@aol.com)**

Santa Cruz county cannot afford to support this train that RTC is trying to force down our communities throats. There will not be the ridership needed and it will involve future property taxes to support those who can't afford to take the train. This will be a complete waste of money. What we need is a trail only in our community such as that which Monterey county is enjoying. SCC Already has a transportation program that assist the disabled and handicapped. We do not need to reinvent the wheel very very expensive multi million dollar wheel.

Joni

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Hi Joni, welcome to the Chat room for the TCAA. Your input is valued. Please make sure you express your concerns in an email or through the survey that is available through the open house.



## #5 Theodore Lorek - [tedlorek@gmail.com](mailto:tedlorek@gmail.com)

Theodore Lorek

If you pick BRT, how long until we pull the track and pave the ROW?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Hi Theodore,

Currently the proposed locally preferred alternative is rail but it could shift to BRT once stakeholder input is received and a decision is made by the RTC. If BRT is the final locally preferred alternative that is approved by the commission, it is estimated to take 15-17 years to implement this project.

The number of years it will take to get to the point where the rail would be moved would be after environmental review and design.

Theodore Lorek

Are you going to let county voters choose the preferred alternative?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

As representatives of County voters, the RTC Commission and Metro Board will be making the decision of the Locally Preferred Alternative to move forward into the next stage. All public and stakeholder input has and will continue to be provided to the Project Team and decision-makers through each step of the process. Regardless of what LPA moves forward, there will most



likely be a potential measure going to voters for local funding match of Federal or State funding in the future.

**Theodore Lorek**

I understand additional funding will be needed to implement any of the preferred alternatives, but if it's BRT. Can't we pave with the revenue from Measure D now? Use the ROW for active transport while you work on the bond measure for the service.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Regardless of which alternative is selected for construction, we will explore funding sources and phasing opportunities for implementation.

**Theodore Lorek**

So the RTC is going to hold the ROW hostage with no active transportation path until they get funding for the total transportation service?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

For more information on the work of the RTC to implement the trail, please see the RTC website. There are currently 18 miles of the trail project underway either in environmental review, design or under construction.

The trail will continue to be implemented independent of the transit alternative.

## **#6 Johanna Lighthill - [jjmmlight@comcast.net](mailto:jjmmlight@comcast.net)**

**Johanna Lighthill**

Hello, thank you for considering my questions. The FRA has determined that "the safest grade crossing is one that doesn't exist." There are 70 grade crossings listed along the corridor.



What are the the costs associated with safety mitigation, of establishing quiet zones, and where are these costs listed? Are rail safety requirements different from bus? If so, has this study considered the effects of safety mitigation measures(fencing) on public access to the trail running adjacent to transit?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

## **#7 Tina Andreatta - [tina.marieotr@gmail.com](mailto:tina.marieotr@gmail.com)**

**Tina Andreatta**

Please continue as quickly as possible building the 32 mile bicycle/pedestrian trail through our entire county. Immediately implement passenger rail to connect us to the rest of the state south of Watsonville. Fortunately I am retired and I can advocate for families and individuals who are busy working and putting food on the table that don't have time to attend these important meetings. Thank you

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

thank you for your comment. We have documented this and encourage you to also submit this as a comment through email. Appreciate your input.





**Tina Andreatta**

Please provide proper email. Thank you

**Proj. Team Member 1**

The email is: [transitcorridora@scrtc.org](mailto:transitcorridora@scrtc.org)

Stepping back and looking at this objectively; every public street, highway, freeway, overpass, sidewalk, traffic light, bridge, etc. is paid by taxpayers through various taxes and measures. Fortunately Santa Cruz county's residents overwhelmingly approved Measure D which includes the maintenance and upgrade of our rail corridor to serve everyone in our county; young, old, disabled, those without a vehicle to commute from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. Please remember our residents living in Watsonville that usually are not voicing their support for rail and trail because working and/or

**Tina Andreatta**

language barrier. Thanks

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for the comment Tina. We are working with key stakeholders within the Watsonville community to help promote the project and distribute information in Spanish.



## #8 Kristen - [krsandel@gmail.com](mailto:krsandel@gmail.com)

**Kristen** What is the likely path forward for the rail corridor, given some uncertainties on funding and political will? How does this project get accomplished?

