

From: Frank Rimicci Jr.  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 10:13 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: RE: It's FINAL: Voters say "Yes!" to Measure D for Transportation

Not surprised, I wish more\$ was going to the rail trail, cant ride it now but D was the best compromise I suppose. Maybe when the trail is built I can use a wheelchair to access it..

Frank

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From: Chris Mann  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 10:08 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: RE: It's FINAL: Voters say "Yes!" to Measure D for Transportation

Congrats! Finally!

Chris

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From: Bruce Korb  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 10:15 AM  
To: Regional Transportation Commission  
Subject: Re: It's FINAL: Voters say "Yes!" to Measure D for Transportation

It still was not substantially different from what we came up with a decade ago :(

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From: J Kinst  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 10:32 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Re: It's FINAL: Voters say "Yes!" to Measure D for Transportation

Dear SCCRTC,

Congratulations, I look forward to seeing you implement these upgrades in transportation, and also to your recognition that using any of these or future funds for a commuter train would be unproductive, wasteful, and disruptive.

Yours, J. Kinst,  
Capitola

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From: Stanley Sokolow

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:47 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Comments regarding BRT in items 12, 13, and 19 on agenda of the Dec 8 RTC meeting

Dear RTC Commissioners:

In the 1999 Major Transportation Investment Study by the RTC and in the 2003 Master Transportation Study by the City of Santa Cruz, the consultants recommended a busway on the rail corridor to provide affordable rapid transit that would bypass the congestion on Highway 1 and city streets. So far, the RTC has obtained a feasibility study for passenger train service on the corridor, which showed that most or all of the existing railroad tracks, ties, some gravel (ballast), and associated hardware should or would need to be replaced to provide for the speeds needed by commuter service. The recent temporary shutdown of Iowa Pacific's slow-moving Polar Express due to faulty track reinforces the fact that the track is not suitable for high-speed commuter service in its present condition. The value of the corridor is not in the existing hardware, but rather in the right-of-way (ROW).

Before you make any decision about the best use of the coastal corridor, you need to have a study of the bus-rapid-transit (BRT) alternative.

I support keeping the tracks until an evidence-based decision is made on what to replace them with. Meanwhile, I support building the coastal bicycle/pedestrian trail adjacent to the tracks. But this asset is too valuable to devote entirely to bicycle travel that won't serve the vast majority who can't or won't commute by bicycle and walking. I ride my bike a lot. I would use the bike trail a lot. But I realize that the non-biking residents of the County deserve their fair share use of the corridor too.

Executive Director Dondero's report on page 7 discusses the BRT option. He says that removal of the tracks would be costly. However, even if the train service is to be restored, the existing tracks and hardware would be removed, so that's not a disadvantage of BRT.

He talks about a typical BRT system with 2 side-by-side busways and says that this could require a significant amount of ROW. However, keep in mind that the passenger train study proposed a single track with passing sidings in a few locations, not adding an additional track to provide 2-way side-by-side trains all the way without track sharing. Buses can similarly share a single-lane busway with passing sidings and collision prevention systems. Since the width needed for a curb-guided busway is only 10 feet plus 2 feet of shoulder on each side, a total of 14 feet, and a train track requires 17 feet of width including shoulders, the single busway would actually be 3 feet narrower than a train track requires. At passing lanes, two busways would occupy less width than the two train tracks would. Therefore, since a train is feasible, a guided busway is even more feasible in the existing ROW width. There may even be long sections of the ROW where side-by-side guided busways are possible but side-by-side train tracks are not.

My concept for rapid transit on the coastal corridor is to have a guided busway that would not need 2-way simultaneous travel. In the morning, during the congested northbound commuting period on Highway 1, specially equipped buses would begin at the existing Watsonville Metro Transit Center, take streets about 1500 feet to the opening of the coastal corridor at West Beach and Rodriguez streets, and then go on the guided busway to the existing downtown Santa Cruz Metro Transit Center, making a limited number of stops or side loops along the way. One side loop would be to reach the existing Metro bus transit center at Capitola Mall and then return to the busway. A train can't do that. The buses would exit the busway at the Seabright crossing and proceed along Metro #68 route to the Pacific Avenue Metro Center. They would not use the railroad bridge at the Boardwalk. After pausing at downtown Santa Cruz for passengers to alight and board, the buses would then travel on Ocean Street to Hwy 1 and return to Watsonville on Hwy 1 in the non-congested direction. In the afternoon, when the commute congestion goes the other direction, the BRT buses would circulate the opposite direction, southbound on the coastal corridor and return on the non-congested northbound direction of Hwy 1. This would eliminate any need for 2-way bus travel on the busway. If someday Hwy 1 is too congested in both directions all day, or if the Metro route designers prefer, the busway could be enhanced with appropriate electronic controls to allow bidirectional use of the single busway with its passing lanes, just as has been proposed for the train service. An additional benefit of the busway over the train is that neighborhood buses can also get onto the busway for part of their route to bypass congestion on the city streets.

A BRT system would utilize the existing investment in the Metro transit centers and in the Metro's existing bus maintenance and operations complex on River Street. A train system would require acquiring land and building a train maintenance complex. Train mechanics would need to be hired, whereas the Metro already has bus mechanics. At the terminal ends in Santa Cruz and Watsonville, new major stations would need to be built, whereas the buses already have terminals there.

I propose that the BRT buses be battery-powered all-electric buses, which are available right now. They have sufficient range to serve this route and would be rapidly recharged when they pause at the transit centers using automatic charging systems or would recharge overnight. Currently, I'm not aware of any electric commuter trains that can operate over such long distances purely on battery power without intermediate recharging or continuous power wires or power rails, which increase the capital costs. Moreover, these battery-powered buses are much less expensive than electric light-rail units.

Regarding potential legal problems or costs associated with abandoning rail service, I offer these thoughts. The state proposition that provided the bond money used to purchase the ROW also authorized use of that money for rapid transit guideways. Since my proposed guided busway would not remove the tracks from Watsonville to Pajaro, Iowa Pacific could continue freight service there. The tracks that reach a few possible freight shippers north of the busway in Watsonville starting at Beach and Rodriguez may continue to be serviced by the tracks if the busway is built alongside the tracks in the corridor or by straddling the tracks with the busway guides as has been done in Germany, for that short

section of track. An alternative would be to modify the Iowa Pacific agreement when it comes up for renewal in 5 years so freight service only goes from Watsonville to Pajaro. My proposal also leaves untouched the tracks from Seabright Ave westward, so the Big Trees railway can continue operation as usual, and people in the beach areas and in west Santa Cruz won't be disturbed by commuter trains rolling through their neighborhoods. Moreover, these battery-powered buses are quieter than light-rail trains, an advantage of BRT for the neighbors of the transit corridor. And buses don't have to blast their horns or have loud clanging crossing gates at intersections with streets.

Proponents of trains on the coastal corridor have argued that trains are more efficient, more desired by the public, promote more transit oriented development around their stations, and are less expensive to operate in the long term than BRT systems are. I have written a carefully investigated report which presents evidence refuting those arguments. I urge you to read my proposal. It's not the kind of detailed analysis that an expert consultant would be able to perform, but I feel it makes a good case that BRT should not be dismissed off-hand. BRT on the coastal corridor needs serious study before you decide. Many cities have studied BRT versus light-rail trains and have concluded that BRT meets their needs better than trains would. My proposal gives many examples.

I urge you to engage a transportation consultant that is very familiar with BRT systems to conduct a feasibility study comparable to the train study you already have obtained.

Here is the link to my proposal for BRT:

[Stanley Sokolow - Guided Busway Proposal to SCC RTC Dec 7 2016](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B2hQ4fiqJvxvbXNuT0tZaUtRaFk)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B2hQ4fiqJvxvbXNuT0tZaUtRaFk>.

Thank you for consideration of my remarks.

Stanley Sokolow

Santa Cruz

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From: Adriana Novack

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:01 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Re: It's FINAL: Voters say "Yes!" to Measure D for Transportation

This is huge!

thank you very much for sharing!

