



Apr 16, 2024

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Support for Staff Recommendation for Item 5. Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project: Affirm Support in the Ultimate Trail Configuration, Seek Additional Funding, Work to Reduce Costs and Share Costs with the Rail Operators, and Acceptance and Adoption of Final Environmental Review Documents

Chair Cummings and Commissioners,

Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail (FORT) is a local, non-profit community organization that advocates for expanding Santa Cruz County's transportation system to include passenger rail service and a 32-mile multi-use trail as detailed in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Master Plan. We are so excited to see the next segments of this neighborhood transforming, multi-use trail come to life.

We urge the commission to support staff's recommendation and take the following actions:

1. Affirm support for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 project in the Ultimate Trail Configuration;
2. Direct staff to work with the County of Santa Cruz on value analysis efforts to reduce costs for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 project in the Ultimate Trail Configuration;
3. Direct staff to negotiate necessary arrangements with the railroad operator (St. Paul and Pacific Railroad and their contracted freight provider Big Trees & Pacific also known as Roaring Camp Railroad) for relocation or the track to accommodate the Ultimate Trail Configuration at their cost to the extent feasible;
4. Direct staff to continue to pursue additional funding sources for Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 to fully fund the project and commit to fully funding the project with state, federal, and local funding sources;
5. Direct staff to identify the necessary steps for the California Transportation Commission to assign the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Active Transportation Program grant award received by the County of Santa Cruz in the

Handout item 5

04/18/2024 Special RTC Meeting

amount of \$67.6 million to the Regional Transportation Commission should it be desirable and beneficial;

6. Accept the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Final Environmental Impact Report as adequate for decision making; and
7. Adopt Findings, Overriding Considerations, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Ultimate Trail Configuration and the Optional First Phase: Interim Trail, and file a Notice of Determination for the Proposed Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project Page 2 Project in its entirety to complete the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase.

We want to thank RTC staff for the consistent efforts to work with responsible agencies and move this project forward.

Matt Farrell

Chair

Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail

From: [Brian Peoples](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Agenda #5 / RTC Special Meeting / Optional Interim Trail recommendation
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:26:24 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

Trail Now recommends that the RTC Commission instruct staff to engage in negotiations with Progressive Rail to facilitate the federal railbanking process, anticipating that Progressive Rail will need to be compensated by the RTC. During his tenure, former Santa Cruz County RTC Executive Director, Guy Preston, advocated for railbanking the Santa Cruz Branchline due to his understanding of the legalities surrounding the publicly-owned property and the necessary procedures to ensure the transportation corridor remains accessible to the community. Roaring Camp, operating as an amusement park train ride operator, lacks the authority to impede the railbanking of the Santa Cruz Branchline. The most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly method to establish the Coastal Trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz Boardwalk is through the construction of the Optional Interim Trail.

The fact is, the only way to build the continuous Coastal Trail all the to Watsonville, RTC Commission needs to move forward with the Optional Interim Trail plan.

Best regards,

Brian Peoples



From: [Alex Fischer](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Approve Ultimate Trail for Segments 10 and 11
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:03:15 PM

Please accept and approve ALL elements of the staff recommendation required to build the Ultimate Trail in Segments 10 and 11. Any more delays will cause increased costs on the rail trail project, which 73% of voters approved of. As a young voter in the county, having a train will be a major improvement for so many different people who live in Santa Cruz. From high school or college students who don't have a car and don't want to wait 30+ minutes for a bus to senior citizens who cannot drive safely anymore, a train will be life changing. Even for those who want to keep using a car, a train will help alleviate the horrendous traffic on Highway 1 which is only going to get worse as more people move to Santa Cruz. Delaying the rail means delaying a more equitable and environmentally friendly Santa Cruz. Please approve ALL elements of the staff recommendation required to build the Ultimate Trail in Segments 10 and 11.

Best,
Alex Fischer



██████████
██████████
Capitola, CA 95010
██████████

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
April 17, 2024

Re: Support for Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10-11 Project

Dear SCC-RTC Commissioners and Staff:

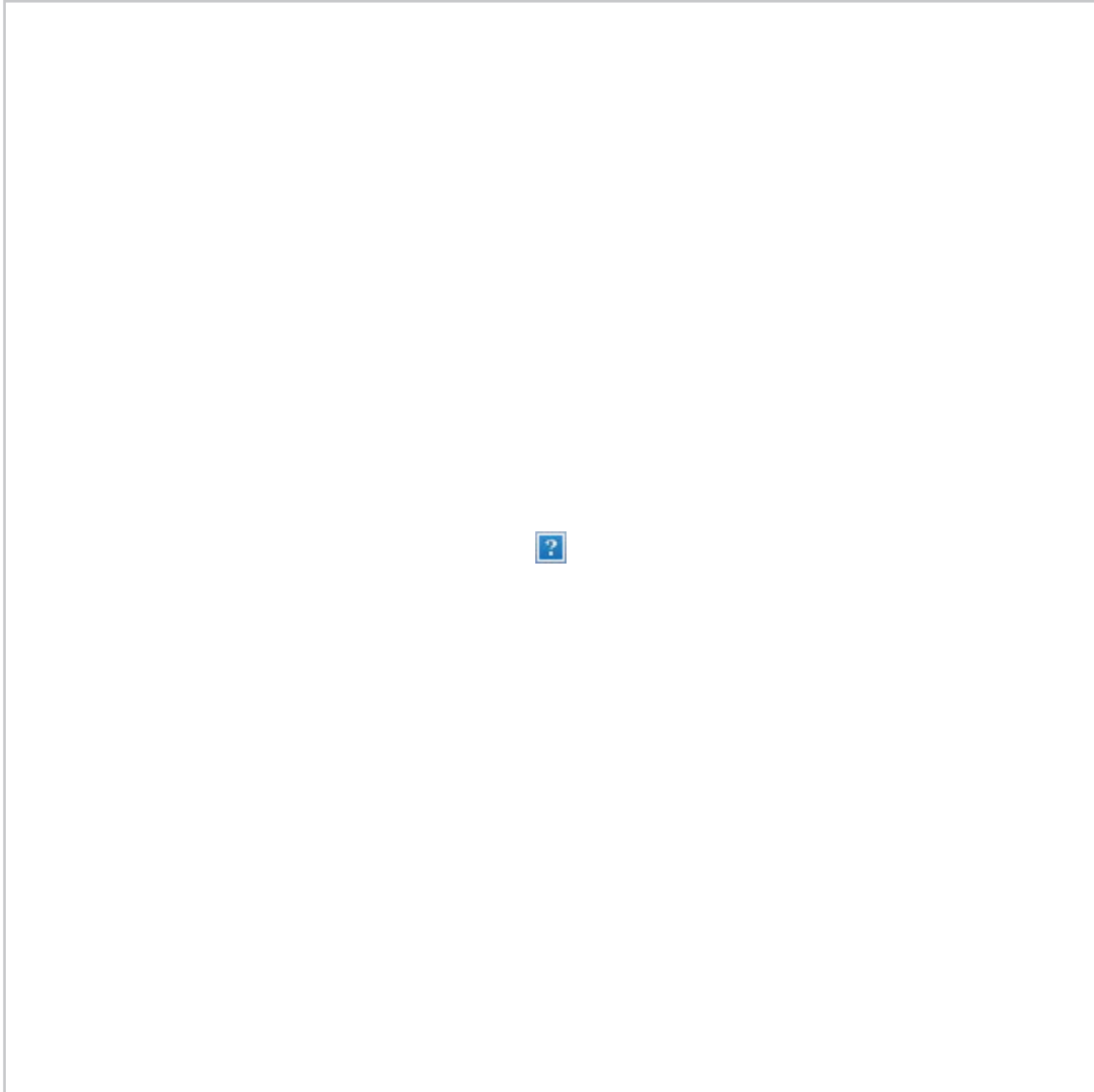
Equity Transit expresses support for Santa Cruz County's Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10-11 Ultimate Trail Project and is writing to you, all commissioners and staff of the SCCRTC, regarding the April 18th, 9am special meeting discussing Segments 10 and 11 of the Coastal Rail Trail. We ask that commissioners move forward and affirm support in the Ultimate Trail Configuration, seek additional Funding to complete the project, and work to reduce costs and share costs with the rail operators, and accept and adopt all of Final Environmental Review Documents including the following as noted in the agenda:

Staff recommends and Equity Transit supports the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to approve all of the following items:

1. Consistent with the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 5, 7, and 18, affirm support for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 project in the Ultimate Trail Configuration;
2. Direct staff to work with the County of Santa Cruz on value analysis efforts to reduce costs for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 project in the Ultimate Trail Configuration;
3. Direct staff to negotiate necessary arrangements with the railroad operator (St. Paul and Pacific Railroad and their contracted freight provider Big Trees & Pacific also known as Roaring Camp Railroad) for relocation or the track to accommodate the Ultimate Trail Configuration at their cost to the extent feasible;
4. Direct staff to continue to pursue additional funding sources for Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 to fully fund the project and commit to fully funding the project with state, federal, and local funding sources;
5. Direct staff to identify the necessary steps for the California Transportation Commission to assign the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Active Transportation Program grant award received by the County of Santa Cruz in the amount of \$67.6 million to the Regional Transportation Commission should it be desirable and beneficial;
6. Accept the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Final Environmental Impact Report as adequate for decision making;
and
7. Adopt Findings, Overriding Considerations, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Ultimate Trail Configuration and the Optional First Phase: Interim Trail, and file a Notice of Determination for the Proposed Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project Page 2 Project in its entirety to complete the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase.

Our support for the Ultimate Trail Coastal Rail-Trail Project is in line with the Transportation Policies of California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and the Sierra Club, and advocates for projects that which help reduce vehicle miles traveled and provide everyone, including pedestrians, wheel chair users, bicyclists and transit users, with safe access to jobs, shopping, services and recreation. Our support is also in alignment with environmental goals of the California CAPTI, Climate Action Plan for Transportation

From: [Trail Now](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Coastal Trail Segment 10 & 11 decision
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 5:36:57 AM



RTC Special Meeting on Segment 10 & 11 Coastal Trail

Thursday, April 18 at 9 am at Scotts Valley City Council Chambers 1 Civic Center

Drive Scotts Valley, CA

Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87983018680>

Dial-in: 1-669-444-9171 Webinar ID: 879 8301 8680

Staff report: [All_Segment1011_EIR_ProjectUpdate_MeasureDAT.pdf \(scrtc.org\)](#)

Public comments can be made at meeting or submitted to info@scrtc.org prior to

Wednesday at noon.

Trail Now response to RTC / County Staff Report:

- The staff report does not take into account the recent findings of a rail consultant, which indicated that most existing rail trestles will need to be replaced for a new passenger rail system.
- The staff report does not mention how the Ultimate Trail will need to be adjusted to make way for a future passenger rail, going against the policy statement for the Ultimate Trail Configuration.
- The staff report overlooks the legal aspects related to the federal railbanking process, falsely assuming that Roaring Camp and Progressive Rail will be able to hinder the conversion of old railroad tracks into the Optional Interim Trail.
- The staff report neglects to include the Capitola Trestle as part of the trail.
- The staff report does not discuss the CPUC restrictions that will be enforced on the trail at various points, potentially hindering trail construction due to limitations on new rail crossings.
- The staff report fails to consider the expected restrictions from the California Coastal Commission, as the Ultimate Trail and new fencing will obstruct beach access, resulting in delays to trail construction.
- The staff report does not address how the Ultimate Trail contradicts the Coastal Act and is not in line with Santa Cruz County Coastal Plans.
- The staff report falls short by omitting cost estimates and projected schedules for the Optional Interim Trail, which are crucial for the RTC Commission to make financially sound decisions.

Trail Now recommendation on Segments 10 & 11 Coastal Trail:

Trail Now recommends that the RTC Commission instruct staff to engage in negotiations with Progressive Rail to facilitate the federal railbanking process, anticipating that Progressive Rail will need to be compensated by the RTC. During his tenure, former Santa Cruz County RTC Executive Director, Guy Preston, advocated for railbanking the Santa Cruz Branchline due to his understanding of the legalities surrounding the publicly-owned property and the necessary procedures to ensure the transportation corridor remains accessible to the community. Roaring Camp, operating as an amusement park train ride operator, lacks the authority to

impede the railbanking of the Santa Cruz Branchline. The most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly method to establish the Coastal Trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz Boardwalk is through the construction of the Optional Interim Trail. We recommend RTC Commission to move forward with the Optional Interim Trail plan.

