

July 11, 2006

Mayor Cynthia Mathews
City of Santa Cruz City Council
323 Church Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Public Hearing Regarding the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan and Final EIR

Dear Mayor Cynthia Mathews:

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) staff urges you to adopt the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan and certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The RTC has supported the Broadway-Brommer Bicycle/Pedestrian Path since the early 1990's and has programmed \$1.8 million over that time to this project. As the transportation funding and policy agency for the region, the RTC has shown its support for this project by protecting funds assigned to it over many years. This project supports several of the Santa Cruz County *2005 Regional Transportation Plan's* Goals and Policies.

Please accept the following comments in support of the project:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

- The RTC's Bicycle Committee is in full support of the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan and the Broadway-Brommer Path. This project will help provide a complete and convenient regional bicycle and pedestrian network and an east-west connection. The completion of this project will also increase the **opportunity and attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian trips for transportation purposes** which can have positive, cumulative environmental impacts. (Letter of support dated August 5, 2005 is attached.)
- RTC staff strongly supports the bicycle/pedestrian path connection proposed in the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan. Currently, there is no continuous bike lane/bike path that connects Santa Cruz and the Live Oak/Capitola area. This path will help **fill this critical gap** in the regional east-west bicycle and pedestrian network.
- The Arana Gulch bicycle and pedestrian path will increase the **ease and safety** of bicycle and pedestrian trips for transportation purposes in and

between our communities. Additionally, after Soquel Avenue bike lanes are constructed, this connection will still serve a need for Class I paths serving lesser skilled cyclists who are unfamiliar with mingling with high volume automobile traffic as well as provide a direct route between the Santa Cruz and Live Oak areas.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility

- The RTC's Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee has unanimously endorsed this project. This will be the **first wheelchair-accessible element of the City's greenbelt parks** which is very much needed for the disabled community. (Minutes from the April 2006 E&D TAC meeting are attached.)
- RTC staff is in full support of the **ADA accessible path for wheelchair users** that will be provided through the Arana Gulch. "Universal access", the goal of enabling all people, including young, old and disabled persons who may have diminished perceptual or ambulatory abilities, to travel safely to destinations served by our public streets and pathway system, is highly desirable and achievable through this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about the above comments, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at (831) 460-3219.

Sincerely,

George Dondero
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. Letter from RTC staff to Susan Harris regarding the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan Draft EIR
2. Letter from the RTC's Bicycle Committee regarding the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan Draft EIR
3. Minutes from the RTC's Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting of April 11, 2006

cc: RTC Commissioner Emily Reilly
RTC Commissioner Mardi Wormhoudt
RTC Bicycle Committee
RTC E&DTAC Committee
RTC



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1523 PACIFIC AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060-3911 • 831/ 460-3200 • FAX 831/ 460-3215

March 27, 2006

SERVICE AUTHORITY
FOR FREEWAY
EMERGENCIES
(SAFE)

Susan Harris
City of Santa Cruz
Parks and Recreation Department
323 Church Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RAIL/TRAIL
AUTHORITY

Re: Arana Gulch Park Master Plan Draft EIR

COMMUTE
SOLUTIONS

Dear Ms. Harris,

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) staff would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The Arana Gulch Park Master Plan DEIR supports several of the Santa Cruz County *2005 Regional Transportation Plan's* Goals and Policies. Please accept the following comments for your consideration:

TRANSPORTATION
POLICY WORKSHOP

BUDGET &
ADMINISTRATION
PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE

- The RTC has programmed \$1.7 million to the Broadway-Brommer Bike Path to date over a period spanning many years. The RTC has protected funding assigned to this project even though transportation funding is very limited. RTC staff encourages the City of Santa Cruz to continue moving forward with implementation of this multi-use trail project as soon as feasible. Further delay could jeopardize some or all of the funding.

INTERAGENCY
TECHNICAL
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

BICYCLE COMMITTEE

- RTC staff strongly supports the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection proposed in the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan. This path will help fill a critical gap in the regional east-west bicycle and pedestrian network. Currently, there is no continuous bike lane/bike path that connects Santa Cruz and the Live Oak/Capitola area. Hopefully in the future there will be several bikeway and pedestrian connections for convenient use by all users. The Arana Gulch bicycle and pedestrian path will increase the ease and safety of bicycle and pedestrian trips for transportation purposes in and between our communities. Providing a complete and convenient regional bicycle and pedestrian network increases the opportunity and attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian trips for transportation purposes, thus allowing people a transportation option between Santa Cruz and the Live Oak/Capitola area in addition to cars and transit.