Adriana Novack

Account Executive

REGISTER - PAJARONIAN

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From: Chuck Bruffey

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:05 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: RE: It's FINAL: Voters say "Yes!" to Measure D for Transportation

Great, just don't waste any of the money on the rail line until Highway 1 is completely widened to Watsonville. If you can't even run a simple holiday train then it is pretty apparent that it can't be used for anything else and we as a county should not be wasting money on somebody's pipe dream. There is a reason we have nicknamed it the "trolley folly"!

Charles H. Bruffey, MHA

Chief Administrative Officer

Radiology Medical Group of Santa Cruz County, Inc.

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From: Brian Peoples  
Sent: Monday, December 05, 2016 8:25 PM  
Subject: Options for Rail Corridor Use

RTC Commissioners,

The assessment provided by the RTC Staff was not written with a "neutral" voice but was instead written with an overwhelming support for rail-with-trail. The fact that RTC Staff has owned the property for over 5 years and have only now begun investigating alternative options shows their strong bias for a train. The proposed path forward for trail-only has many miscommunications and erroneously portrays a lengthy process. An example of RTC Staff misrepresentation is to discourage removal of tracks via their claim that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and/or Caltrans would step in and help the RTC make a fresh attempt to implement rail service. Over 16 years ago, the CTC told the RTC that a train was not economical or practical along the rail corridor. The fact is, the CTC would not get involved in a 20-mile rail line and to suggest this as an option is a great illustration of RTC Staff continued desire to operate a train. The RTC Staff also continues to make claims that the fastest way to build a trail is to leave the old railroad tracks in place and build a trail parallel to tracks. We disagree and have provided ample evidence on the legal, construction and engineering requirements to expedite a rail-trail plan. The most concrete evidence is other locations where rail-trails have been constructed on old railroad tracks. Santa Cruz can simply look to their neighbor, Monterey County. We recently reposted a short video of how the Monterey County rail-trail was built. As noted in the video, the folks in Monterey considered a rail system adjacent to the trail, but decided against it in the end. <https://www.facebook.com/aptos.railtrail/posts/1161904850572159> The 2015 Passenger Train Study showed it would have no impact on traffic congestion, was not economically viable, did not include cost for train stations, parking lots or quiet zones, and would result in big diesel engine trains traveling through our neighborhoods 60 times per day. We believe big transit vehicles should be run on highway corridor, not through our neighborhoods. We know of no additional information that can be analyzed that would show that a train is viable. More importantly, we believe it is critical that we use the property NOW for improved mobility. We will never support a train along the rail corridor nor support any RTC Commissioner who supports using the corridor for a train.

Sincerely, Brian Peoples, Executive Director, Trail Now

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From: Woutje Swets  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 8:40 AM  
Subject: No trains!

Dear RTC,

Please stop this torture of trying to force a train down our throats when it is patently obvious that the rails are in such bad shape that trains are not even allowed to run on the tracks. It would cost millions to fix that, and then still we are stuck with a train we do not want. What we do want is a safe way for bikes to commute. As I'm sure you know, there have been extensive "Corridors" meetings where the committee keeps trying to do away with parking requirements for new housing, essentially saying that people should ride bikes and walk more. BUT it is totally unsafe for bikes to travel on the present corridors (Mission St, Soquel Ave, Water St), and people have died because there is no safe alternative. The longer you manage to stall the trail-only, the more people will die. Do you want this on your conscience? Please, stop wasting time. Remove the rails ASAP and get the trail installed. The life you save may be your own.

Thank you! - Woutje Swets

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From: Linda Werner  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 10:17 AM  
Subject: Please Support the Rail with Trail

I support the 'Rail with Trail' option for use of the rail corridor. I support this option because I believe the Bike Santa Cruz County's stand that:

1. It is the fastest way for a world-class multi-use bike path to be constructed
2. This will save the tracks for the potential of a passenger rail that would allow cyclists to travel further distances and serve as an alternative for Highway 1 commuters

I am a regular bike rider to work and also to other weekly activities. I want to preserve our environment, save money, take healthy options, and enjoy the out of doors. Please vote for the 'rail with trail' option Dec 7.

Thanks, - Linda Werner, Ph.D.

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From: Colleen Young  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 10:20 AM  
Subject: Please Support the Rail with Trail

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners,  
As an avid cyclist in Santa Cruz, I'm writing to voice my support for the current Trail with Rail plan. This plan is the best and fastest way to get this much needed multi-use trail built in our community. As nice as it would be to have a wider biking and walking trail, having the option to add light rail to our community is a huge benefit. Destroying track infrastructure that is already in place would be shortsighted and a waste of resources. Please keep the current plan to build the trail now and save the tracks for later.

Sincerely, - Colleen Young, Santa Cruz, CA

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From: Philip Boutelle  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 10:29 AM  
Subject: Rail with Trail: YES

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners,  
Please do not abandon the current Rail with Trail plan. To help reverse climate change, we need to completely change our car-centered infrastructure paradigm. Having a local rail line won't be the silver bullet solution, but it is one of many approaches that must be adapted as we take on such a daunting cultural shift. With the latest climate change science as a context, the RTC's original quest to obtain the rail right of way now seems visionary. Let's see that vision through to the end: keep the rail line in place.

-Phil Boutelle, Santa Cruz

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From: Elizabeth Sanoff  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 10:30 AM  
Subject: NOT in Support of Rail/Trail option

Too much money to spend on rail portion which will be loud, noisy, disruptive...don't really think it would be used enough to make it worth the effort, energy and money it is taking. Our roads need more funding to safely transport cars and also bikes. Cars are not going away and cannot be replaced by a railroad system.

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From: Piet Canin  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 11:03 AM  
To: info; Cory Caletti; Karena Pushnik  
Subject: EA letter to RTC - build the trail & save the tracks



12/2/16

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1523 Pacific Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Build the rail trail now & preserve the rail for the future

Dear RTC Commissioners,

Ecology Action would like to congratulate the RTC on the passage of Measure D that will fund a variety of much needed local transportation projects. EA is particularly interested in the rail trail and rail transit options within the coastal rail corridor. Both of these projects will receive Measure D funding: the rail trail for construction and maintenance and the rail for maintenance and to complete a comprehensive transit study.

We urge the RTC to stay the course as outlined by Measure D for these two important projects that will offer our county immediate and future sustainable transportation options: continue to build the rail trail next to the existing rail tracks and preserve the rail infrastructure for potential future use. A change in course could delay the construction of the rail trail. With 25% of the rail trail funded for design and construction and construction starting on one section of trail in 2017, let's continue to build the rail trail that will serve school children, families, commuters, seniors, disabled, and visitors.

In terms of the rail tracks, we urge the RTC to take the necessary steps to start the comprehensive study of rail and other forms of transit within the coastal rail corridor. Santa Cruz County residents are looking for more viable sustainable transportation options and the coastal rail corridor can provide more of those choices. We believe the community is eager to know about what sustainable, green technology, neighborhood compatible and cost effective options are viable in this corridor that connects many of our communities.

Sincerely,

Jim Murphy  
ED & CEO  
Ecology Action

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From: Kristin Wilson  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 12:19 PM  
Subject: rail with trail

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners,  
Please do not abandon the current Rail with Trail plan. Abandoning the current plan has the potential to delay construction of the trail for a minimum of 8 years, while RTC staff projections estimate the multi-use bike path, in its current form, would be completed in 10. Abandoning the current plan would not only delay construction of the trail, but it would also jeopardize any future of passenger rail, a risk we cannot take with the knowledge we currently have. Please keep the current plan to build the trail now and save the tracks for later.

Sincerely, Kristin J. Wilson

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From: "jaime garfield"  
Date: Dec 6, 2016 12:57 PM  
Subject: A rapid bus route connecting South County to North County is the ideal solution for the rail corridor!

