Aptos Rail-Trail Friends,

Aptos Rail-Trail goal is to build bike / pedestrian trail from **Harkins Slough (Watsonville) to Wilder Ranch (Santa Cruz) by 2016.** Objective is to bring awareness to Santa Cruz County on how the rail corridor (taxpayer-owned) is being managed for improved transportation and provide a resource to enable individuals to communicate to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). Like us on FACEBOOK (https://www.facebook.com/aptos.railtrail). Below is information related to promotion of a bike / pedestrian trail – by removing the railroad tracks. You can submit comments to info@sccrtc.org. Public involvement is essential for the best use of this taxpayer purchased property.

**APTOS RAIL-TRAIL MURAL**

Thank you Allen Family, Supervisor Zach Friend and friends for the mural on the Aptos Rail-Trail trestle. Looks great!!!

**APTOS BIKE STATION THANK YOU!!**

Thank you Aptos Bike Station for your support and coaching our Aptos Rail-Trail team (Roxanne Harrison, Susie Peoples, Brenda Sherriffs, Danielle McAnerney, Maria Isabel Saez LeBlanc)! The girls completed the first leg of their Triple Crown (3 x 200 miles) at Solvang. Aptos Bike Station is located next to Aptos Rail-Trail Trestle and support removal of tracks and construction of bike / pedestrian trail.
TRAIL WITH TRAIN - *doesn’t fit!*

The majority of the corridor from Santa Cruz Boardwalk to Manresa Beach is not physically wide enough to support a train and trail. The theory that a “Rail and Trail” can co-exist along the corridor is not physically possible. The physical sections of Manresa, La Selva, Rio Del Mar, Aptos Village, New Brighton State Beach, Capitola, Harbor Bridge and Boardwalk Trestle will not allow a train and trail to co-exist. In the details of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail report, “surface-street” alternative routes are common, in fact, 70% of sections from Manresa to Boardwalk will not allow for a bike / pedestrian trail alongside the existing train tracks. More importantly, these sections are the key areas that greatly enhance individual transit and mobility. For example, Aptos Village has two trestles that cross Highway 1, instantly enabling greater mobility for the community – so Aptos Village can be walked from State Park Beach, Seascape visitors can walk to Aptos Village.

Please help remind our leaders that a trail is more important than a train.

SUPervisor Ellen Pirie’s Prophecy

One of the great milestones of the railline corridor purchase is that the property that spans the County (28’ to 200’ width), is now publicly owned. At the time of the purchase of the rail corridor, Supervisor Ellen Pirie stated that “it is going to be a WAR between Train people and Bike people, but the Bike people don’t get it.” RTC is an agency who is chartered to develop long term transportation plans, seek-out Federal / State funding for projects and manage annual transportation budget plans. Ownership of the railline has shifted their primary focus to establishing some form (Dinner Trains, Excursions) train operations at the loss of bike / pedestrian trails. It appears that having the government agency purchase the rail corridor for a future bike /
pedestrian trail may result in the trail never being built. Santa Cruz community needs to understand that RTC's strategy is to focus on investing in a train system, in lieu of a trail or Highway 1 widening. Supporters of a trail need to wake-up and realize that the train is preventing a trail from being built.

SURFACE-STREETS IMPROVEMENTS

As part of the “best use” analysis for the taxpayer-owned property, we are suggesting to RTC that they look at surface-street improvements along the corridor that can make significant positive impacts to traffic congestion. Aptos Village and Live Oak/ Harbor traffic can be significantly improved with the removal of tracks and adjustments to surface-streets. Aptos Village traffic is one of the worst surface-street sections in the County. During construction of the new Aptos Village, traffic is anticipated to get worst. The old railroad tracks run through the middle of town and removal of them will significantly improve traffic flow through the town. In the Harbor / Live Oak, traffic build-up could be alleviated with improvements to the intersection at Murray Ave & Seabright Ave.

