

AGENDA: March 2, 2017

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director
RE: Director's Report

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Highway 1 Mar Vista Pedestrian/Bicycle Overcrossing

Members of the Project Development Team (PDT) comprised of Caltrans, Santa Cruz County Public Works Agency, RTC, and the consultant team met on February 14th to kick-off the environmental phase of the Highway 1 Mar Vista Pedestrian/Bicycle Overcrossing project. The PDT met first in the field to review opportunities and constraints and then reviewed the project scope of work including the roles and responsibilities of each of the key members working on the project. The project team will rely on work done as part of the Highway 1 Draft Tiered Environmental Document to form the basis of the required technical studies for the project.

A two step process is proposed to first develop alternative design options for the overcrossing, and then through a public participation process, identify a preferred design alternative and begin environmental analysis work. The documentation will comply with both California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Focused stakeholder meetings will be held in April with representation from area residents, neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, and bicycle, pedestrian, and environmental advocacy groups. The purpose of these meetings will be to identify areas of concern and interest from the public in terms of operations, safety, aesthetic, and environmental impacts. Up to five design alternatives will be developed for public review and discussion, with the goal of identifying a preferred alternative at a public workshop to be held in the summer. A detailed project schedule is being developed and will be shared at a future date.

Storm Damage

Damage to state highways, local streets and roads and the Santa Cruz Branch rail line has been impacting almost anyone who moves in the County. Crews have been working hard around the clock to restore the system. The RTC coordinated Safe on 17 Task Force will meet on March 15 in San Jose. This meeting will focus on communicating between partner

agencies the weather related challenges on Hwy 17. Caltrans D4 and D5 (traffic management, maintenance, construction, PIO) and CHP in both San Jose and Santa Cruz. Downed trees and washout on the rail line are or will be addressed as soon as possible.

CALCOG Report

CALCOG met in Sacramento on Monday, February 27. Here are a few highlights. The annual Regional Leadership Forum held in Monterey will occur March 30 – April 1. RTC Chair Zach Friend and I will attend this year.

CALCOG has a new Bill Tracker tool on their website www.calcog.org for tracking transportation related bills in the state legislature. If you are interested in tracking any of the 2,495 bills introduced in this session, here is a place to start. A unique feature is that each bill is tagged by subject matter. For example, you can quickly find all the bills that relate to CEQA by clicking on that tag. For some key bills, CALCOG provides some analysis right in the bill summary. Finally, they plan to add a PDF report generator that will allow anyone to pull a report and – for example – add it to an agenda packet for a legislative update.

Senator Jim Beall dropped in to discuss his two and half year effort to get a transportation funding bill passed. SB1 is the current version (which RTC supports). It has now cleared two committees. Leadership and the Governor have set a self-imposed deadline of April 6 to get a bill passed. There is some cautious optimism about passage.

Other bills discussed included:

AB515 (Frazier) would require the state to take input by the regions (such as RTC) on the SHOPP (State Highway Operation and Protection Program) each year before adoption. CalCOG will take a closer look before recommending a position.

AB1113 (Bloom) State Transit Assistance Program; provides that only STA-eligible operators are eligible to receive an allocation from the portion of program funds based on transit operator revenues. Supported by California Transit Association. CalCOG staff recommends support.

AB1282 (Mullin) Transportation: Task Force: Permit Processing. The bill would establish a permitting task force to develop a process for early engagement for all parties in the development of transportation projects. Note: RTC staff has been working with state and federal environmental permitting agencies on an MOU that essentially accomplishes this same goal. It will be brought to the RTC soon for final approval. CalCOG staff recommends support.

SB2 (Atkins) Building Jobs and Homes Act. Imposes a \$75 fee at the time of recording of every real estate instrument, paper or notice required or permitted by law, per each single transaction per single parcel of real property, not to exceed \$225. Revenues are sent to the state Department of Housing and Community Development for deposit in the Building Homes and Jobs Fund and expended so that 20% would fund affordable owner-occupied

workforce housing, 10% would fund housing related to agricultural workers and their families, and the remainder to support affordable housing and other housing related programs. Supported by the League of California Cities and consistent with CalCOG policies. Will go to the CalCOG Board of Directors at the March Board meeting before taking a position.