Since I have become aware of Stanley Slowkows idea of a bus instead of a train along the existing corridor, I am convinced this makes the most sense. Working people and the rest will benefit, as will those who use the highway for shorter distances. And then there's climate change! I am not at all convinced that a train is the way to go in these times. How would people get there and then get to their locations etc.? Even though I live just a few blocks from the tracks, I can't see using a train for my real life needs. (I'm also thinking that just a trail/ bike path next to the rails-road, for now, seems like an affordable meantime option. ) Thank you for your service and consideration,

- Jaime Garfield, resident, Lower Ocean neighborhood

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From: Kent Strumpell  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 1:03 PM  
Subject: Please Support the Rail with Trail

Dear Commissioners,  
I urge you to preserve the current plan for a rail with trail in the Hwy 1 corridor. I believe this is the most expedient plan for implement these much-needed transportation options as swiftly as possible with an incremental approach (trail first, rail later).

Thank you, - Kent Strumpell, Santa Cruz, CA

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From: Bud Colligan  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 1:30 PM  
Subject: Response to Dondero memo for Dec 8 RTC Board meeting

December 6, 2016

To: RTC Commissioners  
Fr: Bud Colligan  
Re: Options for the Rail Corridor

George Dondero's memo of December 8 to the Commissioners regarding "Options for Use of the Rail Corridor," lays out many issues as facts or informed assertions with which we strongly disagree based on an examination of available evidence. The aforementioned memo makes it clear that the Commissioners need to appoint an independent group of community stakeholders to undertake a fact-based and fair examination of the best use of the rail corridor, as envisioned by Measure D. What is more important than examining technical details and tactics is what transit strategy fits the scale of our community and provides the ability to move the most people at an affordable cost for the taxpayers, while considering environmental, equity and aesthetic concerns. It is my belief that the Commissioners should step back and ask this question first. We need to get the first order question answered before discussing tactics. I would remind the Commissioners that this question has been asked and answered in every decade starting in the 1980s.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is important to respond to the point in Mr. Dondero's memo.

#### Rail Transit

The timeframe for completion of rail transit, given the likely legal hurdles and environmental issues noted extensively in *other* sections of the memo is more than 15 years, probably closer to 20 years (2037). Let's also be clear that we are talking about a 3/8's cent sales tax on top of Santa Cruz County's new current rate of 9.25% to fund operating subsidies. Over a 30-year period, the total amount of subsidy based on the most likely Scenario G from the Rail Transit Feasibility Study is \$330 million. The assumption on capital is that the RTC will secure it from state and federal grants, but certainly some local match will be involved. The \$176M of capital does not include unbudgeted items like parking lots, fences, quiet zones and other elements. The statement that the "time frame aligns with experience in other locations for a similar project of a similar size" also pertains to cost overruns, which past state projects have shown run 40% over what is budgeted. So add 40% to whatever capital number is presented.

#### Trail Only

1. We agree—long-term mobility needs of the county are critical. However, we are not convinced that "fixed rail" will be the future transportation option we choose given rapid changes in technology in all transit modalities. A train cannot be implemented for 20 years, but we have a transportation crisis today. Wouldn't it be wise to preserve our long-term options on the corridor while maximizing transit today? We are in favor of preserving future transit options, but we prefer to maximize the utility of the corridor for the next 20 years while future options are examined. Since the RTC's own study says most of the tracks will need to be removed and upgraded, let's take this opportunity to fully use the corridor in the next 20 years..

2. We expect Iowa Pacific Holdings (IPH) to want a buyout from the Administration, Coordination and Licensing (ACL) Agreement if a Trail Only option is the direction set by the Commissioners. However, such a buyout should be relatively straightforward since IPH is currently making no money on the rail line north of Watsonville. A buyout would also be easier if it was the expressed policy of the Commissioners and a directive was given to staff to terminate the contract. That said, with the recent fiasco around the Polar Express train, I believe that IPH is in breach of Section 5.2.1 of the ACL and the contract could be terminated by the RTC at no cost to taxpayers.

3. In communications with the CTC, it has been made clear that there are several options to consider around Proposition 116 funds. In fact, the CTC letter of September 8, 2015 states: "The CTC is willing to work with RTC to develop a solution to any issues affecting this transportation corridor." Besides the CTC flexibility, there is broad support in the community to raise funds privately if necessary. It is ironic that there is such a fixation with repaying \$11M, when the costs savings over the current MBSST trail would be \$70M, let alone the \$575M+ for the capital

costs and 30 year operating subsidies of the train. Finally, it is laughable to suggest that the CTC or Caltrans would be interested in taking over the provision of rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line! Believe me, they have better things to do!

4. It appears that repayment for Prop 116 funds could be between zero and \$11M. As mentioned above, funds saved from the MBSST trail plan would more than make up for this repayment. As it relates to funds raised by the Land Trust and its letter accompanying this agenda, I am certain from blog posts by and discussions with members of the Land Trust, that most of them are interested in seeing a trail, whatever form it may take. It is also instructive to note that most Measure D communications emphasized "unprecedented bike and pedestrian investment," knowing those words would resonate with the public. And they thankfully did (and will)!

5. We have spoken to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) who informs us that they regularly and favorably process tens of railbanking and abandonment requests each year. In 2005, the RTC hired Woodside Consulting Group to assess the probability that the corridor could be abandoned (a precursor to railbanking). The expert from Woodside Consulting Group concluded that the STB would not deny an application for abandonment. Sure, federal bureaucracies can take time and effort, but once the RTC sets a clear direction, these applications are approved regularly by the STB. IPH should have no incentive to continue to want to lease the rail line, since it is making no money doing so. Freight operations can continue uninterrupted in the southern portion of the rail line anyway (as they are today).

6 – 11. It is hard to believe that a contaminated rail line would not present equal challenges to a Rail with Trail scenario as it does a Trail Only scenario. What happens when tracks are moved to accommodate the Rail with Trail plan? I would think that the same contamination issues would be in play. What if a trail is built alongside the tracks—are we saying we are not concerned with high levels of contamination in railroad ties and soil right next to our children using the pedestrian and bike path? Without responding to each point in these sections, what is clear to me is that the Coastal Commission and the County Environmental Services should be more amenable to a low impact, no tree cutting, no greenhouse gas emission alternative than one that enables up to 60 diesel trains per day and its resulting pollution and soil and groundwater contamination to continue. If the price of that result is the clean-up from past train contamination and pollution, so be it. We will need to address it at some point, so let's use some of the savings from not building an expensive narrow trail next to continuing polluting trains and clean up the mess from prior rail use. Lastly, it's well known that there is substantial salvage value associated with recycling the steel rail line, which could be used to offset these costs.

12 – 13. There will be legal challenges under any scenario. They are not exclusive to Trail Only, but not surprisingly are listed under Trail Only. Please include the legal cost of defending lawsuits in all scenarios!

Finally, we appreciate the RTC staff showing the dramatic cost difference between the Rail with Trail scenario and the Trail Only scenario. The Rail with Trail scenario results in a total cost of \$127M + \$176M + 40% average cost overruns for this type of project and timeframe, and \$330M operating subsidies for the first 30 years = \$700M and twenty years vs. a Trail Only cost of \$50M – \$60M and whatever you believe about points 1 – 13 above. The RTC believes these costs are \$32M; I believe they are a fraction of that amount. Even if you take the RTC's number, we are comparing projects that cost approximately \$90M and \$700M+, for something that is not scalable without adding cost, and does not deliver as much ridership. That is why rail has been considered and rejected for the last 40 years. Let's make the right decision now and put this debate to rest for good.

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From: Will Mayall  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 2:15 PM  
Subject: FUD from the RTC

FUD. George Dondero's memo in the RTC agenda for Dec. 8th is a transparent attempt to foment fear, uncertainty, and doubt among the RTC commissioners and those interested in the best use of the rail corridor. The memo is so biased in favor of train that it barely earns the respect of an analysis. The primary point behind the memo is that if trail-only is found to be the best use of the corridor, it would be scary bad. It argues that it would require work, take time, and cost money. Yes, chasing the impossible dream of a train has cost us work, time, and money. Just imagine how much work, time, and money the RTC would have saved if it had decided to study the trail-only option years ago instead of rejecting it out of hand. If there's any blame deserved, it lays firmly at the feet of the RTC. Allow me to respond to the opening line of Mr. Dondero's memo regarding trail-only: "A trail-only option has been proposed on the presumption that it would be a faster and less expensive means of completing the trail, albeit at the cost of forfeiting any other uses including the future option to add rail transit." No, that is not why the trail-only option has been proposed. Trail-only has been proposed because the public believes that trail-only is the best use. Sound research has been performed and confirms that trail-only is the best use and will serve our community well. Those that are pro-train are clearly worried that an informed public now understands what is at stake and that public opinion is on the side of trail-only.