SUPPORT TRAIL NOW

We continue to press RTC leadership to build the Coastal Trail from Watsonville to Davenport in a timely, cost-effective, and eco-friendly manner. We use donations to advertise on Facebook with articles written by Trail Now supporters. Please consider donating at <https://www.trailnow.org/donate>.

This email was sent to info@sccrtc.org
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Trail Now · [REDACTED] · Aptos, CA 95003 · USA



From: [Philip Wiese](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Comment on upcoming RTC meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 4:23:00 PM

Hello. As I live in Watsonville and have a job, I cannot comment during the upcoming special meeting this Thursday. But I would like to express my support for the rail trail and moving segments 10 and 11 forward now.
Thank you
Philip Wiese

Sent from my iPhone



March 31, 2024

Mr. Rob Tidmore, Park Planner
Department of Community Development & Infrastructure/Santa Cruz County Parks
County of Santa Cruz
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Dear Mr. Tidmore,

We understand that the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project (Project) is facing a shortfall of funding, based on the discussion at last week's meeting of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. As you know, Roaring Camp, through its subsidiary, the Santa Cruz, Big Trees and Pacific Railway, operates passenger rail service between Felton and the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, utilizing a portion of the Santa Cruz Branch Line (Line). It also assists the freight operator on the line, Progressive, with operations in the segment that is open for service in the Watsonville area.

The Line represents the only connection between Roaring Camp and the national rail system. In order to maintain the ability of Roaring Camp to transport rail equipment in the future, as well as to facilitate future commuter and excursion operations, it is essential that the potential for the future reopening of the rail line be preserved, as it represents the only rail connection to the national rail system. Toward that end, Roaring Camp is in a position to assist the County in reducing the funding gap on the Project by performing track relocation work.

Roaring Camp would be willing to undertake, at its expense, the relocation of the trackway to support the work on Segment 10. In addition, Roaring Camp is willing to consider performing similar work on Segment 11, however, we have not been provided with the plans for that segment and therefore cannot evaluate the amount of work required for that segment. We strongly support the Project and the County's decision to proceed with the Ultimate Trail Configuration. We are ready to assist you in closing the funding gap and implementing a successful project.

We are copying the members of the RTC on this letter, and providing a copy of the letter we submitted last week to the Board of Supervisors.

Sincerely,

Melani Clark
CEO, Roaring Camp

Attachment

cc: Members of the Board of Supervisors
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commissioners

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of [Catherine Milazzo](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: I Want You to Support Passenger Rail Alongside the Trail
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 5:14:04 PM

Dear RTC Commissioner,

My name is Catherine Milazzo, and I want you to support moving forward with electric passenger rail.

I want rail transit between Watsonville and Santa Cruz because it will bypass highway congestion and take me where I need to go safely, reliably, and quickly.

Electric passenger rail in combination with the Rail Trail will make Santa Cruz County a better place for me and my friends and family.

I am all in favor of sticking with the long term commitment to continue forward with BOTH rail & trail! I already use the sections of the trail that have been built and plan to use both trail & rail in the future.

I believe in our local government staff that are working hard and successfully to secure funding and implement the plans.

Other communities have shown us that this type of project and infrastructure improvements can make a huge positive impact of bringing communities together in solving both human & environmental issues. (ie Portland, OR)

Our communities in North-, Mid-, and South- Santa Cruz County and our planet all need and deserve for us to move forward with the Rail&Trail project. Both components are doable and vital.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Katie Milazzo

Please encourage the RTC staff to continue applying for all possible grant funding for the passenger rail project.

Thank you for your work on the RTC to improve transportation in Santa Cruz County.

Sincerely,
Catherine Milazzo
[REDACTED] Santa Cruz, CA 95062-3413
[REDACTED]

From: [Ben Vernazza](#)
To: "; "Robert Tidmore"; [Regional Transportation Commission](#); [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] "Zach Friend"; [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
[Mitch Weiss](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: INTERIM TRAIL WIDTH & SOUTH COUNTY BENEFITS
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 9:22:19 AM

Dear Supervisors and Commissioners,
 This email addresses key questions raised by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) regarding the Interim Trail: minimizing trail width for safety while maximizing benefits for South County.

Safety and Peak Usage Determine Trail Width :

Supervisors Koenig, McPherson, and Hernandez all raised concerns regarding safety and minimizing tree removal. We acknowledge the importance of safety and maintain the need for a 16-foot-wide Interim trail separating pedestrians and bikes/E-bikes in Segments 9, 10, and 11 up to the Capitola Trestle to accommodate peak usage between Santa Cruz and Capitola (estimated 600-675 per hour after considering new bikes and rentals since the 2019 estimate of 584). After the trestle, we suggest width reductions as follows:

- Park Avenue to “Monarch Butterfly” 14ft (12 ft.?)
- Monarch to Mar Vista Overpass 12ft. **Warning Sign could say . . .
- State Park Drive to Rio Del Mar 14ft (less within Aptos Village)

- Rio Del Mar to Watsonville 12 ft.

** “TRAIL NARROWS TO SAVE BUTTERFLY HABITAT—ENJOY THE SLOWER PACE”

This approach minimizes tree removal and protects the Monarch Butterfly habitat while prioritizing safety in high traffic areas.

Maximizing South County Benefits:

All Supervisors expressed concern about the lack of immediate benefits for South County. We propose your support for the Interim Trail with the following amendments included in the final voting for an Interim Trail:

- Immediate planning and funding for the Slough Trail.
- Immediate planning and funding for the Buena Vista to Rio Del Mar Blvd. segment.
- Planning and funding to connect existing Watsonville trails and bike lanes for resident access.

Benefits:

These adjustments address safety concerns, minimize tree removal, and initiate construction in South County. When sections from Santa Cruz and Watsonville meet (potentially in Aptos Village), a complete trail will be available. To celebrate this milestone, we can vision a community event in Aptos Village celebrating the completion of the trail between Watsonville and the City of Santa Cruz.

We encourage you to consider these solutions in your deliberations.