Linking Transportation Funds to Housing Production

The housing issue continues to attract attention from Legislators and the Administration. One critical factor for immediate relief is funding. Of course new money has limits. The second option is how to redirect other existing funding sources to meet the objective. Enter the discussion of linking transportation funds on housing production or adoption of certain housing related policies.

Recently an invitation-only stakeholder group engaged at a set of meetings with the goal of reaching a consensus on housing policy. The group included housing advocates, environmentalists, planning interests and the League of Cities and CSAC. Consensus was almost reached and a letter was issued (the League elected not to sign). The plan laid out in the letter includes the creation of a \$100M fund to update local general plans and specific plans, bringing them into alignment with the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy, which is a signature element of SB375 and is now created by AMBAG concurrent with updates of the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Updating general plans is needed and could provide some valuable help in locating new sites for housing. See the attached press release.

More on the Housing Issue

In January 2017 the California Department of Housing and Community Development released California's Housing Future: Challenges and Opportunities for public comment, which is due March 4. The report identifies five challenge areas that shape the discussion, and recommends three options to address those five areas. How does this relate to transportation planning and/or funding? The state appears to be working toward policies/potential legislation that makes stronger connections between housing production/ housing goals and state funded infrastructure investments.

Measure D roll-out

At upcoming RTC policy workshops and subcommittee meetings, staff will be bringing the following Measure D items to the board for review:

- 30-Year revenue projection
- Agreements/Guidelines for Direct fund Recipients,
- RTC budget/staff for Measure D tasks, and
- Draft 5-Yr Plans for regional projects.

As noted at your meeting in February, collection of Measure D funds will begin in April and the first disbursements will be in summer, after required payments to the Elections Department and Board of Equalization. Direct Measure D fund recipients such as the cities, the county, and the Metro Transit District will be holding public hearings to provide an opportunity for public input on their 5-year expenditure plans before June 30.

NARC Washington DC Conference Report

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), held their annual National Conference of Regions in Washington DC February 12 -15. My colleague Ron DeCarli, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) attended, and shared his report on outcomes of the conference. The following condensed summary is extracted from a longer staff report that Ron will provide to his board on April 5.

Expectations

Federal Transportation funding is predicted to be flat, best case, if Congress approves appropriations bills at the same level as approved in the FAST Act. This is a big "IF" given the stated congressional emphasis to increase the Defense Budget while not increasing the budget. Currently, the general fund provides approximately 50% of funding to the national highway trust fund. Any cut will likely reduce transportation revenues. In 2020 Congress must act to provide an equivalent of doubling the gas tax just to stay at current funding levels.

President Donald Trump has stated repeatedly his intention to make infrastructure a priority. His statements have focused on a trillion dollar infrastructure program to improve transportation, water, sewer, airports and rail. Funding would largely be derived from the following:

- a. Increased Public Private Partnerships (Good for tolling facilities, poor for RTC). This has a high potential of raising significant revenues but largely limited to new facilities.
- b. Increased Financing Opportunities (Good if you have a stable revenue flow, like a sales tax measure, its value is marginal without).
- c. Repatriation of Oversea Taxes (Also proposed by the Obama Administration). Senate Majority Leader, Paul Ryan, indicated any repatriation would be considered for general fund revenues, and not necessarily be used for transportation purposes.

Conference speakers agreed there will be a major emphasis on privately funded transportation improvements (funded with tolls), new financing opportunities, and increased regulatory relief. They all seemed to agree there was little likelihood of a gas tax revenue increase, nor retention of the current levels of general fund revenues for transportation.

The federal focus will likely be on national transportation priorities, programs and projects that spur economic development. Many speakers warned of potential cuts to transit, bike and pedestrians, the likely termination of TIGER grants, and an increasing devolution of responsibilities to State Departments of Transportation.

A Municipal Finance Panel raised significant concerns over Senate Majority Leader Paul Ryan's Tax Reform Proposal that would delete the Municipal Bond Tax Exemption. It was noted that Muni bonds currently finance more than 75% of local government infrastructure investments.