- Will Mayall, Santa Cruz

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From: Ross Levoy  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 3:17 PM  
Subject: Rail/Trail supporter!

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners,  
Please do not abandon the current Rail with Trail plan. Abandoning the current plan has the potential to delay construction of the trail for a minimum of 8 years, while RTC staff projections estimate the multi-use bike path, in it's current form, would be completed in 10. Abandoning the current plan would not only delay construction of the trail, but it would also jeopardize any future of passenger rail, a risk we cannot take with the knowledge we currently have. Please keep the current plan to build the trail now and save the tracks for later.

Sincerely, Ross Levoy, Santa Cruz, CA

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From: wandis wilcox  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:07 PM  
Subject: Please Support the Rail with Trail

Dear Regional Transportation Commission:  
Please keep the current plan to build the rail trail now and keep the tracks for later rail planning. Thank you for your attention to this exciting matter.

Wandis Wilcox, Aptos resident

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From: John Caletti  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:16 PM  
Subject: keep the tracks

Please Please keep the option open for possible future rail service of some type! With rising housing costs in Santa Cruz and more folks living in South County and needed to get to work in Santa Cruz, along with the increasing population and our dire need to curb CO2 pollution and climate change, please do not remove the rails!!

Thanks much, - John Caletti, caletticycles.com

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From: CYNTHIA DZENDZEL  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:27 PM  
Subject: Keep the Rails!

Please keep the rails and make the bike/walking path to the side. Tax money paid for the rails, and we should not remove them to appease a small group of bicycle fanatics. I am sure that most cyclists and walkers will be happy to have the path adjacent to the tracks, knowing the tracks will be there to carry them to their destination once the trains are back and functioning. The rail/trail corridor should serve ALL groups, including those too young, too old or disabled to ride a bike or walk long distances.

- Cynthia Dzendzel, Felton

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From: Doug Urbanus  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:27 PM  
Subject: Rail/trail

I am one of the persons who earlier completed the transportation survey. I still support use of the old train route for possible light rail. And I do not support the preemptive ripping out of the tracks for the few bicyclists and pedestrians who might regularly use it for long distances. However, I am awaiting something that shows economic feasibility of some sort of track use, combined with water inter ties across each water district upon which the tracks now pass.

- Doug Urbanus , Ben Lomond

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From: Johanna Bowen  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:28 PM  
Subject: Absurdity of the train

It is patently absurd to promote and seek to create a viable train service in this County that's based on the old cement train tracks. They (the tracks) do not run where people go or need to go. The attendant cost of safe shelter at isolated spots where the train would stop and the associated cost of shuttle rides would kill the plan if it were truly costed out. No one wants to be dumped at a crossing a mile from their destination (see Cabrillo College student needs) during a rain storm to either hike or wait, yet again, for the currently not-even-planned-for shuttle service. Stop this travesty and stop paying salaries to people who will not listen to reason. TRAIL NOW would use those ratty old tracks for biking and hiking and attract tourists who seek a delightful walk that includes killer views and regular sightings of rare and not-so rare animals and birds. Picture this: families parking in New Brighton parking lot and walking to Capitola for a meal and walking back. I've taken guests on this round trip on the tracks and it never ceases to please. - Johanna Bowen, 1st District resident

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From: Bill McFarland  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:48 PM  
Subject: Support for Trail Only

I live in Capitola and I want to voice my support for a trail only approach. I believe that a world class trail requires removal of the tracks. Trains are a 19th century approach to moving people and are not economical or environmentally friendly. Railroads are an inflexible way to move people between fixed points, along a fixed route. The only possible way to justify investing millions today in rail transportation today is to be able to amortize that investment over decades of use. In the not too distant future, people transportation will be very different than it is today. We will have self-driving cars and other advances. Any rail system started today will be obsolete by the time that it is completed. The investment will never be recovered. Until technology delivers new solutions to the challenge of moving people, I believe that busses and vans provide a more flexible and economical solution. They can be adjusted to reflect changes in demand and population shifts, unlike trains.

Thanks, - Bill

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From: Glen Stribling  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 4:51 PM  
Subject: Trail not train

Hi Folks, Really think the train is a bad idea. Trains cost money where bike paths make money. Especially in such a bike friendly area as this. We would benefit tremendously with a bike path/corridor.

- Glen Stribling & Pam Logan, Felton CA

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From: Martha Graham-Waldon  
Date: December 6, 2016 at 5:26:35 PM PST  
To: Rachel Moriconi  
Subject: Tram for the Rail line

Hello Rachel,  
I don't have a proposal to submit for the transportation corridor but I just wanted to send you a link about a bio-diesel powered tram that runs on an existing rail line in South Africa. When I saw this, I thought it might be a perfect fit for Santa Cruz County because it is quiet, light weight and non-invasive for the environment and hikers and bikers that would be using the same route. I hope you have a moment to check out the link below and don't worry, this is not spam! <http://cnn.it/2fHL5cX>

Sincerely, - Martha Graham-Waldon, Felton

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From: Deanna Seagraves  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 5:44 PM  
Subject: Trail only

To whom it may concern,  
We have an amazing opportunity here to build something wonderful. We have this fabulous, amazing coastline, and a community of highly active, health-conscious, ecologically-conscious people who would dearly love and make enormous use of a trail through the county. As it is, they are out there getting themselves killed in our heavy traffic already, trying to ride their bikes

through our community. How about we give them a safer place to ride and eliminate some of that traffic at the same time? Not only that, but I have been to several other communities - Sanibel Island, Florida, and Palm Springs, California, and Catalina Island for a few good examples, where they have good biking and walking trails, and believe me, they get used. A LOT. Have you seen the videos about the Netherlands with all their dedicated biking lanes and roads and trails? Is that not appealing? THIS is the future, not another tourist train. We don't need one more tourist attraction that's going to add pollution and clog traffic more than it already is, we need a trail to give people a safer place to ride and walk and hike! That will help decrease traffic and probably save a few lives, not to mention the pleasure we will all take in being able to use it. There is no doubt in my mind that ripping out those old tracks and building a hiking and biking trail through the county is absolutely the way to go. Let's do it!

- Deanna Seagraves

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From: Randall Nacamuli  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 6:23 PM  
Subject: Trail Now

Pull the tracks and build a trail NOW. We do not need to keep the old railroad tracks, the evidence has been provided by Trail Now.

- Randall

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From: joe martinez  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 6:55 PM  
Subject: December 8th Meeting

Commissioner's

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, you all will have an opportunity to display your courage and good judgment by rejecting the report by George Donderio that highlights Options for use of the Rail Corridor. The report is clearly bias, as an example the prop 116 funds are called out as a factor that must be honored. When in reality the letter from the CTC dated September 8<sup>th</sup> 2015 clearly says that prop 116 funds can be returned at any time. Thereby, giving the people of Santa Cruz county the choice to change their position regarding the use of the rail corridor. Build a world class trail by taking the first step today...

Regards, - Jose Martinez

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From: Peter Goodman  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 7:01 PM  
Subject: Please do not pursue the train any longer...

The train does not make any sense. It is expensive. We can use the corridor now by pulling up the tracks and putting down a bike/pedestrian track that stays off the street for the whole length of the corridor. With the train, bikes and peds will be diverted to the street at every trestle and any place the corridor is too narrow. This is dangerous for them. With the rail with trail option you are pursuing, the train will be so close to the bikes and peds. The train is noisy and a liability. Please start to move to the "Trail Only" option.

Regards, Peter, Peter Goodman Consulting LLC

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From: Tom Lynch  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 7:18 PM  
Subject: Rail

Rail does not work economically unless you have a large group of people going from one geography to another such as in the east bay and San Fran. We don't have that here!!!! Please don't waste our money on rail. Build a trail.