**Proj. Team Member 1** Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Welcome Tina!

The next step toward implementation would be environmental review. The commission would need to direct RTC staff to begin that process.

The potential funding options for implementation are discussed in the draft document. I believe it is in the last appendix.

Also, in Chapter 5 if you search for the performance measure that discusses the length of time to implement, there is more detailed information about the various steps to implement depending on the alternative.

**Kristen** Thank you, I will check the last appendix for the funding options. I really want rail to happen in SCC but am concerned the funding won't come through.

**Proj. Team Member 1** We appreciate your interest and ongoing engagement in the TCAA.

## #9 Craig - [reg.sccrtc@excel4x.com](mailto:reg.sccrtc@excel4x.com)



Craig na

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

### #10 Johanna Lighthill - [jjmmlight@comcast.net](mailto:jjmmlight@comcast.net)

Johanna Lighthill

My post timed out, so I'm resubmitting my questions: The FRA has determined that "the safest grade crossing is one that doesn't exist." There are 70 grade crossings listed along the corridor. What are the the costs associated with safety mitigation, of establishing quiet zones, and where are these costs listed? Are rail safety requirements different from bus? If so, has this study considered the effects of safety mitigation measures(fencing) on public access to the trail running adjacent to transit? Thank you.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Hi Johanna, thank you for coming back. We are working to address your question right now related to the costs.

Johanna Lighthill

Thank you.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Costs for all safety needs of any of the alternatives are included in the estimates but are not detailed enough to provide estimates



specific to intersections. That level of detail will be part of a future analysis.

**Johanna Lighthill**

Well, time seems to have run out. I had hoped to have my questions addressed during this chat session. I will try again next time.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

I apologize if we missed a question. Would you mind repeating it so we can address it?

## #11 Phil

**Phil**

Wondering about funding: the report listed approx 60% of rail could be funded by outside sources based on what is available today. Are there other untapped funds that don't meet that definition that could fill that remaining 40%, such as state rail plan, or federal money from a Biden administration? A 40% local match seems like a tall hurdle, since it would require a 2/3 vote

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Hi Phil, Thank you for joining us today. The 60% estimate for how much funding may be available for a rail alternative is based on the existing sources that are currently available.

**Phil**

Does that include funds from the state rail plan? Not clear to me if those funds are currently available



**Proj. Team Member 1**

There is potential in the future for additional funds to be available. One example is the recent executive order from Governor Newsom to promote transit in the future and to implement the state rail plan.

The funding sources that were considered for the 60% for rail did consider the present day amounts that Caltrans is funding to implement the rail plan. But it does not consider any additional funds that may be increased due to this executive order.

Does that answer your questions? The RTC wants to be ready as funds become available for a dedicated transit facility.

**Phil** Yes, that helps. Thank you.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Your welcome. Thank you for joining us today.

## #12 Bud Colligan - [bud@colligans.com](mailto:bud@colligans.com)

**Bud Colligan**

Can we talk live or is this all text chat?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

Hi Bud, welcome to the chat room!

We are currently hosting this online chat and our team is focused on addressing questions through the chat feature. Appreciate your interest and happy to assist you online.



**Bud Colligan**

OK, I have a number of questions and comments.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

You can submit your questions/comments through email if that helps as well at: [transitcorridoraa@scrtc.org](mailto:transitcorridoraa@scrtc.org)

**Bud Colligan**

What support do you have for the draft report's assertion that anything other than rail jeopardizes the continuity of the corridor?

Thousands of communities across the county have used railbanking to keep continuity of their corridors AND lay off any liability to the federal govt for "takings" lawsuits.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Have you had a chance to look at the draft report yet that discusses the results of the performance measures in more detail than is provide d in the open house?

**Bud Colligan**

Yes, I have read the entire report. That's why I'm asking the question.

Is there any response?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

We are working on it.

The results of the analysis show that there is greater risk for non-rail alternatives as the tracks would need to be removed and freight rail abandoned. See page 5-32.

If freight rail is abandoned, it is the common carrier that would need to petition the Surface Transportation Board for abandonment. It may be possible for PGR to petition to abandon freight on all or a portion of the line.



Another party could make an offer to preserve freight on the line and thus has the potential to jeopardize RTC's control of the freight easement.