Proposed by J. Ben Vernazza and other concerned citizens of Santa Cruz County

J. Ben Vernazza CPA/PFS TEP CrFA emeritus,
Aptos CA – [REDACTED]

From: [Matt Farrell](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Letter Supporting Staff Recommendation for Segments 10 and 11
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 6:16:42 AM
Attachments: [RTC Letter Itm5 April 17 2024.docx.pdf](#)

We urge the Regional Transportation Commission to approve the staff recommendation to move forward with Segments 10 and 11 of the Coastal Rail Trail. Please forward this letter to the Commission.

Matt Farrell
Chair
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail

From: [Dianne](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Letter to Commissioners
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 8:32:49 PM

To Regional Transportation Commissioners:

I strongly urge the RTC to support all efforts to get us back on track to receive the CTC grant of \$67 million for implementation of Segments 10 and 11 of the rail trail.

Staff for the County and the RTC have provided viable assurances that funding for the estimated cost shortfall can be found for this highly popular and necessary project for our future transportation needs.

Any delay at this point will certainly jeopardize the progress, planning and possible funding of the trail, and go against the will of 73% of the voters in 2022 to build a trail adjacent to the rail.

Please proceed with plans for both trail and rail transit!

Dianne Dryer
County resident

From: [Rosemary Sarka](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Letter to RTC re Meeting 4-4-24 Item 23
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 7:40:12 PM
Attachments: [Letter to RTC 4.4.24.pdf](#)

The attached letter is sent to the Regional Transportation Commission regarding Agenda Item 23 for the Meeting of the Commission April 4, 2024.

This letter is sent from and on behalf of Roaring Camp, Inc.

Rosemary Sarka
Corporate Secretary



Roaring Camp, Inc.

Regional Transportation Commission

Re: Agenda Item 23, Meeting of April 4, 2024, Actions related to Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11

Members of the Commission:

At the meeting of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors March 26, 2024 Roaring Camp sought to provide our thoughts on several of the issues addressed in the staff report and attachments related to Coastal Rail Train Segments 10 and 11. As these items recur in Agenda Item 23 of the Commission's meeting April 4, we appreciate the opportunity to restate these thoughts and concerns.

As you know, Roaring Camp, through its subsidiary, the Santa Cruz, Big Trees and Pacific Railway, operates passenger rail service between Felton and the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, utilizing a portion of the Santa Cruz Branch Line (Line). It also assists the freight operator of the Line, Progressive, with freight operations in the segment of the Line that is currently open for service in the Watsonville area. Roaring Camp has a particular interest in the preservation of the ability to operate rail service on the Line, as it represents the only connection between Roaring Camp and the national rail system. As a rail operator, Roaring Camp is also interested in facilitating the operation of passenger rail service on the Line and fully supports regional efforts to obtain funding and implement such service.

We concur in the basic recommendations put forth by County Staff. The Draft EIR considered two major alternatives, the "Ultimate Project Configuration" (Trail with Rail) and the "Optional Interim Trail" (Trail on Rail, future construction of Ultimate Project in 30 years). Roaring Camp fully supports the staff recommendation that the "Ultimate Project Configuration" be approved without the inclusion of Option A, which would involve the use of the Capitola Trestle.

Certain "Potential Strategies to Address Budget Gap" which concerned some members of the Board of Supervisors merit our comment. As to the application for additional grant funds, we would suggest that we may be of assistance in finding funds that apply specifically to railroads, but may help to defray costs where rail and trail converge. As you may know, Federal infrastructure funding highly favors rail transportation. We think this option is well worth exploring.

Another suggested option has described Roaring Camp itself assisting to relocate the rail. The very fact that this is cited as an option illustrates Roaring Camp's past, as well as on-going, desire and efforts to be helpful to the rail and trail effort on the Line. Roaring Camp personnel have donated time and effort to consult with County and RTC staff, have shared expertise, been receptive to inquiries, and have offered referrals to experts in various rail-related fields. Roaring

Camp's CEO has studied the plans and walked the rail line with County and RTC staff on trail segments to provide railroad input.

In response to this request, Roaring Camp's CEO has volunteered time to study plans of Segment 10, and has examined areas indicated by the plans as requiring the tracks be moved. Roaring Camp has made a specific proposal directed to Rob Tidmore to move the tracks, without compensation for time, equipment or materials, to the benefit of the County, the RTC and the project itself, in which Roaring Camp believes. Roaring Camp has not been provided with plans for Segment 11.

It is Roaring Camp's continuing hope that the efforts undertaken by means of the planning studies, starting with the Rail Transit Feasibility Study in 2015 and leading up to the recent Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project Concept Report, can be continued and that any actions that would drastically affect the future of passenger rail on the Line would be avoided until those efforts are completed.

Once again, the prospect of railbanking has been raised. We have frequently stated our objections to railbanking, which, in this context would severely delay, if not foreclose, the prospect of passenger rail service on the line.

As the staff report notes, railbanking is only available as part of the federal Surface Transportation Board's consideration of an application to abandon a rail line. Since the existing freight operator, Progressive, has no intention of filing for abandonment, an abandonment could only be pursued by means of an "adverse abandonment" application, brought by a third party (such as the RTC) to force the abandonment. Besides the delay resulting from a contested proceeding that would likely take years to resolve, the ultimate outcome of that proceeding may not result in the approval of an abandonment.

Perhaps more importantly, abandonment of the line may create significant practical and legal obstacles to the renewal of rail service on the line in the future. Any action that substantially impairs future prospects for rail service should only be considered as part of a comprehensive process that considers the full implications of such an action. Before embarking on such a course, the RTC should very carefully consider not only whether such an approach will provide the desired financial benefits sought and can meet the required schedule, but also the permanent damage such an action would have on prospects to renew service on the line. It would be particularly short-sighted to make such a long-term decision simply to close a budget gap on this project when alternative solutions may exist.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide our thoughts to the Board and express our support for the adoption of the Ultimate Trail Alternative.