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From: David Criswell  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 8:05 PM  
Subject: Rail Trail

I am opposed to any rail in Santa Cruz. The rail tracks should be removed and a trail built. The rail made into trail in Monterey is a perfect example of what we really can use here in Santa Cruz County!!! Public use of a train is not feasible and unlikely. Trail, no rail!

David D Criswell , Boulder Creek

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From: Curt Simmons  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 8:30 PM  
Subject: Rail Trail

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners,  
I know this is a form letter but it expresses my views. Add my name to the list. Please do not abandon the current Rail with Trail plan. Abandoning the current plan has the potential to delay construction of the trail for a minimum of 8 years, while RTC staff projections estimate the multi-use bike path, in it's current form, would be completed in 10. Abandoning the current plan would not only delay construction of the trail, but it would also jeopardize any future of passenger rail, a risk we cannot take with the knowledge we currently have. Please keep the current plan to build the trail now and save the tracks for later.

Sincerely, Curt Simmons, O.D.

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From: Jack Brown  
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 10:15 PM  
Subject: Letter to note my support for a trail only solution

I would like to add my support for a trail-only solution for Santa Cruz Rail Corridor. As we have seen from the dramatic failure of the Polar Express Holiday Train, the time of rail transportation through Santa Cruz has passed. Those that were in charge of providing safe transportation to families rushed to perform minimal repairs and brush clearance and put many lives at risk for a substantial cost. The entertainment train was a failure and all that approved it going forward really should be investigated. Most importantly, the Polar Express failure exposed again that we need transportation solutions for Santa Cruz, but trying to resuscitate a train simply is not viable or sustainable. The current agreement is not asking money for Iowa Pacific and throwing more good taxpayer money at a bad solution is not going to make things better. As noted in the preliminary reports, a train may satisfy the transportation needs of 5,000-5,500 trips a day. That's 2500-2750 people out of 265,000+ living in Santa Cruz County, less than 1% of the population, yet it would cost us 100s of millions of dollars to create and maintain. Think of being stuck in traffic on Highway and looking as far ahead of you as possible. Maybe you can see to lanes each with 50 cars stopped. Now imagine 1 of those cars pulls over. What will be the impact to traffic? That is the same impact the train will have to Highway 1. Also with the slow

speed of the train and several stops between Santa Cruz and Watsonville, the train would be slower than the current traffic it is support reduce. Also, many people travel over the Santa Cruz mountains for work, including myself. A train is not feasible to support commuting over the hill. Even if another line was used to connect Gilroy to Pajaro Valley, a trip from Aptos to Mountain view could easily take over 3 1/2 hours each way. As someone who works in transportation, I can tell you we are at the beginning of a revolution in transportation. Autonomous vehicles will substantially reduce the cost and time spent in traffic. We are only a few years away from having efficient transportation on existing infrastructure that could provide door to door service to everyone. Let's not waste time and valuable resources on antiquated rail technology. I want to be able to leave something to my child other than a huge debt for a train project that 99% of the community will not use. Let's use this corridor for something much better. A dedicated trail will showcase the beauty of our community like nothing else. It will support thousands of residents and tourists and help them enjoy our towns and beaches and support a local economy, encourage fitness and provide zero emission transportation. As a bike rider, I would love to be able to enjoy the safety of an isolated bike path away from the distracted drivers that frequent all of our roads. If I want to safely enjoy my bike today, I have to haul it 20 miles south to Marina where I can ride the Fort Ord Dunes trails. I wind up spending my money in Monterey and not here in Santa Cruz where I should. Please RTC, do the right thing and drop the rail and trail and pursue a trail only solution. Not only will you save money, you will provide better transportation for everyone who lives and visits our beautiful community and have something that all of us can be proud of.

Jack Brown, Aptos, CA

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From: Maria LeBlanc  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 6:11 AM  
Subject: No train

Please cast my vote for bike path!

Thank you, - Maria Isabel

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From: Michelle Bradley  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 6:13 AM  
Subject: No train please

My family lives within a mile of the pathway and we are very excited by the thought of a way to safely walk and bike across county. I do not have that same feeling when a train could be sharing the path. This is inviting danger. I would be willing to pay more in taxes to make it a pathway that does not have a train. This pathway would be an invaluable investment in a beautiful community resource. Thank you for your consideration.

- Michelle Bradley

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From: Sweeney, Susan  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 6:14 AM  
Subject: NO TRAIN!!

PLEASE DO NOT invest in a train that goes nowhere. We do not need a train . Be smart!It will not solve our transportation issues.

Susan

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From: Donna Murphy

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 6:48 AM

Subject: Options for Use of Rail Corridor -- Item 13, December 8, 2016

Attached is correspondence related to Item 13 of the December 8 agenda.

Dear RTC Commissioners:

Traffic congestion throughout the county is hurting our economy, our quality of life, our environment, individuals and families. Congestion adds stress, unreliability and expense to all who must use the highway, and it robs us of valuable time, it divides our county, and damages the environment.

Thus, *solving the congestion problem* must be the primary consideration as you, the Regional Transportation Commission members, evaluate options for use of the rail corridor.

*It is essential that the corridor provide a scalable, environmentally superior mode of transportation that can be used by all citizens — regardless of age, infirmity, economic capacity.*

The county and its citizens have invested more than a decade and millions of dollars to acquire and create a blueprint for immediate and future uses of the corridor.

You — the RTC — have been on a visionary path since acquiring the corridor. You have planned a multi-use bicycle/pedestrian trail, some of which is in progress and the rest close to shovel-ready, to give a portion of our population a safe path for moderate commutes and recreation. At the same time, you have begun the important work of exploring passenger rail — which holds incredible promise as new technologies evolve worldwide to move hundreds of people short or long distances with reliability, safety, and little environmental impact.

Do not change course without comprehensive analysis of the full environmental, economic and social equity impacts of all options. A trail only proposal is short-sighted and *ignores the cost, time and environmental impact of finding another mass transportation solution* for the traffic congestion that hurts us all.

You have been on a sound planning track, designing a multi-use trail while evaluating passenger rail to solve our congestion problem. It is not an “either-or” (trail or rail) decision, it is a “yes-and” decision. Yes, build the current trail and save the tracks.

It’s the only decision that fulfills RTC’s job: *to create infrastructure that provides safe, convenient, reliable, and efficient transportation choices for (all members of) the community, with a focus on long-term sustainability.* This ultimate decision must be about solving our congestion and green house gas problems.

Donna Murphy, Santa Cruz, California

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From: Grace Voss

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 7:17 AM

Subject: Please Support the Rail with Trail

Preservation of the rail line is a good idea because: - Including passenger rail insures that the RTC will not have to repay the State Transportation Commission for purchase of rights to the rail line; -Trail construction costs at today’s prices are cheaper; delaying construction will result in a more expensive rail trail; - Rail travel is becoming lighter, more efficient and cleaner, with electricity and solar as energy sources; - Bus and bicycle share commute stations near the rail line will enhance the county’s commitment to alternative transportation; - Rail lines elsewhere have been removed to the regret of city/county planners; one example is the Chicago/Milwaukee rail corridor, which no longer exists, creating traffic jams along a 90-mile stretch of roadway; - The public voted 67.77% in favor of a rail trail; - Construction is set to begin in 2017 on the Westside rail trail segment, which has been designed for rail with trail; let this construction begin without delay!

- Sincerely, Grace Voss

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From: Jim  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 7:24 AM  
Subject: Rails

I support the rails. If that includes the bikes and/or trails, that's okay. The existing infrastructure must be preserved for the future.

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From: G Craig Vachon  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 7:30 AM  
Subject: Pls pull the tracks and build the trail now!

Our tracks are decrepit and unsafe. To rebuild them into a potential rail solution may cost \$600M to a \$1B over the next 10-20 years. The train will be polluting and ugly. The population density of our county will never support the financial viability of a train. Yet, as a trail, we'll enable small electric transport [bikes, trikes, boards et al] that will be community friendly, financially responsible and timely [in the next three years]. Pls pull the tracks and build us a trail now!

