

Item 27 – Attachment 4: Report from Ad Hoc Committee on Proposition 116 Options

AGENDA: March 3, 2005

TO: Regional Transportation Commission/Rail Trail Authority

FROM: Ad Hoc Committee on Proposition 116 Options

RE: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ad hoc committee on Proposition 116 options recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Direct staff to return to the RTC as soon as practicable with a draft Proposition 116 application and financial plan for purchase of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way as a transportation corridor preservation project and including general improvements to ensure continued operation of the rail line. The application materials should also include discussion of the Commission's intention to continue the existing Big Trees recreational passenger rail and the existing freight service, and to consider additional recreational passenger service in the future;
 2. Change its previous direction to staff to prepare a draft request for proposals (RFP) for a combined freight and recreational rail services and instead direct staff to return to the RTC as soon as practicable with a draft RFP only for short line freight service;
 3. After conducting the march 17, 2005 public hearing, direct staff and consultants to prepare the final environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed recreational rail service between Capitola and Aptos/Seascape to return to the RTC with the draft final EIR when there is resolution on the proposed mitigations for noise impacts (the quiet zone) and traffic impacts at the Monterey Avenue/Park Avenue intersection;
 4. Suspend pursuit of a demonstration train on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; and
 5. Establish this ad hoc committee as a short term rail acquisition task force to work with staff through the completion of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition project.
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DISCUSSION

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) designated an ad hoc committee, composed of Commissioners Norton, Pirie, and Stone and Commissioner alternates Quintanilla and Schiffrin, to discuss options for a Proposition 116 application for acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. On February 28, 2005 the ad hoc committee met to discuss information recently provided by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff that an application for Proposition 116 funds can be for corridor preservation and does not require a passenger rail service component. At that meeting, the ad hoc committee made the recommendations listed above.