Sincerely,

Melani Clark
CEO, Roaring Camp

From: [RTC Staff](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: New Contact Us submission from Dee Vogel
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 3:07:56 PM

Name

Dee Vogel

Email

[REDACTED]

Subject

food for thought

Your Message

Greetings,
I'm very thankful a majority of the Board of supervisors voted to hold off on next steps for Segments 10 and 11 of the rail trail. In the face of such astonishingly high costs for only 4.5 miles of trail, I hope county staff will pursue more reasonable options while we wait for results of the latest project concept report.'
Thank you. And sorry if I already wrote to you about this. I forget things sometimes.
Dee Vogel

From: [RTC Staff](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: New Contact Us submission from Woody Carroll
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:27:23 PM

Name

Woody Carroll

Email

[REDACTED]

Subject

Rail Trail vote

Your Message

Dear RTC,
I encourage you to vote to approve building the Rail Trail. It is what the people want. Take advantage of the funding available.
Thsnk you,
Woody Carroll
[REDACTED]
Santa Cruz, Ca.

From: [Bob F](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Passenger Rail Unrealistic - Let's factor in Our Real World
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 9:01:01 AM

Even if we had billions of dollars to burn, it won't guarantee conversion of the 100+ year old Santa Cruz County linear single-track system to a single-track commuter train system safely meeting 15-minute service intervals! (Because BART is also a non-circular track system, if it were degraded to a single track it also could never be in a safe loop configuration so it would significantly impact its usefulness and safety.)

As an engineer "retired" after decades of exposure to the real world and with a patent for an All-Express Passenger Train System, I have felt it necessary to expose truths that unscrupulous opportunists intend to resuscitate a slow-moving freight and tourist train "system" and they want naive taxpayers to forever pay for it. (Providing any resemblance of a commuter train is only a facade.)

I am not anti-train in applications where it makes sense, but I am 100% certain that squeezing both a Trail AND a Rail (with multiple trains running in both directions at the same time on a single track forever limited to a linear configuration) will be a mistake in our real world.

Why introduce something that could be known as the next "Unsinkable" Titanic? (Some may never learn that "what CAN go wrong, WILL go wrong".)

Let's factor in our real world and begin favorable progress by removing the obsolete single track that dates back over 100 years.

From: [Frank Rimicci Jr.](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Please move ahead with the ultimate trail with rail
Date: Saturday, April 13, 2024 12:23:55 PM

Dear Commissioners,

I hope this letter finds You all well. I am writing in to stress You to move forward with the staff recommendations to continue the ultimate trail along segments 10 and 11. While I am aware of the shortage of funding for other segments, I feel segments 10 and 11 are crucial for inter county transit and should not be delayed while We seek to address the shortfall. Furthermore, We need to continue moving forward with plans for both freight and passenger rail for the long term environmental and economic benefits. I am also aware of the plight of the residents of the properties that may be in the RTC right of way and I hope the issue can have a solution that is satisfactory to all parties involved. I feel it is imperative to stick to the original plan of the rail line purchase that will benefit the most for the longest. We have seen the vision of a trail with rail become reality and We should continue the progress that has been achieved thus far. Yours, Frank Rimicci Jr., Corralitos

From: [Tina Andreatta](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Putting the \$68Million Grant and other Funds at risk is unacceptable
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 10:51:43 PM

Dear Commissioners,

Please accept and approve ALL elements of the staff recommendations required to build the Ultimate Trail in Segments 10 and 11. We have an extraordinary RTC department and planning department worthy of their names. They are committed to serving the current and future residents of this county without discrimination. We'd do well to heed their expertise and listen to them.

Accept the \$68Million grant, no more delays.

Supervisor Koenig, Greeway's former Executive Director is delaying our Coastal Rail & Trail project, which is a classic tactic as it increases costs and could stop the project. By delaying approval of the \$68Million grant Supervisor Koenig is deliberately removing the rail connection to Watsonville. Watsonville's underrepresented community would suffer the consequences of this loss - trail and rail. Watsonville is the Gate to the State.

Regards,

Tina Andreatta
Aptos, CA 95003

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: RE: RTC: April 18, 2024 RTC Special Meeting Agenda Materials
Date: Monday, April 15, 2024 6:04:10 PM

Dear Commissioners,

My family supports the Interim TRAIL option. Please say NO to staff trying to get your support now behind what they call the Ultimate trail. There is nothing Ultimate about it, except that ultimately it would cost too much, cause irreplaceable environmental damage to the corridor / Monterey Bay Sanctuary and create numerous encroachment issues along the way.

Thank you.
Kim

-----Original Message-----

From: "Regional Transportation Commission" <info-sccrtc.org@shared1.ccsend.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2024 10:43am
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RTC: April 18, 2024 RTC Special Meeting Agenda Materials

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: RTC Meeting 04/04/2024
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 11:33:53 AM

RTC, I am requesting Agenda #24 be moved ahead of Agenda #24 because latest report shows that existing rail infrastructure cannot be used for future train and future configuration of the railway will like require the Ultimate Trail to be relocated in some sections.

The proposed Ultimate Trail for segments 10 and 11 is \$20 million over budget and likely to increase and there is not enough local funding these sections and allow for future construction to Watsonville. Please approve the Optimum Interim Trail at a fraction of the cost.

Michael Vickers, Santa Cruz

From: [ROBERT STEPHENS](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Rail Trail
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 10:29:05 AM

Dear Board of Supervisors and RTC Members:

I really appreciate Mr. McPherson and Mr. Koenig wanting to question the “Ultimate trail”. The RTC staff has made a huge mistake by deciding that a train is inevitable and therefore an "interim trail" would need to be ripped out and replace. No wonder it is more costly and destructive. They also made the interim trail much too wide, as it should be built depending on the topography. This is a classic example of a “study” being set up to come out with a predetermined conclusion.

To build any type of trail before the following questions are answered is just foolish: when will a train start to operate, how much will it cost to build and operate, what will be the ridership and who will pay for it?

Both the Capitola trestle and the one going over the yacht harbor should be used as soon as possible for pedestrians and bikes. This will really help pedestrians, skateboarders and bikers get around particularly because the access to Capitola village is very dangerous (no sidewalks on the north end of town entering the village) and the Murray Street bridge closing in the future. By the way, skate boarders are not allowed in the village, so any trail in the village will not allow skateboarders.

I believe you all have seen the rapid increase in ebikes. This will only continue. Let’s work on actually building something they can use and which is affordable, safe and realistic for our current generation to enjoy.