G Craig Vachon

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From: Roman Gabriel Ceja  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 8:00 AM  
Subject: Trail Now - Roman Gabriel Ceja

Mass transportation can be a wonderful thing, but only if it is designed and implemented correctly. I support TRAIL NOW, an organization that is promoting using our existing rail corridor for a trail, without a train. The corridor is simply not suited for efficient rail transportation. It's not correctly positioned geographically. The corridor could be used to build a pedestrian and bike trail that we can be proud of a trail that our kids can enjoy, a trail designed and used by the disabled and our Senior citizens. A trail that connects our neighborhoods, not separates them. A world-class trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. I respectfully ask you to halt the passenger train idea. I respectfully ask you to build a trail. Now.

Sincerely, Roman Gabriel Ceja

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From: Sue Holt  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 8:59 AM  
Subject: no rails, please

Dear RTC members,  
I am writing to endorse the abandonment of the rails from the rail-trail track. It appears that RTC will wait for an environmentally safe version of rail service before the tracks are used routinely. That may easily take 10-20 years. If the tracks are removed or covered during that period and trail access provided instead, there will be 10-20 years of substantial recreational and bike commute use. Meanwhile, the noise and other environmental problems associated with the Christmas train demonstrate that routine rail service will cause significant local damages.

Sincerely, Sue Holt

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From: Molly Graessle  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 10:12 AM  
Subject: Bike path

We strongly support a world class bike path along the current train track route. In beautiful areas throughout this country a bike path is the most utilized and most beneficial transportation corridor that exists. We would like Santa Cruz County to be on par with those areas such as Ketchum, Idaho and Portland, Oregon that utilize this type of transportation system. Please vote in favor of the bike path without the train for commuters, students, families and the entire population of this progressive, athletic and beautiful Santa Cruz County.

Sincerely, Molly Graessle

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From: Tom Brady  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 11:05 AM  
Subject: Bike Path instead of Train

Dear Regional Transportation Commission,  
I would like to advocate for a world class bike path throughout Santa Cruz County vs. a train. There are very few safe places for families to ride bikes in the County. Please vote for putting a bike path vs. a train on the railroad tracks.

Thank you, Shannon Brady

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From: Denise White  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 11:30 AM  
Subject: Bike path

Hi please use the train tracks as recreation bike path !!

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From: Bill Smallman  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 11:36 AM  
Subject: Comments for Meeting 12/8/16

Dear SCCRTC,  
I have several questions:

1. Has anyone done a cost/benefit analysis for other options for the Rail Corridor other than your preferred Rail + Trail plan?
2. Do you believe your staff is qualified to design/estimate and build the Rail + Trail Plan? If they are not, how can they believe anyone can at a reasonable cost?
3. Do you think "Polar Express" Train was a success this year? How much money did this make? How come you were not aware that the tracks cause serious swaying of the train, when this was known by many for over 20 years? Was this subject brought up when the corridor was purchased from Union Pacific?
4. Do you think it would be a good idea to put 2 - 18" high pressure recycled water mains distributing 10 million gallons a day, with the ability to stop saltwater intrusion and solve the most serious water shortage problem, in the corridor with the train? If it cannot go next to the train, where else could we put these pipelines? What do you think is the best specific plan that the City's Water Supply Commission has received to solve the water problem?
5. When are complete drawings of the rail + trail going to be done, including boarding stations, bridges, crossings, parking lots etc.?

6. Since a portion of the recently passed Measure D is going towards a parallel road for the trail next to the train, and if you decide to forgo the train and install the trail over removed tracks, essentially on the already constructed "road" for the train, is not this a waste of money duplicating a road that already exists?

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SENT: Wed 12/7/2016 2:16 PM

Hello Bill Smallman -

Measure D, approved by 83k Santa Cruz County voters, includes an analysis of transportation options in the Rail Corridor. In an item for tomorrow's Regional Transportation Commission meeting, the board will begin discussing some of the rail corridor questions. The agenda packet is on the RTC website: [www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org).

The Master Plan for the Coastal Rail Trail contains preliminary design information. Final design will be conducted as segments are funded. Maximizing use of the rail corridor for transportation purposes is the goal for acquiring this 135 year old continuous corridor. Other uses will be considered based on their consistency with transportation goals.

Thank you.

Karena Pushnik, Senior Planner/Public Information Coordinator

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From: Mark Mesiti-Miller

Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 11:44 AM

Subject: Options for Use of the Rail Corridor - Item 13 on your 12/8/16 meeting agenda

Greetings Commissioners,

Please see attached letter regarding Options for Use of the Rail Corridor, Agenda Item 13 of the December 8, 2016 meeting of the RTC.

Best regards, Mark

December 7, 2016

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

1523 Pacific Ave

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Options for Use of the Rail Corridor

Agenda Item 13 of the December 8, 2016 meeting of the RTC

Dear Commissioners,

After many years of community input, the RTC purchased the rail corridor to provide a Rail with Trail (RWT) multimodal transit facility. With more years of community input, the RTC subsequently adopted the MBSST Master Plan and supporting EIR to build the trail while maintaining the rail. On November 8th, a super-majority of County voters passed Measure 0 which provides \$85 million to build the trail and \$40 million dollars for use in preserving the tracks and, completing an environmental and economic analysis to answer important community questions about possible future transportation uses of the corridor. We don't want to wait any longer, build the trail and save the rail.

The staff report indicates the effort to change from the unanimously adopted RWT plan to a Trail Only (TO) plan will take at least 8 years and cost \$32 million with absolutely no guarantee of success and no guarantee the State of California won't just step in at the end and take the corridor back from the County. The staff report also indicates if the RTC simply stays with the current plan, the entire trail could be open to the public in about 10 years. There is no way to justify delaying construction of the trail for even one more day much less 8 plus years. There is no way to justify spending \$32 million when that \$32 million could be better spent building 10 miles of trail (roughly \$3M per mile). The voters of this County expect a trail as soon as possible and will be mighty upset if, after all the effort to secure the rail corridor and pass Measure 0, the RTC decides to waste more time and millions of dollars. Don't wait any longer, build the trail and save the rail.

Furthermore, staying with the current RWT plan, means 25%, 8 full miles of the currently planned pedestrian / bicycle path will stay on schedule to open in only 2 years. It would be a colossal mistake, to jeopardize this plan and the millions of dollars raised to fund these 8 miles of trail serving our citizens. Don't wait any longer, build the trail and save the rail.

Lastly, should a decision be made to remove the rail and go to a trail only use of the corridor, the opportunity to provide an environmentally superior mass transit system would be essentially gone forever. Given the very real threat of global warming and ocean acidification, giving up an opportunity to substantially reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and reduce our carbon footprint is morally unconscionable.

Accordingly, a decision to change the current plan must be made with the utmost care and only after sufficient study has been completed. Given the incredible value of this transportation corridor, a thorough triple bottom line (TBI) analysis (social, environmental and financial) demonstrating the superiority of any alternative to the present plan must be provided. The existing rail corridor was acquired to address the transportation needs of the region, specifically with a goal to alleviate traffic congestion, serve the widest number of constituents and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. Your commitment to TBI analysis was cemented by your adoption of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Given our community's interest and leadership around environmental and social justice issues, a TBI analysis is the only cost accounting framework that makes sense when making a long term decision about the highest and best use of the incredibly valuable rail corridor. Given the complexity and importance of this analysis, the RTC would be wise to retain the services of a professional consultant with demonstrated experience in TBI analysis of public infrastructure, especially transit systems.

At times during the RTC's meeting on September 1, 2016, there was some discussion about what to do with the rail corridor as ultimately being a "political" decision. Using that thinking, it was suggested the RTC need not complete existing studies nor undertake any additional studies, it can simply decide based on currently available information. To this notion, I would say: There are good "political" decisions and there are bad "political" decisions. Bad *IIpolitical*" decisions are those made without being fully informed, without benefit of adequate study and analysis, without taking the time to fully engage the community and/or decisions made under some artificially shortened time constraint. Making a decision about the highest and best use of the rail corridor in less than a year, without completing the Unified Corridors Study currently underway, without waiting for the Sustainable Transportation Prioritization Plan and the 2018 CA State Rail Plan to be completed, and without undertaking a thorough TBI analysis to answer important community questions about possible future transportation uses of the corridor through an open, transparent public process as promised in Measure D, clearly meets the definition of a bad, very bad political decision. This community will not allow it.