Aptos Village flyover: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRLGHS0yaJQ
Seabright Ave / Murray Ave flyover: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzFQ_9hCDPY

BEST USE OF PROPERTY

In 2013, Lakeside Organic Group (farm between Seascape and Manresa) agreed to a partnership to put a trail on the bluff of their property as an alternative to unused railroad tracks running through the middle of their farmland. Great example of a community working together for a common good and best use of the corridor.
TECHNOLOGY: TRAIN VERSE VEHICLE (CAR, BUS, TRUCK)

Traffic congestion is a world-wide issue and will be a business opportunity for many. Transportation industry trends are referencing “smart” cars and “dumb” cars. Dumb cars are those we have today and Smart cars have vehicle-2-vehicle communication (V2V) systems that are more efficient in traffic. Many people ask the question shouldn’t the railroad corridor be preserved to allow for a future train? We believe the configuration and short distance of the corridor will never constitute a need for a fixed-rail system, but be more effective for individual-motorized systems (bikes, walking, running). V2V systems are being integrated into cars, trucks and buses today – which will increase the highway and surface-street capacity by 200-300%, thereby reducing traffic congestion. We are hopeful that RTC shifts their focus to advanced vehicle technology verses old train technology. We are asking RTC to look at establishing a “SMART Highway Corridor” where V2V systems will help increase the capacity along Highway 1 and Mission Blvd.


HIGHWAY 1, HOV LANES & EXPRESS BUSES

The train is not the most cost effective method to improve transit and it eliminates the County’s ability to invest in other infrastructure. Santa Cruz Metro (transit experts) advocates widening of Highway 1 with HOV lanes and Express Buses over train. Les White (former Santa Cruz Metro Chief) was quoted in Sentinel Newspaper as saying “I would hate to see us so wedded to a particular mode or a particular corridor that we would forgo access to a ton of money.” He is essential telling the RTC that they are missing out on highway funding which is a more practical infrastructure improvement.

RTC BOARD & NEXT MEETING

The next RTC meeting is Thursday, April 2nd from 9 am to 11 am at Santa Cruz County Chambers. You can submit comments to info@sccrtc.org. Public involvement is essential for the best use of this taxpayer purchased property.

April 2nd RTC Agenda items (Aptos Rail-Trail comments)

Agenda #7 – Unmet Paratransit Needs (Cutting Bus Service)

Riders who take the Highway 17 Express bus or use paratransit has been operating at a loss for years. This month, transit officials have been holding public meetings to discuss
possible solutions to make a dent in Santa Cruz Metro’s recurring structural deficit. Since 2011, the agency has been dipping into reserves and capital eligible funds to balance its $48.5 million budget, of which 80 percent are labor expenses. Cutbacks on paratransit is not good. Highway 17 Express riders could see the price of a one-way ticket increase from $5 to $7 and a day pass from $10 to $12. The agency is also considering a new $94.50 15-ride card and discontinuing the $42 five-day pass and many day pass upgrade options. Will a train be more cost effective?

Agenda #8 & 9 – RTC Financials

In 2016, RTC is looking at issuing a new Sales Tax Measure to support transportation needs. That same year, an existing transportation funding source will sunset and reduce the amount of funding provided to Santa Cruz County for improvement of transportation. RTC is looking to have a 2016 Tax Measure for Sales and DMV Fees to support their agency. Santa Cruz Public Works is also looking at a 2016 Tax Measure to support maintenance and repair of roads and surface-streets. RTC is an agency who is chartered to develop long term transportation plans, seek-out Federal / State funding for projects and manage annual transportation budget plans. Ownership of the railline has shifted their primary focus to establishing some form (Dinner Trains, Excursions) train operations at the loss of bike/pedestrian trails. Aptos Rail-Trail does not support of an RTC tax measure for the train.