There is a very clear process for abandonment through the Surface Transportation Board that is initiated by the rail operator before any tracks are removed. Once abandoned, and again before any track removal, the corridor is railbanked. Railbanking preserves the corridor and any easements for future use by rail. At that point tracks can be removed and any lawsuits are the responsibility of the federal govt. Your report asserts that this is somehow not a process that is understood or has been applied in many communities across the nation and that is factually incorrect. In terms of another party applying to do freight, what freight operator in their right mind would apply to do freight after 3 FAILED FREIGHT OPERATORS in 8 years?

**Bud Colligan**

If you feel this potential risk should be explained in another way, please provide your comments via email or a letter for consideration by the project team and the RTC.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

I have just provided my comments. Next question: You talk about various Capitola adopted plans on pages A-7 and A-8 but make no mention of the fact that the voters of Capitola VOTED in 2018 against the plan of record by the RTC and the language of Measure L was then adopted by the City and is part of the code of the city to no cooperate or use a

**Bud Colligan**

any city personnel or money to support routing the trail through the City of Capitola, which is the RTC's plan. It would seem that that is THE



most important part of any City of Capitola discussion. Not mentioned in your report. Why?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for this suggestion to add discussion on Measure L that Capitola adopted in 2018. I will bring this to the project team for consideration. Currently, appendix A just includes previous studies related to transit.

Studies are not votes of ALL voters. Your input sessions are extremely small next to a ballot measure where thousands of people voted. Which brings me to my next question. I know that you published the draft immediately after the election and it was mostly done prior to the election. In the 1st District Supervisors race, the disposition of the corridor was THE CENTRAL ISSUE. Manu Koenig, who favors a multi-use trail on the corridor and NO TRAIN, won in a landslide, 57% to 43%. Again, it would seem to me that actual votes, in which more than 33,000 people voted would be an IMPORTANT piece of public input vs. the very small input you receive from the same people, most of whom are associated with groups that support a train. Your input tells you exactly what you want to hear rather than being representative of the populace's wishes. There are survey ways to discern what the public REALLY wants, but you are not doing them. Why? In the absence of actual survey results that are representative, we must rely on the TWO VOTES that have taken place, both of which are opposed to any of the alternatives you are proposing in the draft plan.

**Bud Colligan**

Two more questions; 1) Roaring Camp RR is a private business. Why are there needs discussed in this report? I don't see any other private business which is given consideration in a public study.





2) You have not been clear in the report how much of the projected ridership comes from Watsonville. The Passenger Rail Feasibility Study said it was only 300 roundtrips per day. Is there any update to that number in our study?

your study

**Proj. Team Member 1**

The RTC made the decision at the end of the Unified Corridor Investment Study to have RTC and METRO work together to determine the transit alternative as a dedicated transit facility on the Santa Cruz Branch Line that would most benefit the residents of Santa Cruz County. RTC and METRO staff as part of the TCAA is investigating the likely amount of funds that would be available from state and federal sources. Likely, there will need to be a source of local funds needed in the future and at that time this will require a vote to be brought to the people to determine their support.

In regards to your question on why there is a PM directed towards Roaring Camp, the RTC made the decision at I believe the March 2020 meeting to include the impact on Roaring Camp given how directly they could be impacted by this decision.

I do not have the number of riders that would be coming from and to Watsonville.

**Bud Colligan**

Last question: you are not clear how you determined the "likely" nature of state and federal grants from "existing" sources. You state that 60% of capital and 47% of operating expenses is "likely." On what basis do you determine the likelihood of funds when all of the grants sources are competitive, have different terms and conditions, etc.?



**Proj. Team Member 1**

In the appendix on the funding sources, there is a column on the assumptions that were used to estimate the amount of funds that are likely to be available.

**Bud Colligan**

It's too bad you do not have the Watsonville numbers, so those are the residents most often said to benefit from this type of public transit. It is a super important part of any analysis. I guess we will continue to rely on the RTFS as the best source of funds.

source of info on this issue

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you Bud for participating in the Online Chat. The session is now concluded.

### #13 Mark Lee - [mdlee4125@gmail.com](mailto:mdlee4125@gmail.com)

**Mark Lee**

Hi my name is Mark Lee and I have several questions regarding financial liability on (2) two of the alternatives?