Implications for our Region:

1. Expect funding for bridge replacements, highway maintenance, and freight movement.
2. Potential cuts to transit, and programs considered “non-essential” such as bike & pedestrian.
3. Shift in decision-making to the states (Governors, not necessarily Caltrans, or regions).
4. Expect little for congestion relief for interchanges or other improvements.
5. The potential loss of the tax exempt status of municipal bonds significantly impacts local government financing options and increases costs.

Issues:

1. Acknowledgement by many that tolling will not replace the need for traditional revenues for maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, nor is it an option in rural areas.
2. Current law does not allow tolling on existing facilities.
3. A significant concern is that many politicians see “increased financing” opportunities as equivalent to increased funding. It is not, and there remains a significant need for increased revenues.
4. TIGER grants (competitive) will likely be stricken; transit reduced; and bike, pedestrian, and Safe Routes to School funding will potentially be in jeopardy.

PRESS RELEASE**Strange Bedfellows Find Common Ground, Ask Leaders to Tackle Housing Crisis**

Contact: Former Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, (916) 442-1111

On the heels of a Statewide Housing Assessment that concluded California's housing crisis is compounding inequality, a dozen groups representing labor, affordable housing, infill builders, social equity, and environmental concerns sent a joint letter to Governor Brown and the State Legislature signaling their willingness to work together on housing supply and affordability. They urged the Governor and Legislature to make housing a priority in 2017 and provided a Housing Concept paper outlining core areas of agreement.

The letter was signed by American Planning Association, California Chapter; California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation; California State Association of Counties; Council of Infill Builders; Housing California; California League of Conservation Voters; Natural Resources Defense Council; Planning and Conservation League; Public Advocates; San Francisco Council of Community Housing Organizations; State Building & Construction Trades Council and Western Center on Law & Poverty.

The Housing Concept put forth by the groups outlines eight key principles, including:

- A \$100 million fund to update local general plans and specific plans, bringing them into alignment with the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy, a signature element of SB 375
- Consistency with implementation of AB 32, the state's landmark climate and clean energy law
- Linkage of transportation funds with affordable and workforce housing production
- Legislation to create a permanent funding source on par with the redevelopment affordable housing set aside from 2010
- Better enforcement of existing housing laws, and incentives for cities and counties that make significant progress toward providing their fair share of affordable housing
- Streamlined permitting for projects that meet certain requirements, including paying prevailing wages, location within an infill area, and sites that have already undergone environmental and public review.

"Right now, millions of Californians have to choose between paying their rent and buying necessities like food and medicine," said Housing California Executive Director Lisa Hershey. "The lack of affordable housing has made California the most poverty-stricken state in the country. But we can solve this if we work together, and that is why I am pleased to see labor leaders, builders, conservationists and housing advocates coming together to help lawmakers craft a plan that will serve all our people."



"A livable California must include affordable housing and jobs that provide economic opportunity for our workers," said Cesar Diaz of the State Building & Construction Trades Council. "We look forward to working with Governor Brown and the Legislature to make sure homes are within reach for working families across the state."

"California's housing crisis is the worst it has ever been, and our businesses, workers, and families are all paying the price," said Former Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, who helped bring groups together around this proposal. "This is the year state and local leaders must step up to solve this problem and make California once again a land of opportunity for all its people."

"Californians deserve affordable housing, clean air and climate action," said Howard Penn of Planning and Conservation League. "That is why we are working with partners in the labor, building and housing communities to identify a path forward for transit-oriented developments that balance economic and environmental concerns."

The stakeholder process was facilitated by former state legislators Darrell Steinberg and Roger Dickinson, and funded by Resources Legacy Fund, a Sacramento-based nonprofit philanthropic organization.

Unified Corridor Investment Study Public Comments

From: Philip Boutelle
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2017 3:31 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: RTC 3/2/2017 Agenda Item 26

RTC:
Please approve Agenda Item 26, allocating the additional funds required for completing the Unified Corridor Investment Study - Expanded Scope. We need an independent complete study to determine the best use of these corridors.

Thank you,
-Philip Boutelle

From: Lec Cel
Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2017 11:01 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Dirty 19th century tech.