Agenda #18 – Executive Director George Dondero Performance Review

Executive Director is up for a 2-year contract review and an ad-hoc committee for the performance review will be done. We would suggest that the Executive Director be measure by his success of completing the trail from Harkins Slough to Wilder Ranch, developing a transportation strategy that effectively uses Highway 1 corridor and improve his collaboration with Santa Cruz Public Works and Santa Cruz Metro who do not support the train. Current Executive Director appears to have an ideology that a train is the best investment for improving transit, even though the majority of transit experts disagree with him.

Agenda #23 – Rail Corridor Update

The Passenger Train Feasibility Study is scheduled to be completed in Spring, 2015 that will provide additional data to help RTC Board Commissioners vote on the best use of taxpayer-owned property for improving transportation across the County. The report is not available at the April RTC meeting. RTC is analyzing several possible operating scenarios. To help think of ideas for a train, RTC has reached out to other agencies planning passenger rail systems. RTC Staff is pushing the team to have the plan available for public review as soon as possible, but no confirmation that it will be completed on time.
Agenda #24 – Rail Motorcar Excursion

Funding for the purchase of the 32-mile railline was through Proposition 116 that was voted for by Californians in 1990 to establish viable passenger train service. Years later, the train lobbyist had California Legislators include “recreational” trains as part of the tax funding. RTC used this new legislative directive to help fund the purchase of the railline. During the agreement signing, RTC verbally informed the California Transportation Commission (CTC) that they will not operate a train that is not economically viable – clearly stating that Santa Cruz Taxpayers did not purchase this property and they will not be responsible to support a train that is not economically viable for the net value of the property.

RTC Staff is recommending that the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) be allowed to operate 40 individual motorcars operate on railline April 25 and 26.

Aptos Rail-Trail does not support rail motorcar excursions that will continue to extend the length of time the corridor is built as a trail. We believe the “occasional use” of the corridor by motorized vehicles not related to improved transportation is not in the context of Proposition 116 voters. We do not believe taxpayers should fund train excursions, motorcar excursions, or other “Dinner train” operations that do not reduce traffic congestion and actually create more air and noise pollution.

RTC Commissioners:

The SC Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is comprised of elected officials from the County and City governments.

- John Leopold (Chair), County of Santa Cruz, 1st District;
- Don Lane (Vice-Chair), City of Santa Cruz
- Zach Friend, County of Santa Cruz, 2nd District;
- Ryan Coonerty, County of Santa Cruz, 3rd District;
- Greg Caput, County of Santa Cruz, 4th District
- Bruce McPherson, County of Santa Cruz, 5th District
- Jimmy Dutra, City of Watsonville
- Randy Johnson, City of Scotts Valley
- Dene Bustichi, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District
- Dennis Norton (Capitola City Council)
- Cynthia Chase (City of Santa Cruz)
- Karina Cervantez (City of Watsonville)
• Ed Bottorff (City of Capitola)