Clearly, the best decision is to stay the course, build the trail and save the tracks for later.

Respectfully,

Mark Mesiti-Miller

Professional Civil Engineer C40945

33 year resident of Santa Cruz

From: Tom Brady  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:13 PM  
Subject: No train! Build a pedestrian/bike path

Please build the pedestrian/bike path. Do not move forward with the train. Get our county moving the right way!

Thanks, - Tom

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From: Akiko Minami  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:29 PM  
Subject: Letter to Regional Transportation Commission regarding train

12/6/16

Dear Regional Transportation Commission,

I am writing to you about the decision of having or not having a train with the rail trail. My opinion is that we should have a train. I think that having a train would help both people and the environment. According to a study by Chester and Horvath of UC Berkeley, trains produce fewer emissions for each mile of passenger travel than cars or buses. I think that a lot of people would ride the train rather than take the bus so I think that would save a lot of CO<sub>2</sub>. Also personally I like riding the train better than the car or the bus because first of all I don't get carsick, second of all I can walk around and third of all I can meet new people.

I think we should definitely not make a final decision on whether to have a train or not without further study. I don't really think there are very many great reasons we should not have a train other than money and the path being smaller. But at least to me it is more important to have a train than to have a bigger path. Having a train could both help people on longer distance journeys and people who got tired of walking or riding. It would also help kids, seniors and handicapped people. We have gone a long way from the old fashioned coal trains and since our new trains are efficient, fast and fun I think we should use them. Trains are good for many reasons but the top reasons for me are they are better for the environment and they are fun to go on. Thank you for reading my letter. Please consider my opinions.

Sincerely,  
Tamarah Minami, Santa Cruz CA, age 10

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From: Stanley Sokolow  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:47 PM  
Subject: Comments regarding BRT in items 12, 13, and 19 on agenda of the Dec 8 RTC meeting

Dear RTC Commissioners:

In the 1999 Major Transportation Investment Study by the RTC and in the 2003 Master Transportation Study by the City of Santa Cruz, the consultants recommended a busway on the rail corridor to provide affordable rapid transit that would bypass the congestion on Highway 1 and city streets. So far, the RTC has obtained a feasibility study for passenger train service on the corridor, which showed that most or all of the existing railroad tracks, ties, some gravel (ballast), and associated hardware should or would need to be replaced to provide for the speeds needed by commuter service. The recent temporary shutdown of Iowa Pacific's slow-moving Polar Express due to faulty track reinforces the fact that the track is not suitable for high-speed commuter service in its present condition. The value of the corridor is not in the existing hardware, but rather in the right-of-way (ROW). Before you make any decision about the best use of the coastal corridor, you need to have a study of the bus-rapid-transit (BRT) alternative.

I support keeping the tracks until an evidence-based decision is made on what to replace them with. Meanwhile, I support building the coastal bicycle/pedestrian trail adjacent to the tracks. But this asset is too valuable to devote entirely to bicycle travel that won't serve the vast majority who can't or won't commute by bicycle and walking. I ride my bike a lot. I would use the bike trail a lot. But I realize that the non-biking residents of the County deserve their fair share use of the corridor too.

Executive Director Dondero's report on page 7 discusses the BRT option. He says that removal of the tracks would be costly. However, even if the train service is to be restored, the existing tracks and hardware would be removed, so that's not a disadvantage of BRT.

He talks about a typical BRT system with 2 side-by-side busways and says that this could require a significant amount of ROW. However, keep in mind that the passenger train study proposed a single track with passing sidings in a few locations, not adding an additional track to provide 2-way side-by-side trains all the way without track sharing. Buses can similarly share a single-lane busway with passing sidings and collision prevention systems. Since the width needed for a curb-guided busway is only 10 feet plus 2 feet of shoulder on each side, a total of 14 feet, and a train track requires 17 feet of width including shoulders, the single busway would actually be 3 feet narrower than a train track requires. At passing lanes, two busways would occupy less width than the two train tracks would. Therefore, since a train is feasible, a guided busway is even more feasible in the existing ROW width. There may even be long sections of the ROW where side-by-side guided busways are possible but side-by-side train tracks are not.

My concept for rapid transit on the coastal corridor is to have a guided busway that would not need 2-way simultaneous travel. In the morning, during the congested northbound commuting period on Highway 1, specially equipped buses would begin at the existing Watsonville Metro Transit Center, take streets about 1500 feet to the opening of the coastal corridor at West Beach and Rodriguez streets, and then go on the guided busway to the existing downtown Santa Cruz Metro Transit Center, making a limited number of stops or side loops along the way. One side loop would be to reach the existing Metro bus transit center at Capitola Mall and then return to the busway. A train can't do that. The buses would exit the busway at the Seabright crossing and proceed along Metro #68 route to the Pacific Avenue Metro Center. They would not use the railroad bridge at the Boardwalk. After pausing at downtown Santa Cruz for passengers to alight and board, the buses would then travel on Ocean Street to Hwy 1 and return to Watsonville on Hwy 1 in the non-congested direction. In the afternoon, when the commute congestion goes the other direction, the BRT buses would circulate the opposite direction, southbound on the coastal corridor and return on the non-congested northbound direction of Hwy 1. This would eliminate any need for 2-way bus travel on the busway. If someday Hwy 1 is too congested in both directions all day, or if the Metro route designers prefer, the busway could be enhanced with appropriate electronic controls to allow bidirectional use of the single busway with its passing lanes, just as has been proposed for the train service. An additional benefit of the busway over the train is that neighborhood buses can also get onto the busway for part of their route to bypass congestion on the city streets.

A BRT system would utilize the existing investment in the Metro transit centers and in the Metro's existing bus maintenance and operations complex on River Street. A train system would require acquiring land and building a train maintenance complex. Train mechanics would need to be hired, whereas the Metro already has bus mechanics. At the terminal ends in Santa Cruz and Watsonville, new major stations would need to be built, whereas the buses already have terminals there.

I propose that the BRT buses be battery-powered all-electric buses, which are available right now. They have sufficient range to serve this route and would be rapidly recharged when they pause at the transit centers using automatic charging systems or would recharge overnight. Currently, I'm not aware of any electric commuter trains that can operate over such long distances purely on battery power without intermediate recharging or continuous power wires or power rails, which increase the capital costs. Moreover, these battery-powered buses are much less expensive than electric light-rail units.

Regarding potential legal problems or costs associated with abandoning rail service, I offer these thoughts. The state proposition that provided the bond money used to purchase the ROW also authorized use of that money for rapid transit guideways. Since my proposed guided busway would not remove the tracks from Watsonville to Pajaro, Iowa Pacific could continue freight service there. The tracks that reach a few possible freight shippers north of the busway in Watsonville starting at Beach and Rodriguez may continue to be serviced by the tracks if the busway is built alongside the tracks in the corridor or by straddling the tracks with the busway guides as has been done in Germany, for that short section of track. An alternative would be to modify the Iowa Pacific agreement when it comes up for renewal in 5 years so freight service only goes from Watsonville to Pajaro.

My proposal also leaves untouched the tracks from Seabright Ave westward, so the Big Trees railway can continue operation as usual, and people in the beach areas and in west Santa Cruz won't be disturbed by commuter trains rolling through their neighborhoods. Moreover, these battery-powered buses are quieter than light-rail trains, an advantage of BRT for the neighbors of the transit corridor. And buses don't have to blast their horns or have loud clanging crossing gates at intersections with streets.

Proponents of trains on the coastal corridor have argued that trains are more efficient, more desired by the public, promote more transit oriented development around their stations, and are less expensive to operate in the long term than BRT systems are. I have written a carefully investigated report which presents evidence refuting those arguments. I urge you to read my proposal. It's not the kind of detailed analysis that an expert consultant would be able to perform, but I feel it makes a good case that BRT should not be dismissed off-hand. BRT on the coastal corridor needs serious study before you decide. Many cities have studied BRT versus light-rail trains and have concluded that BRT meets their needs better than trains would. My proposal gives many examples.

I urge you to engage a transportation consultant that is very familiar with BRT systems to conduct a feasibility study comparable to the train study you already have obtained.