I strongly disagree with using our tax dollars helping justify old 19th century (dirty) train technology & train routes are not easily adjusted to the vastly changing transportation solutions, (i.e. small self driving light weight passenger vehicles). The continuing *delay* using our Coastal Corridor for vast amount of *and* growing group of bicycle loving people & pedestrian modes of transportation is short sighted at best. Without the dirty, noisy, expensive & space hogging trains, this corridor could be a *California & worldwide* model for bicycles, pedestrians and the ever advancing battery technology, making truly lightweight, *long* lasting battery assisted bicycles the most viable and cost effective large scale transportation solution for the very limited space we have here in Santa Cruz county. The short sighted concept of trains along our pristine coastal corridor is like being blind to the ever advancing clean technologies we have and that are steadily advancing almost exponentially daily.

From: Coastal Rail Santa Cruz
Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2017 12:41 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Expanded UCIS is well warranted

Dear commissioners and staff,
Recent storm damage underscores several significant considerations:

- Our roads and highways are frail and suffer from neglect;
- Highway 17 is a vital link which, when down, impacts us all.
- There's little hope of ever widening 17, we can scarcely keep it open;
- Widening highway one is too costly to our budgets and environment;
- A southern route to jobs in the silicon valley and beyond is practical;
- Valuable and viable active rail infrastructure exists and awaits our final commitment.

Monterey County is moving ahead with their Capitol Corridor Extension, rail service between Salinas and Gilroy with a stop in Pajaro. Our active Santa Cruz Branch Line ends in Pajaro and is a built-to-suit solution for a modern and sustainable alternative to driving, one that is immune to traffic congestion and sure to be popular once made available. By expanding the Unified Corridors Investment Study to include the southern reach of the rail corridor, you serve us and future generations well. As much of our wasted transportation time and resources are associated with intercity and intercounty travel, it seems appropriate to fully investigate the promise that is held by joining our neighbor to the south in activating rail transit service while building a fabulous world class trail.

Many thanks for your leadership and vision,
Barry Scott, Coastal Rail Santa Cruz

From: Bryant Mairs
 Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2017 12:51 PM
 To: info@sccrtc.org
 Subject: Re: Expanding the Unified Corridor Investment Study

My current understanding is that the RTC is planning to expand the UCIS beyond its original scope that ended at Pajaro Station to extend all the way to Davenport. This is anticipated to quadruple the cost and extend the studies into 2019. As a Santa Cruz resident who is an avid cyclist for commuting and getting-around purposes this is disappointing. I've been hearing about a rail trail for a long time and have been excited to have it built. I used to think a rail line made sense, especially with the imminent construction of a high-speed rail line it could connect to in Gilroy I think it was. But there are some additional factors that I think bear consideration:

- 1) Delaying the building of a multi-use trail reduces the benefits we can gain from tourism and decreased car usage, both of which have a large number of benefits, too numerous to list. Bicycles and walking are important modes of transit for the disadvantaged so putting off the development of this trail disproportionately affects them.
- 2) The transportation scene is changing quickly with autonomous cars and on-call ride hailing services starting to change things, with more changes coming as those systems mature. These will likely obviate the need for much of the fixed-line services like rail. Especially rail like that proposed for SC that would have to run directly through a city and not be very fast. The cost estimates I saw from the last study were not favorable, and that's based on past & current modes of transit. If this rail is supposed to last 20+ years, I don't know how it'll survive. So I used to be a big fan of the rail and trail, but I have since switched to prefer a trail-only solution. It'll be safer segregating bikes and pedestrians, cost less to build and maintain, and provide benefits much sooner than keeping (and probably replacing the rail).

Sincerely,
 Bryant Mairs, Avid biker and resident of 8+ years

From: Bob Schneider
 Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 9:45 AM
 To: info@sccrtc.org
 Subject: UCIS -

Dear Ginger,

Logic tells me that the continued investment in the rail in the form of studies, surveys, and salaries is like pouring money down a sewer drain. I support the folks at Trail Now and cannot support the RTC staff who continue to support the pro rail agenda.