Sincerely,

Brian Peoples
Aptos Rail-Trail
RTC,
Comments to RTC meeting for April 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2015:
Agenda #10 – Appointment of Bicycle Committee
I am recommending that David Caterson and Amelia Conlen not be on the Bicycle Committee. The primary reason that both should not be on the Bicycle Committee they must be advocates for the use of the corridor for a trail – putting it over the need of a tourist, freight or even passenger train. These nominees put the train over the trail and disguise their support of the train by advocating the corridor for “dual-use (train, trail)”. Unfortunately, the corridor south of Boardwalk is not wide enough for dual-use (train, trail) and in sections where it may be physically possible, it is not economically viable. As a Bicycle Committee member, they should understand the infrastructure, be technically competent to provide good advice on infrastructure improvements and understand the trends related to transportation and technology. I would argue that their stance on a train over trail actually hurt bike opportunities.
To remind Commissioners of the physical limitations for a train & trail, if you walk south on the tracks – starting at the Boardwalk:
\begin{itemize}
\item From the Boardwalk trestle, you can see that a train and trail will not fit under Murray Ave Bridge.
\item Continuing south to the Harbor we can see that a 4\textsuperscript{th} trestle can not fit and the environmental impact makes it virtually impossible to get approval for 4\textsuperscript{th} trestle.
\item Most people don’t realize the extensive number of trestles and limited space through Live Oak sections – but Commissioner Leopold has taken the time to walk the tracks and understands that it will take decades to build a trail parallel to the tracks.
\item Approaching Capitola, we can see that the corridor near the Joulebox is not wide enough and the likelihood of a parallel Capitola trestle is not physically, economically, environmentally or politically possible.
\item Continuing on through New Brighton State Park, the coastal section and bridge in the park is not physically wide enough to support a train and trail.
\item Along the corridor from State Park to Aptos Village to Rio Del Mar, there are 4 trestle sections that can not physically or economically support dual-use. Two sections over the highway is not wide enough to support parallel trestles and it is not economically possible to build two new trestles over the highway. The Aptos Village trestles are not wide enough and the environmental impact requirements make it virtually impossible to build parallel trestles over the river. Even though a continuous trail from State Park to Aptos Village to Rio Del Mar will result in one of the most significant improvements in mobility through the area, Amelia and David do not support a trail over the train.
\item Seascape has multiple trestles that can not be duplicated due to environmental limitations and cost.
\item Lakeside Organic Group that operates the farm between Seascape and La Selva will not support a parallel trail to tracks.
\end{itemize}
Save the Date!

Please join Santa Cruz METRO on April 9, 2015 as we collectively call attention to the state of our transportation infrastructure in this country. Stand Up 4 Transportation Day will be a local day for national education and outreach to the public and our elected officials. Our goal is to raise awareness for the nation’s long-term transportation infrastructure funding plight.

Help send a message to Congress that the expansion, maintenance and upkeep of our public transit, roads and bridges need to be dealt with now and we need the passage of a long-term bill in order to grow our communities and our nation.

Join us and together we will make our voices heard!

What: Listen to local politicians and other community advocates speak out on what the impacts will be on local projects if a strong transportation bill is not passed.

When: April 9th at 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Where: Santa Cruz Metro Center 920 Pacific Avenue Santa Cruz
Join us for music and refreshments!

For More Information Contact: METRO Customer Service (831) 425 – 8600
http://scmtd.com
STAND UP 4 TRANSPORTATION
http://standup4transportation.org

15-b-1
¡Guarde la fecha!

Por favor únase con Santa Cruz METRO el 9 de abril del 2015 ya que colectivamente llamemos la atención sobre el estado de nuestra infraestructura de transporte en este país. El Día de Stand Up 4 Transportation será un día local para la educación nacional y la divulgación al público y nuestros oficiales electos. Nuestro objetivo es sensibilizar la financiación de infraestructura a largo plazo de transporte en la nación.

Ayude a enviar un mensaje al Congreso que necesitan la expansión, mantenimiento y conservación de nuestro transporte público, carreteras y puentes necesitan ser tratados ahora y necesitamos la aprobación de un proyecto a largo plazo con el fin de crecer nuestras comunidades y nuestra nación.

¡Únete a nosotros y juntos vamos a hacer oír nuestra voz!

Que: Escuche a los políticos locales y otros defensores de la comunidad hablar sobre lo que los impactos serán en proyectos locales si no se pasa una fuerte ley de transporte.

Cuando: 9 de abril de 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Donde: Santa Cruz Metro Center, 920 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz
¡Únase a nosotros para la música y refrescos!

Para más información comuníquese con: Servicio al Cliente de METRO
(831) 425 – 8600 http://scmtd.com
STAND UP 4 TRANSPORTATION
http://standup4transportation.org
Maggie Miller Bardacke

From: Scott Russo [russo_scott@att.net]
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 7:43 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail to trail

Flag Status: Flagged

As an avid bike rider in this county I am writing to ask that we make a bike trail out of the rail system. I have spent many years literally putting my life at the county roads due to my love of the scenery and of biking. I have used my bike both for recreation and for transportation to and from work. It is very disheartening to think that I am able to ride on bike trails in places like Sacramento, Fremont, and Morgan Hill and not able to ride on a bike trail in my own place of residence despite the fact that this is supposed to be one of the most environmentally friendly and scenically beautiful places in CA, especially given the fact that there is a very usable and accessible corridor that can be easily changed in order to solve this dilemma. It would not only provide a safe venue for cyclists, runners and walkers but would most likely allow more people an avenue for alternative transportation versus our currently over crowded freeway system. The bike trail just makes simple sense whereas a train that will be hardly used makes none. Please do the right thing and build the trail, it is long overdue.

