

Comments received May 21 – July 31, 2015
on the

Passenger Rail Feasibility Study – Draft Report

An analysis of rail transit options on the 32-mile Branch Rail Line in Santa Cruz County, CA

Link to document and background information: <http://www.sccrtc.org/projects/rail/>

Lead Agency: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, www.sccrtc.org

Grant Funding: California Department of Transportation's Transit Planning Program



July 29, 2015

George Dondero
Executive Director
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Dondero:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the on Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report dated May 2015. AMBAG offers the following comments for your consideration.

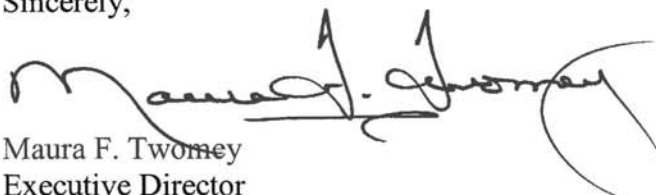
- Page 121: The report states "Measures development was based on an initial review of typical and context sensitive performance metrics, the unique character ... of the County, assumed data availability, *and AMBAG travel demand model constraints.*" The word *constraints* should be removed from this sentence since model constraints were not the basis of these performance measures. As the report indicates, AMBAG model *capabilities* were key to performance measure development, namely in the development of Transit Operations and Performance Evaluation Measures, Connectivity/Quality of Access Evaluation Measures, and Livability and Commercial Vitality Evaluation Measures.
- Page 149: The draft report states "As previously mentioned, the AMBAG model does not currently include transit or other multimodal components." This statement is incorrect. AMBAG's model accounts for every existing and future transit and bus route in the study area and throughout the region.
- Appendix G, page 3: This appendix states "Measures development was based on an initial review of typical and context sensitive performance metrics, the unique character ... of the County, assumed data availability, *and AMBAG travel demand model constraints.*" The word *constraints* should be removed from this sentence since model constraints were not the basis of these performance measures. As the report indicates, AMBAG model *capabilities* were key to performance measure development, namely in the development of Transit Operations and Performance Evaluation Measures, Connectivity/Quality of Access Evaluation Measures, and Livability and Commercial Vitality Evaluation Measures.
- Appendix G, Table 3: In the "Comments" column, all references to "AMBAG model does not have transit mode needed to quantify this" should be removed since these statements are incorrect. The AMBAG model does include transit modes, including all bus routes within the study area and the region. For the *Ridership/Performance* criteria, the AMBAG model is capable of identifying rider shift from roads and transit. For the *Support/promote economic vitality* criteria, the AMBAG model is capable of identifying

changes in throughput since this measure is taken into account through volume outputs. Under the *Local Connectivity* criteria, the AMBAG model can identify the percentage of households traveling to schools, jobs, and key destinations within 30 minutes. Whether the model will perform these functions at the project-level that this study requires should be determined by the consultant. If needed, the model can be modified.

- AMBAG recommends that the initial rail concept connect to Watsonville to facilitate long-distance commuting between housing nodes in Watsonville and job nodes in the Santa Cruz metropolitan area. This will better facilitate local and regional commuting, supporting implementation of the Monterey Bay 2035 Moving Forward Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- As funding for such a large rail project is limited, AMBAG encourages SCCRTC to continue evaluating options to structure the most cost effective initial service scenario which minimizes costs while maximizing the number of riders per train, allowing for future expansions to accommodate increased demand.
- As with the Caltrain system, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority light rail, and the Bay Area Rapid Transit systems, paid station parking can be an important revenue source to improve the project's financial feasibility. Instituting a nominal parking fee at stations with a high parking demand may also help encourage walking and bike to and from those stations, discouraging shorter drive-alone trips to and from rail stations. Any station parking fees should be implemented in coordination with cities to assure that neighborhood parking is not impacted by commuters attempting to avoid the parking fee by parking in nearby neighborhoods. This is often done by implementing permit parking, parking time limits, and parking enforcement efforts in tandem with station parking lot fees.
- AMBAG recommends that SCCRTC work with local jurisdictions to ensure that the land uses surrounding potential station locations allow for increased population and job densities to maximize transit use and orient development around more sustainable long-term transportation modes. This may include encouraging infill housing development near stations, encouraging high density redevelopment, providing density bonuses near station areas, encouraging transit oriented development, developing high density transit corridors near stations, and transforming station areas into fully multimodal nodes. This will help maximize rail system ridership by locating housing and jobs near stations and would support the implementation of the Monterey Bay 2035 Moving Forward Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Please feel free to contact Bhupendra Patel at bpatel@ambag.org or Heather Adamson at hadamson@ambag.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Maura F. Twomey
Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Serious drought
Help save water!*

July 31, 2015

Mr. George Dondero
Executive Director
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Dondero

Thank you for the opportunity to review your agency's Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report. We support your efforts toward increasing transit options in Santa Cruz County. Communities around the state have demonstrated a connection between mobility alternatives and enhanced quality of life. This connection is referenced in multiple state, regional, and local goals for addressing transportation challenges at a multimodal, systemwide level.

The scenarios presented in the study align with sustainability principles identified in Caltrans plans at all levels and modes (e.g. 2040 California Transportation Plan, Smart Mobility Framework, Strategic Management Plan, District System Management Plan, Highway 1 Corridor System Management Plan, State Rail Plan, and Freight Mobility Plan).

We commend your efforts toward empowering the community to directly guide this project throughout all stages. From the initial voter referendum to the ultimate decision-making responsibilities regarding implementation, SCCRTC has demonstrated a commitment to a community-driven project. We encourage your agency to continue this level of citizen involvement into the next stages of implementation.

A list of detailed comments is attached. If you have any questions please contact me at (805) 549-3510 or Kelly.McClendon@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly McClendon".

KELLY MCCLENDON
Transportation Planner

Enclosure

Attachment-Caltrans Detailed Comments on the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

General Comments

- 1. Reconciling community preference and feasibility:** The two scenarios that were identified as feasible do not include service to Watsonville. Following the release of the draft report, the community demonstrated preference for scenarios that connected to Watsonville. This includes the preference of community leadership, as discussed at the June RTC Board meeting, as well as the preference of many public workshop attendees. Since these meetings, we assume SCCRTC has been working with project consultants to investigate creative approaches to developing service scenarios that may be feasible *and* include Watsonville. However, it is unclear as to what the next steps will be if service to Watsonville is ultimately deemed infeasible from a construction and operations standpoint.

Specific Comments

Comment No.	Page/Sheet No.	Section	Paragraph	Comment
1	iii	0.0 – Purpose of Study	Bullet #3	Caltrans recommends deleting “commuter and/or intercity” from bullet #3. The study is primarily evaluating either rail transit or commuter rail service, but not intercity rail service.
2	xi	Other evaluation measures...	Last	Scenario E is clearly the highest scoring with three others tied around 2nd; maybe the narrative shouldn’t group E with the two others as scoring the highest.
3	4	1.2.1	3	Caltrans recommends revising the fifth line to “the Coast Rail Coordinating Council’s <i>proposed</i> new train service between Los Angeles and San Francisco...”
4	7	1.2.2.2	2	This section should clarify that “the Coast Daylight is proposed by the Coast Rail Coordinating Council, led by SLOCOG, as a new state-supported intercity rail service, which would extend the Pacific Surfliner service from San Luis Obispo to either San Jose or San Francisco.”
5	7	1.3	Last	Santa Cruz County has the second smallest land area.
6	12	1.4.1.1	1	This section could also explain why recommendations from the previous studies were never implemented.
7	23	2.0	1-2	Please identify the source of the rail definitions if one was used. Caltrans distinguishes between rail transit, intercity rail and excursion services in its rail plans, which reflects differences in how services are funded and administered in California. Intercity rail includes commuter rail, conventional intercity passenger rail and high speed rail consistent with state and federal definitions.
8	40	4.1.1	Figure 4.1	Please confirm/update the tiers for proposed Watsonville and Pajaro station stops (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 are inconsistent). Numbering the stations in Table 4.1 could be helpful.
9	Xii-Xiii and 127	7.2	Table 7-1	The composite evaluation scores show that service scenarios B, G, G1, S, and J all have similar scores (between 35 and 38). Yet only one of those options (S) is recommended for further consideration.

				Many of the evaluation measures are somewhat subjective, making the composite evaluation scores a difficult measure for decision making. Caltrans recommends that some traditional evaluation measures be used that allow comparison across service scenarios, such as farebox revenue as the relationship of costs to revenues, not as a pre-determined farebox %; or total operating cost per passenger mile.
10	55	5.1.1.3	Top sentence	Is the cost difference per siding or total corridor?
11	57	5.1.2.2	2	On Google it looks like there may be a couple private at-grade crossings
12	142	9.3	4	The state's role in operating and administering rail service needs to be clarified in this section under Governance option #4. Caltrans has the authority under state law to contract with Amtrak for operating intercity and commuter passenger rail service in defined corridors (Government Code Section 14035), which includes a San Francisco-San Jose-Monterey corridor. Caltrans suggests adding a sentence similar to: "Currently all commuter services in California are locally funded. Caltrans would not consider operating a primarily local rail transit service of the types recommended in this study as preferred alternatives."
13	148	9.5.2	4	Caltrans agrees that planned service in the Santa Cruz Branch line should be coordinated with proposed intercity rail services in the Coast Corridor to provide connections between services. The opportunity to connect services and support development of an integrated intercity passenger rail system statewide is an important consideration in prioritizing state cap and trade fund allocations. Please consider a sentence at the end of the third paragraph in section 9.5.2 such as "Longer-term plans for this project should consider connections to the intercity rail network through bus or direct

				<p>rail connections, enhancing the financial feasibility of the project, and furthering a state-wide integrated rail system.” We suggest that this language also be included in the Executive Summary.</p> <p>Caltrans has been working on their District System Management Plan 2015 TAMC provided us with a paragraph describing their efforts on extending the Capital Corridor rail service for the DSMP rail section. SCCRTC might want to incorporate it in their study. “In Monterey County, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) has been working cooperatively with the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority to extend the Capital Corridor rail service to Salinas. The service is planned to begin with two daily round trips from Salinas to San Jose and beyond to Sacramento, and will be increased to up to six round trips as demand warrants. The extension will include three new station stops in Monterey County, including: Pajaro/Watsonville, Castroville, and Salinas. The rail extension, in addition to connecting Salinas with San Jose and the jobs base of Silicon Valley, will also connect to other cities via connections to Caltrain, Altamont Corridor Express and planned High-Speed Rail service at stations in Gilroy and San Jose. The first phase of this extension project is fully funded through state funding, and the project has completed environmental review and preliminary engineering. The project is now in the final design and property acquisition phase.”</p>
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**RECEIVED**

JUL 31 2015

RTC**July 31, 2015**

George Dondero, Executive Director
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report, for the Santa Cruz Branch Line

Dear Mr. Dondero:

The goal of reviving regular passenger service on the Santa Cruz Branch Line is directly supportive of the State's Coastal Act policies. These policies include, but are not limited to, California Public Resources Code sections 30210 (maximizing opportunities for public access); 30212.5 (distribution of public use to mitigate overcrowding or overuse of any single area); 30213 (provision of lower-cost visitor and recreation facilities); 30251 (protection of highly scenic coastal views); 30252 (facilitating transit service and nonautomobile circulation); and, 30253(d)(minimize energy consumption and vehicle miles traveled).

In 2006, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) acquired the railroad right-of-way along the northern shoreline of Monterey Bay that was formerly owned by the Union Pacific RR. Accordingly, the SCCRTC will—with the appropriate funding—be in a position to implement a long-term rail-*and*-trail project along the 32-mile Santa Cruz Branch Line (SCBL). Planning for the trail component was previously covered in a companion document that addresses the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) system. Now, the subject study addresses the rail component, with appropriate reference to the planned, parallel MBSST.

Comments: criteria for service scenarios. The evaluated service scenarios focus on essentially conventional passenger rail modes, resulting in projections based largely on the SCBL's potential to attract weekday and weekend transit riders. These projections appear well supported and credible. But, we would additionally like to see what would result if there were more emphasis on recreational rail. In the following discussion, we use the terms tourist rail, excursion rail, visitor-oriented rail and so forth to all mean recreational (as opposed to transit) rail service.

With respect to the economic feasibility of visitor-oriented rail, there are already 520 different domestic listings in the *Tourist Trains Guidebook, Fifth Edition* (Kalmbach Books, 2015). These include 42 operations right here in California. The majority of these offer regular or excursion passenger service, although only a few would be considered as having a serious transit function (notably, the SF Municipal Railway, and Port of Los Angeles Red Car Line).

The draft report itself states:

Passenger rail service is divided into two main categories: transit and excursion. Rail transit services are by and large patronized by passengers who — though they may enjoy the travel — ride the train as a means rather than an end. More than 75 of these types of services are recognized in the U.S., with services ranging from historic streetcar lines to modern streetcar and light rail systems to long distance commuter and intercity service. ...

Recreational excursion and tourist-type systems, by contrast, are not meant as transportation between two places as much as riding them is an activity unto itself. There are numerous excursion-type services around the U.S., including the Napa Wine Train and local examples like the Roaring Camp Railroad and Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay Railroad's "Train to Christmastown" which operate in Santa Cruz County. ...

Other examples of these two distinct categories can be found in nearby areas of California. These include the transit-oriented weekday-only Stockton-San Jose Altamont Express, and the weekend-only Niles Canyon Railway running from Sunol to Fremont. But, in our area, there might not be so much of a distinction since there is so much weekend beach access route and area congestion. Our hypothesis is that visitors would use the rail option—if it were available—both as a recreational experience in itself, *and* as a way to get to the shoreline attractions (and thereby avoid highway congestion).

Suggestion: augment study with recreation-oriented service scenario screening criteria. The report states that a characteristic of successful service is:

It serves more than commuters. A route that has ridership during the day, in late evening, and on weekends will get more use out of the same equipment and infrastructure.

Accordingly, we recommend that the economic analysis be augmented to consider the additional public access benefit (and revenue) that would result from complementary recreational (tourist)

service along the coast. Such effort should evaluate the added value and revenue generation for the County, overall—not just the net cost of the rail operation itself.

For such supplemental study, we recommend adding three additional criteria to Table 4-3 Screening Criteria for Service Scenarios. These suggested additional criteria are:

1. Potential for support of the County's tourist economy, by attracting riders to highly scenic ocean views and/or the opportunity to ride in historic or otherwise interesting rolling stock.
2. Potential for improving conjunctive use with the MBSST, by facilitating and extending access for bicyclists, walkers and wheelchairs.
3. Potential for distributing recreational access to those beaches best able to accommodate it, so as to mitigate parking and roadway congestion issues, and to protect resources and neighborhoods from overuse in any one area (with special reference to Coastal Act Sections 30210, 30212.5 & 30253(d)).

Station stops: add La Selva Beach? The draft study identified La Selva Beach as only a potential “tertiary station” stop. It states that these stations “...were screened out and not included in preliminary service scenarios analyzed due to lower ridership potential.”

The report’s Figure 5-1, Santa Cruz Rail Feasibility Project Service Scenarios, illustrates the locations of the 14 stations stops selected for the study. We suggest that one additional stop also be considered: La Selva Beach. The study’s Table 4-1 Preliminary Station List indicates this stop as corresponding to mile 8.6 of the rail line, and tertiary station #16 on Figure 4-1.

This additional stop would serve the enclave of population in this more southerly part of the County. It would also provide direct access to the most popular part of Manresa State Beach--thereby improving recreational access and better distributing recreational impacts along the arc of Monterey Bay. And, the bluff top views afforded from the newly-renovated rail bridge are nothing short of spectacular. Therefore, we believe that the La Selva Beach stop would rate pretty highly on all three of the additional criteria suggested in the previous paragraph.

Even if the direct cost of extending service to this stop would not be supportable in terms of commute passengers alone, it might nonetheless have strong *indirect* value through enhanced tourism, improved coastal access, and protection of coastal resources (through better distribution of recreational impacts). These considerations would be especially consistent with a weekend &

holiday service scenario, which we recommend be evaluated as one of the next steps in the passenger rail planning process.

Incorporation of this scenic highlight into the selected passenger rail scenario, we believe, would encourage the type of recreational rail travel that is based mainly on scenic enjoyment. We would be interested in seeing what kind of increased ridership--and revenue--might result, assuming serious promotional support.

Special event, weekend and holiday service. As indicated above, the draft study identified La Selva Beach as only a potential “tertiary station” stop and was therefore not included in the analysis. But, the report then explains that these stations “...can potentially be added to the system in-step with growth in ridership potential [including at] special time periods (such as seasonal weekends or special events).”

La Selva Beach, as well as locations along the north coast from Santa Cruz to Davenport, all offer high quality beach access opportunities. The rail line, being closer to the bluff edge, offers scenic views superior to those afforded by State Highway Route 1. The superb shoreline viewing opportunity would auger well for the often-mentioned dinner train, at least on weekends.

These beach areas also feature or could potentially feature various special shoreline area events. Rail service would almost certainly generate weekend, excursion, or at least event-oriented additional ridership. We suggest that this potential be further explored, and the feasibility analysis updated accordingly.

Integration of passenger rail with the MBSST. Passenger rail service has the potential to greatly enhance the recreational value of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST), the “backbone” of the California Coastal Trail around Monterey Bay. For example, walkers and runners would be able to take rail transit in one direction, and return on the path in the other direction--or if overtaken by fatigue, to finish the outing by rail. This would expand public access opportunities for persons of all ages and abilities, consistent with applicable public access policies (including Coastal Act section 30210).

Accordingly, we strongly support the SCCRTC’s continuing commitment to implementing the MBSST along the County’s shoreline. We also recognize that the acquisition of the SCBL, under the terms of Prop.116 funding, is predicated on the provision of passenger service in one form or another. Whatever version of passenger service is selected by SCCRTC--passenger rail transit, beach access trolley, dinner train, tourist/museum train, or combinations of modes--it must not preclude the provision of upgraded bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the corridor.

We believe the report, in section 1.5, appropriately describes the context for passenger rail relative to the planned parallel "Rail Trail" (i.e., the MBSST). And, in section 1.5.1.2 and on Figure 1-4: Sample Cross-Section with Track Shift, it laudably mentions the potential for realigning the tracks if it is found necessary to accommodate an optimal MBSST alignment.

Such alignment adjustments are readily accomplished with modern rail maintenance equipment that can lift rails and replace ties within the existing ballast prism, as recently observed on the Union Pacific line south of San Jose. Thus, the study clearly indicates the feasibility of providing both passenger rail and the MBSST trail, even when the right of way is constrained in width.

Suggestion: include trail component when implementing the rail components. Passenger rail should be presented as one non-automotive component of an overall integrated transportation system--a system that optimally provides for and coordinates rail, bicycle, wheelchair and walking modes. A good example of an integrated rail/bike/ped system is the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) system currently under construction, connecting the Larkspur Ferry Terminal in Marin to downtown Santa Rosa. The line uses the existing former Northwestern Pacific right-of-way, and includes light rail service as well as a continuous bike/ped network parallel to the tracks.

Here in Santa Cruz County, we have destination beaches and spectacular ocean vistas, together with the recreational opportunities offered by the MBSST. Integrated SMART-style planning will allow us capitalize on these advantages, with improved prospects for to attracting ridership. As planning proceeds on stations, parking, sidings and other infrastructure improvements on the SCBL, all phases of design should include both the MBSST "rail trail" and any connections to it, to ensure that coordinated planning among modes continues.

Another way to assure such coordination is for the SCCRTC's future construction projects to combine train, trail and any other work whenever possible. For example, while the recent rehabilitation of the steel bridge at La Selva was clearly essential for the survival of rail service, the project would have ideally included a MBSST trail component as well.

For future rail-oriented projects within the SCBL right of way, e.g. bridge and trestle rehabilitation, adding stations, realigning rails, installing crossing arms, etc.,--the corresponding trail segment should be installed at the same time (or at least do the rough grading). In other words, rail *and* trail, whenever feasible.

Suggestion: design railcars to facilitate bicycle use. The selected rail cars should be specifically designed to facilitate use by bicyclists. Examples include the VTA light rail in San

Jose, and similar bicycle accommodations on Portland, Oregon's Metro light rail. Such a multi-modal approach--sometimes referenced as conjunctive use--will maximize public access opportunities consistent with Coastal Act Section 30210. Accordingly, as the economic analysis is refined, it should include the assumption that the passenger cars will indeed be bicycle-friendly—and that ridership and roadway congestion relief should benefit accordingly.

Suggestion: invite proposals to operate vintage rolling stock. The feasibility study as drafted focuses on the baseline case of (relatively) standard rehabilitation of the SCBL trackage, along with acquisition and operation of contemporary, already-proven rolling stock.

In places like San Francisco and Long Beach, vintage-style railcar designs have proven more popular than modernistic versions, and comprise a tourist attraction that contributes to the local economy. We suggest that the SCCRTC could also consider opportunities for running rehabilitated vintage railcars, as well as new railcars crafted in the form of vintage stock.

In the same vein, this or a follow-on future study could consider the feasibility of reinstating some form of vintage steam locomotives, at least on weekends. The opportunity to ride behind a vintage steam locomotive has proven to be a primary visitor attraction for nearby Felton, as well as on the California Western RR ("Skunk" line). The latter has been heralded as an economic lifesaver in Ft. Bragg, after the big sawmill shut down. Potential information sources would include rail enthusiast clubs, museums that operate rail equipment, and rail attraction entrepreneurs, starting with the Santa Cruz & Big Trees RR (which runs the steam trains at Roaring Camp).