That said and since I have no power to stop you from spending more taxpayer money on these foolish studies, I would like to ask you do to the following:

- 1) Make sure each and study is actually stamped and wet signed by your engineers...all of them who oversee the final product. While these reports may be consider opinions, they are opinions provided by professionals with special technical knowledge. These people need to be held accountable to each document and should stamp and sign all reports.
- 2) I shall review said reports in the context of the professional engineering code of ethics.
- 3) If I find language or the omission of language that I believe violates the codes of ethics I shall consider filing a complaint against these engineers with their board.
- 4) Sorry if this puts a damper on your day.....but I believe this is my only recourse to stop this madness.

I. Fundamental Canons

Engineers, in the fulfillment of their professional duties, shall:

1. Hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.
2. Perform services only in areas of their competence.
3. Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
4. Act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.
5. Avoid deceptive acts.
6. Conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.

Regards,
 Robert S Schneider

From: Brian Peoples
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 8:55 PM
To: Scrrtc Info
Subject: Agenda 26: increasing scope of Unified Corridor Study

Proposing to expand the Unified Corridor Study project to include the railroad tracks that extend out to Pajaro -- outside the City of Watsonville - adds no significant value to the overall project and is not worth the added cost and schedule. This part of the railroad is not part of the taxpayer-owned Santa Cruz Branchline. This shows poor use of taxpayer funds and RTC Staff continues to lose the trust of the public.

Brian Peoples

From: Eric McGrew
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 11:39 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: 3.2.17 RTC agenda re: expanded study budget approval

I urge the Commission to approve the expanded study as detailed in the report from Ginger Dykaar and Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planners in preparation for the 3.2.17 RTC meeting agenda, to wit:

"RTC staff recommend that the RTC approve the expanded scope of the Unified Corridor Investment Study to include a larger project area, a two step scenario analysis, additional economic, equity and environmental analyses, improved project cost estimates, increased public outreach and additional model development in order to answer important community questions about possible future uses of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line as defined by Measure D. RTC staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission approve \$500,000 of Measure D funds allocated for the rail corridor to be added to the Unified Corridor Investment Study project budget to complete the expanded scope as outlined above."

Sincerely,
Eric McGrew, CCIM, Envision Housing, LLC

From: joe martinez
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 3:54 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Corridor Project & Proposed Changes

RTC Commissioners,
Do not expand the scope of the rail corridor project by extending the railroad tracks beyond the City of Watsonville. A change to the proposal such as the one being consider is unacceptable, and in my view, would need voter approval. As well, my view is implementing rail/train service of any kind on this corridor is a waste of time and money. However, given the current situation the RTC should focus on repairing the roads, expanding Hwy 1 to 3 lanes, and building a bicycle/pedestrian trail.

Regards,
Joe Martinez, Aptos

From: Sawhill Bruce
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 4:50 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Cc: Sawhill Bruce
Subject: Letter for 3/2/2017 packet

Dear Commissioners:
Please find enclosed a letter from the FORT Board regarding the Unified Corridors Study.

Sincerely,
Bruce Sawhill, PhD, Chair, FORT



Supporting the construction of a 32-mile bike and walking path from Watsonville to Davenport