Here is the link to my proposal for BRT: Stanley Sokolow - Guided Busway Proposal to SCC RTC\_Dec 7 2016 <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B2hQ4fiqJvxvbXNuT0tZaUtRaFk> .

Thank you for consideration of my remarks.

Stanley Sokolow  
Santa Cruz

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From: Tom Livingston  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 12:50 PM  
Subject: Trail NOW

Hello RTC,

Please vote on pulling up the rails now. We do not need another dirty, stinky, dangerous old train rumbling through our communities. What we do need is to utilize all of our resources to improve the transportation options now. We can not wait 10-15-20 years before the trestles are rebuild to support 19th century technology. We could be within months of converting the old railroad tracks into a world class trail that would be used by hundreds of thousands for commuting to work and recreation. We have a rare opportunity in front of us, let's be bold and build the trail now.

Thanks, Tom Livingston, Aptos, CA

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From: Rhonda Howard-Vachon  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 1:38 PM  
Subject: Please Remove the Tracks....Trail NOW

The current condition of the tracks is unsafe. To rebuild them into a potential rail solution may cost \$600M to a \$1B over the next 10-20 years. Not only will it cause more congestion and perhaps safety issues at intersections, but it will also affect air quality...something that is treasured here in the Santa Cruz area. It seems the population density of our county will never support the financial viability of a train. Yet, as a trail, it will provide a safer alternative for those using bikes (electric as well) as a means to commute to work or to provide for a healthier community oriented lifestyle. And, that seems to be community friendly, financially responsible, efficient and timely (in the next three years). Please remove the tracks and build the trail now and stop the wasting precious time!

- Rhonda Howard

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From: Haston, Carma  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 1:45 PM  
Subject: Rail trail

Please add my name in support of trail only for the train corridor. The idea of tracks is so costly and unnecessary. We could pave that and have a beautiful trail that locals could use for transportation and tourists would come to ride. Let's take some lessons from other communities our size around the world. Trail only and no train gets my vote. Thank you from Aptos.

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From: chulacat007@aol.com  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 1:56 PM  
Subject: Trail

To whom it may concern, I'm writing to express my support of the trail only proposition. We have lived in Santa Cruz County for 26 years and have seen the traffic in this area explode. Much like more progressive and developed parts of Europe, our area has the demographic that will utilize a trail only to its full potential. We have two children who we would love to take out on rides to Capitola, Watsonville or Soquel, but the danger of street riding makes it prohibitive. As lovely is the idea of having a rail, I can tell you now that it won't have the value or impact of a trail only. An example is my friend who is in a wheelchair who has to drive down to Marina to safely ride his recumbent bicycle. He'd love to ride up here in his community. I commute daily to Watsonville where I teach. I would venture to guess that a huge part of the traffic issue heading north is students commuting to Cabrillo and UCSC. Why not pay to have a fleet of wifi-equipped buses (you could serve free coffee!) to transport students and others from Watsonville. There's a huge vacant parking lot next to Watsonville Hospital where they could park. Please think of the needs of the community. The last thing we need is a costly project that will prove to be an epic failure. Let's improve community health and happiness by giving us a world-class trail available to families, bicyclists, commuters and students.

- Thank you, Margaret Rosa, Aptos

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From: Kevin Delaney  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 2:42 PM  
Subject: No to RAIL - Yes to TRAIL

Santa Cruz friends, Do the right thing!! Build the bike/pedestrian trail and do not to move forward with the train. Thanks! Kevin Delaney

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From: Jennifer Willoughby  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 3:45 PM  
Subject: Please Build the Trail

Please do not repair the train tracks. The train is outdated and bad for the environment. It will not help commuters. Using it one month out of the year for a ridiculous tourist train makes no sense. Fixing the tracks is a waste of money and a waste of space. Putting in a trail would be great for the community and the local economy. It would increase property values and allow for safer bike and walking routes, bringing our community into the modern age.

Thanks

Jennifer Willoughby

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From: Linda Wilshusen  
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 4:33 PM  
Subject: SCCRTC Meeting of December 8, 2016, Comments from Linda Wilshusen on Item 13, Options for Use of the Rail Corridor

Dear Commissioners -

How alarming to hear yesterday that two days after the passage of Measure D was certified, the RTC is considering *again*, at a "Special Meeting" and without the benefit of a staff recommendation, the outrageously harebrained idea of closing off the option of future rail transit on our publicly-owned coastal rail line.

Haven't the voters just agreed to spend over 500 Million dollars on our local transportation system, specifically including further analyzing options for future rail transit service? & specifically including implementing the award-winning Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Master Plan, a.k.a. the Rail Trail?

I'm on the RTC's public notification email lists and received no notification of this special meeting nor of this significant agenda item. Also, this item has not been noticed as a decision-making item, nor as a Public Hearing. Speaking as a commoner, the timing of RTC consideration of this topic reminds me of rancid fish.

The RTC should table this item until implementation of voter-approved Measure D actions have been completed. Any other RTC action would be grounds to overturn Measure D.

Thank you for your consideration.

- Linda Wilshusen, SCCRTC Executive Director, 1985-2005

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE  
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**December 7, 2016**

Mr. George Dondero, Executive Director  
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC)  
1523 Pacific Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**Subject: December 8, 2016 Special Meeting Agenda Item #13: Options for Use of the Rail Corridor**

Dear Mr. Dondero:

Coastal Commission staff read with interest that the SCCRTC this week will again be discussing possible options for the future use of the 32-mile Santa Cruz Branch Line (SBL) corridor. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate our continued support for evaluating the SBL corridor for all possible transportation and public access options. As we understand it, the options under consideration currently include a range of mobility modes, including pedestrian trails, bicycle trails, bus service and rail service. We believe that careful consideration should be given to all of these potentially interwoven strands that likely will be key to providing safe, attractive non-automotive access to and along the Monterey Bay shoreline, and that will aid in the County's efforts to meet the State's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Protecting and utilizing the SBL corridor for a variety of transportation alternatives can also be anticipated to contribute to the implementation of the State's public access and recreation policies, including those that call for facilitation of non-automotive transportation in the coastal zone. As a reminder, we note that Coastal Act policies that apply to this situation include, but are not limited to the following Sections: 30210 (maximizing opportunities for public access); 30212.5 (distributing public use to mitigate overcrowding or overuse of any single area); 30213 (providing lower-cost visitor and recreation facilities); 30251 (protecting highly scenic coastal views); 30252 (facilitating transit service and non-automobile circulation); and, 30253(d) (minimizing energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled).

Consistent with Coastal Act (and related Local Coastal Program) policies, we envision the SBL as the potential "backbone" of many possible alternative transportation options in the region, including the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, which is one regional component of the California Coastal Trail network. We urge the SCCRTC to proceed with its analysis of *all* possible options, including a rail-trail option (see also our January 26, 2015 letter), a multi-use (i.e., bikes and pedestrians) trail option without rail, and other possible permutations (e.g., those associated with dedicated bus service) with a multi-use trail that can effectively meet the above stated objectives. An equivalent level of detailed information should be developed for all options to guide decision makers in their future deliberations about the corridor. Until those studies are

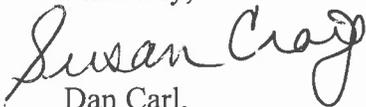
**George Dondero**  
**SCCRTC Special Meeting Agenda Item #13**  
**December 7, 2016**  
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completed, the corridor assets necessary for potential rail, bus, and/or trail uses should be preserved in ways that do not preclude or prejudice future options for the SBL.

In conclusion, we believe that the SCCRTC should proceed with the course of actions outlined within Measure D relative to the SBL corridor, including protecting and maintaining the existing SBL infrastructure and right-of-way and performing in-depth environmental and economic analyses of the possible future trail, transit, and other non-automotive transportation options within the corridor, with full public participation. We look forward to working with your staff and other interested parties to help ensure that a vision for the SBL corridor that provides enhanced transportation mobility in the region, particularly in terms of enhanced recreational trail options, can be brought to fruition in the near term.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (831) 427-4863 if you have any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

 FOR:

Dan Carl,  
Deputy Director  
California Coastal Commission