Suggestion: use the branch line to encourage passenger rail innovation. Although not necessarily within the scope of this study, the SCCRTC could use this as an opportunity to express support for creative passenger rail design experiments. If any show promise, they could be evaluated in a future, more refined scenario analysis--especially if they offer potential cost-savings or could potentially increase ridership. Any such design experiments might be run on a temporal (trackage time-sharing) basis--mindful of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) standards for non-traditional rail vehicles.

For example, the UCSC Baskin School of Engineering or other entity might be invited to design ultralight "trolleys" using modern materials and hybrid power plants. Such innovations might actually make traditional stylings in outward appearance more feasible, through improved fuel economy, low capital investment, and avoiding the need to install an overhead electrical power source.

By explicit direction in passenger rail plans, and by identifying sections of track or times that would be available, the SCCRTC could help launch such an “innovation incubator” on the SCBL.

Freight service on the branch line. A widely-accepted consideration is that any freight that can be shipped by rail will benefit highway capacity proportionately. The report does cover the relationship between passenger rail and freight, but does not project future use for freight transportation. As we understand it, Iowa Pacific has exclusive use of the tracks for several more years and has some obligation to run freight trains.

As the various passenger scenarios are further developed, we recommend that any corresponding freight scenarios be integrated as part of future analytic efforts. As mentioned in the draft feasibility study, real time operations may require temporal sharing, or differing modes on defined geographic sections of the branch line.

Optimizing interim use of the rail corridor. The draft report states that passenger train service between Santa Cruz and Watsonville optimistically could start in 10 years. This raises the question of what uses will be made of the dormant portions of the SCCRTC-owned corridor in the meanwhile.

To the extent that passenger or freight might not be running on part of the line during a given time period, we believe that future options for both freight and passenger mobility and related public access opportunities should be protected over the entire 32-mile SCBL. This means that, to avoid prejudicing future options on dormant segments of the branch line, the tracks should be left in place. Our agency has made this a requirement, even where the rails were allowed to be temporarily paved over (e.g., for recreational trail purposes, as on portions of the Monterey Branch Line used for the southern leg of the MBSST).

One option, even before the MBSST is constructed parallel to the tracks, would be to allow public access along the corridor, where safe (currently, “no trespassing” is in effect). In addition to making unused rail segments available for public access, other examples of optimal interim uses might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- innovative (or old-fashioned) human powered uses (like handcars or the railrider bike)
- club excursions (in particular, those featuring use of motorized ex-railroad maintenance “speeders”—now mostly privately-owned)
- passenger rail design experiments as suggested above, or

- other public-benefit uses that will optimize use of the rail corridor.


Of course, any of these options needs to account for whether there is still freight use, or if dinner trains or Christmas specials will be using the tracks.

Conclusion. Our review of the subject feasibility study reveals a careful foundation of background and contextual information. In particular, on p.13, we were very pleased by the list of "...some of the key changes since the last transit studies were conducted..." This is followed by appropriate analysis, supporting evidence, and defensible recommendations.

The study effectively establishes the potential feasibility of reinstituting passenger rail service in one or more forms on the SCBL. And, it demonstrates how modernized passenger service can be established in ways that further the above-identified Coastal Act policy goals. Accordingly, we commend the Regional Transportation Commission, its staff and consultants for this thoughtful and thorough report.

We recognize that as different components are proposed and constructed, project-specific environmental reviews and—where new development is involved—coastal permits will be required. In this regard, we look forward to reviewing further documents and information as it becomes available. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (831) 427-4863 if you have any questions regarding this comment letter, or other matters concerning the California Coastal Zone.

Sincerely,


Susan Craig,
District Manager
Central Coast District

Cc:

Hon. Sam Farr, US Congress



July 22, 2015

George Dondero
Executive Director
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Via email to: gdondero@sccrtc.org

Re: Santa Cruz Branch Line Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

George
Dear Mr. Dondero:

On behalf of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), I am writing to provide comments on the draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study.

The mission of TAMC is to develop and maintain a multimodal transportation system that enhances mobility, safety, access, environment quality and economic activities in Monterey County. TAMC supports your efforts to implement transportation solutions such as a contiguous bike trail around the bay (Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail) or new passenger rail service on the Santa Cruz branch line.

As you know, TAMC is also pursuing new rail service to the region, including constructing a new passenger train station in Pajaro at the Watsonville Junction, to be served by intercity rail traveling north to the San Francisco Bay Area and down as far as San Diego. Our hope is that your branch line will provide connectivity for Santa Cruz County residents to do a rail-to-rail transfer at Pajaro. Ultimately, the long-range vision of "Round the Bay" rail service could be achieved. To that eventual end, **TAMC encourages you to keep rail service between Santa Cruz and Pajaro in the plans, even if service to Pajaro is not in the near-term scenario.**

TAMC appreciates the challenge of balancing project costs with available funding, while not taking anything away from the existing bus transit service. We applaud your efforts to identify every possible funding source, including those that are not certain, such as a local transportation sales tax measure, public-private partnership opportunities, and transit-oriented development. We encourage you to continue to "think big" and plan for the projects of the future while providing for the needs of the present.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Christina Watson of my staff at (831) 775-4406 or christina@tamcmonterey.org.

Sincerely,

Debra L. Hale
Executive Director



June 2nd, 2015

Dear Regional Transportation Commission members,

I am writing in regards to the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report. Bike Santa Cruz County supports the addition of passenger rail service to the county's multi-modal transportation network. Passenger rail would allow people who use bikes as their primary mode of travel to extend their trips, making distant parts of the county, region and state more accessible.

Bike Santa Cruz County recommends that the following bike-friendly policies be put in place if passenger rail service moves forward:

- Bikes allowed on trains, with space for bikes included in train car design (similar to the bike cars on Caltrain).
- Ample bike parking provided at rail stations, including a variety of bike parking options (bike racks, lockers, covered bike parking).
- Integration with bus transit schedules to expand the reach of transit service.

We believe that bicycles will be critical to the success of passenger rail service by proving "last mile" transportation for users, allowing them to travel between their home or workplace and rail stations quickly and easily. We ask that ease of bicycle use be considered throughout the passenger rail planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amelia Conlen".

Amelia Conlen, Director
Bike Santa Cruz County



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP
 Of The Ventana Chapter
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July 23, 2015

Regional Transportation Commission
 1523 Pacific Ave
 Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Comments on RTC Passenger Rail Study

Dear Executive Director George Dondero, RTC Staff, and RTC Commissioners;

The Sierra Club supports using the Santa Cruz Branch line for passenger rail and the overall findings of the Santa Cruz County Passenger Rail Study. The Sierra Club believes that passenger rail will further many of the Club's goals including decreasing fossil fuel use, promoting sustainable land use, reducing global warming pollution, and get commuters off of congested roads. Passenger rail aligns closely the Sierra Club's overall policies regarding transportation, and as National Policy states "rail systems are most effective [compared to other forms of transportation] in stimulating compact development patterns, increasing public transit patronage and reducing motor vehicle use[1]." Additionally, the Sierra Club supports the car-free transport options that regional and statewide rail-based connectivity will precipitate.

While the Passenger Rail Study recommends further study of scenarios E (service from Santa Cruz to Aptos) and S (service from Santa Cruz to Seacliff), the Club believes that service to Watsonville is essential to the success of passenger rail, and our responsibility to connect population centers to job centers to promote social equity and environmental justice within our county. Therefore, we recommend that the Regional Transportation Commission continue to study Scenario G, service between Santa Cruz and Watsonville. Residents of Watsonville are disproportionately burdened with long commutes and the need for car ownership due to their distance from county job centers.

Additionally, passenger rail between Santa Cruz and Watsonville will expose all members of the community to the unique ecosystems and habitats along the rail corridor, many of which are not easily accessible or viewable via other means of transportation. For example, the rail corridor passes through beautiful sections of Watsonville's Gallighan and Harkins sloughs that are not easy to get to by other means. Watsonville's extensive sloughs, the county's largest wetlands system, is a local eco-treasure that is underutilized: many more people will be inspired to explore, enjoy and protect this area, with its over 200 species of birds and over 7 miles of walking and biking trails[2].

In addition to expanding service to Watsonville, the Sierra Club believes that it is very important to expand the reach of passengers using the rail services by facilitating easy access to stations and trains for pedestrians and cyclists, providing adequate space on trains for bicycles and wheelchairs, provide ample bike parking at stations, and tie train service in with Metro busses to major destinations and other transit hubs and corridors. Making stations easily accessible to bus users, cyclists, and pedestrians will help to mitigate the need for large car parking lots, with their undesirable community and environmental impacts.

Yours Sincerely,

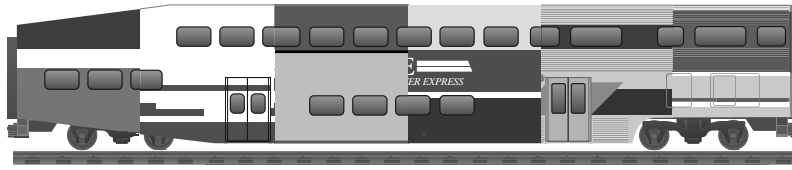
Greg McPheeters
Chair, Executive Committee

[1] <http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/transportation>

[2] http://cityofwatsonville.org/public-works-utilities/conservation_outreach_and_education_program/nature-center/wetlands-and-trails

TRAC

Train Riders
Association
of California



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BY EMAIL

July 13, 2015

Michael D. Setty
Administrative Director

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William F. McGeehan III
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Greg Thompson
Sacramento County

Justin Walker
Los Angeles County

Mr. George Dondero
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: TRAC's Comments on SCCRTC's Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report

Dear Mr. Dondero:

TRAC would like to commend SCCRTC for the wisdom to engage experienced and informed consultants who appear to actually understand small-scale passenger rail systems. For example, the capital cost estimates for passenger rail are reasonable. Too often these kind of studies propose additional capital improvements and other features that run up billings but are not actually needed for usable service.

Second, the study is realistic about rail operating costs, developing transparent, understandable estimates. The study is also notable for clearly documenting the large economies of operating diesel multiple units (DMUs) compared to locomotive-hauled trains (e.g., \$12.00 per train mile savings). DMUs also match the relatively small scale of rail operations proposed.

However, it is not clear if fixed facilities maintenance expenses (e.g., track, signals, switches, grade crossings, etc.) have been included in the operating expenses for various options (Section 6.2). Tables 6-3 through 6-10 include line items for Operations, Vehicle Maintenance, General Administration, and Contingency, but none for Track & Other Maintenance.

TRAC suggests that proposed initial rail service west of the Boardwalk be dropped, in favor of a short 0.6 mile in-street extension to the existing Metro Center hub in downtown Santa Cruz (not to preclude special services on the Davenport branch). This would provide direct rail connections to Santa Cruz Metro's entire network, plus "over the hill" bus connections to Santa Clara County. Precedents for in-street operations by DMUs have been set by both New Jersey's River Line in Camden across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, and Capitol Metro's Metrorail line in downtown Austin, Texas.

We also suggest that SCCRTC partner with the Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) in developing regional rail services. To date, TAMC's proposal for DMU service between downtown Monterey and Marina has made little progress in the last decade, but together progress may be possible. Potential service between Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties may also be important and productive, though there are sensitive environmental issues along the Union Pacific line next to Elkhorn Slough.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael D. Setty'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael D. Setty
Administrative Director



To the RTC and its commissioners:

We are encouraged by the findings of the RTC rail study. It indicates to us that some form of rail transit in Santa Cruz County is both attainable and beneficial, though many details remain to be worked out. There are very few communities of this size that could support a rail transit system, but a well-placed rail corridor coupled with unusually high population densities, a bike and walking path in the rail corridor, and a population that is ready for alternatives to driving make it possible. We look forward to working together to take the next steps to make this a reality.

Our recommendations going forward:

1. "Rail AND Trail": The two uses complement each other. Bike/ped trips are generally less than 3 miles, rail trips are usually longer. Plan the rail and trail together for safety, efficiency, and cost effectiveness in the construction process. The trail and rail must play along nicely together and the usage of either one should not impinge upon the other. For instance, passengers waiting for a train should not interfere with passing cyclists. Also, money available for rail projects from outside sources, such as Federal infrastructure initiatives could benefit both rail and trail. Example: Replacing trestles as they wear out.

2. "Density over Population": It is well-known that the ridership of a local rail system is not a function of the population of the whole urban area through which the rail line runs, but rather the density in an approximately mile-wide corridor along the line. Even though Santa Cruz County has only a quarter million people, densities along the rail line of 7,000 - 10,000 people per square mile are comparable to much bigger places, such as Berkeley, Oakland, Portland, and Seattle and are dense enough to support rail service. The Rodriguez St. census tract in Watsonville is denser than San Francisco!

3. "Words Matter": The word "train", even though it is very short and simple, has been shown to ignite controversy. Americans, and Westerners in particular, think of trains as thousand-ton behemoths that shake the earth and spew smoke into the sky. Just as semi trucks and Priuses are both "wheeled vehicles that drive on roads", that is where the similarity ends. What we envision and endorse is like a Prius version of a rail vehicle compared to Amtrak's or Caltrain's semi truck, 1/10th the weight, noise, and energy consumption. Perhaps "light rail vehicle", "tram-train", "rapid streetcar", etc. would present a better public face. People really latch onto words and images, and it can be hard to change negative impressions once set. We realize that current regulations force the use of a heavy diesel vehicle, but we are betting that PTC will be the law of the land by the time our system becomes operational and vehicle options will be greatly increased.

4. "Rightly Modest": No transit system can be everything to all people. Better to start with a smaller system executed adroitly than a large system executed problematically. Benefiting a subset of the population directly will benefit the whole population by improving traffic flow and other measures of quality of life. It is worth careful consideration to evaluate the "Minimum Viable Project = MVP" that could provide a substantial benefit to the County as a whole. In the Rail Study, Option E is close to this ideal - frequent service for a large number of people with the lowest cost per ride of all the options. The subsidy could be further lowered by careful system design. Success with a smaller system makes it easier to get outside funds to enlarge it.

5. "Don't forget South County": Extend service to Watsonville and Pajaro if at all possible, at least during morning and afternoon commute hours. Costs could be minimized by running a smaller number of longer trains a few times a day at the busiest times. Here is where a diesel/electric hybrid could be advantageous, as electrifying the whole line is (according to George Dondero) prohibitively expensive. An intermediate and lower-risk option: Take advantage of Mark Stone's new law allowing buses to use paved center medians of freeways to create a Bus Rapid Transit ("BRT") service to Watsonville, if Hwy 1 can be modified to support this use at reasonable cost. If demand is high enough for BRT, extend rail service to Watsonville in the future. If it is not possible to include South County without breaking the

bank, the creation of an Assessment District should be explored that does not include South County in terms of rail expenditures.

6. “Metro Can Do It”: The County is too small to afford multiple transit agencies. And, moreover, work with Metro to create a coordinated transit system where buses and trains work together in terms of transfers and timing for smoother transit through the County. A unified ticket/pass system and a “where’s my bus/train?” apps are obvious desires.

7. “Operations over Capital”: Make every effort to reduce future operating costs by careful planning and execution, even if it costs more upfront. Upfront costs happen once, operating costs go on forever. Since money from other sources will likely be available to defray upfront costs (the Federal “Starts” programs, California cap and trade, etc.), it makes sense to spend more upfront so as to spend less later and reduce the required subsidy. Cut costs everywhere but efficiency and safety, and spend extra for a system that is low-maintenance, lightweight, low energy usage, and quiet. Since our system will have only a small number of rail vehicles, their expense will be low compared to the track infrastructure, and it will be a relatively small system cost increase to obtain advanced vehicles.

8. “The Varsity Train”: Reach out to the educational institutions, primarily UCSC and Cabrillo College. There are a lot of students and staff at both places, and they will be early adopters of a rail system. Make it easy for them to use it! In other academic communities around the US, academics are heavy users of rail systems where available. For instance, consider as a future plan a pedestrian or even ped/rail bridge to Cabrillo.. UCSC is much harder to serve directly, but bus transfers at Bay St. could be expedited.

9. “Good Neighbors”: Reach out to neighbors and spend effort and money to reduce impact. (horn signalized road crossings, lightweight electric vehicles, continuously welded track, regenerative braking, sound walls if needed, low-noise wheels, even ultra capacitor powered vehicles to avoid diesel noise and smell as well as overhead catenaries.) CalTrain or Amtrak sized vehicles are not appropriate for a system of our scale. The Citadis by Alstom is a good example—quieter than automobiles, four times more efficient than a bus per person, and both electric and diesel power. http://www.alstom.com/Global/US/Resources/Documents/Brochure_Citadis%20Spirit.pdf



10. “Locals First!”: This is a system to improve the quality of life for those that already live here, not to induce sprawl or provide entertainment for tourists, though they are welcome and invited to use it. We’re paying for it, and we want the benefits to accrue to us!

11. “New Habits”: Be open to novel approaches to demand management. Three examples: 1. Since the rail line goes by many schools, perhaps the train set could have a chaperoned “Kinderwagen” at the end at certain times of day so children could use it to get to/from school as well as between after-school activities. Over 1/3 of car trips are moving children around and they often count double because of drop-off and pick-up. 2. Plenty of bike lockers at train stations to make it easy to cycle instead of drive to a stop and to not have to worry about bike theft. 3. Bike transport on rail vehicles — ensure rail vehicles are configured to carry a substantial number of bikes.

12 “Most Trips are Short”: Automobile traffic over Hwy 17 has *declined* in the last two decades, but Hwy 1 traffic has increased substantially. This means that local trips are causing congestion on Hwy 1, not “over the hill” commuters. A bike/ped path plus rail service would attack this issue directly--most bike trips are less than 3 miles, and rail trips would pick up where bike trips leave off in terms of distance, reducing the impact of short trips on freeway congestion. A well-used transportation system on the rail corridor could have a significant impact on highway and surface automobile traffic.

—Respectfully,
Bruce Sawhill, PhD
on behalf of the FORT Board



July 31, 2015

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

Re: Passenger Rail Transportation Study
Comments by Santa Cruz Area Chamber Co Commerce

The Santa Cruz Area Chamber commends the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission for its more than 20-year-long commitment to preserving and planning for the re-use of the Southern Pacific rail corridor. This assemblage of contiguous land and existing capital investments is the starting point for transportation and recreation improvements that will serve the County for the next century.

In responding to the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report, the Chamber recognizes that it is conceptual and exploratory. Future passenger rail in Santa Cruz County will be determined through further analysis and evolving trends in external factors such as federal and state transportation funding and priorities of the local electorate. These and other forces will shape both this vision and our capacity to implement it.

Within those constraints the Chamber offers the following comments and recommendations regarding the study:

Transportation Vision. Transportation systems around the world are increasing their dependence on rail systems as an element of their integrated transportation strategies. This is true in part because of existing infrastructure and property rights, the relative cost of transportation improvements, environmental priorities, and other "non-market" factors. But this evolution also reflects a change in customer preferences regarding transportation.

The use of the rail corridor is necessarily a core element of the County's strategic transportation planning. It is the only affordable route for a second "north-south" mass-transportation corridor.

Many of today's transportation visions will become plans and, ultimately a part of our transportation system in the next three decades. On the other hand, it is unlikely that there will be a significant transportation investment in the next 30 years that is not already well-along in the conceptual phase of planning. Our options are already on the table.

Much is at stake. The character and efficiency of our transportation system will continue to play a key role in insuring the County's economic competitiveness for jobs, workers, and visitors. It is a keystone for its future use of land and urban planning. The Chamber is persuaded that rail together with continuing improvement of Highway 1 is fundamental to the community that we want to be two and three decades from today.

Passenger Rail's Role in Transportation System. As the study notes, the rail corridor provides the only alternative for rapid transportation between Davenport and Watsonville. The County's only existing transportation route is Highway 1, universally acknowledged to be inadequate, with long delays at commute times and, at best, unpredictable travel times, especially on weekends and in the summer.

Rail could provide an efficient alternative. The study's projected travel times between Santa Cruz and Watsonville (41 minutes) would be comparable (and, often, an improvement on) current travel times. It could offer a much improved traveler experience and would have significant environmental benefits.

Role in the Economic System – Housing, Jobs, Retail, and Recreation. While the complexity of public projects such as passenger rail service are necessarily independent of other public and private sector plans, all such planning – e.g., land use, housing, water, education, public safety, workforce attraction and retention, health care, recreation, public services, economic development – is highly interdependent. To achieve our goals as a County in all of these areas transportation must be improved.

The plans we make and implement, including our transportation strategies, have a very significant role in determining who lives in the County, the character and compensation of the jobs that are available to them (in fact, whether there are jobs available to them) and the quality of life and cost of living they will enjoy in our communities.

Of particularly immediate interest is the relationship between transportation planning and the availability and affordability of housing in Santa Cruz County. One of the most difficult barriers to the development of higher density housing is the constraints of our transportation systems – today, almost entirely streets and highways. Tying housing development to transit hubs and nodes is a long-tested and successful strategy for improving both transportation and housing efficiency.

Strategies such as rail and protected bicycle routes that remove cars from the roads and street can improve the character of neighborhoods. They can also allow for the creation of neighborhoods that while denser are less impacted by street traffic and more desirable for residents.

More efficient systems such as passenger rail reduce travel time and stress for many and reduce travel congestion for all. They can stimulate the construction of housing that is more affordable by locating it in areas that this less expensive without increasing travel time or commute costs. In Santa Cruz County this is a key element for service workers including those employed in tourism and agriculture.

Likewise, the confidence of employers in creating jobs and investing in Santa Cruz County is affected by travel times and the efficiency of transportation for customers, workers, their inputs, and the distribution of their products.

Similar benefits can be found in the development and use of recreational resources. For instance, a chronic shortage of athletic fields in some areas and the under-utilization of others can be improved through more efficient transportation providing access to existing recreational facilities along the rail corridor and opening up new areas that may be developed for recreation purposes.