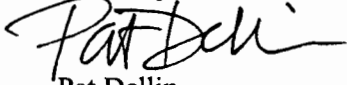
ELDERLY & DISABLED
TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WWW.SCCRTC.ORG
EMAIL:INFO@SCCRTC.ORG

- The *2005 Regional Transportation Plan* supports the development of multi-use paths. “Universal access”, the goal of enabling all people, including young, old and disabled persons who may have diminished perceptual or ambulatory abilities, to travel safely to destinations served by our public street and pathway system, is desirable.
- RTC staff fully supports that the Arana Gulch multi-use paths provide ADA accessibility to wheelchair users. The DEIR notes that this will be the only greenbelt area in the City of Santa Cruz that will be accessible to wheelchair users, which shows how needed this project is. Although the proposed Arana Gulch multi-use paths meet the minimum width requirements for bicycle and pedestrian paths per the Caltrans’ Highway Design Manual, RTC staff suggests that the path be designed to have a width greater than eight feet where possible to better facilitate universal access. For example, the inclusion of some wider portions of the pathway on the bridge and in the sloped sections of the path would promote universal access.
- As noted on page 3-15 of the DEIR, the Arana Gulch Master Plan trail system is indeed consistent with the concepts for the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail (MBSST) which includes interpretive elements as well as transportation elements and recreation elements. Several interpretive elements for the MBSST have already been constructed. The RTC is expected to address the next step in trail planning for the MBSST next fiscal year

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about the above comments, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at (831) 460-3219.

Sincerely,



Pat Dellin

Acting Executive Director

cc: RTC Commissioner Emily Reilly
RTC Commissioner Mardi Wormhoudt
RTC Bicycle Committee
RTC E&DTAC Committee
RTC
Nick Papadakis, AMBAG
Susan Pearlman, Santa Cruz County Sanctuary Task Force

August 5, 2005

Susan Harris
City of Santa Cruz
Parks and Recreation Department
323 Church Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Scope of Arana Gulch Park Master Plan EIR

Dear Ms. Harris,

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) staff would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scope of the Environmental Impact Report for the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan.

Please include in the EIR the positive environmental effects this path will have on transportation and air quality. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Connection proposed in the Arana Gulch Park Master Plan will help fill a critical gap in the regional east-west bicycle and pedestrian network and will increase the ease and safety of bicycle and pedestrian trips for transportation purposes in and between our communities.

Please also address in the EIR that the need for this bicycle and pedestrian path does not duplicate or obviate the need for any other existing or potential bicycle or pedestrian facility in the area. Providing a complete and convenient regional bicycle and pedestrian network increases the opportunity and attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian trips for transportation purposes which can have positive, cumulative environmental impacts.

The Broadway-Brommer Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection will also provide “universal access” to and through Arana Gulch. “Universal access” is the goal of enabling all people, including young, old and disabled persons who may have diminished perceptual or ambulatory abilities, to travel safely to destinations served by our public street and pathway system. Achieving universal access to and through Arana Gulch should be addressed in the EIR.

RTC staff encourage the Santa Cruz City Council to design the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path in a way that will minimize the environmental impacts of the project. We recognize that some modifications in the current design may be warranted to respond to environmental concerns

while keeping the other goals of the project in mind. We also encourage the Santa Cruz City Public Works staff to continue to work with the RTC's Bicycle Committee and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to review the design plans and concepts for the project, at appropriate times.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about the above comments, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at (831) 460-3219.

Sincerely,

Pat Dellin
Acting Executive Director

cc: Commissioner Reilly
Commissioner Wormhoudt
SCCRTC Bicycle Committee
SCCRTC E&DTAC Committee
SCCRTC

**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's
Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
Social Service Transportation Advisory Council
Paratransit Advisory Council Meeting**

MINUTES

**Tuesday, April 11, 2006
SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Downtown Santa Cruz**

Members Present: Sharon Barbour (5th District), Lisa Berkowitz (CTSA – Community Bridges), Michael Bradshaw (Social Service Provider – Disabled), Michael Molesky (County Social Service Provider – Disabled), Lois Connell (Persons of Limited Means), John Daugherty (SCMTD), Catherine Patterson Valdez (CTSA – Lift Line), Robert Yount (Metro Accessible), Robert Pesce (1st District)

Alternates Present: Sandra Coley (4th District), Steve Paulson (SCMTD)

Others Present: James Ridner (Yellow Cab), Tom Hiltner (SCMTD), Fred Keeley (TFTF Convener), Susan Harris (Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department)

Staff Present: Lyle Broschat, George Dondero, Karena Pushnik

Excused Absences: James Monroe (Private Operator)

1. Call to Order

Chair Michael Molesky called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

2. Introductions

Introductions were made.