On another note, the whole coastal trail is for the north county. South County gets virtually nothing. South County is underserved as far as parks go. Having a real trail in the south part of our county would be wonderful. All this money being spend for only half of our county is just crazy.

I do want to thank all of you for your time and work.

Robert Stephens
Aptos

From: [Mitchell Bramlett](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Rail trail segments 10 and 11
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 9:23:12 AM

It is time to stop wasting tax dollars on an ill fated rail system. A train on our existing corridor will NEVER impact Hwy 1 traffic and will be no more than a hyper expensive amusement ride. Further, the RTC continues to ignore or deny many facts and important issues:

The city staff report does not take into account the recent findings of a rail consultant, which indicated that most existing rail trestles will need to be replaced for a new passenger rail system. The staff report does not mention how the Ultimate Trail will need to be adjusted to make way for a future passenger rail, going against the policy statement for the Ultimate Trail Configuration. The staff report overlooks the legal aspects related to the federal railbanking process, falsely assuming that Roaring Camp and Progressive Rail will be able to hinder the conversion of old railroad tracks into the Optional Interim Trail. The staff report neglects to include the Capitola Trestle as part of the trail. The staff report does not discuss the CPUC restrictions that will be enforced on the trail at various points, potentially hindering trail construction due to limitations on new rail crossings. The staff report fails to consider the expected restrictions from the California Coastal Commission, as the Ultimate Trail and new fencing will obstruct beach access, resulting in delays to trail construction. The staff report does not address how the Ultimate Trail contradicts the Coastal Act and is not in line with Santa Cruz County Coastal Plans. The staff report falls short by omitting cost estimates and projected schedules for the Optional Interim Trail, which are crucial for the RTC Commission to make financially sound decisions.

Please implement the following recommendations on Segments 10 & 11 Coastal Trail: the RTC Commission instruct staff to engage in negotiations with Progressive Rail to facilitate the federal railbanking process, anticipating that Progressive Rail will need to be compensated by the RTC. During his tenure, former Santa Cruz County RTC Executive Director, Guy Preston, advocated for railbanking the Santa Cruz Branchline due to his understanding of the legalities surrounding the publicly-owned property and the necessary procedures to ensure the transportation corridor remains accessible to the community. Roaring Camp, operating as an amusement park train ride operator, lacks the authority to impede the railbanking of the Santa Cruz Branchline. The most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly method to establish the Coastal Trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz Boardwalk is through the construction of the Optional Interim Trail. We recommend RTC Commission to move forward with the Optional Interim Trail plan.

Regards,
Mitchell Bramlett
Santa Cruz City resident and tax payer

From: [Ella](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Rail trail special meeting
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 7:49:17 PM

Hello there,

My apologies if this is the incorrect email for this purpose. I am writing to ask that the members of the RTC act decisively to move forward with the rail *and* trail project: with both an operable train track and multi use trail. If this is the incorrect email, I would greatly appreciate you passing along the message.

Best Regards,
Ella Carroll

From: [J Lighthill](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Reducing Environmental Impacts to Escalona Gulch
Date: Monday, April 15, 2024 7:11:52 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

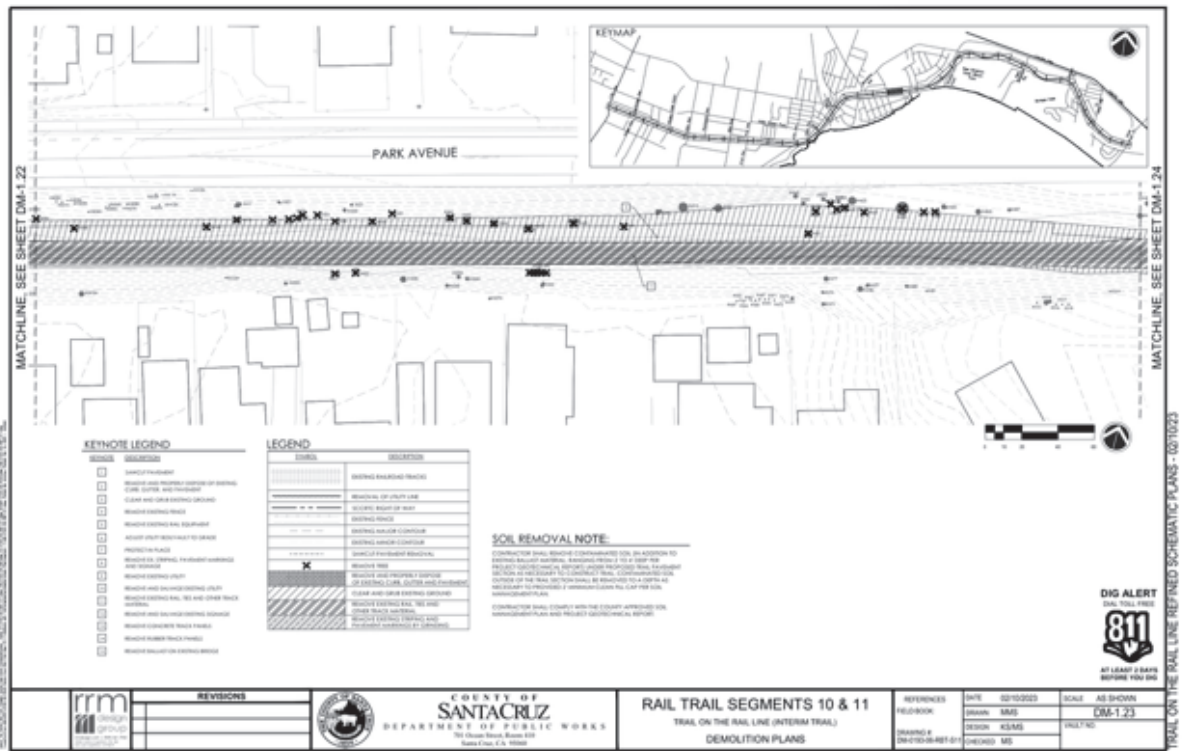
Since the Board of Supervisors recently suggested looking for ways to reduce the environmental impacts near Escalona Gulch in Capitola, I wonder if one way to do so could be to realign the Interim trail to be centered on the tracks and reduce its width to 12 ft, instead of the current design that has the trail “meander” north of the tracks toward Park Ave, thereby requiring the removal of many trees that may be potential Monarch roost sites.