Efficient use of transportation funds. There is a good deal of professional debate about what costs should be included and what evaluative standards should be applied in comparing the capital and operating costs of highways to “fixed-guideway” systems like light rail.

This is an interesting conversation, but, as it applies to Santa Cruz County, the Chamber doubts its utility. The sources of federal and state funds for passenger rail are distinct and

largely independent of each other. If we are successful at accessing these distinct resources we can have more of both external highway funds and external railway funds. Yes, these will require local match; but we are far behind meeting our needs today and even the most optimistic projections that include both rail and highway improvement do not remedy our transportation shortfalls, even for today, much less 20 years and an estimated growth of 37,000 people from today.

Moreover, the net project costs of a Santa Cruz County Passenger Rail system (Santa Cruz to Watsonville: \$120MM to \$176MM (depending on system) \pm 30%) compare quite favorably with the estimated \$600MM necessary to add a third lane to Highway 1.

However, and more importantly, it is the diversity of systems, routes, modes, passenger requirements, capital investment, and travel costs, as well as the benefits of developing a second transit corridor that makes development of a Santa Cruz County Passenger Rail system a net value.

Population Density. Santa Cruz County would be at the smaller end of the spectrum of communities with light-rail. The population densities in both Santa Cruz and Watsonville are comparable to many – probably most – light-rail systems, as is the county's overall urban area, but the area served is smaller, in large part because of the County's relatively narrow corridor of habitation – half of the population lives within 1 mile of the rail corridor.

The offsetting value of the system in Santa Cruz that makes a light-rail system both feasible and attractive is the critical need for improved transportation for those inhabiting that corridor. The extraordinary cost of land and our dedication to values that limit the areas for urbanization and preserve both agriculture and environmental resources inveigh strongly for making this investment.

Projected growth in the county over the next 20 years, while similar to or less than the rest of coastal California, requires that we begin serious planning and implementation of solutions to preserve both the character and the vitality our urban areas and the environmental features and community values of the entire County.

Connecting Watsonville and Santa Cruz. One of the most likely economic benefits of the rail system is the creation of an efficient connection between the two largest and fastest growing cities in the County. There are encouraging steps underway to add industrial capacity in Watsonville that will benefit from more efficient connections to the tech and innovation sector elsewhere in the County. And, as housing prices continue to price service labor out of some urban areas, there will be great opportunities for low-income skilled and un-skilled workers to commute efficiently and cost-effectively throughout County.

The greatest vulnerability of the next generation of Santa Cruz County residents is the loss of local jobs as a result of land and housing costs. The most compelling corollary to this notion is the opportunity to make the most of both existing and new housing through improved mobility of the workforce.

Preservation of right of way and improvements. The notion that we would spend at least \$11 million to obtain the right to tear out the tracks (to reimburse the railroad purchase cost) and perhaps a good deal more time and money to obtain the right to abandon from the Federal Railroad authorities and the cost of actually removing these improvements seems a preposterous waste.

We cannot be certain at the current level of study that passenger rail is feasible. Nor do we have any assurance that the expected state and federal funds that may be available for such a project will actually materialize.

There will be years available to us to further consider this... years in which the bicycle and pedestrian accesses will continue to be developed. To use a transportation metaphor, to do so now – before we know more about design features, user projections, capital and operating costs, and possible sources of funds – would be getting the cart in front of the horse.

Connecting to California. There is little that is certain about projecting two decades and more into the future. But in the bell-curve of things more and less likely, increased use of rail throughout California and the U.S. seems among the most probable. While there are many who resist high-speed rail it has proven to be a boon to areas that have installed it. The European and Asian experiments have proven their utility and efficiency. With increasing emphasis on environmental efficiency they are likely to have significant economic advantages as well. Even “low-speed rail,” for instance the Capitol Corridor AMTRAK has demonstrated its great utility.

A failure today to retain our option to be directly linked to such a system is likely to be perceived by our successors as a blunder of the first order. That the Monterey Peninsula and Bay Area communities are investing in similar projects should be an indicator to us.

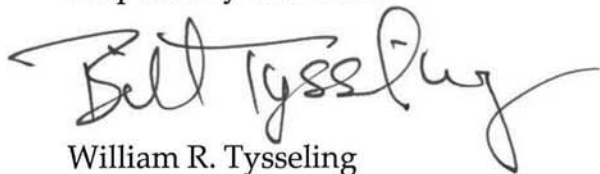
Economic Equity. We strongly support the notion that many will use the bicycle route provided by the ‘trail’ portion of the rail-trail. It seems likely many local commuters in Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Capitola will use the trail to commute to their employment.

But this is not likely for the many commuters who travel longer distance and, especially, not for the thousands of service workers who commute daily from south County to jobs in north County.

This begs what may be the ultimate question of Santa Cruz County and its cities: “Are we destined to become communities of the wealthy, the retired, second-home owners... in short, people who do not work in Santa Cruz?” Or, can we develop the housing, jobs, and infrastructure, especially transportation infrastructure, that retains a jobs-housing balance where people live where they work, raise families, and retire.

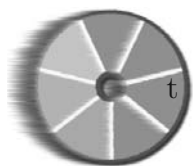
The Chamber believes that this is still the vision of a majority of our electorate and one that can only be achieved through creative investments such as passenger rail.

Respectfully Submitted



William R. Tysseling
CEO

Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce
For the Board of Directors



The Campaign for Sensible Transportation

P.O. Box 7927, Santa Cruz, CA 95061 831-688-2304 www.SensibleTransportation.org

July 31, 2015

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Comments on the Rail Feasibility Study Draft

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, Draft Report.

Members of the Campaign for Sensible Transportation are supportive of the overall concept of public transit using the rail corridor. We won't repeat the list of excellent reasons provided on page iv of the study. The detailed goals and objectives given on page vi of the study are also well founded and reflect input from the community.

Here are our further comments, by subject item.

Early elimination of Watsonville from scenarios?

The study recommends just two "preferred alternative" passenger rail scenarios to go forward for further analysis, leaving Watsonville out. We believe that the limited scope and level of analysis in the feasibility study is insufficient to make this watershed decision.

Since developing a passenger rail project is presently dependent on voter approval of a county-wide sale tax measure, project feasibility considerations could include not just "will they ride it?" but "will they vote for it?" Will South County voters and community leaders support taxing themselves for a passenger rail proposal that would serve North County areas while leaving Watsonville out of the picture?

We see in any case that for advancement of project goals, passenger service that would include Watsonville (Scenario G) scored right in the same league as the two other scenarios recommended by the study (figure ES-3, page xii).

Interaction of rail service and bike/ped rail-trail development

Further feasibility analysis should answer, in more detail, key questions about how passenger rail and the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail will be mutually enhancing and resolve certain use-of-space questions.

This means examining details of where train passing sidings may be located, and where the trail's continuity could be affected or not, whether at trestles, sidings, or elsewhere. What are the specific spatial challenges?

The practical specifics of how passenger rail could accommodate potentially significant numbers of bike-on-train users should also be addressed beyond saying setup would be

“very flexible” (p. 25). How would bicyclists keep bikes protected, secure from theft, and not be turned away due to limited on-board capacity for bikes?

Integration of rail service with METRO bus system and with begin/end trip travel

More analysis of service connectivity seems in order. For example, we observe that METRO’s Watsonville Transit Center on Rodriguez St. at West Lake Ave. is located several blocks from the existing train tracks. What are the possibilities for integrated service? Similarly, further analysis of the somewhat challenged connectivity to Cabrillo College would be good also. What are the possibilities for bringing the existing UC Santa Cruz inbound bike-hauling trailer service further down Bay Street to a rail stop?

Transportation mode efficiency analysis, and GHG reduction

Just as private single-occupant motor vehicles are the least efficient travel mode when measured in terms of passenger-mile energy consumption and physical land space required for transportation, rail transit carries a potential for highly efficient use of land space and reduced greenhouse gas emissions per passenger-mile. What are the facts?

Further feasibility study should quantify the relative energy-use merits of different passenger rail scenarios and different passenger rail propulsion technologies, and compare greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The inclusion in the appendices of an incomplete technical data brochure for only one type of train unit, a make of DMU, seems overly limiting.

We observe that the 1998 Major Transportation Investment Study (MTIS) did not analyze GHG emissions directly, but did compare estimated energy usage among different travel modes and project options.

Some CFST participants suggest that adopting the “greenest” flavor of rail transit, for example with electrification instead of diesel fuel, could add a marketing “wow” factor that increases public support and compensates for an added construction expense with heightened popularity along with reduced GHG emissions. Would electrification also help address concerns of some residents about localized air pollution and noise or vibration from heavy train units? What would most reduce GHG emissions?

Scenario options blind spot?

The feasibility study does not address possibilities of also utilizing the contiguous Santa Cruz, Big Trees & Pacific railway line to provide service through downtown Santa Cruz and to the Harvey West area. We don’t expect the separate ownership to be a barrier. Why leave this question “outside the scope of this study?” Could service to Harvey West help address the existing peak period traffic congestion at the Highway 1/9 intersection? Is a passenger stop in downtown Santa Cruz north of Depot Park a feasible enhancement?

Objections from members of the public

The feasibility study could further address the primary objections to passenger rail being raised in the community.

Questions for example about noise from trains and train horns, are a legitimate concern. This could be addressed by more than a statement that signal equipment at road crossings may be an alternative to train horns. What are the details?

Similarly, what may be the effect of trains on road traffic at at-grade road crossings?

Ridership estimates

The study uses a modeling process to estimate future ridership. Some people contend the estimates are over-optimistic. As one reality check, are there examples in the U.S. or elsewhere of successfully established systems with certain ridership numbers that operate in somewhat comparable circumstances? Pages 24 to 33 list some other systems and some key features, but not much is offered for further detail.

Report organization, editing, auditing

The report has enough typos and misspellings that one may wonder if it were subject to in-house editorial quality control, not just of the text quality but therefore of the statistical analysis as well. We then wonder if independent peer review is called for.

Downloaded separately, the appendices are challenging to navigate without a table of contents, pagination, or page footers identifying the appendix sections by letter.

Appendix E, cost estimates, uses insider acronyms or abbreviations such as LS and TF, without a key, that are of uncertain meaning to the general reader.

Conclusions

We commend the SCCRTC for promoting an an ongoing public input process following acquisition of the rail corridor. This draft feasibility study is an important step forward.

Sincerely,



Jack Nelson, Co-chair



Paul Elerick, Co-chair

The Campaign for Sensible Transportation

Rail Trail Project: Draft Rail Feasibility Study – Comments for 6/4/15 Public Meetings

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and comments to the recently released “Draft Rail Feasibility Study”. We feel that this project is of vital interest to the community, and we support the RTC’s investment in this important Study. We do feel however that the Study does not sufficiently explore the cost/benefit implications of passenger rail, or provide adequate context as to how passenger rail fits into the broader transportation solutions and plans for the County. Specifically, we believe that the 3 stated goals of the Study (on p. vi) are not viably solved with the Passenger Rail scenarios and analysis outlined in the Study. In the brief time we have had to digest the study and do some preliminary analysis, we’ve put together a short summary of some of the issues that warrant further research by the RTC:

GOAL 1: Provide a convenient, competitive and accessible travel option

- Lack of recent commuter data (origin/destination statistics) that substantiate a passenger rail solution solving commuters’ needs
- Ridership numbers need further substantiation and sensitivity analysis as the numbers will have significant impact on the overall viability of passenger rail.
- “Last mile” issue is not adequately addressed and will likely detrimentally impact ridership numbers (e.g. too far from home, business)
- Longer travel times required for commuters with passenger rail vs. alternative bus options

GOAL 2: Enhance communities and the environment, support economic vitality

- Given the lack of commuter data (referenced above), removing cars from Highway 1 and thus reducing traffic and CO2 emissions is questionable, particularly when compared to a trail option where rail is banked for some period of time until new technologies present more cost effective commuting options.
- Lack of information re: track sharing with freight cars (noise, pollution, cost to accommodate dual tracks, etc.)
- High costs to implement adequate safety measures along the railway
- Unfavorable impact to property values along the railway once active passenger rail is implemented
- A strong argument can be made that the community, environment and economic vitality could all be better served by an optimized trail only option

GOAL 3: Develop a trail system that is cost effective and financially feasible

- Sources of funding for capital and O&M costs are tenuous, may be unreliable (e.g. state and federal grants), and need further validation
- Costs to acquire adjacent properties/easements along railway to allow for width accommodation in narrow areas of railway are not included in the Study
- Given above concerns about optimistic ridership numbers, additional subsidies (beyond cost scenarios outlined in Study) would be required to maintain the system and would take away

from other transportation needs such as road repairs, senior transportation, bus service, car pooling alternatives, bike paths, etc.

- Project timeframe (first passenger rail in 2025) is too long given weak benefits outlined in the study

We are actively researching these areas in June and July and welcome further input and discussion with RTC staff and commissioners.

Sincerely,

Bud Colligan and Miles Reiter

From: Lou and Joan Rose
Sent: Thursday, July 02, 2015 10:18 AM
To: info@scrtc.org
Subject: Comment on Commuter Rail Proposal

Dear RTC,

Thank you for the opportunity that you afford the public to provide input on your commuter rail proposal. My attached comments are in the form of an op ed submission to the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

The thoughts expressed come out of 30 years of teaching and research in urban economics (including transportation economics) at the University of Hawaii. I hope you will read them.

Sincerely,

Lou Rose

Professor Emeritus, Economics

University of Hawaii

Aptos, CA 95003

Op Ed on Santa Cruz County Transportation Proposals. (870 Words)

Suppose it's the normal rush hour. Would you rather pay \$2.50 to ride a commuter rail? Or pay \$2.50 *plus* additional local taxes to speed along an uncongested highway in your car? Please read this and let the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission hear your answer.

As an alternative to constructing a wider Highway 1, the SCCRTC hired consultants to provide a Rail Feasibility Study. The study, completed in May, provides, under alternative assumptions, a comprehensive range of benefit and cost forecasts. A final report would yield refined forecasts – and you might as well cut the benefit forecasts in half and double the cost forecasts before making a decision! If you do that, you will surely find that a rail system in Santa Cruz County would yield a net loss and be a waste of taxpayers' money.

The U.S. Dept. of Transportation once published a report comparing actual rail system outcomes with consultant-prepared forecasts of ten different urban rail projects. In all ten cases, the ridership forecasts exceeded the actual ridership, and the actual costs exceeded those forecast.

Although it's difficult to accurately forecast ridership and costs, we might expect that objective consultants would sometimes under-forecast and sometimes over-forecast. However, in these ten consultants' reports, the errors were not random. They always over-estimated ridership and always under-estimated costs.

Many years ago, I participated in the review of a Los Angeles consulting firm's report to the Honolulu City Council on a proposed rail system. We hired a group of independent economists to more thoroughly review the consultants' report and held a conference at which the consultants would present their report and the economists would present their comments. The consultants' report was shown to be biased in the same ways that I described in the ten studies above – implying benefits far less than costs. It was an expose devastating to the supporters of the proposed rail system.

Let's be honest about this and adjust the consultant's final ridership forecasts downward and cost forecasts upward prior to making a project decision because *the forecasts are biased*. (The reasons for this would have to be the subject of another letter.)

We all look forward to a future Santa Cruz with an aesthetically pleasing and efficient transportation system. But even with some funds from federal and state governments, under-forecasting costs and over-forecasting ridership imply under-forecasting the burden on Santa Cruz taxpayers. Years ago I had the great pleasure of daily riding the brand new and beautiful Metro rail from Arlington, VA into Washington, D.C. for only \$1.50 – but the cost of that ride was \$15.50 and, of course, taxpayers had to pay for almost all of my ride. Such will surely be the case here in Santa Cruz.

In low population areas like Santa Cruz County, a rail system is unlikely to yield benefits in excess of costs. For rail systems to yield benefits greater than costs, there should be a larger and denser population such as exists in some of our larger cities in the Eastern U.S. that grew up prior to the automobile.

However, Santa Cruz County has geographical constraints that are well-suited to a more efficient method of improving traffic conditions on Highway 1 - and 17 as well. The severely limited number of highways in and out of our area makes it a good candidate for rush hour congestion pricing (no tolls the rest of the day.) The charges would be electronically levied (no booths) at a level proportional to demand and sufficient to move traffic at a target speed or volume. We don't need to widen Highway 1. Rather, we should use our existing road infrastructure more efficiently before we increase the number of lanes (or install a commuter rail system.)

Although some uninformed drivers and politicians may recoil from the idea of tolls, this method of mitigating road congestion is now in effect with good results in several cities. Seattle is a good example. They established a variable toll (\$1.10 - \$3.50) on S.R. 520 that reduced auto volume, increased bus ridership and reduced fuel use and emissions, all by 30% or more - and increased driver satisfaction. To support variable tolling, they also improved bus service, increased telecommuting and car pooling and employed advanced technologies for managing traffic. The actual benefit/cost ratio was 1.76. (See USDOT, FHA, 2015). Note: Income tax rebates for rush hour tolls paid could be used for lower-income drivers.

There is a variety of new traffic control systems now in cities of the world and many of them use pricing as the most important tool. Some of the pricing systems control traffic within areas rather than along a roadway. The cities include Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong, London, Stockholm, Milan, San Diego and Riverside. The RTC ought to investigate this potentially more rewarding approach.

I'd much rather take the car onto an uncongested highway for the time-saving, flexible trip that it affords. How about you? Send your answer to the SCCRTC at info@sccretc.org by July 8.

Is there a worthwhile use of the RTC's rail corridor? You bet! Hike and bike! But please, no costly, inefficient commuter trains!

Lou Rose

Professor Emeritus, Economics

University of Hawaii

Date: July 28, 2015

To: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

From: Michelle Shippen (356 Pioneer Rd., Corralitos, CA 95076)

SUBJECT: Comments on Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

I am submitting the following comments and concerns regarding the proposed passenger rail service in Santa Cruz County. Please include my remarks in the Final Feasibility Study Report and in the packets of the Commissioners.

In preface, I want to say that I am strongly opposed to passenger rail service at the levels evaluated in the Draft Feasibility Study. Each of the options evaluated, as well as the two recommended options, represents a very intrusive negative imposition on the surrounding neighborhoods including residences, businesses, schools and parks, pedestrian and bicycle routes (including the rail trail) and most of the traffic intersections.

The preferred scenarios have passenger trains passing every 15 minutes in both directions at peak speeds from 45 to 60 miles per hour. Minimum scenarios have trains passing every 30 minutes. This level of service is a huge departure from earlier discussions and expectations for rail service limited to seasonal recreational use. This is in addition to an unspecified number of freight trains who will share the right of way. It completely changes the character of many neighborhoods, shifting from a beach/town/farm neighborhood feel to an urban industrial quality.

The Draft Study makes clear that in order for train service to be economically feasible, very frequent boarding schedules and high passenger usage are essential. I have serious doubts that the high ridership projections in the Study are realistic. Just look at our County's current bus usage. All day long, beautiful Clean Air Buses transect this County at convenient times and locations. And they are almost always nearly empty! Before heavily taxing us locals for dubious train service, let's put some resources into making our existing bus service viable.

Certainly we should complete the widening of Hwy 1, eliminate the horrific bottleneck between the Soquel exit and the Freedom Blvd. exit. Where that highway is already widened, the traffic moves well at peak times, without gridlock. Let's also engineer our City and County streets to better accommodate traffic flow. Let's fix the annoying and dangerous bumps, potholes, lack of responsible road shoulders, signage, traffic lights and painted lines that are so neglected throughout. I have lived in rural Corralitos for 30 years. During this time countless tragic accidents, deaths and near misses have occurred on the rural routes to my home. I wonder how much inadequate road maintenance and development has contributed. We need to put our limited tax dollars to better use than the folly of intensive passenger rail service.

Whether or not a case can be made for economic feasibility, in my opinion, the proposed passenger rail service is neither feasible nor desirable from a community goals and quality of life perspective. The following highlights some important points.

Train Horn/Wayside Horn Noise Impacts Federal and State law requires that trains sound their horns at between 96 and 110 decibels (as loud as a rock concert) starting about 1/4th mile before each public and private crossing. There are 44 such crossings between Westside Santa Cruz and Capitola Village alone. Anyone who experienced the Train to Christmas Town on the Westside 3 years ago knows how deafening the train horn is. By law it sounds at a level where conversation must stop because you can't speak over it. And it extends outward in all directions for many blocks. Imagine that sound every 15 minutes from early morning until late at night.

The only way to avoid the legal train horn requirement is for local jurisdictions to apply to the Federal government for Quiet Zones. Quiet Zones are specified sections of the track where the train can refrain from sounding the horn. Quiet Zones must cover at least a half mile and must put "Supplemental Safety Measures" (SSMs) in place to show the government that the higher risk of accidents has been adequately addressed. Local jurisdictions (the Cities and County of Santa Cruz) must pay for Quiet Zones and assume the legal liability which is significant. Typically, this means installing extensive blocking arms, bells, lights, medians and so forth. Often it means installing Wayside Horns at each crossing. Owners of private rail crossings will have to assume their own costs, which will likely exceed \$350,000 for each crossing, plus maintenance and liability. This puts a disproportionate burden on private land owners. Surely there will be an outcry from these private interests.

In the Draft Feasibility Study, the issue of Train Horn/Wayside Horn noise has been neatly avoided. It was not included in the evaluation metrics on "Noise and Vibration". The Study makes it seem like any concerns about noise have been taken care of because the trains themselves are newer designs and more quiet. In the noise metrics, the Study completely omits the issue of train horns, wayside horns, bells and so forth at crossings. This is very misleading.