3. Oral Communications

Bob Yount announced that the City of Calabasas passed a city-wide smoking ban, and added that the City of Santa Cruz is now considering a smoking ban on Pacific Avenue.

Karena Pushnik informed the committee that she had distributed an RTC staff list, with contact information and staff assignments.

4. Additions and Deletions

Karena stated that Susan Harris (Santa Cruz City) would be joining the meeting later to discuss the Arana Gulch project. Michael Bradshaw added a question about the timing of Paracruz operations.

5. Consent Agenda (Information Items)

Action(Bradshaw\Connell; Daugherty abstaining): Agenda approved unanimously

5.1 Approved Minutes and materials distributed at the February 14, 2006 E/D TAC meeting

5.2 Accepted Transportation Development Act fund projections as of March 2006

5.3 Accepted Highlights from January, February and March RTC meetings

5.4 Accepted Bi-Annual Report/Unmet Needs

5.5 Accepted Agency Updates (other than items on the regular agenda)

5.12.1 Volunteer Center

- FY 05/06 Second Quarter Report

5.12.2 Private Operators

5.12.3 Community Bridges/Consolidated Transportation Services Agency

5.12.4 Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

- ParaCruz Operations Status Report March 06

- ParaCruz Operations Status Report February 06

5.12.5 Monterey Sanctuary Scenic Trail

5.12.6 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

6. Transportation Funding Task Force (TFTF) – Fred Keeley, Convener

Fred Keeley provided the Committee with a brief background and history of the TFTF:

- Idea for task force generated by failure of Measure J, which received only 43% voter approval in 2004, far short of the 67% needed to succeed
- There are now nearly 100 members, including a technical advisory group
- The TFTF is charged with the mandate to develop a broad public consensus on a package of new transportation projects and funding , and its tenure is short-term
- The initial strategy of RTC is to select existing community groups that will then supply the effort with representatives for the task force,
- For the first phase, there will be five task force workshops held at different locations throughout the county. There will be another round or two of workshops.
- There is no strong distinction between TFTF members and general participants, though members may have some in-depth background on transportation issues
- Basic tools of the process are a Participation Guide (summary of background transportation information) and the TFTF Workbook (printed and online versions) developed to solicit input from as many people as possible in the community

- The central focus of the effort is on problem-solving (what works, what doesn't work and how should improvements be funded), with a range of perspectives from neighborhood to regional
- Assumptions for participation: (1) Good faith, (2) Civility, (3) Principled compromise
- Culmination of workshop activity (June 2006) will result in the collection of all public responses to the workbook questions; the responses will be made available to the public online

Tom Hiltner asked how the results of the workbook would translate into a plan. Fred Keeley responded that he will look for points of principled compromise and areas of general agreement.

Lisa Berkowitz asked if members could use the workbook as a means for soliciting input into the process, and Fred responded that group members could bring information into the process, or he is interested in coming to the groups to facilitate the process.

Sandra Coley stated concerns that requesting the Transportation Funding Task Force members to act as group discussion facilitators may not generate an informed discussion on transportation issues, as might be desirable. Karena Pushnik noted that this stage is to generate ideas, not necessarily to answer all questions. However, representatives from local jurisdictions and transportation agencies will be present at the workshops and that questions of general interest will be posted on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section of the TFTF website (www.tftaskforce.org). In addition, the Workbooks include an Open Forum question to find out more about the public's general transportation questions/issues.

John Daugherty stated that emphasis for participation should be on low-tech participation options, since technology might tend to exclude certain elements of the community, notably seniors. He also affirmed that the goal of the process should not be the generation of a ballot measure. Fred responded that the TFTF was a response to the failure of Measure J, that there was no predetermined outcome and that approval of any outcome would be the role of RTC. However, Mr. Keeley noted that a minimal ballot measure may be one logical result of such a process.

Sharon Barbour expressed concern that the TFTF flyer was insufficient to interest people, and that it was not user-friendly (needing larger print). Karena Pushnik noted that a new flyer was currently in design.

Michael Bradshaw asked about the public outreach process, and Fred responded that the broad media had already become involved through an initial meeting, that ongoing outreach was being implemented through email and mail lists, Commissioners, bulletin boards, Chambers of Commerce. Karena Pushnik added that Mr. Bradshaw's ideas about outreach to disabled individuals were helpful and staff has been able to implement most of the ideas.

Action: Fred Keeley will compile and interpret the public response, inclusive of local political perspectives, and create a draft plan for further discussion.

7. SCMTD's Section 5311 for FY 2006 – Tom Hiltner

Tom Hiltner explained the annual funding process for federal Section 5311 funds, which is intended for non-urban fixed route transportation. The qualification process normally goes directly to RTC, but this year is including E&D TAC as a measure to ensure that Social Service Agencies are included in the process. Available funds this year (\$168,000+) are significantly greater than in previous years, and SCMTD is seeking input from social services agencies (initially through a formal letter) for programming of these funds.