The current alignment and tree demolition schematics are shown below. The two together show that the current Interim Trail is not centered, but is aligned more on the north side of the tracks. The tracks are positioned in a flat and straight section that measures 16 ft wide at its narrowest point. Could staying centered be less impactful?

Thanks for your consideration,

Johanna Lighthill

CP-1.23, FEIR p. 1689 (of 2308), and
DM-1.23 FEIR p. 1792 (of 2308). https://dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/19/pdfs/RailTrail/RTS1011_FEIR_Vols%201-3_COMBINED.pdf



From: [Brian Peoples](#)
To: [Mitch Weiss](#)
Cc: [Redacted]; [Waters, Laurie@DOT](mailto:Waters.Laurie@DOT); [Redacted]; [Behrens](#);
[Redacted]; [Shannon Munz](#); [Regional Transportation Commission](#);
[Redacted]; [Matt Machado](#);
Subject: Santa Cruz Coastal Trail / Segment 10 & 11 / "Minor Adjustment" with Optional Interim Trail
Date: Monday, March 25, 2024 4:15:18 PM

Interim RTC Executive Director Weiss,

A public hearing is being conducted on March 26, 2024 at the Santa Cruz Supervisor meeting to consider Environmental Impact Report (EIR), adopt Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, approve the project, permits, and the agreement with Caltrans, for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10/11 project, and take related actions (Community Development and Infrastructure).

Based on the public information, Segment 10 and 11 is estimated to be \$27M over the current budget to build the Ultimate Trail next to the old railroad tracks. Included in the EIR is the Optional Interim Coastal Trail that travels along the same corridor but would be placed on the existing railroad bed at a fraction of the cost.

In March of 2023, Trail Now contacted Laurie Waters (Associate Deputy Director Programming - Active Transportation Program), who is the lead CTC administrator for funding Segments 8 – 11, to get clarification on CTC funding for the Optional Interim Trail. She explained that there are two types of adjustment request for CTC funding (Minor, Major). A major adjustment request would require the proposal to be submitted to the CTC Board for approval while the minor adjustment request would only require CTC staff approval. In our discussions with her, she stated that because the Optional Interim Plan was included in the EIR for Segments 8-11 and provides the same trail logistic results, it could fall under the Minor category.

We ask if RTC Staff can get clarification from CTC Admin for the grants if the Optional Interim Trail would be a “minor adjustment” to the grant?

We are asking Santa Cruz Supervisors to approve the Optional Interim Trail which can achieve the same goals of the California Transportation Commission (CTC) grant as the Ultimate Trail at a fraction of the cost. The cost of the Ultimate Trail is too expensive when a more cost effective, eco-friendly and timely approach (Optional Interim Trail) is available.

Best

Brian Peoples

Trail Now

From: [Anna Ladas](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Santa Cruz Rail Trail Comment
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024 2:36:14 PM

Hello RTC Commission Members,

I am a registered voter in Santa Cruz County. I am writing today to express my discontent at the stalled voting progress on Segments 10 and 11 of the rail trail project. I am in favor of the rail plus trail design and voted for it in 2020. As an avid cyclist and walker I feel strongly that the Commission should move forward with the original approved plan to support safe alternate paths to travel our county.

Thank you,
Anna Ladas


Soquel CA 95073

From: [Jaakko Mella](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Section 10 and 11
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 8:25:56 PM

Dear scrtc,

Please, really reconsider you vote and funds available for this project and future rail/trail projects.

I want the trail and keep the rail for future use. Equable transportation for all of us.

Sincerely

Jaakko Mella

Aptos resident

From: [nadene thorne](#)
To: [REDACTED]; [Regional Transportation Commission](#); [Andy Schiffrin](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Segments 10 & 11 Rail Trail FEIR and Funding
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 9:21:39 PM

Supervisors and Commissioners:

I don't take exception with the statement that 2022's Measure D voters wanted to "explore" rail, regardless of funding. But nothing in that Measure suggested that voters would be good with an adjacent trail that would remove hundreds of butterfly trees which shade and shelter their streets, fences installed the entire length of the railroad tracks, or evicting numerous mobile homeowners unknowingly residing on the track easement. Moreover, I think it's fair to say that voters believed that someday a rail trail would go all the way to Watsonville, and that the Capitola Trestle would be used for a bike and pedestrian trail (confirmed in the 2018 Measure L vote).

Throughout four rail studies, the facts that have been slowly coming to light in these trail EIRs concerning the cost and feasibility of passenger rail, and the ability to fit a trail in next to the tracks, have been clarified. Having received extraordinary funding grants from the state, we're approaching the time when you all are going to have to fish or cut bait.

It strikes me that when a project initially estimated at \$18M balloons to \$111M it's time to give another thought to the facts underlying the decisions to be made. I'm thankful for the supervisors who recognize that just because some voters want a thing, doesn't mean we need it or can afford it. With (the fifth) rail project concept report to be published within a year, you supervisors and commissioners are wise to put the brakes on until we have current data on the feasibility of rail, and a vote of the county residents on whether a train is worth the money - their own money! - and whether a trail built without consideration of these facts is what we really want.

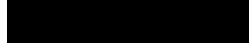
I hope you will not be swayed by the clamor of voters, few of whom have the facts or the bigger picture that you do, nor by the siren song of votes you may hope to get in the future.

Thank you,
Nadene Thorne

From: [Bill Gray](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Segments 10 and 11 of the Coastal Trail
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 10:26:12 AM

I fail to understand why we are putting all this cost into studies and not figuring the costs associated with rebuilding of bridges and trestles. Until we have money in the bank for a Capitola Trestle capable of supporting rail, we should STOP, pull up the rail and make the best trail we can make with available funds. If the next generation wants to play with a train, let them. The right-of-way will still be there.

Bill Gray



Capitola

509/9919292

From: [nadene thorne](#)
To: [Redacted]; [Regional Transportation Commission;](#) [Redacted];
[Andy Schiffrin;](#) [Redacted]
Subject: Special RTC Meeting 4/18/24 Segments 10 & 11
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 9:00:54 AM

Commissioners et al,

As a follower of the rail trail planning, I was astonished by the hasty and half-baked proposals put forward by staff for your approval at this special meeting.