Scott Russo
Head Coach
Freshman Football
Aptos High School
Dear RTC,

 Somehow I was put on a mailing list called "Aptos Rail-Trail" so I am well educated in the point of view that the "rails must be pulled" so that the right of way is for walkers and bikers only. This group also proposes that the right-of-way be returned to private property owners and the cities along the way.

 I find these two goals to be parochial, ableist, classist. The right-of-way is a regional asset that will allow people to travel by rail comfortably the length of our county. It will be available to people who can not walk or ride their bikes. And it will be available to people who don’t live in the immediate Aptos neighborhood.

 They affirm that the the right-of-way being too narrow for both rail and trail is the reason why the rails must be pulled. The trail can simp’y be diverted to surface streets and then returned to the rail right of way. Let’s move on. The rail is there, it is a treasure, and the bike trail is simply a derived benefit.

 Linda
Maggie Miller Bardacke

From: Daijaku@aol.com  
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 9:56 AM  
To: info@sccrtc.org  
Subject: Fwd: Fr Judith Kinst Re: RTC and train in Capitola

Dear SCCRTC,

Please see email below regarding proposed train. I support the effort of the APTos Rail-Trail to eliminate the rail all together. I look forward to your response and am sorry I will be out of town when you have your meeting.

Judith Kinst

From: Daijaku@aol.com  
To: michael@triadelectric.com, ebottorff167@yahoo.com, jbertrand@ci.capitola.ca.us, shharlan@ci.capitola.ca.us, dhortondesigns@msn.com  
Sent: 3/27/2015 9:52:54 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time  
Subj: Fr Judith Kinst Re: RTC and train in Capitola

Dear Capitola City Council Members,

I am writing regarding proposed use of the rail line that runs through Capitola.

Here are the basics:

At an RTC meeting before the purchase I was publicly assured that a train was not going to happen.
Based on that, I supported the purchase. The trail seems like a great idea, and the fact it would run behind my house is not a problem,
The occasional freight train was not a problem, but the size of the train that rolled behind my back yard after the purchase, as well as the noise and dirt, that came along with it was just stunning.
The Rail and Trail purchase was touted as being all about making a trail possible.
Since then I have heard again and again about the proposed "commuter train" - a direct contradiction to what I was told at the RTC meeting.

A commuter train will substantially degrade the quality of life for all Capitola residents living on or near the tracks - and will substantially reduce property values.
A train of any kind will interfere with the development of the trail.

Here is what I want, as a voting resident of Capitola:

Put this on the City Council meeting agenda and a let me and others know when this will happen.
Make a statement that you, as a council, oppose the train and acknowledge the impact it will have on the quality of life and property values of those living near or on the tracks.
Outline specific steps you will take to ensure it does not happen.

I lock forward to your response. I work out of town on a regular basis and have not been able to attend a meeting, but will make every effort to do so if it is at all possible.

Yours, Judith Kinst  
41060 Jade St.#20  
Capitola Ca 95010
Maggie Miller Bardacke

From: Dave Turner [Dave.Turner@ssimda.com]
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 11:00 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: TRAIL VS RAIL

If you stop and think about the path of the tracks and intersections, and the commerce along the way, the installation of a bike/walking trail will bring interest from near and far to travel all or portions of what would be a great trail.

It’s healthy and keeps SC county in step with other counties, such as Monterey county, allowing the public to enjoy our beautiful coastal environment.