**Proj. Team Member 1**

Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

**Mark Lee**

Everyone who really understand capital project financing in California in order to pay for any capital improvement and annual operational costs that floating a ballot measure one must take into consideration of a 25 year bond measure must double 2x for Wall Street Bond Underwriters to attract investors In the case of Alternative 1 BRT is priced at \$410 million - 64% paid through existing taxation would be  $\$147.6 \text{ million} \times 2 = \$295.2 \text{ million} + \$380 \text{ million} = \$675. \text{ million}$  dollar in additional sales or property



taxes (big mistake) Politicallly and finacncally this not look feasible for an already overtaxes County. Now lets look at Alternative 3 or LRT priced at \$465 million - 61% from existing sources (\$283,650,000 million) leaves \$183,350,000 to be finance by sales tax or property taxes x2 for the Bond Issuers = \$362,700,000 +\$510 additional funding sources = \$872,700,000 million to be shouldered by locaal tax payers over 25 years is clearly unaffordable and politically not feasible. How can we either reduce the scope by 50% of both Alternative 1 BRT and Alternative 3 LRT into phases over 30 years?

Sorry about the misspellings - I was attempting to beat the clock before 1:30 p.m for this workshop.

I am not sure how BRT would actually work unless it is placed on a dedicated Bus on Shouder approach and NOT Auxilliary lanes - which shall cause even further traffic congestion due to induced increased in traffic volume.

**Proj. Team Member  
1**

The project team will be developing a business plan for the locally preferred alternative that will address some of these issues.

**Mark Lee**

One element that is completely missing from the TCAA Alternatives analysis that is very important is how would BRT or LRT would actually reduce Highway 1 traffic VMT during commuter hours. This analysis is completely missing. No data on reducing VMT on Highway 1 from Santa Cruz to Watsonville.. Needs to be analyzed

**Proj. Team Member  
1**

For more information on the bus on shoulders project, please see the Highway 1 web pages. <https://sccrtc.org/projects/streets-highways/hwy1corridor/>



**Mark Lee** Still not enough transparent analysis on paying for these high priced capital facilities and operation cost alternatives BRT and LRT

BRT would cost taxpayers approx \$675 million in new taxation sources which is a huge debt service to shoulder for the new generation especially as the transition to E-vehicles and Uber-Lyft alternatives

LRT would cost taxpayers approximately \$872.2 million over 25 years through new taxation sources that would certainly drive the cost of home ownership up so high making it unaffordable for the next generation of Millennials and their children as property taxes have to be raised. The next generation will continue to drive - E vehicles and contract driving arrangements through Uber-Left transportation services. Sales tax financing is more favorable than property tax increases and is much more equitable.

**Proj. Team Member**  
**1**

Thank you for your input and time today Mark. Your comments are documented and our online chat session has now concluded.

**Mark Lee**

Thank you

Good Day

**Proj. Team Member**  
**1**

Have a great day yourself!

**#14 Zachary Davis - [zach@theglassjar.com](mailto:zach@theglassjar.com)**



**Zachary Davis** What are the important upcoming dates/milestones to select the Locally Preferred Alternative?

**Proj. Team Member 1** Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

In January the Final Report and Proposed LPA will be presented to the RTC Commission and they will consider approval in February 2021.

### **#15 Sally - [sallya@cruzio.com](mailto:sallya@cruzio.com)**

**Sally** I love the rail proposal. But given that some of the tracks are very close to the ocean, can you explain what consideration has been given to armoring against sea level rise? It seems that the tracks near the Boardwalk are particularly vulnerable. I imagine the City of Santa Cruz is developing plans to protect that flood plain. Are there other vulnerable parts of track that need protecting from the unfortunate inevitability of sea level rise?

**Proj. Team Member 1** Thank you for your interest in the TCAA Project, a team member will be with you shortly.

As part of the current analysis, we have looked at vulnerable zones for sea level rise.



The other areas besides the boardwalk that could be affected by sea level rise and additional coastal erosion are La Selva coastal bluffs and New Brighton Beach bluffs.

**Sally**

Thanks. Was any work done to research what would be needed to protect those areas?

It's ironic that the location that is best suited for use to reduce our local GHG emissions is also vulnerable to the disruptive results of those emissions.

**Proj. Team Member 1**

This current study has identified potential impacts, but it will not look at identifying mitigation strategies for potential impacts. That work will be done during the environmental analysis phase of work.

**Sally**

Thank you. That's helpful. This chat function is very useful. I hope that lots of people are using it.