So, either the public must accept the unacceptable legal requirement for loud train horns at all crossings, OR (if Quiet Zones are established) the residential, pedestrian and car traffic must cope with bells, lights and possibly Wayside Horns.

The Regional Transportation Commission is strongly looking at the SMART rail and trail project in Sonoma-Marin counties as a model for Santa Cruz. The SMART project, which is scheduled to be implemented in a year or so, has undergone its Environmental Impact Study process and so forth. To deal with the issue of unacceptable intrusive train horn noise, the SMART planners are recommending that Wayside Horns be included in the "Supplemental Safety Measures" at all crossings. If Santa Cruz County follows the SMART lead, then Wayside Horns will be a strong possibility.

Wayside Horns are not benign. They are very loud. They are about as loud as the train horn. The difference is that Wayside Horns impact fewer people. Fewer complainers.

Wayside horns are one of the alternatives to train horns in Quiet Zones. The way they work is this. They are installed on poles above each crossing. They are sounded at about the same decibel level and in the same pattern as train horns. They start sounding continuously about 25 to 30 seconds before the train crosses the intersection. They sound just like the train horns but the difference is that they are pointed directly down upon the pedestrians, bicyclists and cars stopped at the intersection. So in terms of impact, they seem much worse than the train horn for those nearby! And while they don't extend out as far as the train horn, they nonetheless make a deafening noise for 100 feet or more.

I keep thinking about the people trying to enjoy the Monterey Bay Scenic Trail, the beautiful bike/pedestrian rail trail that is so longed for in our County. Does this public have any idea what is actually in store for them?

- a train zooming by every 15 minutes within feet of the bike/pedestrian trail
- at a minimum, loud clanging bells and lights at every crossing
- a strong possibility that a Wayside Horn will be in every Quiet Zone, blasting at ear splitting levels directly down on them every 15 minutes

This is the best case scenario. The worst case is that Quiet Zones will not be established and the obnoxious deafening train horn will pervade for miles in every direction from morning until late at night.

Public Outreach and Input The Draft Feasibility Study makes it seem like the broad public has been engaged at every level, every step of the way. The Study is using this reference to imply that the citizenry of our County has understood and been adequately consulted about the trajectory of the passenger rail project. Please take another look.

There were several public interest events and an on line survey. A tiny fraction of the public actually engaged. Most of these were people very interested in the trail aspect of the rail trail idea (the bicycle community), those who loved the idea of a train ride, especially a recreational train, train hobbyists and selected singular representatives of interest groups. Fewer than 2000 questionnaires were returned. Approximately 100 people took part in workshops and events that sought their input. A look at the Survey format shows that the way the questions were structured, respondents were gently directed toward answers that assumed a passenger train was in the future. In other words, "all roads led to Rome." Respondents were not advised that what was being proposed is an intensive (60 trains a day) commuter rail service. Questions were very benign, such as "Which station locations do you think you would prefer to use?" I wonder what people would have said if they had been shown the full scope of the proposed scenarios, including number of trains and frequencies, and been asked to evaluate them with a more critical eye.

Even so, nearly a fourth of the respondents expressed reservations about the train, and more than half of those said they wouldn't ride the train at all. But the Draft Feasibility Study does not present the data in this light.

Regardless of the initial Survey responses, I think it is important to recognize that in a County of 270,000 people, the input of less than 2000 members of the public does not constitute a representative sample, and definitely does not constitute a mandate.

Costs and How to Fund Them As I pointed out earlier in my comments, the Draft Feasibility Study assumes a very high ridership, primarily to offset the costs of ongoing operations and maintenance. Passenger fares will cover only 15% of the actual costs, the rest is taxpayer subsidized. Even if ridership materializes at the high level assumed by the Study, even with various grants and other monies for capital costs, project planners admit that a sizeable increased countywide sales tax will be essential. The Regional Transportation Commission will consider asking local taxpayers to heavily subsidize passenger rail service through a 30 year sales tax measure in the Fall of 2016.

This is the only way they can come up with the money to make this work. They intend to imbed the train tax inside of a broader initiative to fund general transportation needs that are more legitimate. In other words, we will likely be presented with a ½ cent increase to our already high sales taxes to fix the potholes, to fund our buses, and to do other good things. . . but nearly a quarter of that tax will go to the train subsidy. We local voters will face a difficult choice. If we want to fix and fund the other priorities, we will also have to approve a tax that funds this passenger train.

Are we being manipulated? Are we being held hostage to funding the passenger train? Are those of us who so strongly support the idea of a pedestrian/bicycle rail trail being boxed into a situation where if we don't approve the train we will not get our trail. . .no matter how awful the train will be for us on the trail? I see a Gordian Knot in the making.

Traffic Congestion Relief There is absolutely nothing in this study that shows that traffic on Hwy 1 or anywhere else will be reduced because of this train. If I were going to design a traffic reduction train project, I would put a train between Santa Cruz and San Jose/Silicon Valley, i.e. Hwy 17. That is the truly gnarly commute. Every time I look at the solo drivers on Hwy 1 and the spillover route of Soquel Ave/Dr, I see people just trying to get to their jobs, or their schools to pick up kids, or to the grocery store. Pretty much nobody will be willing to trade off the necessary convenience of driving their own cars so that they can park, get on a bus to the train station, ride the train to wherever, get off again and take a bus. . . . Given people's real lives, this train simply does not make sense.

I hope I have made my case well enough. I would urge those who have not yet taken an in depth look at what is being proposed to take some time to think about it. If you are a neighborhood resident along the branch rail line, think about what this will mean for your quality of life and your property values. If you are someone longing for a beautiful

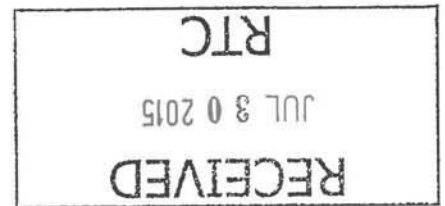
efficient way to bike across the County, imagine the nightmare of trains every 15 minutes within feet of your trail. If you are a car driver trying to navigate the stagnant trip through the County, imagine being stuck at rail crossings and passenger boarding areas for a ridiculously intrusive train that transports. . .how many?

For those who dream of a pollution free environment, for those with special interests like some UCSC folks who want yet another burdensome local accommodation, for those merchants near proposed train stops hoping for the delivery of customers, I can only say look again. This train is not the answer. The cost is too high. And it will be at the expense of so many throughout the County who should not be charged for such questionable benefits. Everyone, please think again. There are more important things to be done

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Shippen
356 Pioneer Rd.
Corralitos, CA 95076

July 28, 2015



✓ Board of Directors
Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz CA 95060

Editor
Santa Cruz Sentinel
1800 Green Hills Road, Suite 210
Scotts Valley CA 95066

About the Rail/Trail

The Regional Transportation Commission's (RTC) decision to buy the Southern Pacific right-of-way was a great idea. It is obvious that this corridor from North County to the South presents great possibilities for transportation and land use.

To facilitate acquisition, the RTC went to the State for some "free" money. The money came with a condition that future use of the right of way include rail component. Naturally, the RTC is now pursuing a plan that responds to the State requirement. The Feasibility Study is another step in the process. It's an important one in that it begins to limit future choices.

About the alternatives.

At the beginning, the Feasibility Study quotes Anthony Foxx, Secretary of Transportation:

"I don't think we should plan for a (transportation) system that's 1956. We should plan for 2045".

The Feasibility Study offers seven alternatives. Here's a question. Has the RTC asked itself:

- Does a train chugging back and forth between Santa Cruz and Capitola (Scenario B) meet our vision of passenger rail service in 2045. In my opinion "No".
- Does a train with limited weekday commute hour service between Santa Cruz and Watsonville (Scenario D) meet our vision of passenger rail service in 2045? In my opinion "No".
- **Does a train chugging back and forth between Santa Cruz and Aptos (Scenario E) meet our vision of passenger rail service in 2045.** (One of two recommended alternatives) In my opinion "No".

- Does expanded service between Santa Cruz and Watsonville (Scenario G and G1, two alternatives) meet our vision of passenger rail service in 2045? In my opinion "No".
- Does a regional train connector between Santa Cruz and Pajaro (Scenario J) meet our vision of passenger rail service in 2045. In my opinion "Possibly".
- **Does a Limited Starter Service between Santa Cruz and Seacliff/State Park Drive (Scenario S) meet our vision of passenger rail service in 2045?** (One of two recommended alternatives) In my opinion "Hard to tell". As a "Starter Service" this alternative suggests some other future scenario that is not addressed?

It seems to me that if the idea of passenger rail service in Santa Cruz is to make an iota of sense, it has to provide service from Santa Cruz to Pajaro, to connect to a future regional system. Actually, the service should run from Pajaro to Davenport, providing rail access to the future Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument.

It is unclear to me why the study looks at snippets of the same right-of-way. The impacts and issues are pretty much the same except modified by distance and costs. Alternatives seem incomplete, begging an answer to the question of what the ultimate project looks like. The approach is particularly puzzling in that the State is looking for "rail projects within Santa Cruz County that facilitate recreational, commuter, intercity and intercounty travel." This study is short on the inter-city aspect, and mostly missing the inter-county requirement.

To the extent that an argument is made that in future years any of the alternatives can be expanded, that argument is problematic. The community deserves to know up front the scope and cost of an eventual system.

The Feasibility study suggests that funding for capital costs may be problematic if they exceed 100 million; similarly problematic may be a proposal with more than 10 million in operating costs. Alternative "E" conveniently meets these concerns. But a question is raised. Is a more robust system including Watsonville/Pajaro and Davenport infeasible? Maybe we should not be so influenced by current technology and funding scenarios. A rail system is a long ways off.

In my view, a concept study should develop a Davenport to Pajaro scenario. It could then investigate alternatives involving use of electric overhead powered system or battery powered (talk to Elon Musk?); grade separated tracks or street closures to reduce conflict; different assumptions about levels of public subsidies (the Feasibility Study assumes a very high 85% subsidy of the operating budget).

The Feasibility Study could do better in its discussion of the trail component of the right-of-way. The two are intertwined. Without rehashing the work that has been done on the trail, it is useful to know how costs compare, what costs overlap, and what competition the trail represents to rail. It's entirely conceivable that over the short distances involved between Santa Cruz and Capitola/Aptos the trail may be a very cost effective alternative.

About Feasibility

It would be useful, and more correct, to call this report a concept study, not a Feasibility Study. Any of the presented alternatives is feasible. It's only a matter of how much public money is thrown at it. As it is, the recommended alternatives look for tax money to pay for infrastructure, and anticipate subsidizing operating costs to the tune of 85%. If this is "feasibility", a lot of other concepts are as well.

About the details

The consultant's work is based on information from existing systems and data from other agencies. Thus the approach is necessarily more backwards looking than forward. The report notes that the public process produced ideas for other approaches (bus rapid transit for example). These other suggestions are deemed outside the study's scope.

It isn't necessary to get involved in far out possibilities (sky gondolas?). But it is necessary to look at certain other ideas, such as an electrified system. Whatever the future, it's probably safe to say that the future train is not going to be a Stadler GTW. There is a deficiency when the study assumes only a diesel-driven system.

The study presents minute details about the Stadler and other aspects of the system (number of railroad ties to be replaced, etc.), while it fails to present data of greater relevance to people who will ultimately have to vote for a tax increase. Such as What are the practical benefits of rail? How many trips are diverted from Hwy 1? What kind of traffic reduction can we expect on Soquel, or Murray, or other roads? To say the information is not available or out of the scope of the study isn't good enough.

About the rating system

The Feasibility Study wants to take an objective approach to evaluating the different scenarios. Objectivity is a good thing. However, if the selection of alternatives is to be based on a numeric rating, then the system better be a good one. The evaluation measures of the Feasibility Study are not.

The first evaluation measure under Goal 1 is an example. The criteria is Travel Time Competitiveness. The Santa Cruz/Aptos scenario rates a "3", a good thing; the Santa Cruz/Watsonville scenario rates a "1", not so good. Why? The Watsonville/Santa Cruz scenario covers the same route as the Santa Cruz/Aptos scenario. Presumably the potential riders from Aptos who want to take advantage of the reduced travel time offered by rail will see no difference between the Aptos scenario and the Watsonville scenario. None of these riders will be asked to go to Watsonville to start the trip. Therefore the rating for Watsonville/Santa Cruz should equally be a "3". The same questions arise in other ratings where the Santa Cruz/ Watsonville scenario is rated differently from the Santa Cruz/ Aptos, when the former includes the latter.

Perhaps a bigger problem is the question in the first place. Why is the rating based on travel time? Isn't travel time ultimately related to congestion on the highway or road? Why not deal with the question on that level? How many trips can be expected to be diverted from the Santa Cruz/Aptos scenario, compared to Santa Cruz/Watsonville? (It should be acknowledged that trip diversion is mentioned as a criteria that was discarded, because there are no data. Thus, this critical question is blithely ignored.)

Another deficiency of the rating system is that all criteria have equal weight. The report acknowledges this. I don't think it's that simple. The overarching objective is a rail system that reduces automobile trips and associated impacts. If I apply weighted evaluation criteria based on trip reduction (say, ten times more important than other criteria), the alternatives evaluation results in different rankings.

About the next steps.

The Feasibility Study recommends that city/county land use planning consider the opportunities of a future rail system. Even at this time of a feasibility study we know that any future rail system is going to use the publicly owned right-of-way. So there is nothing to prevent this effort from taking place now, or from having been started years ago. Even if a rail system never materializes, the trail system might be robust enough to facilitate the "whole community" concept. Averaging Alternative "E" ridership throughout the day yields about 330 riders an hour. It doesn't take much to imagine that many people using the right of way to walk to work, or bicycle, or skate board or Segway or otherwise transport themselves.

The Feasibility Study assumes a sales tax measure in 2016. This assumption should be discarded. In the first place, there is no worthy rail project; even if there

were, sales tax revenues, purported to be used to subsidize operations, will not be needed for the next ten years.

However, speaking of elections, there is one useful measure. Raise ten million dollars (or whatever the RTC got from the State), and pay the State back the "free" money. We'll be better able to plan for a 2045 rail/trail system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Katzlberger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Katzlberger
453 Quail Hollow Circle
Felton CA 95018

To: The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

From: John Hunt
La Selva Beach, California

Re: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear RTC,

Thank you for soliciting comments on the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report. I thought the report did a good job describing a careful, high-level evaluation of the potential for passenger rail as a means to improve the economy and quality of life in Santa Cruz County while reducing carbon and other pollution. I can neither confirm nor challenge the Feasibility Study's cost or ridership calculations, but it appears that a serious effort has been made to provide useful first-order estimates.

Please consider the following points:

1. The trail should be built.

Both the MBSST EIR and the Feasibility Study state convincingly that building the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail for pedestrian and bicycle use will not interfere with the potential for rail service and visa-versa. All three of these transportation options will benefit the county and should be built. Rail connects well for riders who bike to the stations.

2. The rail line must be preserved.

Under no circumstances should the valuable infrastructure of the railroad right-of-way or the rails themselves be compromised.

3. Rail service from Westside to Watsonville should be the ultimate goal.

While an adequate characterization of travel patterns in the County is not available due to economic changes since the 2010 census, it is clear that Highway 1 traffic patterns have shifted over the past five years. Before the recession, highway congestion was primarily in the 41st Avenue area. Now the greatest northbound congestion is between San Andreas/Larkin Valley and Soquel Avenue, with perhaps the critical point being the constant stream of cars joining Hwy 1 at the northbound onramp at Freedom Blvd. Southbound traffic used to ease up after 41st, but now it gets tighter all the way past Rio del Mar. Alleviating this congestion will require a rail approach similar to Rail **Alternative G** (using light trains) that provides rail transit for workers commuting between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. This is also the most equitable alternative for all County residents. Technical details related to sidings, etc. can be overcome.

According to the RTP, 77% of all vehicle trips are between points within the County, with only 17% going over the hill. So even if the rail system doesn't take Silicon Valley commuters off the road, full rail service between Watsonville and Santa Cruz has the greatest potential to reduce highway congestion.

4. Cost and funding are important in determining if the rail system is reasonable.

Unofficial estimates indicate that there may on the order of \$250M over 20 years for rail costs not covered by rider fares or identified grants. This \$250M / 20 corresponds to less than 2% of the annual County budget. Identified grants (such as cap and trade) may be competitive, but they are certain to become more competitive in the future as more communities identify rail as a viable alternative. Santa Cruz County is ready now to apply for construction and implementation money and will be competitive in the new funding regime. Now is the time to invest locally and seek grant funds.

5. Transportation infrastructure is critical for economic vitality.

Our current transportation system depends heavily on Highway 1, which is extremely congested and increasingly unworkable as core infrastructure for a functioning economy. As County population grows (unfortunately for many reasons) this congestion will increase unless there is a change in traveler behavior. Building more highway lanes (including HOV lanes) is much more expensive than rail and will only encourage more driving, as has been shown in many recent studies. (I can provide references if requested.) Building more freeway lanes would thus make no headway toward reducing highway congestion, and would add to congestion on arterial streets and within neighborhoods. Rail and trail are the best alternatives for changing transportation behavior and providing traveler options. These are much cheaper and less polluting than highway expansion.

While the rail / trail will not result in increased build-out near the stations (due to zoning), it will encourage economic revitalization as areas near stations redevelop to take advantage of increased access to customers. This will not be growth but will be better: economic vitality.

6. Light (non-FRA-compliant) rail cars are preferable to heavy locomotives.

Light trains have lower fuel consumption and carbon emissions, and have less neighborhood impact from noise, vibration, crossing times, etc.

7. The NIMBY argument is exaggerated.

I live within a block of the rail line and I would much rather have 60 light rail cars go by each day than the corresponding number of cars needed to carry the same amount of people. I like hearing the train go by, and one or two light trains every half hour is not a burden on anybody.

8. Comingling with freight.

Freight traffic is currently minimal (though the study doesn't state what current usage is), and freight should be accommodated by temporal separation, with minimal freight runs at off-commuter hours. Adjustments to freight delivery in Watsonville would involve very short distances, though the details need to be considered.

9. The Boardwalk/Roaring Camp train.

The Boardwalk/Roaring Camp train track overlaps with the branch line for approximately 900 meters and could also be temporally separated from light commuter trains. Preferably, the Roaring Camp train station would be moved to the area by Depot Park, relieving congestions around the Boardwalk and making that train more accessible to downtown business customers.

10. Whether rail will reduce congestion on Hwy 1.

The Feasibility Study does not quantify reduced congestion on Hwy 1, and various comments have suggested it will have little impact. However, if rail can't affect Hwy 1 traffic, and HOV lanes would cost \$600M, then we clearly are at a point where the General Plan needs to impose stricter controls on new residential development in the County. Obviously, water supply and other resource issues argue for stricter growth controls as well. As I mentioned above, I do believe that rail and bike options will reduce Hwy 1 congestion by changing travel behavior, though it will take time. More freeway lanes simply reinforce car-first thinking and encourage more driving (and carbon pollution), both on Hwy 1 and on residential streets.

11. Feeder systems will develop.

If Santa Cruz Metro does not have the funds or capability to move people from the Pacific Ave/Beach Street rail station into downtown Santa Cruz (and similarly in Watsonville and elsewhere), then simple feeder systems should be included in the rail program or developed privately. These could include zip cars, bike exchanges, simple shuttles to the Metro station and County Building, Uber-type taxi networks, etc.

12. Erosion at Manresa.

The rail trail between Manresa State Beach and the new trestle at La Selva is imminently threatened by erosion that will soon undercut the rail line. This stretch will need to be protected from erosion and cliff failure in order to preserve this valuable infrastructure investment. This should be done with soft engineering that will also improve beach habitat and recreational value. I am eager to help with this.

Finally, we need to have a broad perspective and think long-term. Transportation patterns and systems in Santa Cruz County need to change, as you have well documented in the Feasibility Study, Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan, MBSST EIR, Economic Vitality Strategy and Regional Transportation Plan. Carbon emissions are not academic: dealing with sea level rise will be extremely expensive for Santa Cruz County, dwarfing the rail investment. There is no reasonable car-based transportation solution for Highway 1, and getting people out of cars is good for business. **We must make the investment in both rail and trail**, or 20 years from now we will be cursing and pointing fingers because we didn't. Thank you for moving us forward, and thank you for considering these comments.



John Hunt

Date: July 30, 2015

To: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

From: Monique Kremer: 503 Dufour Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Comments on Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

I am submitting the following comments and concerns regarding the proposed passenger rail service in Santa Cruz County. Please include my remarks in the Final Feasibility Study Report and in the Commissioners' packets:

Let me begin by saying that I do not support the creation of a rail transit system for a number of reasons having to do with its negative impact on the quality of our county's neighborhoods.

Initially, I felt a great deal of optimism and excitement when Santa Cruz purchased the rail line in 2012. At that time, I think many of us were focused on the idea of a walk/ride trail similar to what Monterey enjoys. Even the idea of a passenger train wasn't too worrisome; I imagined something geared toward recreational use that meandered its way along the rail once or twice a day. You can imagine my concern, then, when I read the Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study (the "Study") and realized that what is being proposed is nothing short of a full-blown commuter train running right through many of the county's residential neighborhoods.

My concerns are many and funnel down to the fact that what is being proposed is establishing a commuter train on a rail corridor that was never intended to accommodate this kind of use. In the over 130 years since this line was built, a robust town has sprung up around these tracks and the tracks now run predominately through or alongside neighborhoods.