Local business along the path will gain with added population passing by their doors many new start-up lunch stops may become reality?

The thought of subsidizing a short lived dinner train, with someone trying to make a buck at tax payers expense does not make any sense.

Where are we when it fails? Right back where we started!

Let’ have few old train cars along the way, off the path, set up as shops etc. so people can have the remembrance of the old train system that once ran on the space they now can enjoy with thousands of others, what a great way to meet new friends too!

dt- Aptos

This message (including any attachments) may contain confidential information intended for a specific individual and purpose. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and any attachments.
I can't imagine that anyone would think this endeavor is anything other than wonderful!!!!

Put my name on any list where volunteers might be needed.

Thank you,

Christy Bowles
Hello,

I just wanted to let you know that I am in full support of the Rail Trail. It's an fantastic idea that is worth every penny that it will cost! I received a brochure about it that stated all the reasons for it, and I agree with everything wholeheartedly. Thank you to all the people who are working hard to make this happen. I look forward to the day that I can ride/walk on the beautiful Rail Trail!

Sincerely,

Rachel Frankl
From: Annelies Walbridge [jawalbridge@charter.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2015 7:37 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Trail

Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern,

Our family lives in Capitola, our children attend Main Street Elementary School, New Brighton Middle School and Soquel High School, and both my husband and I serve the community in our jobs through Central Fire Department and through Dominican Hospital. We would love to see the community come together to give a safe path for each of us to use to get across town without having to use our cars. We feel so blessed to live so near our schools and places of work but I don’t feel safe having to bike through all of the traffic. Our family supports the development of a bike path to promote a sense of community and physical health as well as convenience.

Thank you,

John and Annelies Walbridge
Dear RTC,

I am a resident of Santa Cruz county. I work, pay taxes and volunteer in my community. I love our county, it is an amazing place to raise children, while we have issues (growing crime, underfunded schools, roads in desperate need of repair, beautification projects needed) we are ONE community.

I recently learned about plans to try and use the old train tracks that run through the county. I understand everything from a passenger train, Christmas train and dinner train are under advisement. In 2015 this seems absurd! I hold a global position in my company and travel the US and world a lot, many communities are shutting down old trains. Why would Santa Cruz county seek to move backwards into the 19th century with putting old technology into the county. To put any type of passenger train you would need an extensive bus system in place to accommodate passengers as the train does not run in central communities, the cost would be millions and the buses would not be environmentally friendly. To invest in any type of transportation that is not electric in 2015 is crazy. I have lived here for 20 years and never taken my kids on the Christmas train. A dinner train doesn’t even need debate, we have amazing restaurants. A gimmick like this that would disrupt the communities that live along the train corridor and lower their property values, it is absurd.

Why not be like every other forward thinking town and city in the world and develop the tracks for a stable bike path so those of us that commute around the county can bike to work. So those of us who enjoy crowded summer beaches like Captola, can ride bikes without the hassle of dealing with traffic and parking. Let US have an alternative to HWY 1. We are the citizens of Santa Cruz, let us decided how this train corridor should be used. Please don’t invest our tax payer money on ideas that are not forward thinking, do not have the public’s best interest and are pure gimmicks to this county like the train to Christmas town. Teach our youth the value of the environment by allowing them to go places on their bicycle rather than getting in a vehicle. IF you are going to invest any taxpayer money please invest it in research as to what other town across the world are doing with old train tracks. Look at Australia and New Zealand, they have extensive bike paths along their cities and beaches that are used constantly and are appealing to locals, commuters and tourists. Many of our streets are not wide enough to accommodate bicyclists and are dangers for cars and bike to ride on. Please be responsible here and don’t consider options that don’t benefit 70% of our taxpaying community. 20 years from now how much will it cost to run our cars? We need alternatives to driving in Santa Cruz, a dinner train is not it.

Best Regards,

Nicky

Nicky Halstead
Sr Director, Circulation Sales & Marketing
Financial Times
Phone: 831-684-2209
Mobile: 408-569-7953