Comments on Unified Corridors Planning Process for RTC 3/2/2017 meeting

1. We at FORT support the idea of transportation systems planning exemplified by the Unified Corridors Planning Process and the planned extension of the domain from the Mid-County to a region spanning the distance from Watsonville to Davenport. This will make the UCIS much more relevant to the County as a whole.
2. Even though Davenport is not currently a strong generator of travel to or from, it should be considered in a unified planning process because of potential future traffic impact of the National Monument.
3. We support the planning principle of the “Triple Bottom Line”- People, Planet, Prosperity. This is particularly important when considering alternative transportation because traditional valuation procedures do not fit alternative transportation well. (See #6 below)
4. **People:** Transportation infrastructure needs to benefit the maximum number of people, and having options is essential to achieving this goal. Not everybody owns a car or wants to drive one, not everyone can ride a bike or walk because of physical limitations or because of distance. In addition, there are large inequities in income and opportunity in our County, and transportation options, particularly between Watsonville and Santa Cruz, are critical to addressing these inequities.
5. **Planet:** AB32 requires drastic reductions in CO2 emissions. Santa Cruz County is above the state average in terms of amount of pollution that comes from transportation, so AB32 will hit us disproportionately hard. Only a combination of large increases in efficiency, moving away from fossil fuels and reduction in trip miles will accomplish these GHG reduction goals. Some of these “levers” are the purview of the RTC, others belong in public works and zoning.
6. **Prosperity:** When calculating the cost of a transportation option, consider the cost not only to the RTC and other transportation agencies, but to the populace itself. For instance, owning and operating a car costs around \$9k per year according to the AAA, and this is in effect a punishing tax that could be spent elsewhere in the County if people didn’t have to pay it.
7. Embrace “out of the box” thinking: Examples:
 - a. Could a multimodal transit station next to Cabrillo College combine a rail terminus, a bus-on-freeway median station, and an intersection with the bike/ped MBSST to most effectively leverage all of those modes?
 - b. Could the vast parking resources of Cabrillo College be used for weekend tourist parking for the Boardwalk and nearby destinations, with tourists using rail or trail to get there?
8. Lastly, Build the Trail as rapidly as possible! Voters approved Measure D to fund a majority of the trail.

Sincerely,

Bruce Sawhill, PhD
Chair, Friends of the Rail & Trail

From: Brian Peoples
 Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2017 6:02 AM
 To: info@sccrtc.org
 Cc: Zach Friend; Alex Clifford; bruce.mcpherson@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; John Leopold; cchase@cityofsantacruz.com; jimmy.dutra@cityofwatsonville.org; greg.caput@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; ryan.coonerty@santacruzcounty.us; rlj12@comcast.net; lmendez@sccrtc.org; gdondero@sccrtc.org
 Subject: RTC Staff false statements on Trail Only timeline / Agenda #26

RTC Staff,

History will show who was telling the truth as it relates to Coastal Corridor width and timeline to build a rail-with-trail (Train Required) versus a rail-trail (Trail Only). Santa Cruz Land Trust is elevating the public awareness of this argument with a recent article [http://www.landtrustsantacruz.org/rail-trail-politics/...](http://www.landtrustsantacruz.org/rail-trail-politics/) Trail Now has provided the facts on how long it would take to build a rail-trail (Trail Only) and the evidence will eventually be shown with time. An example of a prior debate between RTC / Land Trust and Trail Now. From 2012 to 2015, RTC Staff argued that we were not allowed to return the \$10M back to the CTC and we must operate a train along the Coastal Corridor. In 2015, RTC asked CTC if they would be allowed to not have a train operate on the Coastal Corridor. CTC stated "yes, all you have to do is return the money and you can do what you want with the property". This showed RTC Staff did not do their job and was not allowing all the facts to be providing for decision-making purposes. Once again, we are in the same situation where the RTC Staff are making false statements concerning the use of the Coastal Corridor. RTC Staff is purposely not being truthful in the timeline to build a rail-trail (Trail Only). RTC Staff are stating if we move forward with a rail-trail (Trail Only), it will take years longer than building a rail-with-trail (Train Required). Once again, RTC Staff has not asked the authorities (Surface Transportation Board) on the process. Trail Now has provided detailed guidance, including contractor cost and schedule to remove tracks and build trail. All we can conclude is that RTC Staff are trying to get 60 trains a day from 6 am to 9 pm along the Coastal Corridor. A train will never happen because there is no funding, no tax measure would pass and neighbors to the Coastal Corridor will sue to stop 60 trains a day. We say keep heavy vehicle traffic on the highway corridor and let's use the Coastal Corridor NOW for active transportation. History will show the true facts to building the rail-trail, it already has been show with pass CTC communications.