- Given that fact, I feel that the Study either superficially addresses or completely omits some of the most important considerations in a proposal of this nature. Under the headings of noise and vibration, there is no mention of train horns (which are required by federal law), wayside horns, intersection bells or lights.
- Per the Study, "The potential traffic and noise and vibration impacts would be minimal through use of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) rail vehicles." DMU trains operate in the 80-85 decibels (dBA) range. This is as loud as a garbage truck; that's hardly "minimal" if it is traveling right next to your home...at 6 in the morning...every 15 minutes. According to Los Angeles's Department of City Planning, upper 70 dBAs are "annoyingly loud" to some people and the 80s are twice as loud as the 70s.
- Even if the train were completely silent (which it is not) and even if "quiet zones" are created at every single crossing in every single neighborhood, the law requires that any number of non-quiet measures will have to be instigated to protect pedestrians and cars. Per Sonoma's SMART transit "Quiet Zone" report : **"Quiet zones are not silent.** While trains will cease to routinely blow their horns at grade crossings in Quiet Zones, the

electronic bells will still need to sound at crossings when a train is approaching....[and] The decibel levels of bells adhere to American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) Standards which requires them to sound at **between 61 and 91 decibels (dBA), as heard 50 feet away.**" (emphasis mine)

- These tracks were never intended to provide transportation for commuters and the specific set of needs that commuters bring with them. Because of the way the city has grown around these tracks, these trains (**60 per DAY**) will be running unacceptably close to scores of homes. In addition to the number of trains, there is the issue of the train schedule (trains begin to run at **6am and end at 9pm**) and frequency--in order to maximize continuity and ease of service, the Study suggests trains passing **every 15 - 30 minutes.**
- Then there is the issue of safety. Every year hundreds of non-passengers are injured or killed by trains (the largest number are in CA actually). That number has been increasing as more and more trains are put into service. What is being proposed is a train that operates at high speeds (40-60 mph at peak speeds) in mostly residential areas. The rail corridor also passes perilously close to a number of neighborhood schools which means a large number of children that cross the tracks every school day.
- I am also concerned that the rail is not economically feasible. The study is based on a projected ridership of many thousands of people a day and yet the train, in itself, will stop at very few places that would be considered an end point for commuters. This means that many who ride the train will still have to find a secondary means of travel to get to their final destination. I don't see thousands of commuters a day making the decision to do this when it does not save them much in the way of either time or money.

I agree that Santa Cruz (where I have lived since childhood) experiences miserable traffic congestion during commute times and along tourist corridors, but I am far from convinced that this is something that can be mitigated by a train that uses this track. I feel that in our desire for the trail, we have overlooked what we are actually asking of our community. This train stands to negatively affect the quality of life for thousands of people including people that live nowhere near the tracks. I think it is incumbent upon us as a community, and certainly the RTC, to establish whether or not it actually IS feasible to try and create a commuter train or whether our time and money would be better spent focusing on the trail element of the proposal and supporting other ways to mitigate transit concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments; your work is appreciated.

Sincerely,
Monique Kremer
503 Dufour Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

July 31, 2015

Chris Krohn
123 Green Street
Santa Cruz, Ca. 95064
ckrohn@ucsc.edu

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to offer input as requested concerning the “Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, Draft Report.” I am a strong proponent of using both the rail line for passenger service as well as having it function as a bicycle route for school, jobs and recreation activity. I am pleased this project is before the community and the commission. Thank you.

I urge the Commission to take up the following issues in light of the Study:

- 1) We should not leave Watsonville out of the passenger rail scenarios. I doubt folks in south county will vote for the tax increase if they do not have a chance of using the rail line.
- 2) How would bicyclists keep bikes protected, secure from theft, and not be turned away due to limited on-board capacity for bikes? My experience is that most cyclists do not like to lock their bikes at Metro bike racks for example, for fear of losing it.
 - Please urge UC Santa Cruz to connect their current bike-hauling trailer service further down Bay Street to a future rail stop.
- 3) I am greatly concerned about connecting the Harvey West Park area to the proposed service line. I suggest including a connection with Big Trees and Pacific railway line.
- 4) Please address the issue of noise. I do not recall the issue of horns being a major complaint for example in San Diego or Portland, lines I am familiar with. Please provide more details, the current study does not address the noise issue enough.
- 5) Please provide more potential ridership number scenarios. We are not reinventing the wheel here (maybe we are for a community our size?), other cities have a track record. What is it? (See pages 24 to 33 where the Study lists some other systems and some key features, but it’s light on detail in the ridership area.)
- 6) I would like to see independent reviewers (outside of Santa Cruz County) look at this study’s statistics, graphs and scenarios and offer their informed analysis. In

other words, has the current draft been peer reviewed?

7) Many times it seems to me college students are not included in our local population numbers. My question here is: are UC Santa Cruz and Cabrillo Community College students included in the ridership model?

8) We need to look beyond diesel toward electric rail. Has this been, or is it being explored? Electric trains (and off-setting it with solar arrays locally) would play well in the public debate about lowering our carbon footprint and actually being the energy and transportation change that we seek.

10) Please investigate the following: “what is the travel time in rush hour on Highway One between Soquel Ave and Highway 9 now that the auxiliary lanes have been installed compared to pre-widening conditions? (If congestion has not been noticeably reduced, what is the purpose of auxiliary lanes compared to the originally stated purpose of the highway widening project to add a carpool/bus lane?”)

I commend the SCCRTC for promoting a public input process that actually invites the public in. I support the following three goals as we move forward with a tax initiative that needs two-thirds voter support. Any initiative that goes before voters must:

- Utilize the great potential that the rail corridor offers in all its multitude ways—pedestrian, bike trail and train passenger service;
- It must make significant use of monies collected in repairing and maintaining our existing streets and roads and improve bike and pedestrian safety, while expanding accessibility;
- We must refocus our energy (and money) on restoring and expanding bus service and specialized transit services for the elderly and disabled in our community.

Sincerely,

Chris Krohn
ckrohn@ucsc.edu

July 31, 2015

Via email to info@sccrtc.org

Re: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear RTC,

The following are my comments in response to the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Draft Report.

I commend the data and analysis in the report which provides evidence that a rail transportation system is feasible in Santa Cruz County. I especially found the string diagrams most interesting, and they helped give me a greater understanding of timing, distances, sidings for passings, and other factors in the scenarios. I would appreciate more data and analysis be published, including some of the following suggestions.

Cost comparisons

The report lacks a cost comparison of constructing one mile of each of the following transportation modes to one mile of rail transportation.

- Highway 1 widening
- Separated bicyclist and pedestrian path
- Bike lane striping
- Sidewalk

In addition, it would be fair to include a comparison of the true cost to consumers of a given transportation mode. The RTC has an excellent online resource, "The True Cost of Driving" (<http://cruz511.org/drive/true-cost-of-driving/>), which includes links to other tools to compare modes of transportation. The "true cost" includes both direct cost (fuel, repairs and maintenance, insurance, financing, parking and tolls, travel time) and indirect costs (collisions, pollution, land use, barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists). Ideally comparisons could be made for trips from one side of Santa Cruz to the other, and from Santa Cruz to Capitola and to Watsonville. Providing a comparison that includes all direct and indirect costs for each trip and mode would be educational and enlightening. It would discredit opponents who claim that rail is too expensive, especially compared to automobile use.

The last mile

In any network, whether it is Internet or transportation service, the last mile refers to the gaps between the central network and the points of origin and destination. In order to attract consumers of the network service, the service provider must offer some way for the consumer to traverse the last mile. For public transportation, that means people should be able to safely walk, skate, or bicycle from their origins to the transportation network and beyond to their destinations.

It is critical that the rail transportation system accommodate people who ride bikes. Safe and secure bicycle parking must be included, either with bike lockers, an attended facility, or a bike share system such as that which is being expanded upon in the San Francisco Bay Area. People must be allowed to bring their bikes on board trains so they can complete their journeys to their destinations. The Metro

bus system does not, nor could it ever, provide sufficient connectivity to many mid-County residents who live more than one-half mile from a station. By supporting bikes, the train system would encourage those who live too far to walk to stations to leave their cars at home and ride a bike instead.

Connections to other train systems

In the report, 88.9% of respondents indicated slight to extreme interest in connecting to other train systems. Whichever scenario is ultimately selected, if it excludes the possibility of connecting to other train systems in the future, then there would be strong feelings of disappointment, distrust, and betrayal from the public. It is absolutely essential to always keep a connection to other train systems as a possibility in adopted scenarios.

Possible survey biases

The report does not indicate where respondents to the survey reside. There is no way to correlate respondents' preferences to where they reside, and there should be. For example, let's assume that out of all respondents, 50% live in the city of Santa Cruz and 10% in Watsonville. The report would indicate that there is a strong bias for scenarios that serve Santa Cruz residents over Watsonville residents.


The online survey results could be further skewed away from people with limited English proficiency because the questions were in English only.

It's also not clear whether outreach included youth, seniors, people with disabilities, people without homes, economically disadvantaged people, and other individuals who depend upon public transportation for mobility.

If these biases do in fact exist, the report should include an admission or disclaimer to that effect.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and suggestions. I hope to ride the train in Santa Cruz County in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Piercy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Piercy" clearly legible.

Steve Piercy

Date: July 31, 2015
To: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
From: Sue Renner, District 1
SUBJECT: Comments - Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

Please include these comments in the administrative record of this project, in the final report, and ensure Commissioners receive a copy in their packets.

I am deeply dismayed that after previous attempts to institute frequent rail service on the Santa Cruz County rail right-of-way that failed, the RTC is now presenting an even more disruptive trans service set of "options." To be clear, Prop 116 said nothing about this project, and proponents who state that residents have already approved or are in alignment with this train are simply misleading. In fact, if you look at the past public record and commentary involving the ROW, you'll find that people overwhelmingly want a multi-purpose trail – something that will truly enhance the outdoor-minded livelihood of our quaint coastal community; enable a safe, pleasant way for cyclists and families to walk/bike across town; and protect our neighborhood peace/safety and property values.

I respectfully refer you to this article written by Bud Colligan and Miles Reiter for serious consideration and pursuit:
<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/opinion/20150711/bud-colligan-and-miles-reiter-what-is-highest-and-best-use-of-the-rail-trail>

What's being presented via this draft passenger rail feasibility study is extremely intrusive to our communities. It completely changes the character of neighborhoods from a beach town quality to a much more urban, industrial quality.

- Continuous noise and vibrations from trains passing by every 15 minutes in both directions at peak speeds of 45-60 miles per hour, or at the very least according to the minimum scenarios, trains passing every 30 minutes. The disruptiveness from train horns, where the sound is so loud people have to stop their conversations, can't be resolved adequately. (90-110 decibels is deafening when you're nearby, and is disruptive to the point of halting conversation up to 1/4 mile away). Even if quiet zone applications were applied for and accepted all along the ROW, AND there was money to pay for all the ROW modifications required, AND local jurisdictions accepted the associated increased liability, the train horn noise is still very intrusive.
 - Already, residents are up in arms about the noise impact of planes that now fly overhead due to the FAA's flight plan changes. And the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors is focused on passing a new noise ordinance to cut down on noise generated from individuals/small groups within neighborhoods and the complaints that result from it. Imagine the outcry if one of these train scenarios becomes reality.
- With a train and a trail, the trail wouldn't be sufficient for most people to use. Our rail corridor is narrow and directly bordered by privately owned fences and buildings in many places. Being out there when a train goes by is downright scary; I've done it and

won't be doing it again, even if there's a short fence separating the train part from the trail part.

- In the draft feasibility study, there's mention of some number of freight trains sharing the ROW also. So not one type of train, but two. Having freight on the line at the same time as passenger trains means the passenger trains must comply to Federal regulations and NOT be the "efficient, lightweight" trains some people speak of. Or the freight would have to run at a completely different time (i.e., at night), which again comes back to noise and vibration, but when people are trying to sleep.
- Traffic. Nowhere in this study does it show that traffic on Hwy 1 or anywhere else will be reduced because of this train; and it states that a trip from Watsonville to Santa Cruz would be 40 minutes, not including time to get to and from the station at either end. This isn't an improvement, incurs a ridership cost I question people will actually pay, and doesn't allow for any flexibility to do the things many people do within one trip: e.g., shuttle children to school, go to the gym and/or workplace, shop for groceries.
 - The ridership numbers seem extremely high given the size of our community and things like the number of people who actually travel over the hill, not to jobs here in the County. Please take a closer look at this.
 - We have a bus system that is highly underutilized. I see busses go by regularly that are next to empty. I'd rather put resources behind this and make it more attractive for people to ride – and certainly not have to take resources away from it for this train.
 - Traffic in neighborhoods in and around the ROW will be negatively impacted. Trains passing by will undoubtedly cause backups and congestion all along the ROW and nearby neighborhoods, making it difficult for drivers and even those on bikes to get through.
- Public outreach. I'm not sure why there's been such lack of information to the public.
 - The open house that took place in June wasn't publicized well, and most people didn't know about it. An article in the SC Sentinel and email to people already on the SCCRTC mailing list doesn't suffice. For a project like this that has such a huge impact I'd expect something to be mailed via postal service. AND, the open house didn't allow for open discussion; people had to stand in line at tables at the back of the room and wait to talk to someone individually about a specific element of the study. There was no Q&A session, no way for people to have a collective conversation and all receive the same information.
 - The online survey created is very misleading. It assumes the train is the outcome and requests feedback via pre-defined answers (multiple choice options) on respondent preferences, GIVEN the premise that a train is already the conclusion. It doesn't convey the actual proposal of an intensive commuter rail service with up to 60 trains per day. It doesn't include the scope of the proposed scenarios. Please consider the survey format and structure when reviewing the data that comes from it.
 - Within the last 2 weeks I've seen a posting on the Nextdoor.com site. I hope the information coming forward will reflect the realities of the proposal in an unbiased manner.

- Cost. The study assumes a very high ridership as noted earlier, in order to offset the costs of ongoing operations and maintenance. Even if you accept these high numbers, passenger fares will cover only 15% of the actual costs; the rest needs to be taxpayer subsidized. I'm not in favor of further taxation, especially considering all the other critical downsides of this proposal.

In my opinion the proposed passenger rail service isn't a good way to expand our transportation options. The negative impact to our coastal neighborhood communities is huge; the cost will be paid in terms of eroding peace/tranquility, increased traffic congestion in neighborhoods, and real dollars. I do think that honoring the widespread desire for a multi-purpose trail should take precedence and be optimized for use by the general public.

Sincerely,

Sue Renner
Santa Cruz County District 1

Bill Smallman, P.E.
11765 Edgewood Drive
Felton, CA 95018

July 31, 2015

Dear RTC,

RE: Cost/Benefits (Train + Trail) vs. (Trail + Utility Corridor).

Government spending is not wasteful for construction. It is wasteful if the improvements don't pay for themselves and/or low net operating cost. Up to 14 million every year is way too high, and can be used far more effectively. Imagine what a commuter is going to feel like trapped in the near identical gridlock on Highway 1, and the train is carrying the estimated amount of riders? He or she will put the 2015 RTC Board on a pedestal as the biggest wasteful government spender ever.

Proposition 116 main concern was to reduce air pollution. Its title is, "Clean Air and Transportation Improvement Act of 1990". Trains are a good option, only if they are located in high density urban areas, on a major commute routes, or have companies willing to pay for freight hauling. Santa Cruz County has none of these, and this train is clearly a very ineffective way to reduce air pollution.

Arguably, a bike path would be more effective. It would cost less, and take just as many cars off the road, or more. Claiming that both the train and trail can be built was a desperate act of deception. No professional surveys or engineering was done, only artistic sketches and false claims that there is plenty of room for both. Without professional drawings, it is impossible to estimate the cost. Most agree it is over 125 million, probably 300 million, and not constructed 100% in over 10 years.

Pro-Train + Trail has made repeated arguments that the corridor must be used per prop 116 and the 14.4 million used to purchase the property would have to be returned. We must follow the State's recommendations and the proposition to the letter. If you agree with this, then why are we paying you at all to make any decisions at all, and believe in the State's mandate? I believe you don't, and will make the right decision.

Please disagree with the State, and tell them why they are wrong. If the train tracks are removed, underground utilities installed, and resurfaced as a bike path- the benefits trump the Train. There are numerous rail lines around the Country which are similar to Santa Cruz's which have been made into bike paths. All of them the vast majority of people would not even think a train should be brought back and remove the bike path. Here is the list of benefits if we forgo the train:

1. Removing the tracks would only take about 1 month. The steel and ties can be salvaged. The community could start using the path immediately as a gravel road type bike path.
2. Utility interests would easily pay for easements, well over the \$14.4 from the State.
3. Most importantly, recycled water pipelines can be installed for Davenport to Watsonville, and then to Deep Water Desal. This will solve the County's water shortage problems during drought. The issue 125 million was going to be spent on Desal.
4. It will end 8.4 million gallons, every day, of sewage pollution in the bay. This water is disinfected, but is a massive feeding tube for bacteria. It's obvious that this is a major contributor to Cowell Beach being ranked the worst beach with the highest bacteria counts.
5. Injection wells located along the rail lines will provide a means and security to stop saltwater intrusion. There are numerous wells along the rail line which can be changed to injection instead of production at very low cost and connected to pipelines described above.
6. It also provides priceless security for a long term drought by connecting to Deep Water Desal.
7. There are plans to build reservoirs in Davenport, which can be connected to, and to North County farmers- more water security.
8. Fire hydrants along the bike path- Increased fire protection.
9. Numerous farms, golf courses and large landscapes which can use recycled water.
10. Finally, in Amsterdam, they constructed section of a bike path surface with solar panels. The panels have LED lights depicting Van Gogh's "Starry Nights". Not only would this provide a green energy source, it would provide something which may attract more tourism.

Can a cost/benefit analysis be done with this, and compared with the Train + Trail plan?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Smallman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill Smallman, P.E.

July 31, 2015

RE: Draft Rail Feasibility Study Comments

Dear RTC Commissioners & Staff:

Thank you for your efforts in securing State transit funds for this updated rail feasibility study. It's gratifying to all of us who worked hard to bring the rail line into public ownership that the study results confirm the potential for successful rail transit, together with the rail trail, along our unique coastal corridor.

Generally speaking, the consultants did a good job with the feasibility study and the results are very credible.

1. For the final version, it would be helpful to include more explicit information and images up front (including on the cover and in the Executive Summary) about the type of rail vehicle associated with most of the scenarios. This is a key aspect of proposed future rail service, and a better understanding of contemporary options in this regard would assist members of the public in envisioning the kind of scenarios being analyzed. Similarly, use of words like 'commuter rail', 'passenger rail' and 'trains' throughout the study should be changed to the term 'rail transit'.

My particular point of view regarding rail vehicles is that only scenarios which use **modern, lightweight self-propelled rail cars** ('trams' or light 'DMU's' - diesel/electric multiple units) should be carried into the next phase. I don't believe that locomotive-hauled trains will prove to be publically acceptable for the kind of modern transit service we'll need on this line into the future.

2. It's important to **highlight pertinent cost and ridership information** in a manner that's easily understood and therefore not as likely to be misrepresented by people who may be looking for ways to disparage the feasibility analysis results.

For example, the study indicates that the *net* annual operations & maintenance cost of Scenario G (Santa Cruz-Watsonville local service with tram) is about \$6M (Table 6-20, 2014\$) for a daily rail ridership estimate of 5,500 trips/day (Table 6-11). Compared with our current bus system (Santa Cruz Metro Operating Financials, FY14), new rail service would represent a 35% increase in average daily transit ridership for about a 17% increase in net transit operating cost – a benefit cost ratio of 2:1. This doesn't even include ridership from visitors to our county, which could be substantial. I'm sure there are other examples of this sort of summary information that can be highlighted in the study (e.g., our high population density and abundance of destinations located within 1-mile of the rail corridor compared with other urban areas).

3. Of all the scenarios included in this study phase, I support a modified version of **Scenario G: trams between Westside Santa Cruz and Downtown Watsonville**, 30-minute headway service, level boarding, and 10 daily stops (Table 4-5), with the *addition of an extension of service to Pajaro Station* when interregional service is

established on the main California Coast line. A bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Highway 1 connecting Cabrillo College with the proposed New Brighton station should be included in this baseline scenario. Phased implementation makes sense, of course, as well as accommodation of bicycles on the trams.

4. Regarding the Evaluation of Scenarios (Figure ES-3, Chapter 7 & Appendix G), a comparison of divergent values assigned to similar service scenarios could lead one to question the results of this key study component. As well, comments in the Executive Summary and Chapter 6 about funding assessment make seemingly unsubstantiated statements about the limits of both capital and operating funding capacity, in particular regarding the use of existing transit funds for an integrated bus and rail transit system. Take together, these possible shortfalls of the study could appear to have biased the scenario recommendations and should be corrected.

5. It's not clear to the public what the next steps are for the RTC. The study acknowledges that there are key service considerations still to be analyzed at the same level as this current study, i.e., which stations can accommodate parking, quiet zones, and a fuller discussion of governance options (and how to proceed with this issue). Also, some of the study details and recommended options may change or be modified based on public comment and the RTC decision-making process. Presumably, the RTC's review process will clarify what will be included in the next phase of community dialogue and technical analysis, and the anticipated timing of both.

6. Finally, regarding the idea of just 'tearing out the rail' and abandoning both the current *Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail Master Plan* and any future hope of reasonable transit alternatives to Highway 1: this issue has been raised not infrequently by some bicycle and/or anti-rail advocates over past decades during RTC consideration of the rail line purchase, and each time, the RTC has reaffirmed its intent to consider both trail and rail transit/passenger rail options along the line into the future. It would seem especially imprudent to modify this long-standing position in light of the positive conclusions of this feasibility study and current implementation progress on key segments of the Rail Trail.

Thank you very much for considering my comments, and for continuing to move forward with the eminently rational vision of a modern and robust Santa Cruz County transportation system. We're going to need as many sustainable travel options as possible into the future.

