

**RTC Meeting 9/4/14  
Add-On Pages – Item 17  
Passenger Rail Study Comments**

**Subject: Selection of 5 Passenger Rail Service Scenarios**

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**From:** Henry Searle   **Sent:** Sunday, August 17, 2014 1:13 PM

**This is a comment and a suggestion regarding the Rail study currently underway.**

**First off, I would like to be assured that PRT is included within the definition of “rail” for purposes of this study. At the recent study session. Staff indicated that PRT had not been listed as an option. I believe it is not only appropriate but highly desirable that the PRT option be included in the current study.**

**PRT stands for Personal Rapid Transit. The City of San Jose used the term ATN (Automated Transit Network) in it’s two-million dollar ATN study. PRT or ATN is elevated, automated rail service. It should be considered as a part of this study.**

**PRT is in fact a rail conveyance except that it most typically has rails of narrower gauge and different operating characteristics. The Santa Cruz RTC has previously recognized this fact and, DID in fact look at PRT as a part of the Fixed Guideway Study it commissioned several years ago. This same thinking should be employed today.**

**The advantages include far lower operating and maintenance costs because the pods are operated via onboard and remote computers and feature 24-7 operation. Pods are in operation only when there’s a demand with point to point non-stop transportation. They feature better safety characteristics with no interference because of pedestrian or auto crossings. Pods are non-polluting and quiet. Much of the power for the Pods may be generated by solar installations on the pods or the supporting lines. The entire surface right of way could then be used for bicycle/pedestrian path. It is believed that construction costs would be similar to improving and adding a track to the existing rail track with no need to improve the tracks or bridges. Aesthetically, PRT presents a much smaller profile and can be artistically designed to blend into its surroundings. Preservation of adjacent residential privacy is easily accomplished in several different ways.**

**If PRT is not considered “rail” in terms of this study, then I suggest adding it. If it is not included in the current study, it surely will be added later—PRT is a viable alternative that eliminates many of the objections to surface rail.**

Reed Searle, Santa Cruz, Ca. 95060

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*RTC Staff Response:*

*Reed Searle – Your email regarding the Santa Cruz County Passenger Rail Study was received. The consultant team has proposed a range of train technologies to be considered as potentially feasible using the **existing tracks on the Santa Cruz Branch Line**. Personal Rapid Transit is not included, nor are any other technologies which would require construction of a new elevated track system.*

*As noted to you and other PRT proponents, the RTC is very interested in the outcome of the PRT/ATN study in San Jose, an area noted for advancements in technology.*

*Thank you for your comments.*

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**From:** Peoples, Brian C **Sent:** Sunday, August 31, 2014 6:56 AM

RTC/Luis, The following is in response to item number 17 of the Thursday, September 4, 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) agenda.

1. A comparison to other transit services cost per rider should be included in the feasibility study to ensure clear understanding of rail-system cost.
2. For the proposed scenarios that only use the corridor for weekend train services or limited usage, we recommend that a cost analysis be done on the “best use of asset”.
3. In the railline study, the definition of “feasibility” is not clear. We recommend that the specific criteria of acceptable cost per rider or “allowable budget (O&M, Capital)” be clearly defined to ensure that there is a consistent measurement of the study and determining if train service is economically viable.
4. The timeline to establish the use of this asset should be included in the feasibility study. Taking years to use this property is a cost to the community. What is the “lost to the community” as a result of not using this resource (not having improved mobility, no increased tax revenue). Use of this resource should be done in a reasonable timeline, i.e., by 2016

Finally, we would like to submit a formal request to purchase the entire corridor that extends from Watsonville to Davenport by Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group from the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC).

The general outline of the proposal consists of:

- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall purchase the entire 32-mile property from RTC
- RTC shall refund California Transportation Commission funds (\$11M) used to purchase railline
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall construct a bike / pedestrian trail from Harkins Slough (Watsonville) to Shaffer Road (Santa Cruz)
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall donate completed bike / pedestrian trail (Harkins Slough to Shaffer Road) to Santa Cruz County and/or local Cities (Santa Cruz, Capitola, Aptos, Watsonville)
- Santa Cruz County and/or local Cities shall own all rights to the bike / pedestrian trail, and thus have the right to use for future transit systems as it desires
- Santa Cruz Railline Operator shall submit abandonment application with the Surface Transportation Board to terminate use of railline as an operating railroad system, based on report by The Woodside Consulting Group report within Collier-Pinkard Appraisal (2009).
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall partner with Lakeside Organic Gardens and property owner to establish bike / pedestrian trail along coastal bluff from Sumner Ave to Camino Al Mar, thereby returning railroad track sections to property owner

- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall partner with farmers near Harkins Slough to establish trail to San Andreas Road
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall partner with farmers north of Scaroni Road to oversee establishing a bike / pedestrian trail from Scaroni Road to Davenport
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall return properties from Harkins Slough to Lee Road to adjacent property owners (farmers)
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall return properties from Scaroni Road to Shaffer Road to adjacent property owners (farmers)
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall retain ownership of selective segments of property of corridor for residential, commercial, industrial development and property leases
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall negotiate contract termination with Iowa Pacific
- Aptos Rail-Trail Investor Group shall own rights to railroad segment from Lee Road to W. Beach Street

Luis, we can not wait another decade or more to utilize this transportation resource for Santa Cruz County. We are offering a private-public partnership that will be a win-win for our community and allow Santa Cruz County to develop long term transit solutions. Can you please provide us with the formal procedure to submit a request to purchase property?

Thank you, Brian Peoples

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**From:** robert burick **Sent:** Tuesday, September 02, 2014 9:43 PM

RTC,

Pipe dreams or "medical grass". Worse, you believe your "experts" (on your payroll, of course. You "buy" the answer that justifies your existence).

Bob Burick, Aptos

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**From:** Leah Meek **Sent:** Tuesday, September 02, 2014 1:41 PM

Awesome!

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**From:** Kevin Karplus **Sent:** Tuesday, September 02, 2014 1:46 PM

**Amtrak doesn't have a station at Pajaro. The nearest rail station is Salinas.**

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*RTC Staff Response:*

*Kevin Karplus – Future train service at the Pajaro Station includes:*

- *Extension of the Capital Corridor (Amtrak) trains from San Jose to Salinas with a stop in Pajaro. Our sister agency, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, is the lead on this project.*
- *New Amtrak service called the Coast Daylight between San Francisco/San Jose and Los Angeles/San Diego. One train in each direction daily is planned*

*In addition, the High Speed Rail Service includes a stop in Gilroy, a short distance from the Pajaro Station. Thank you for your comments.*

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**From:** Laura Caldwell **Sent:** Tuesday, September 02, 2014 3:24 PM

Thanks. I was wondering what was happening with the passenger rail proposals.

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**From:** Tom.r.haid@gmail.com **Sent:** Tuesday, September 02, 2014 3:25 PM

You only had 2000 participants in the survey that is miniscule that is no kind of a good survey obviously people are not interested. You failed to mention how many times per day this train would run.

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*RTC Staff Response:*

*While the staff report to the Regional Transportation Commission board has more detailed information about each of the proposed scenarios to undergo ridership and cost forecasting, the number of trains per day is a level of specificity that has not yet been determined. The next stage will refine the scenarios to determine how to best achieve the highest ridership projection, at the lowest costs.*

*Thank you for your comments.*

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**From:** wandis wilcox **Sent:** Wednesday, September 03, 2014 10:28 AM

This looks encouraging! Much thanks to all who are hard at work on this important project.

Sincerely, Wandis Wilcox

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