Karena asked if there were any responses from social service agencies so far, and Tom stated that there had not yet been any responses to the letters mailed five weeks ago.

Action (Yount/Barbour): Motion to accept the informational item approved unanimously.

8. Volunteer Center and Community Bridge's Transportation Development Act Claims

Karena provided background on the TDA claims process, explaining that the funds were the result of the state returning collections from the ¼ cent sales tax. Eighty-five and a half per cent of the funding source is distributed to SCMTD, approximately 8 ½ % to Community Bridges, and 1 % to the Volunteer Center. The City of Santa Cruz is the government agency that has agreed to act as the claimant for both non-profits, and the council would be reviewing the claims proposal at the April meeting. E/D TAC's responsibility is to review and comment on the proposal for the RTC's consideration.

Lois Connell spoke on behalf of the Volunteer Center's claim for \$68,782 to provide rides county-wide. The Volunteer Center uses its TDA funds to recruit volunteers to provide this important service, hire 3 part-time staff to assist in operations, and provide other operating expenses such as mileage reimbursement and insurance. Priority is given to clients with ride needs related to medical appointments.

Sharon Barbour asked why the demand for rides was increasing, and Lois said that this was probably due to an ageing population and increase in the cost of living.

Action (Daugherty/Yount): Motion to accept the Volunteer Center's TDA claim approved unanimously.

Catherine Valdez, Lifeline Director, explained that taxi scrip was a primary funding source (29% of rides) for providing a variety of essential ride services, and that Lifeline's claim request this year is \$577,766. Lifeline operates 13 wheelchair-accessible vehicles, and is open Monday thru Sunday, 12 hours each day.

A Lifeline customer survey, recently completed, indicated concern over the four-day advance notice requirement for scheduling a ride. The agency sees this as an unmet need indicating problems with same day ride requests. Also, Catherine indicated that Lifeline's intention now is to increase distribution of taxi scrip.

Action (Daugherty/Barbour – Valdez and Berkowitz abstaining): A motion was made to accept Liftline’s TDA claim request, contingent on the City of Santa Cruz authorizing itself as the claimant agency.

9. Arana Gulch EIR – Susan Harris (City of Santa Cruz)

Susan Harris described the city’s new greenbelt project in the Soquel Avenue/Capitola Road area, and explained that the project, as currently designed, would include a paved, wheelchair-accessible (8 feet wide) path running north-south to the boundaries of the project. Public comments on the EIR for this project are due April 14th.

Michael Molesky commented that this would be the first wheelchair-accessible element of the city’s greenbelt parks, and that is was very much needed for the disabled community. Concerns were expressed that the path might be too narrow (8 ft) to accommodate ADA accessibility, but Susan said that this compromise was necessary to preserve the natural character of the park and to limit the negative environmental effect of paved surface, since the other paths would be created with a natural, pervious material. Concerns were also stated about potential conflicts with bicycles, and the ADA defined requirement for rest areas along the path. It was also pointed out that at least two peripheral bus stops would provide access to the park for public transit users. Susan mentioned that attachments of ADA requirements for such paths could accompany a letter from the E&D TAC.

Action (Crain/Yount): A motion was made to support the project, including the requirements stated in ADA that are relevant to public path design, with the additional consideration that the design should remain environmentally sensitive . The motion was approved unanimously.

10. Recommend Approval of Local Review Committee’s Section 5310 Scores

Karena explained that, at the last E/D TAC meeting, a local review committee was formed to score grant applications for (federal) Section 5310 funding (specialized transportation needs relating to the purchase of vehicles and equipment). Two applications were received this year, from Hope Services and from Community Bridges. These applications were scored based on information provided by the applicants. However, some pages were inadvertently missing from the Community Bridges application. Community Brides contacted Caltrans staff, who agreed to accept the missing pages. Based on the missing information, Community Bridges scores would be increased by 3 points across the board. The E/D TAC was requested to approve/disapprove the scoring results and forward a recommendation to the RTC.

Action (Barbour/Daugherty – Valdez and Berkowitz abstain): A motion was made to accept the scoring results including the additional 3 points for Community Bridges projects and recommend that the RTC approve the local scores..

11. Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair

John Daugherty was nominated by the committee for the position of Chair, and Tom Crain was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair.

Action: Motion to approve chair by Crain/Connell and to approve vice chair by Molesky/Daugherty. All approved unanimously.

12. Review Agenda Items for Future Meetings

- Driver safety/education
- Bus stop shelters

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Prepared by: _____ Lyle Broschat, SCCRTC Staff