Sincerely,

Linda Wilshusen
SCCTRC Executive Director, 1985-2005

Draft Rail Study - Web Form Comments

Listed in order of last name

From: Diana Adamic
Email address: Adamic@me.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 22:26:59

A bike lane is priority. No train unless a bike path can be had. Santa Cruz folks will make much more use of a bike lane than a rail line.

Cost per passenger? You can't make it cheap enough to convince a mom and two kids. Riding bus alone is \$2 or \$4 for RT. almost ok on my budget. But the if one child rides then I am spending \$8 RT. now is cost more to ride bus. Not worth it. 2 kids? Forget it. Add in husband and you completely lost me on any advantages of riding public transit. If you want a daily to ride the train it can't be more than \$4 for whole family.

From: Beth Ahrens
Email address: bethjena@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/8/2015 11:19:05

IMPORTANT TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC; Start a campaign (web site, advertising) for funding by Santa Cruz residents, to show that you will not just rely on forced taxation. idea--- COMPETITION FOR THE DESIGN ON THE CARS, OFFER \$100. PRIZE. advertise this in the Sentinel & even in Mercury, get started!; raise money "PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THIS HISTORICAL ENDEAVOR TO BRING TRAINS AND BIKES BACK TO PROMINENCE IN SANTA CRUZ"; emphasize the importance of trains; show the history of how there used to be a train from SJ to SC. The history of how the great depression slammed the train industry. The historical importance of trains, which withered with the onslaught of the car. Have prepared a cool drawing of a modern yet historical looking train which individuals WILL WANT to ride on, just to ride on !!!! For something fun to do. Have one ride at a certain time for only \$1.00, to PROMOTE the train and how cool it is. I envision people living in Watsonville because housing is cheaper and taking trains into Santa Cruz for their jobs. Tourists would take the train. Maybe a stop at the boardwalk only on weekends. Trains should definitely appeal to tourists with the design. Trains should be electric, advanced, and inspire the 'cool' factor. Metro does not inspire the cool factor. Trains should make residents of the town of SC want to go to south, and not by car. Trains should be in close cooperation with bikes, promote "rail trail" for what it is, a cool cooperation between train and biking. More and more residents will bike into the future. Cars and highways will lose appeal. THIS IS THE WAY OF THE FUTURE. But, but, but, must be done right, with verve, imagination, energy, and input by the people! Bring the residents into this concept, put their skin in the game, to improve chances of the successful outcome of the project. BE CREATIVE. The trains can have advertising in the area between ceiling and tops of windows, so can be paid for also by that means, SAY THAT. Try to deemphasize that public subsidies, taxation must pay for this project-- be creative in showing how it can be worked that the trains will pay for themselves. another idea is a type of advertising that can be taken on and off the side of the trains, giving work to artists and new technologies. Make people excited!

From: Beth Ahrens-Kley
Email address: bethjena@yahoo.com
Submitted: 6/3/2015 10:53:44

My opinion from a long-term resident of the city of SC is that a rail plan is a outstanding project. This kind of infrastructure should be the focus on into the future, addressing problems of traffic congestion locally. I believe the bullet train project should be stopped; traffic from north/south and s/n will not have any impact at a huge expense to the state and tax-payers, but if congestion is not addressed beginning now on the local scale there will be very negative impacts on cost and enjoyment of living in this region.

SC to Capitola would be heavily used is my belief, and would enhance both areas economically because of the benefits to tourism which will only grow dramatically in the near future.

SC to Watsonville would be heavily used is my belief, because of jobs and housing.

My concern with regards to a rail line to Davenport is access to the beach, which is a natural right for all citizens. I would prefer for a rail line to reach the SF area by going over the mountains...through Silicon valley. This would be good for tourists and workers who presently commute by car. If there is a rail line going north along the beach, there must be several tunnels going underneath for easy access to the beaches. The RTC should asap set up a web site to accept donations for further funding and implementation of the project, marketing of the idea is important as well so that the positive aspects can be explained. This would be good in the face of a possible small sales tax increase. The rail project should have its own simple and nice web site, where progress is described and people can comment. Ask for a volunteer to design the web site. Save money when and wherever possible!

From: Pia Anderson
Email address: 4windrider@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 15:12:27

To RTC,

Passenger Rail service from Davenport to Watsonville is not a solution to congestion on our roads in Santa Cruz or neighboring communities. Please think into the future and plan for more progressive form of solution with trail use for bicycles, pedestrians, light electric "vehicles"/bikes alike which would allow for multiple uses of the trail, not just commuting.

From: margaret anderson
Email address: margiesmemories@aol.com
Submitted: 7/8/2015 15:29:10

Planning for future generations riding rail transit should be part of the study. Not just what we need now. We should be 50 years out on our projection or it will come back to bite all of us.

From: Ann Simonton Ann
Email address: mwatch@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 21:21:54

I love the idea of a rail train that is affordable, accessible for all people and places not just commercial venues with stops in many places. We need mass transit that will work in our community. People who can't run, bike, or walk the trail should have something like a train to help connect our community. I hope you also make it bike and walking friendly.

From: J. Song Armendariz
Email address: Jarmendariz3@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/24/2015 0:49:09

Please no trains!! Too loud, too expensive, not effective. Bike and walking trail only!!!

From: Joe Armstrong
Email address: josephwarmstrong@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/26/2015 14:48:14

The report does not seem to have enough detail on the location of proposed stations. "Santa Cruz" and "Watsonville" are large areas - it would be great to add more detail on these station placements.

From: Jon Bailiff
Email address: jonbailiff@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 12:01:47

I worked on the Depot Park Sub-Committee for years with members of the RTC with the expressed intent of creating a link to the entire county's rail system via rail AND trail. We have accomplished so much and seen so many milestones achieved since then. We have also seen massive expense for highway construction with little or none of the predicted traffic reduction that was promised. We now know that global warming is a fait accompli and we are suffering daily from it NOW.

This is our future and our children's future and their children's future we are deciding here. Make the logical connections, both physical and financial, social and political, to make our county a leader in RAIL and TRAIL transport for all our citizens. Thank you for all your hard work and all the work to come. Don't be swayed, don't be deterred. Those who would see their own selfish needs first must be brought into a county wide coalition to make our future cleaner and also a lot more FUN!

From: Donna Baird-Horne
Email address: dmmmb85@aol.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 19:17:18

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.

From: C Barauskas
Email address: walksdogsherdscats@hotmail.com
Submitted: 5/25/2015 13:21:27

I really do hope these rail services:

1. will be built
2. will connect to local, Bay Area, State and Interstate transport
3. would include the current tracks in the San Lorenzo Valley
3. will be affordable to seniors such as myself

For years I have longed to take the Zephyr to see my daughter, grandsons on the East Coast, but the difficulty of getting from Felton just to Emeryville, and the great expense, keep it just a dream. The cost to get to any airport from Felton is also prohibitive, plus flying itself is torture, both for the sardined traveler and for the planet. I dream of more pleasant and less destructive alternative modes of travel to be reborn. And hope for less cars on our under-served public and sorry privately maintained country roads.

Ps. We have no buses here on Hwy 9 S of Felton, but a beautiful train track. It is only used now for the Christmas train, and used to connect to the Salinas hub and the go N through the entire San Lorenzo Valley. Wouldn't it be great if our SLV would be included?

From: James Barrett
Email address: barrett.seascape@comcast.net
Submitted: 5/29/2015 15:05:26

I don't see how the potential ridership would be enough to justify the expense of the rail. I do think the bike path would be widely used for recreation as well as a commute option, and therefore a better way to spend our tax dollars. A comment in the newspaper suggested selling the existing rails to help fund the construction of the bike path - I love that idea! Perhaps the hundreds of property owners along the right of way would contribute to the construction of the bike path and removal of the rails, just to preserve their property values?

From: Paula Barsamian
Email address: pa0la421@yahoo.com
Submitted: 6/29/2015 21:06:59

I love this idea and when i look at the traffic between watsonville and SC, i can see that this is a good solution. I think the success will depend on parking. If there is a place to park a car with adequate bus transportation at the other end of the trip, it can work.

From: Carola Barton
Email address: carolab@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/27/2015 9:11:02

Please research all options before committing to the rail line - I think other transportation types might be better

From: carol beatty
Email address: carolvb@earthlink.net
Submitted: 7/25/2015 11:26:39

I am against having a passenger train. It costs too much and the benefits do not out weigh the costs. I am in favor of the option no Project after reading the 3 options presented.

From: Sondra Beauregard Wilson Cohelan
Email address: sondracohelan@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 20:08:10

After listening to both sides train or trail

I feel the only solution is to support the trail with out rail.

From: Stephen Beck
Email address: b3systems@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 14:07:55

After careful reading, I oppose the railway and lean towards a better designed bike and pedestrian path that will carry as many commuters at a much cheaper cost, environmentally and financially. At minimum, any decision should be paused for a more careful analysis and further public comment.

From: Will Beckett
Email address: will@beckettpcs.com
Submitted: 7/4/2015 15:53:05

I live less than a quarter mile from the tracks. I love trains and miss our two trains per day that use to travel here when CEMEX was in operation. I have traveled on many train systems, in the USA, Japan and soon Switzerland and Italy. Growing up and live four blocks from CalTrain in Palo Alto, CA. I am a bit closer to the tracks here than I was in Palo Alto but I am not on level ground as I was in Palo Alto where many buildings were between me and the noise of diesel engines. I am about 100 ft. above the tracks with a clear view of the trains when they come through. I was very excited to hear about the possibility of dinner trains to Davenport. I think a station in Seascapes is a bit more practical than one in Aptos Village. I saw the effect to traffic of trains in the village and don't see that as being practical for frequent stops. Also going through that town without stopping would be odd and dangerous if it were over the current 10MPH speeds. Clearly it would cut the village in half and limit access to the one small street under the bridge for people on Trout Gulch. Still I would love to see trains here, I just don't think 60 per day is practical. I also feel that locomotive trains would be way too noisy if they were that frequent. Self powered cars are lighter and should be lower in noise and battery electric trains would be even better. I expect that by this time, battery powered trains will be practical. Third rail or overhead wires are not likely to happen here. Still, I would like to be able to take the train to downtown Santa Cruz, or have dinner on the way to Davenport or travel to Santa Barbara by way to Watsonville.

From: barton beek
Email address: brockybeek@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 16:57:10

Thanks to everyone who worked on this study. It is a thorough and fascinating report.
I have two major problems with the study:

1. selection of the Stadler GTW articulated car as the case study vehicle seems to prejudice the results from the outset. the length of this vehicle precludes some possible stations, and thus skews the results toward scenarios with fewer stations. instead of a vehicle that is 135 ft long (the Stadler), a case study should be made using a vehicle that is one third as long - say 45 ft. this would be the "streetcar" scenario. it would allow many more stops, and thus more boardings. a comparison should be made with the Pacific Red Car line in Long Beach, CA. while this is a recreational, or tourist ride, it is a viable alternative for transit uses. historic appearance and dimensions are not inconsistent with modern streetcar function, and in fact might enhance the appeal of the service.
2. at least one additional route scenario needs to be analyzed. that would be a hybrid of scenarios G and J. an expanded local service that connects twice a day to Pajaro and the outside world. the schedule might be more complicated, but I doubt that anyone can now predict what the correct schedule of trains will best serve college students, shoppers, work commute, tourists and train connections.

additional comments: I do not understand the justification of preserving freight options on the line. perhaps you should explain assumptions about possible freight uses.
several times BRT is mentioned, but never defined. please give a broad brush to that idea.

bottom line: I favor Rail Transit analysis with modern light-weight, low-platform, self-propelled streetcars or trolleys (it is not clear to me that these would necessarily be electric - and by the way, there is no such thing as "clean electric" yet).

as for the rail-trail, you should point out that it cannot be some kind of bicycle freeway. there will be many road crossings and detours around train stations. if there is conflict between bikes and cars now on roads where the traffic rules are well known, then there will be an order of magnitude greater number of conflicts between bikes, cars, trains, and passengers with the rail and trail. and don't forget skateboards, Segways,

dogs on extensible leashes, powered scooters and skateboards, roller bladers, jogging strollers, wheelchairs, thing-a-ma-jigs etc. the trail is going to attract every kind of conveyance and every kind of behavior that is not allowed on streets.

how can my neighborhood's pedestrian access improvement group, the Alley Advo-cats become a recognized Interest Group for this study?

p.s. I especially appreciate your discussion of 'complete communities' and the potential for rail transit to stimulate revitalization around walkable neighborhoods. keep up the good work!

From: Lisa Bennett
Email address: lisa.g.bennett@hotmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 18:38:17

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives and seek additional information before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today? A wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths, digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars, and Santa Cruz could continue to be seen as an innovative environmental leader by embracing these ideas.

Specifically we need to know the following:

Where is the origin and destination data that provides information on Highway 1 commuters so we can strategize on how to reduce congestion?

What is the feasibility of a Trail Without Rail corridor? What are the usage forecasts for such a corridor and integration possibilities with existing transportation options?

How can the RTC thoroughly and respectfully explore the flexibility of existing rail related agreements with the California Transportation Commission, other Federal and State agencies?

What is the current freight usage of the railway (what materials are being transported, where [from-to], how often, tonnage, etc.)? Why would we limit our options to accommodate freight when there seems to be none or very little happening?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer.

Thank you.

From: Lisa Bennett
Email address: lisa.g.bennett@hotmail.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 19:07:43

As long as there are "park and ride" places where we could park our cars, I think a pedestrian/bike lane would be better used from Aptos to Scotts Valley than a train; however, for the distance from, say, Park Ave to Watsonville, you are looking at car commuters and very few people who would bike the distance. And from Emeline to Los Gatos, you are mostly looking at people who are commuting into Santa Clara County.

I definitely see the residents of this area in favor of bicycling options. But we must consider those who live outside the main Santa Cruz area, who commute north to work, and also those who are jamming the highway in the morning going over the hill to Santa Clara County.

From: Tony & Tanya Bennett
Email address: ttcben@pacbell.net
Submitted: 7/30/2015 13:56:48

July 29, 2015
Response to Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

We are writing this letter in opposition to the proposed railroad project. We oppose this for the following reasons.

1. It will cost too much. Taking into account all the scenarios presented, the initial build out costs, yearly maintenance costs, and ridership numbers, in every scenario this train will operate at a loss. The County cannot afford this!! The current estimate to get the train up and running is \$150 million. This will, no doubt, double or triple by the time it is completed. Additionally, there are other significant expenses that have been grossly underestimated such as: the cost of train stations (purchasing property and sidings, building the stations and parking lots, paying people to work them, etc.), total cost of trains (purchasing the trains, fuel and maintenance, salaries of engineers and conductors), and track, trestle and station maintenance.
2. We don't believe there will be enough passengers to offset expenses of the train, therefore the citizens will be subsidizing the train, which is wrong and irresponsible. Increasing my taxes to subsidize this train is not an acceptable solution.
3. The train may cause more traffic disruptions than it solves because of frequent railroad crossing delays. Cars will have to stop at RR crossings several times an hour. This is bound to create increased traffic jams throughout the County. My guess is that the traffic jams created by the last train passing will have barely abated before the next train arrives (assuming every 15-30 min train scenarios).
4. Safety on the track corridor is not addressed. The tracks have dogs, cats, deer, mountain lions, coyotes, and other animals on them constantly. The number of animals killed per year will be high. How this affects train functioning is not addressed. In addition, MANY homes along the train corridor do not have fencing abutting the tracks. The possibility of children being on the tracks is high. How does the County plan to keep people safe along the tracks? The liability for the County seems quite high and is not addressed anywhere. I saw no plans for fencing or safety in the proposal.
5. There is no plan for noise abatement. Diesel trains are loud. They will have to blow their horns often and there is no current plan for quiet zones to be created. This is unacceptable. The horns can be heard for at least a mile.
6. There clearly not enough room for both train and trail for much of the corridor. The cost of building parallel trestles for a path, earth moving and or possibly buying land to put in the trail path are prohibitive.

Instead of the commuter trains we suggest building a bike trail only (if necessary, that the \$11 million be returned to the state). Clearly, laying down a strip of asphalt and maintaining it would be much more affordable than a train.

On a daily basis, we are reminded that the county can't even satisfactorily maintain the road and streets in Aptos. We have no faith that our County can build and efficiently maintain an expensive railroad.

Even if we thought a commuter train was a great idea and we were in favor of it, the county cannot afford it. The idea of a commuter train is interesting. The reality is unaffordable!

We would rather see the hundreds of millions of dollars being proposed here be spent widening the highway 1 corridor as this will benefit many more people than the train. It will move more people to their destinations, faster.

Please end this project before it costs your taxpaying community any more money.

Respectfully,
Tanya & Tony Bennett
Homeowners, Aptos, CA

From: David Bergman
Email address: Deb1267@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 11:22:12

I would like to see a rail system that would allow for a future link to either San Jose or Oakland.

From: Len Beyea
Email address: lbeyea@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:05:46

- The study goals and objectives are appropriate and consistent with other planning efforts in the County.
 - The scenarios chosen seem somewhat arbitrary and do not include potential scenarios that may make more sense in the near term than scenarios selected (e.g. maximum number of stops, fewer runs per hour). Scenario G, the only scenario that has comprehensive service on the entire route, also assumes a high frequency of trips, which in the short term may not be practical or economically feasible.
 - Headways for weekday full service are assumed to be 30 minutes. This may not be desirable from a ridership perspective during early years of operation, and furthermore adds significantly to the cost for only a small gain in headway. Frequency of 1x/45-50 minutes between Santa Cruz and Watsonville may be more practical in the short term, and would only require two rail vehicles and a passing siding at the route midpoint. Based on route timings in the study, each additional rail vehicle added would shorten the headways by 15-20 minutes (i.e. with 3 vehicles, headway of 30-35 minutes, 4 vehicles, headway of 15-20 minutes).
 - It does not appear to be addressed in the study, but bi-directional rail cars would be an advantage to keep new construction costs down, not requiring a turnaround of any kind at the line terminus.
 - Comparison of rail technologies did not address battery/capacitor powered electric rail vehicles, which are already available, such as Kawasaki SWIMO or Bombardier Primove.
 - For service to include Cabrillo College and adjacent residential and commercial destinations, a crossing over highway 1 should be evaluated. More effective than a bicycle/pedestrian bridge, more energy efficient and lower maintenance than a shuttle service, and possibly less expensive than a bridge due to minimal construction and highway service constraints, would be a short gondola cableway connecting a rail stop to the central campus area. This approach would suggest a location between the 12a and 12b station options shown in the study, more or less aligned to Cabrillo College Drive at its intersection with Soquel Drive.
 - Key impacts on neighborhoods include noise and vibration. These impacts can be lessened by utilizing light rail vehicles, especially those with hybrid or electric propulsion. Noise can be further mitigated by locating signaling devices at crossings, rather than on rail vehicles, so that sound levels are limited to what is required for audibility at the crossing, as opposed to being heard from an approaching train. Shorter lighter rail vehicles are available from a number of manufacturers, and are in common use in many parts of the world, including some major US cities. I've done some research on this and am happy to share my findings.
-

From: John Biddick
Email address: jwbiddick@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 6:46:13

I live in Rio del Mar near the train tracks. I would love to have rail service on those tracks. It would be a great service to the community. Not everybody drives. And not every train is loud and dirty. I recently returned from a trip to Sweden and Denmark and saw how helpful rail services can be to communities. Yes, it takes taxes to pay for them, but the benefits outweigh the cost, even in less populated areas.

From: Cherie Bobbe
Email address: cbobbe@me.com
Submitted: 5/23/2015 9:39:00

Based upon review of the Draft Study, I believe that scenario E offers the most economic and environmental advantages.

I wish the trains could be electric, but the DMU seems the most obtainable in terms of money.

Another concern I have is that E does not include Watsonville. This omission bothers me because Watsonville is always treated like the step-sister by Santa Cruz County. Culturally, Watsonville is the most diverse and interesting area of the county. Would train service enrich the relationship between north and south county? I don't know, but I would like to see this issue evaluated and done so with honesty. If Santa Cruz does not admit to past and present discrimination of the people of Watsonville, then this issue is rendered closed.

From: David Bolam
Email address: davidbolam@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 6/2/2015 20:53:36

Any proposal should include sharing a station with the proposed Capital Corridor extension at Pajaro. It would be sooo Californian to make us have to take a shuttle bus between the two thereby leading to the familiar mass-transit death spiral of not being convenient enough for people to use --> low ridership --> withdrawal of funds. Repeat.

The trains should run until midnight.

From: Johanna Bowen
Email address: jobowen@cabrillo.edu
Submitted: 6/2/2015 20:13:47

In the face of serious homeless shelter, low income housing and overall transportation challenges in this county, I am shocked and appalled by any use of public monies for this nonsensical Passenger Rail proposal. Where exactly are the priorities of this county?

From: Timothy Brattan
Email address: timbrattan@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 7:36:32

Do a feasibility study on trail only, 16' wide to accommodate all of the new transportation modalities, e.g. pedal assist bikes, battery powered skateboards and many others coming on the market every month. It also encourages activity and exercise and will be HUGE boon for the eco-tourist industry here. Installation and upkeep costs are a fraction of the rail and could be constructed and in use relatively quickly. It would also be used by far more residents than the rail.

The negatives for the train are so numerous - cost, noise and air pollution, disruption of traffic, difficulty for riders to park and ride, etc., it's hard for us to imagine it working, let alone coexisting with a narrow trail that would be unsafe and congested.

Get creative with the Prop 116 funding for a trail only option. There must be a way to retain the \$11 million, and get started on the trail only NOW!

From: Bruce Bridgeman
Email address: bruceb@ucsc.edu
Submitted: 7/31/2015 10:51:23

Type of rolling stock is critical. Electrifying the line would ultimately reduce operating costs and result in much quieter and less polluting vehicles.