Staff appears to be scurrying around like chickens with their heads cut off trying to assure funding for a project whose costs have already ballooned beyond rationality. This project is no longer about a trail - it's become infrastructure for future rail - at any cost!

I saw not one word in the handout materials about the ongoing rail feasibility study ("concept report") which - am I the only one who thinks this? - should underpin any funding and construction decisions you are making. You're discussing financial arrangements with Roaring Camp when there's no assurance (see previous rail feasibility studies) that passenger or freight rail is affordable or even makes sense!

I hope anyone who greenlights the ultimate trail proposal with its exorbitant costs and environmental destruction will also stand up and speak about plans for the futures of the encroaching mobile home dwellers, and the obfuscation of the voters' approval of 2018's Measure L, and the dangers and lack of ADA access for a bike lane through Capitola Village, and the impossibility of any trail for Watsonville adjacent to the tracks and over the sloughs... and most importantly, why you're not waiting for the feasibility study to see if rail is possible and if voters will approve the tax increases necessary to fund it.

Saying, "Voters overwhelmingly approved this with their vote on 2022's Measure D" has become just plain deceptive. You have a responsibility

to the whole county for how money is spent on infrastructure projects.
Don't disappoint us.

Nadene Thorne
Santa Cruz

From: [Kaki Rusmore](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Support for Rail and Trail
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 9:10:05 AM

Dear Commissioners,
Following the short-sighted and misinformed decision by the Board of Supervisors, I am writing to assure you that County residents want the ultimate trail option to proceed and urge the Commission to do everything possible to move that option forward as fast as possible. As you are well aware, the "reasons" given by McPherson and Koenig are facetious, given that they both supported the Highway 1 widening which will cut many more trees and has a projected deficit of many times that needed to move forward with the Rail and Trail. I don't think I need to remind you that 73% of the voters support preserving the option for rail transportation, and given the urgency of making all forms of transportation more climate-friendly, it would be incredibly misguided to stop the forward momentum of this project now.

Respectfully,

Kaki Rusmore

Aptos


she/her/ella

From: [Jack Brown](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Thank you Supervisors Hernandez, Koenig and McPherson!!!
Date: Sunday, March 31, 2024 6:20:17 PM

Thank you Supervisors Hernandez, Koenig and McPherson for rejecting the ill-advised plan for Segments 10 and 11. Shame on Commissioner Rotkin for posting his weekly misinformation in his Lookout infomercial propaganda for rail.

I appreciate that Hernandez, Koenig and McPherson are doing their job requiring the RTC to work harder to work within their budget and not attempt to fleece \$28,000,000 of additional budget before the project even starts, displace dozens of low income mobile home residents out of their home and the unnecessary clear cutting of nearly 1,000 mature trees when there is no plan or budget for a train in Santa Cruz, the basis for an Ultimate Trail that I doubt will ever see the light of day.

We need more of our commissioners to stand up for the constituents of our County and realize there are much better ways to build a trail without the environmental and financial impact of the Ultimate Trail and to improve Metro to provide better public transit than through a train that will take over 4 decades to implement and do nothing for our transportation issues except line the pockets of the rail lobby.

Jack Brown
Aptos, CA

From: [mary.odegaard](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Trail from 17th Avenue to State Park Drive
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:11:48 PM

Hello Commissioners,

The mid-county trail from 17th to State Park Drive is very important for the health of many citizens and the environment. Please see to it that the project moves forward, and our county makes use of the 67.8M Caltran construction grant awarded this project.

Sincerely, Mary Odegaard

From: [Selesa](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Trail now please
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 7:13:05 AM

Good morning,

I am emailing to register my support for the **Trail Now response to RTC / County Staff Report:**

- The staff report does not take into account the recent findings of a rail consultant, which indicated that most existing rail trestles will need to be replaced for a new passenger rail system.
- The staff report does not mention how the Ultimate Trail will need to be adjusted to make way for a future passenger rail, going against the policy statement for the Ultimate Trail Configuration.
- The staff report overlooks the legal aspects related to the federal railbanking process, falsely assuming that Roaring Camp and Progressive Rail will be able to hinder the conversion of old railroad tracks into the Optional Interim Trail.
- The staff report neglects to include the Capitola Trestle as part of the trail.
- The staff report does not discuss the CPUC restrictions that will be enforced on the trail at various points, potentially hindering trail construction due to limitations on new rail crossings.
- The staff report fails to consider the expected restrictions from the California Coastal Commission, as the Ultimate Trail and new fencing will obstruct beach access, resulting in delays to trail construction.
- The staff report does not address how the Ultimate Trail contradicts the Coastal Act and is not in line with Santa Cruz County Coastal Plans.
- The staff report falls short by omitting cost estimates and projected schedules for the Optional Interim Trail, which are crucial for the RTC Commission to make financially sound decisions.

Trail Now recommendation on Segments 10 & 11 Coastal Trail:

Trail Now recommends that the RTC Commission instruct staff to engage in negotiations with Progressive Rail to facilitate the federal railbanking process, anticipating that Progressive Rail will need to be compensated by the RTC. During his tenure, former Santa Cruz County RTC Executive Director, Guy Preston, advocated for railbanking the Santa Cruz Branchline due to his understanding of the legalities surrounding the publicly-owned property and the necessary procedures to ensure the transportation corridor remains accessible to the community. Roaring Camp, operating as an amusement park train ride operator, lacks the authority to impede the railbanking of the Santa Cruz Branchline. The most efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly method to establish the Coastal Trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz Boardwalk is through the construction of the Optional Interim Trail. We recommend RTC Commission to move forward with the Optional Interim

Trail plan.

Selesa Webster, lifelong resident of Santa Cruz

From: [Jeb Bishop](#)
To: [Regional Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Yes to Segments 10 and 11!
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:56:20 PM

Please approve moving ahead on Segments 10 and 11 of the ultimate Rail and Trail at the RTC meeting this Thursday 04/18. With every year that goes by, congestion is increased and we need a train all the more. And please remember that 73% of County voters voted in favor of the ultimate Rail and Trail. Please do not betray us!

Jeb Bishop
Santa Cruz CA 95062

Sent from my iPhone