Best regards,
 Brian Peoples, Executive Director, Trail Now

From: Bud Colligan
 Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2017 6:36 AM
 To: John Leopold; Zach Friend; Ryan Coonerty; Randy Johnson; Bruce McPherson; Cynthia Chase; greg.caput@co.santa-cruz.ca.us; Bertrand, Jacques; oscar.rios@cityofwatsonville.org; sbrown@cityofsantacruz.com; ebottorff167@yahoo.com; dnhagen1939@gmail.com; tim_gubbins@dot.ca.gov
 Cc: info@sccrtc.org
 Subject: More money, more delays while county residents suffer

March 1, 2017
 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

As grass roots support for a Trail Only solution on the Coastal Corridor continues to grow, it appears that our Regional Transportation Commission is increasingly out of step with the facts and the will of the people. Many commissioners tell me privately that they think a passenger train will never operate in Santa Cruz County, yet the Commission continues to approve more studies and delays in making a decision on the best use of the corridor. At the RTC meeting on September 1, 2016 the Commissioners agreed unanimously to make a decision on the disposition of the Coastal Corridor within a year. This was the meeting at which I said that we have been debating this issue since the early 1980's, have done innumerable studies and have plenty of data to make an informed decision. That discussion and consensus seems to have been forgotten. Since Measure D passed, there seems to be relief that there is a big pot of money to do additional studies and take years to make a decision. In the interim, the county has experienced catastrophic storms and road damage, which has further reduced our ability to get around the area. The current plan of record for the Coastal Corridor will do very little to move people in

the next twenty years. An MBSST trail that is relegated to one-third of the corridor between a fence and a wall will be a huge disappointment if it is ever built, when voters come to understand the cost, lack of transit value, access and safety, and the irreversible ecological damage that has been done, all in the name of a train that will never operate! Even if you believe a train is a possibility for the future, railbanking is clearly a superior solution to keeping all options open. Now the RTC Staff is requesting another \$500,000 and has pushed the completion date of the Unified Corridors Study to 2019. The voters have asked for transit solutions, and the Commission is providing studies and delays. With the passage of Measure D, we have an important opportunity to restore trust in the RTC, and I fear we are now in the process of sacrificing that trust. Without holding our staff more accountable for milestones and timely unbiased recommendations to get our county moving, I don't see any likelihood of improvement in the current situation. The Great Santa Cruz Trail Group will continue to explain the relevant facts to the voters and urge action to provide timely solutions to our transportation challenges.

Sincerely,
Bud Colligan

From: Piet Canin
Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2017 9:13 AM
To: info
Subject: Ecology Action's letter of support for Corridor Plan

Dear RTC,
Attached is EA's letter of support for the RTC staff recommendation to expand the scope of Unified Corridor Plan.

Piet Canin | Vice President Transportation, EcologyAction | EcoAct.org



February 28, 2017

RTC Commissioners
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Support for Expanded Scope of the Unified Corridor Plan

Dear RTC Commissioners,

Ecology Action would like to express our support of the RTC's staff recommendation to expand the scope of the current Unified Corridor Study to more comprehensively research and analyze the transit options within the coastal rail corridor. We believe this comprehensive study is what the community is looking for especially since the RTC's 2015 Passenger Rail Feasibility study raised more questions than it could answer. The expanded Unified Corridor Study will answer more of those questions and help the RTC board, with community input, make a data driven decision regarding transit options in the corridor.

We are looking forward to an objective, thorough and transparent study with opportunities for public involvement that will analyze sustainable transportation options within the rail corridor with a goal of discovering which option(s) could achieve the most triple bottom line benefits for our economy, our environment and community equity. We encourage the RTC to undertake a process that provides sufficient information about the full breadth of options the community has requested – from trail-only to passenger rail alongside trail – such that the community can come to clarity within the complex task of deciding the best transportation use of the corridor.

Ecology Action dedicated considerable resources to help pass Measure D because of its sustainable transportation benefits which we believe are critical for all people to thrive on a healthy planet. Our messaging, which aligned with the main campaign for Measure D, stated that Measure D would fund a comprehensive study of rail transit and other transit options including a study of a trail only option. It is critical to move this forward so the community can get behind the best path forward and so we can all make good on our campaign promises.

We applaud the RTC staff for moving so quickly after the passage of Measure D to initiate this comprehensive study of transit options in the coastal rail corridor and urge the Commission to approve the expanded scope of the Unified Corridor Study to achieve the goals outlined above.

Sincerely,

Piet Canin
VP of Transportation