Light rail is relatively quiet and can have high capacity (SF muni). It uses lighter less expensive rails. For reasonable train frequency, freight must be excluded.

Welded rail is needed; ties should be concrete, not wood (don't need replacement, more precise track alignment). All new European systems use concrete. Existing low-quality track could be retained at and within 300' of stations, as trains will be going slowly there in any case.

From: Brian Brooks
Email address: Fastdrupe@hotmail.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 22:04:51

The trail needs to be a bike trail only. I walk parts of the trail nearly every day. There is no way it will ever be a combo bike and rail trail. Not unless Some organization is prepared to buy portions of a lot of backyards Santa Cruz backyards are not cheap. Let's imagine by magic the trail Becomes a combo rail and trail: It is still rail in only one direction! To have a functional light rail, you need rail in TWO directions. No Person in their right mind will wait the 80 minutes for the train to come Back. I mean that literally. I used to take the light rail in Sacramento And I only saw drunk people and druggies on it. I actually saw a woman Smoking crack on the sac light rail. Sure. Everybody will take the light Rail for about three weeks until people have a negative experience and Then they will ride their bikes on the trail. But the. They will stop riding Their bikes because of train noise and the train would be passing them At an unsafe proximity. Soon enough nobody would use the beautiful Trail. Just like now. When you want too much, you end up with jack squat Do we want jack squat or a bike trail? The trail is already beautiful. It just Follow Occam's razor. The simplest solution and by FAR cheapest is best: In this case, save the bikers a Soquel squashing and give them their bike trail

From: Claudia Brown
Email address: Claudiabrown@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 14:12:32

Dear RTC,

I support the group that asks you to please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

After reading the analysis, I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.

From: brian brunelli
Email address: calimove1@yahoo.com
Submitted: 6/8/2015 22:12:02

Give up on this boondoggle. The railroad is too expensive, carries too few people to too few locations. It does not solve how people get to and from the stations. Do people park their cars at rail stations? The train does not take people to Santa Clara, where their jobs are. It does not take people to UCSC, Dominican Hospital, or other large employers in our county. It does not help parents get children to/from school. It does not take people to major retail areas.

A bike trail is acceptable.

The only solution to our transportation woes in Santa Cruz County is to widen Highway 1. Improvements in auto technology are making the railroad option look more foolish by the day.

From: Bobbi Burns
Email address: bobbi.burns@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 10:58:50

I believe a multi-use bicycle/pedestrian trail overtop of the existing railroad is the ideal solution for SC county. It would be much less expensive, more timely, and likely reduce congestion on the streets by allowing for more non-auto, environmentally friendly transportation options for the residents.

From: rebecca byron
Email address: beccabyron@hotmail.com
Submitted: 6/2/2015 16:48:05

My family and I have no need for a train and all it's expense. We would use a free, safe, clean air path for walking and bicycling NOW! It would be used on our own time table, and not expensive to pave. When will you figure this out? Time is wasting. Everytime I go by the the tracks I am sad to see this amazing thoroughfare. Are we living in the dark ages here?

From: Marilyn Calciano
Email address: mcalciano@me.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 22:45:57

Dear RTC,
We feel that the most efficient and beneficial use of this amazing opportunity would be a bike and pedestrian multi-modal path, without rail. We hope that all options will be considered and that the RTC will seriously reconsider its current plan and do a thorough study of ALL alternatives.

We understand that state funds were used to help purchase the corridor, but these are sunk costs and should not be factored into any future decisions. We hope that the RTC will creatively work to find a way to renegotiate any agreements made with the state and repay the state funds if necessary. Repayment would be significantly less than the cost to build and operate the rail portion of the trail.

A multipurpose pedestrian, bicycle, and possibly personal electric vehicle trail would be safer, cleaner, quieter, and a true asset to our beautiful county.

Thank you very much!

Marilyn & Drew Calciano

From: John Caletti
Email address: john@caletticycles.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 12:22:28

Thank you for looking into rail service. I would really love to see that option here in Santa Cruz as we deal with increasing traffic and global warming.

From: DOROTHY CARROLL
Email address: doneto@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/17/2015 10:28:58

we live in watsonville. and would love to have a rail transport to santa cruz and davenport area. we go to bonny doon every week and being able to get to davenport from watsonville would be fantastic. i also think a rail system would be a big draw to tourist...yes, we do have tourist in watsonville.

From: Carla Carstens
Email address: carstensdesigns@aol.com
Submitted: 7/26/2015 22:47:14

My husband and I have discussed the Rail Study at length. We believe the best use for this land is for bicycle and walking. The work to install the rail, the expense, and the noise of construction and eventual train travel, offset the value of a passenger rail.

We wonder, however, how the State will respond, with regards to continued funding. If the use is only bicycle and walking (not rails), would they then withdraw their funding? Would the local community be able to raise the funds to clear the rails and create the walkway without the State's support?

From: carl casey
Email address: carl.casey@oracle.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 9:14:50

No trains. period. we already have a very nice train. thank you. do like other municipalities have done across the country. tear out the tracks and turn it into a pedestrian trail.

From: Claire Castagna
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/12/2015 7:53:49

Although I love the vision of rapid train service widely available, and use trains when traveling in big cities, I don't think we have the correct urban environment for rail service. The stops are still far from destinations. Unless the trains are electric--they would be very noisy for neighborhoods.

I would prefer to see a nice, wide multi use trail for pedestrians and bikes.

This makes sense economically, fiscally and environmentally. It would be an amazing addition to our county. I ride West Cliff and Wilder regularly and the paths aren't wide enough for multi use. I would ride to Live Oak several times each week on the trail if it was protected from traffic. Exposure to traffic on Soquel and Laurel are the main reasons we don't bike south.

Having just returned from a vacation in Boulder, CO--I wish we could have the trails they have.

From: Roger Chaffin
Email address: Roger.chaffin@uconn.edu
Submitted: 5/24/2015 10:34:33

I am very glad to see movement on this far sighted project and hope that the next step toward implementation will occur asap.

From: Ray Chapman
Email address: lostlaketrail@hotmail.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 8:37:14

Consider a box car for SUP and other personal paddling craft, etc. it would help eliminate parking for already crowded beach areas.

From: Ray Chapman
Email address: lostlaketrail@hotmail.com
Submitted: 7/22/2015 22:18:02

Will a box car for bicycles, kayaks, SUPs, surfboards be included?

From: Eric Child
Email address: eric.child@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/13/2015 11:07:27

The consultants report was outstanding. I learned quite a bit and was pleasantly surprised that there is an excellent case to be made for including passenger rail along the corridor. I am concerned though, that there does not seem to be adequate co-ordination between planning for the rail line and the planning for the scenic sanctuary trail. I hope that more information will be forthcoming as work progresses on both. We must ensure that the desire to complete the trail quickly does not impede on use of this major transportation corridor, whether for rail or some other technology.

From: Eric Child

Email address: eric.child@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/13/2015 11:01:46

I believe you need to do a fact sheet on the differences in RFA compliant and non-compliant railcars and the implications of choosing one over another. I know I was confused after the consultant presentation to the Commission and I believe some of the commissioners were as well. I am not advocating for one style over another, but believe you need to clearly lay out the options available and the strengths and drawbacks of each. I don't believe it is as simple as DMU versus Locomotive pulled. Also, in your survey you imply that you can't have level boarding with standard railcars (vs DMU), when in fact level boarding can be achieved with either.

From: henry cleveland
Email address: henry@baymoon.com
Submitted: 6/5/2015 20:52:54

My two main concerns are: The intent seems to be to kill bus service? and what about parking at stations. Money to rails could go to better bus services. Buses not limited by range to fixed rails.

Space needed for parking at stations. That cost isn't included so far.

From: Elena Cohen
Email address: elenac@post.harvard.edu
Submitted: 7/31/2015 14:14:13

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives and seek additional information before committing to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that may saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. I'd like to see more consideration of advances in transportation technology (e.g., electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths, digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars) that offer viable alternatives today? I understand that a wide multi-modal transportation corridor might result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution-free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation and Santa Cruz could continue to be seen as an innovative environmental leader by embracing these ideas.

Specifically we need to know the following:

Where is the origin and destination data that provide information on Highway 1 commuters so we can strategize on how to reduce congestion?

What is the feasibility of a Trail Without Rail corridor? What are the usage forecasts for such a corridor and integration possibilities with existing transportation options?

How can the RTC thoroughly explore the flexibility of existing agreements with the California Transportation Commission, other other Fed and State agencies, and any private contracts that have been signed by RTC to divest ourselves of rail?

What is the current freight usage of the railway (what materials are being transported, where (from-to), how often, tonnage, etc.)? Why would we tie ourselves to accommodate freight rail when there seems to be none or very little happening?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'd like to see more evaluation other alternatives since I'm not yet convinced passenger rail is the answer.

Thank you.

From: Val Cole
Email address: vcole@me.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 16:11:31

Keep going! Don't delay the trail because some want to re-evaluate the rail. There was a thorough and democratic input process for the Master Plan, but we are beyond that point. Its very exciting to be on the cusp of building the Santa Cruz, Watsonville, and North Coast segments of the trail -- let's do this ASAP!

Val Cole
Land Trust Board Member
Avid Cyclist

From: Bud Colligan
Email address: bud@colligans.com
Submitted: 7/22/2015 21:55:44

I am opposed to any additional work on passenger rail until the following work is completed and we have all the facts to make an informed decision about the highest and best use of the rail right-of-way:

- A study of Hwy 1 commuters so we know which public transportation options will relieve the most traffic from Hwy 1
- A comprehensive study of a "trail only" alternative which looks at the benefits and costs of a wide multi-modal trail option with no trains
- Getting clarity from the CTC re using the the right-of-way for no rail projects, including the possibility of paying back the \$11M from Prop 116 monies.

From: Ed Colligan
Email address: ed.colligan@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 17:01:33

The rail use estimates have no basis in fact, and the costs of rail is way too high. We should use the land for a pedestrian trail which would get way more use, be much less costly, and be a long term asset to the tourist and local economy.

From: Ryan colligan
Email address: ryan.colligan@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 11:24:04

Dear RTC Committee,

I am a long time Santa Cruz resident and value the beauty this area has to offer its residents. Santa Cruz is truly unlike any city in the world. I am concerned about the proposed rail train project and the impact this project will have on the bike and walking paths that will be significantly compromised by the implementation of a rails system. The solution to less traffic along highway one can be accomplished by promoting greater use of this section of land by commuters choosing to ride their bikes or walk. This will also serve to cut down on

pollution while promoting an active lifestyle. Many European countries have adopted and promoted this method of transportation with great success. I propose we look closely at this alternative before jumping into a rail project that will compromise this beautiful stretch of land and cost tax payers hundreds of millions of dollars. The solution can be a simple one and we can still reduce traffic by using a more natural, practical approach. Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns.

From: nancy connelly
Email address: justoliveoyl@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:22:17

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives and seek additional information before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today? A wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths, digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars, and Santa Cruz could continue to be seen as an innovative environmental leader by embracing these ideas.

Specifically we need to know the following:

1. Where is the origin and destination data that provides information on Highway 1 commuters so we can strategize on how to reduce congestion?
2. What is the feasibility of a Trail Without Rail corridor? What are the usage forecasts for such a corridor and integration possibilities with existing transportation options?
3. How can the RTC thoroughly and respectively explore the flexibility of existing rail related agreements with the California Transportation Commission, other Federal and State agencies?
4. What is the current freight usage of the railway (what materials are being transported, where [from-to], how often, tonnage, etc.)? Why would we limit our options to accommodate freight when there seems to be none or very little happening?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer.

Thank you.

From: Ruth Copland
Email address: Ruthcopland@aol.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 15:20:17

I would like to see an option that uses the corridor for more than purely rail. I would like to see the availability of use for pedestrians and bicycles and electric bicycles. Please use the corridor for as many uses as possible. Thank you.

Ruth Copland

From: Greg Crandall
Email address: gregcrandall@mac.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 8:51:16

This is a typical report where the company paid to do the study inflates projections (even on the low end) so that the project continues and they can keep getting paid. There is no way a train can travel at 25 MPH on that track with the shape the track is in, the fact that it travels in the backyards of many homes and the track is wide open without any fencing.

Also, the reality will be that fewer than a couple of hundred people would ever ride it to commute. But an equal or larger number would use the Bike/Trail to commute. Look at the use that the Bike/trail gets in Monterey/Seaside or San Diego or any other city. Forget a rail even if it means giving up some federal funds. It is a lame idea that will never be financially viable. Turn it into a wide bike/walk trail and it will be used by hundreds of people everyday improving our communities and our health.

From: Erica Crawford
Email address: ericacrawford@mac.com
Submitted: 7/24/2015 8:36:59

Hi, I think it might be the best use for all and certainly more affordable to have the rail corridor turned into a super off road partly paved trail for use by bikers, skaters, walkers, runners, dog walkers and accessible. This would allow for use by all rather than an expensive train we will have to pay to ride after paying to build.

From: Dean Cutter
Email address: deanc@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 15:00:30

I strongly support public transportation. I go a week at a time without using a car. However, I think a train on a track is a bad idea because a railroad takes up too much room to allow safe and enjoyable pedestrian/bicyclist use and no ability to depart from the track. Railroads are also expensive. A cheaper, safer, and more flexible option would be small (20-40 passenger) jitney busses on pneumatic tires running on natural gas or electricity. They would be quiet. They would be able to stop quickly to avoid folks. They can handily depart the line to create more routes to convenient stops. It is easy to add or subtract jitneys on the line. They can be stored in dispersed maintenance/parking yards more readily. They are less expensive and easier to upgrade. There would be no tracks to maintain. Dean

As a daily cycling commuter I may elect to continue to use our streets rather than deal with the hassle and danger or railroad tracks. Many bicycle accidents happen behind the Boardwalk with tires getting "tracked." As a local teacher taking my students on bike trips I have had the experience 3 times, of kids crashing in those grooves.

From: Aethia Danforth
Email address: aethiadanforth@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 15:37:40

I have not read the 225 page document. I took the survey and in the survey I stated that I didn't think that I would ride the train much. After thinking about the possibility of train service, I realize that I would really enjoy having the option of taking the train. I know that it would be my first preference over a car if the service was frequent enough to be convenient.

I live near the train tracks, I would only request that after 10pm that the train was quieter or ran very infrequently. Many of us get up to go to work and the train line runs through the neighborhoods here on the west side.

I would welcome train service in Santa Cruz.

From: Dan Davis
Email address: dandavis@coldwellbanker.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 18:48:20

I find the traffic on hiway 1 and many city streets becoming more congested. I hear from almost everyone the same complaints about Hiway 1 traffic. It is impacting people's lives. It seemed you could plan to travel at off times and avoid traffic but that is getting harder to find "off" traffic times". The lack of foresight to provide for increased vehicle use is a sign of poor government as transportation needs are basic to a good community. It reminds me when years ago there was the "bright" idea of narrowing the lanes on Hiway 1 approaching Santa Cruz from mid county by eliminating a lane. When there was an immediate cry, "what's gong on?" it was said that drivers will get used to it and it's a smart idea. Well after numerous accidents, burnt rubber skid marks on the road and even side wall, the lane was put back in. It seems that same thinking is in place too often. Feels like way to eliminate traffic is to make it so miserable to drive here that people give up and don't come here. Do people really think that car use is going away in the foreseeable future? Why not prepare for the predicted 20,000 to 30,000 additional people that are expected to move to Santa Cruz in the near future? Part of that preparation is hiway 1. This crazy add a lane every few years to an on ramp is a poor way of preparing for the future. With limited funds. I think widening hiway 1 is the priority.

From: Marc de Giere
Email address: questionmarc@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/8/2015 16:06:48

Thank you for all the work put into this study. Unfortunately, my comments are to voice concern as to how the county could be missing an enormous opportunity to use the rail corridor for exclusive pedestrian/bicycle use.

While an existing rail line does provide a seemingly easy option for new rail service, I fear that the formal discussion around this has failed to seriously consider, and survey the community on, the benefits of pedestrian-only use. Existing outreach has focused on receiving feedback through the lens of a combined rail/train plan, mostly asking how it would be implemented, rather than the various pros / cons to alternatives, such as exclusive pedestrian / bicycle use, or possible collaboration with our great park system.

I am aware of the MBSST plan and the great work being done and plans underway. But I am also very familiar with the scenic trails of other, leading cities in transportation. I lived for years in Portland, Oregon where both public transit and pedestrian / parks access are given significant funding and support. As a bicycle commuter, the dedicated pedestrian paths made it possible for myself and significant percentage of the city's population to get around town with ease and not need to use a vehicle. In addition, the combination of these paths with "green spaces" -- park-like settings where it was safe to gather and enjoy the outdoors -- made the city the most livable and enjoyable one I've ever experienced. I've experienced this in other cities, such as Eugene, Bend, and Davis.

A rail line, with the required tracks and fencing, would severely limit the available space and restrict pedestrian crossing to very specific access points, not much different than the feeling of being on a street. This ruins any potential to have a true pedestrian space, where the path can easily become a crowded, liner avenue that, once again, focuses on getting from one place to another, rather than creating space and creating new opportunity for community.

There is a quality of life rubric that I ask the RTC to explore. One that could ask, "What are the potential benefits of establishing a world-class pedestrian/bicycle-only path through some of the most scenic natural beauty that our state has to offer?" "What are the indirect benefits to tourism with such an attraction, one

that could actually compete with any projected profit from a train service?" "How could this create new, unique spaces for parks that intertwine with the path and also the surrounding neighborhoods?"

Thanks for your time,

From: Marc de Giere
Email address: questionmarc@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/8/2015 15:22:57

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Thanks for your time,

From: Doug Deaver
Email address: ddeaver@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/12/2015 15:08:20

I don't see how the rail is going to achieve anywhere close to the estimated number of riders stated in the report. The Metro has to be heavily subsidized to exist, and many of the buses I see in mid-county (except for students going to Cabrillo) have very few passengers. I think a proposed train would need heavy subsidy and would pull primarily passengers that use public transportation today. The rail stations are not close to where I (or many) residents live, and it's not convenient to many locations that I shop or visit. In my opinion most of the increased traffic on Highway 1 is commute traffic to the Silicon Valley, not people going from Aptos to Santa Cruz. If Santa Cruz were a hub of high paying jobs and growing businesses I might have a

different opinion, but most of Santa Cruz is retail, hospitality, and government; and the jobs are spread out. I believe it will be much more cost effective to turn the rail into a trail (maybe sharing the pavement with electric shuttles), and widening Highway One. No one can possibly think that the traffic jam on Highway One in the morning and evening is environmentally friendly or that it can be solved by running a train through the corridor. Unfortunately the demographics of this area don't support a train - the costs will likely be higher than estimated and the ridership will be lower than projected. The Metro is a great comparison. It has never lived up to the expectation of the supporters in the 23 years I've lived here.

From: Kathy Doctor
Email address: kdoctor@mac.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 22:16:15

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives and seek additional information before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today? A wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths, digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars, and Santa Cruz could continue to be seen as an innovative environmental leader by embracing these ideas.

Specifically we need to know the following:

Where is the origin and destination data that provides information on Highway 1 commuters so we can strategize on how to reduce congestion?

What is the feasibility of a Trail Without Rail corridor? What are the usage forecasts for such a corridor and integration possibilities with existing transportation options?

How can the RTC thoroughly and respectfully explore the flexibility of existing rail related agreements with the California Transportation Commission, other Federal and State agencies?

What is the current freight usage of the railway (what materials are being transported, where [from-to], how often, tonnage, etc.)? Why would we limit our options to accommodate freight when there seems to be none or very little happening?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer.

Thank you.

Kathy Doctor

From: D Doherty
Email address: Dmdsligo@aol.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 21:49:33

Need as many transportation leaders/participants as possible with private enterprise backgrounds
World-wide most career politicians and govt bureaucrats enjoy the power of spending with little regard for the opportunity costs or true costs of delivering a service!

If the actual cost per rider was \$25, they would still proceed with the project, all the while knowing that the tax payers would be on the hook for the next 20 years or more

From: Mike Dugoni
Email address: Mikedugoni@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/2/2015 15:31:21

I am very much against the railroad. The sound of the horns would be sounded from 6:00 until 9:00 without end. We have been hearing horns all day near Seascap today(they must be doing testing. It's

From: Gerald Dunbar
Email address: gldcop@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/4/2015 11:28:18

I agree entirely with the comments expressed in Lou Rose's commentary printed in the Sentinel's July 4th edition. The RTC, and others, have been researching and reviewing rail options for years. Initially I thought it was just a maneuver to obtain the external funding to secure the right of way with the true goal being a scenic pedestrian and bicycle trail. But the discussion and consulting fees continue. I find it hard to believe that serious people are even discussing the viability of a commuter rail in a community such as Santa Cruz County. It would make more sense for these serious people to spend their energies on figuring out how to fill the near empty busses and resolve the structural debt of the Metro.

It is not easy to take the RTC seriously when it continues to pursue endeavors such as this one.

From: Doris Duncanson
Email address: Djamassa@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 6/21/2015 8:11:54

We need alternative travel means as growth occurs. Highway 1 is clogged most of each day. It can take 30 plus minutes to travel from Watsonville to Cabrillo College for example. We must plan for future growth to alleviate this huge problem.

From: CYNTHIA DZENDZEL
Email address: cyndzen@earthlink.net
Submitted: 7/25/2015 7:26:10

The commentary by Amelia Conlen in the Sentinel today was the best discussion I have yet seen. The only thing she left out was what type of trains would be used. Electric trains with solar charging stations should be an option in the future. I envision hikers and bikers using the train to get from one end of the county to the other in order to access other trails. We should not give up the rails!

I live in Felton. I would love to be able to take the Roaring Camp train to the Boardwalk and connect to the coastal train.

From: Gary Elia

Email address: eliazoo@att.net
Submitted: 7/30/2015 10:10:26

As a resident of Aptos I see our communities growing and expanding each year. The congestion on highway 1 has been a topic for many years as has vehicles using local streets for alternate routes. I don't see our communities being stagnant in growth, rather housing or commerce. We should not close the door on the only transportation corridor left in this county.

Having some sort of viable transportation other than putting more cars on highway 1 seems to make the most sense. Providing alternate transportation to the many recreation spots along our coast for our local residents or people visiting will be essential as communities out side our county expand and those people come to our area for recreation.

Many of our local businesses depend upon tourism. If our major corridors can't handle these influx in tourism then people will look for other destinations. After all, who wants to spend 2 hours in traffic either coming or leaving and in some casing both!

Let's take our time and really explore our options. It is a huge expense. There will be much resistance due to noise pollution, I can certainly hear the tracks noise and the whistles from my house.

Reducing or eliminating the traffic on highway 1 and 17 should be our top priority and ALL viable alternate choices of transportation should be discussed.

Not everyone can or does ride a bike and most desirable destination are well outside the range of walking.
Thank You.

From: Sarah Emmert
Email address: saemmert@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 9:47:12

I encourage the RTC to more thoroughly investigate other options before committing us to a \$600M+ passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to serve our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

From: Joanne Engelhardt
Email address: joanneengelhardt@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/28/2015 23:26:33

I completed the survey, but I neglected to suggest that we consider a LIGHT RAIL system rather than traditional passenger trains. Thank you.

From: Doug Engfer
Email address: doug@engfer.org
Submitted: 7/23/2015 22:25:34

Thanks for your work on this key issue for our community. As each of us experiences, transportation (particularly 'north/south') in our area is a daily challenge. Anything we can do to create more diversity in our transportation modalities will help with that. However, we must remain cognizant of cost-effectiveness in any investments of public monies. My concern about fixed-rail service in our area is that our geography and

density patterns do not lend themselves to this mode of transit. Far better and more cost-effective for us to encourage cycling, flexible public transit (buses and jitneys), and walkability.

From: John Fangary
Email address: johnfangary@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/17/2015 16:41:01

Wait a minute,
Should we build along this corridor without considering the people who will ultimately pay for the project and be using the resource? That would primarily be those who are 13-45 years of age now and will be future resident and working adults in Santa Cruz County who would be commuting along the corridor in 10-11 years time. The rail would create additional traffic at each spot where the track crosses the road and would also drastically change the dynamic and landscape of the beautiful area bordering the corridor. Are we slaves to automotive transportation? Can we do something other than what is done in major metropolitan areas like San Francisco and LA? A bike path and walking trail would provide the active community of Santa Cruz County a safe, scenic and sustainable route to and from Watsonville and Santa Cruz. People would use it for commuting to work and also for recreation. I would hope I could create memories biking or walking along this route with my future family and enjoy the striking natural surroundings as similarly as possible to the way the indigenous Soquel and Aptos people did centuries ago. I hope my opinion is actually considered before the decision is made.

From: David Faulkner
Email address: Babadave@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 14:40:35

Hwy 1 is congested. There is no disputing this. It wil only grow worse over time. It might seem intuitive to simply build more lanes to relieve some of this congestion, but this solution never works. There are countless studies worldwide that prove adding hwy capacity only adds more traffic. Adding more lanes will never be a feasible solution.

Passenger rail will be invaluable 10, 20, 100 years from now regardless of the seemingly high cost today. Can you imagine what Hwy 1 will look like 50 years from now? Let's not have hindsight that is 2020, instead let's have foresight that extends beyond the year 2020. All aboard!

From: John Feagans
Email address: feagans_john@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 0:54:32

Thank you for your service in producing the report. Also the persistance to complete the rail purchase the voters approved with prop 108 and 116. I hope someday I may ride a train to Los Gatos.

From: Kelley Filbin
Email address: Kelleyfilbin@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 16:10:09

I do not see the addition of rail service to be a viable transportation solution. I do support the creation of a multi-use trail for bikes and pedestrians WITHOUT the rail/train. The train is not economically feasible.

From: Rose Filicetti
Email address: savgmom@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 14:15:37

To quote a friend "I have concluded that a wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation today, with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths (that generate energy to pay for themselves and provide nighttime lighting), digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars. All of these products and services are here today or will be a reality in the near future.

Please thoroughly investigate other options before committing us to a \$600M+ passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to serve our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please join me in asking the RTC to seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor."

(I already receive updates.)

From: Samara Foster
Email address: samara.foster@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/7/2015 15:13:09

I strongly support the development of passenger train in Santa Cruz County. I commute from Aptos to UCSC everyday, and would love an alternative to driving on Highway 1. I anticipate using the train for both work commuting and to get to other areas of the county for recreation in the evenings and on the weekends. I also have children who would use to the train, which would limit how much I have to drive around town to get them to various activities. I would prefer a train with as many stations as possible and connecting as many areas of the county as possible. I think this is a really great long term solution for our County's transportation needs. We desperately need something, and the train seems like such a great idea! I think it is worth the public investment and maintenance costs. I also am willing to pay through reasonable fares. Finally, I hope to also see the development of rail that connects the County to other parts of the Monterey and SF Bay as well as the state. I think rail is not just part of our past, but an important part of our sustainable future.

From: Tyler Fox
Email address: tyler@santacruzwaves.com
Submitted: 7/20/2015 12:45:09

This benefits and drawbacks of solely a bike and walking path hugely out way the option with a rail system. As a life long resident of this county I care deeply about this issue sincerely hope for the healthier option of just a bike/walking path.

From: Ariel G

Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/31/2015 20:30:30

I like the idea of enhancing our public transportation in Santa Cruz and am supportive of the rail plan as I think every growing city needs to have a strong public transit infrastructure.

A few comments (in addition to my survey response)

I would like to see any trains put in place to be as efficient, quiet, and environmentally friendly as possible, especially considering the train will go through many residential neighborhoods. I recently rode the Santa Clara VTA light rail trains and was very impressed. Not knowing exactly what kind of trains those were versus the ones being considered for this project, I don't have a specific input other than to say we should be as forward thinking as possible with the use of trains.

I also think we need to balance the needs of daily commuters and ad hoc travelers. I would be more of an ad hoc traveler, but think providing daily commuter options is essential to reducing the congestion on highway 1. Perhaps a combination of morning and evening business commute hour 'express' routes (that make fewer stops) along with more stops during the day to meet the needs of tourists and locals getting around could be a solution. Sort of a hybrid between scenario E and S. I didn't notice this as an option, but perhaps I missed it.

And lastly, I think any scenario needs to include a stop at the Boardwalk, one of our most frequented attractions during the summer. I would use the train every weekend to avoid the traffic and parking hassles and am very disappointed to see it is not a stop on the two primary scenarios being considered. Please re-consider adding a seasonal boardwalk stop.

From: arline ganzler
Email address: arlineganzler@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/2/2015 19:31:25

I understand how difficult or impossible it will be at this time to say how much the fares would be. However unless you state a range, I will not be able to say whether I would use the train. I am a Senior and friends and I have discussed hiring a driver once or twice per week to take us where we need to go. I would need to compare this cost and convenience before I can decide if I would use the train. If the station was too far from the place I needed to go, I would not use the train. I wonder how many Seniors have this concern.

From: Rob and Dondi Gaskill
Email address: beachnit@pacbell.net
Submitted: 6/15/2015 13:50:33

NO trains in our wonderfully quiet beachside community! We are all for hiking and biking trails...

From: David Giannini
Email address: giannini.david@hotmail.com
Submitted: 6/2/2015 14:37:49

No matter how you slice it, there is no way a county of 262,000 people can afford a conventional passenger rail system. The distances are too short for the economy of scale rail bring to the equation.
(<https://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch3en/conc3en/transcost.html>)

And we don't have the population density. The rail concept is an economic disaster waiting to happen.

From: Maria Gitin
Email address: msgitin@got.net
Submitted: 7/26/2015 10:33:44

While I appreciate the objectives, I do not believe that passenger service is a viable transportation alternative for any significant number of residents. I understand that pursuing this option is necessary for funding the bike/pedestrian trail which I am strongly in favor of. But the layout of SCC and the existing/proposed rail line is not convenient to the majority of county residents. Getting to and from the stations would increase traffic and the need for parking space, would create additional noise and pollution, and increase the likelihood of accidental or suicide deaths, as happens in other urban areas with frequent train service. Limited holiday use and continued freight use are fine.

I also agree with others that planning to use an outmoded technology like steam or electric trains when new forms of individual (or collective as in speedy golf carts) electric transportation are being developed is foolish. We should prepare the path for a variety of mini-van and individual transportation modes. And make our path beautiful and safe for bicyclists and pedestrians like the hike/bike train in Monterey.

We MUST widen Highway 1 to three lanes from SC to Watsonville. Anything that takes away funding from that, I am solidly against.

From: juliet goldstein
Email address: shiningjoys@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 12:30:58

Am opposed to a rail trail and support a bike trail because of:
noise and air pollution,
need for car parking to board the train,
changing our rural community into an unwanted urban environment.
We want to preserve and add to our rural living, not take it away.

From: Daniel Gomez
Email address: d.j.gomez@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/17/2015 10:21:38

I strongly disagree with a Rail-Trail in our community. There are many successful communities that have benefited from a Trail ONLY system that connects the community. We have a perfect opportunity to create a non polluting, low long term expense alternative transportation (walking, biking, running) corridor that emphasizes what our community is about. Bringing people together in a safe healthy active way. If I had access to a trail only I would 100% ride my bike to work everyday from Aptos to Capitola to Santa Cruz. If it was combined with a train, I will stick with driving to work. I work in Capitola near the tracks and it would destroy or sense of peace in our beach community.

From: Peter Goodman
Email address: ptrgdmn@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 16:23:02

My opinion after reading the study is that it is a big stretch to think that it is economically feasible to have both trail and rail. I, as a tax payer, do not want to subsidize rail which I think will be the result of trying to have a rail. I think the best use of the corridor is to make it a trail only. I think you will see lots of people using it to commute since it will be a level path from Watsonville to Davenport and will not be in traffic except for crossings. This can be done cheaply, has little maintenance and would be a gift to everyone in the community. We live in Aptos and my wife works at the county building. I know we would buy her an electric bike to get to commute to work. Please pull the rails. Let's be done with the train.

From: Seana Graham
Email address: seana@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 14:33:37

I am generally for the train, and have learned that it will not be funded out of existing funds for the bus system, which is good. I do have a bit of a problem with the outlay of capital for this that might keep other solutions from happening. For one thing, I would definitely put a bus that goes to the San Jose airport ahead of a lot of this stuff. I find a lot of the way our transportation interfaces with the larger area very lagging behind where I would expect it to be in a community bordering Silicon Valley and with commuters to same. And as someone who does ride the bus, mainly on the Westside, I am disheartened to find that there are very few non-students who use it. I would think Santa Cruz would be ahead of the game on thinking of ways to incentivize people to use public transportation, but I find that quite the reverse is often true, and it makes me wonder how much the decision makers have to rely on public transportation themselves. Not much, I suspect.

From: william gray
Email address: graybil@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/22/2015 11:50:49

This is so outrageously biased and poorly done that I can only hope the whole project dies of its own weight. We do not, now will we have the demographics to support your plan. Get real!

William H. Gray, PhD
1440 Prospect Ave
Capitola, CA

From: Richard Green
Email address: ed@soe.ucsc.edu
Submitted: 7/29/2015 22:22:47

I'm delighted to see the county exploring uses of this legacy infrastructure. As a resident of the west side of Santa Cruz, I'd love to have a transportation option to downtown Santa Cruz, the east side and beyond that did not involve a car.

I also have witnessed a revitalization of the industrial west side which is all in close proximity to the tracks. Everyday, hundreds of people drive and park here. These people would be well served by light rail that would connect this employment hub with the population centers of the county.

Long-term infrastructure projects are usually unpopular and expensive. But we owe it to current and future Santa Cruzans to build the infrastructure that will continue to make Santa Cruz a livable city. Let's build this train!

From: Gary Griggs
Email address: griggs@ucsc.edu
Submitted: 7/25/2015 16:25:59

While I think the original rail trial sounded reasonable to many people, now that the economics have been worked out and the narrowness of the right-of-way recognized, it seems very clear that the cost of the rail is way beyond anything this county can support. This year's community assessment environmental section (which I was asked to summarize at their annual public presentation) based on a reasonably large number of Santa Cruz County residents, indicates that 71% of the residents who work drive alone in their cars, and 2% (a bit over 2000 people) use public transportation- the data from the past 6 years shows that the % using public transportation has decreased by half.

The ridership isn't there simply because commuters are going somewhere else (over Highway 17 for the most part). This will never pay for itself and would make the bike trail aspect much less desirable and feasible. The rail project with trains just doesn't make sense, whereas the trial part for bikes and other similar vehicles does and should be pursued.

From: thomas gruber
Email address: nonprofit@tomgruber.org
Submitted: 7/23/2015 18:43:35

Dear RTC,
Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.

From: Julie Guillen
Email address: julie_guillen@pvusd.net
Submitted: 5/22/2015 11:06:14

I think that possibly more people would use the Pajaro station then this survey results show. I believe the demographic of the people that live in the area and outer areas (Las Lomas, Royal Oakes) most likely don't take surveys or have access to computers or possibly the language. I lot of "Watsonville" residents and their children attend Cabrillo College, I know this line would be a big help for those communities. I personally live west of Watsonville (near the fair grounds) and would appreciate a rail system that I could catch in Watsonville and take all they way up to Davenport or even San Francisco on the weekends.

From: Herb Gundersen
Email address: herb@artanddisplay.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 14:48:00

Unless you have a solution where the train services is 100% paid for by riders, this is not something I can get behind. There are plenty of ways to use tax payers money, and this isn't one of them.

From: Donald Hagen
Email address: dnhagen39@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 18:55:15

I was one of the original RTC members who voted for the Rail/Trail System. The original plan was to have the tail line proceed from Davenport to Pajaro Junction! Any proposal to eliminate part of the COMPLETE Rail system is a violation of this original proposal! I would be whole heartedly against such a move! The idea of not ultimately being able to connect with the existing San Diego to Seattle Rail System would be foolish and an ultimate destruction of the original idea of The Santa Cruz County Rail System!!

From: Jennifer Harris-Anderson
Email address: buzznjen@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/17/2015 17:32:48

I am very much opposed to any rail form of transportation in the corridor. Give the money back and investigate other avenues. Rail transportation is a waste of taxpayer money. Alternative modes are more beneficial to the public. I sincerely hope that you are allowing only county residents to comment.

From: Roxanne Harrison
Email address: bikesantacruzca@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 12:49:02

I tried to take the survey but I found the questions too general and framed in a way that it felt skewed toward the rail. I exited out at about 50% completion. It would have been helpful if the questions were more specific and pertained to the local situation as opposed to general questions. In general I fully support the bike trail and would like to see it get developed as quickly as possible. I see no fiscally prudent or possible way to expand some of the existing tressels which is necessary to sustain a commuter train. I oppose a tourist train going through our community neighborhoods.

From: Rick Harrison
Email address: RickHarrison63@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/17/2015 16:55:56

First of all, I am very much appreciative to the RTC for securing the right of way associated with the rail service. And I support the idea of a bike trail very much. However, I would prefer to see the rail project dropped, making the trail exclusively for bike use. The rail use would be too disruptive to bike use. The right of way is far too narrow for both to use the space effectively.

From: Roxby Hartley
Email address: rhartley@nsbfuels.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 10:22:58

Thank you for producing such a complete and thorough review of possible rail options.

I absolutely agree that a rail service is mandatory for the coastline. It's clear that some sort of mass transit system is required to meet future demand and ease the awful and growing congestion. I can only feel that anyone against this system must have an alternative agenda based around property values.

Linking a coastal service into a California high speed system should be a lofty goal to reduce emissions and head towards a low carbon future.

Good luck, and I look forward to California having a rail system matched with integrated public transport.

From: Constance Hatfield
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/6/2015 14:13:04

I agree wholeheartedly with the recent Sentinel editorial opposing this money-losing fantasy. Dr. Lou Rose, professor emeritus from the Univ. of Hawaii, soundly and deliberately exposes the whole proposal's weaknesses and ultimate failure: rail studies overestimate benefits and consistently under-estimate costs. I have been opposed to this nonsensical idea from the beginning. It was great to read the comments and warnings from someone, Dr. Rose, who has experience in this. The city council and this SCRTC committee is a socialist monster. Call it what it is. You are spending other peoples' money. Shame on you.

From: Stephen Hauskins
Email address: shauskins@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 19:54:03

Please consider if you really think a train is useful to make it light rail electric.

But the train would provide little to people going to their jobs unless they can walk less than say 3 blocks from a station. Having people park at stations doesn't take traffic off of the roads.

Put the money into the bus transit system and improve stops and times. Make the buses nicer. Buses are so much more flexible in terms of where they can go.

The train may seem romantic and some kind of historical issue, but it really doesn't make sense.

Noise Noise Noise through neighborhoods.

Make the trail bike and pedestrian only.

From: Stephen Hauskins
Email address: shauskins@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/6/2015 18:23:51

Why not improve the bus system. Trains are restricted to one path. They are also loud in terms of the horn that has to be used at almost every intersection.

The number of trains running on one rail is pretty small.

Why would people stop using their cars when we have seen that is not true for the current bus system.

Put the money in the bus transit system. Make it better.

From: Karl Heiman
Email address: karlheiman@cruzio.com
Submitted: 5/22/2015 14:04:46

We fully support the passenger rail part of the rail plan and study. Please expedite the Passenger Rail portion of the rail plan. It is desperately needed and will greatly reduce traffic and the number of cars on Highway 1.

From: Doris Henry
Email address: henrydoris@ymail.com
Submitted: 5/24/2015 11:58:58

Please proceed with the Passenger Rail Study and bring a commuter train from Pajaro to Santa Cruz! And make more Park and Ride available! There isn't enough south County ones to make reasonable connections to get into Santa Cruz early a.m. when most of us have to report to work! We need better ways to commute in this county. The Metro Bus system is not efficient enough to carry all the potential riders in South County and to relieve the congestion on the woefully inadequate Hwy 1 corridor. Metro buses don't cater to the working poor in this County. They work for the disabled and student populations and perhaps the retired and elderly citizens of this community but not a working person who has to work non standard days and hours! Some of us actually work on weekends and Holidays also! Please bring this area into this century with workable solutions to the 1 hour to 1 & 1/2 hour commute to Santa Cruz from where the population lives! (Believe it or not, in 1985, you could actually drive to Santa Cruz from Watsonville in 15 mins.) How I miss those days!

Thank you!

Thank you.

From: Gwen Heskett
Email address: gwenheskett@aol.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 9:16:09

While I recognize the need to continue exploring options for transportation, I am highly concerned about a traditional train passing through our community. They are incredibly loud. The noise makes any walking or biking trails far less attractive. And to significantly impact any congestion, people must want to use public transit.

I would support an elevated monorail which would address all of these issues. The elevation would allow us to retain a very safe pedestrian and bike trail. Monorails are far less likely to collide with people or vehicles. Since monorail systems typically are electrically powered with rubber wheels compared to steel, they are far quieter. Aesthetically, monorails are far less intrusive. And passengers would be far more drawn to using a monorail because of the views an elevated ride provides.

In terms of costs, while a monorail system may be more expensive initially, operational expenses are significantly less. I also believe that the entire greater Santa Cruz community would financially support the additional costs this kind of modern public transportation system would provide through a tax.

From: Suzanne Holt
Email address: suholt@cabrillo.edu
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:57:01

Why I don't think rail service should be pursued the way the RTC describes:

1. On the 1990 ballot, Prop 116 was targeted on large urban areas where heavy inter-city commuting traffic and congestion created serious air pollution problems – not true of Santa Cruz County. Rail service was expected to begin no later than 2000. The proposition's purpose was to "facilitate cost-effective transit service to the maximum number of Californians." Its targets were heavily urbanized metropolitan regions, not a small county with low population density.
2. Santa Cruz County did not fit this target and therefore did not meet the Prop 116 criteria for funding. Santa Cruz petitioned the California Transportation Commission and got its application considered because the state specifically amended its policies. The application was approved in August 2003.
3. On the 1990 ballot, Prop 116 required that projects provide a 50% match from local sources and not use other state funds as match. Santa Cruz was unable to meet that condition, and needed an additional waiver to be able to use STIP funds as match. This waiver was granted in June 2010. The county failed to meet the waiver conditions by August, as required by the CTC. The county got a subsequent waiver that delayed the due date on satisfying those conditions. Of the \$23,600,000 funds spent on the project, \$11,000,000 came from Prop 116, and the balance came from non-local sources.
4. Points 2 and 3 make clear that even though county voters supported Prop 116 in 1990, the funds would not be available for county use, as the proposition was written. It is illegitimate and misleading for RTC officials to state that county voters approved Prop 116 back then because they wanted passenger rail service here. To claim otherwise is to assume County voters chose not to read the proposition description.
5. The CTC guidelines stipulate that the County demonstrate it has the financial capacity to construct, operate and maintain the service with local funds. Among other policies, the County is expected to achieve a farebox recovery rate of 40% at a minimum.

By contrast, the RTC report identifies O&M funds as coming from rider fares (assumed 15% farebox recovery rate FRR, percent of O & M), new local sales tax, and state and federal grants. Footnote 43 of the RTC report notes that non-fare sources will likely be less available if FRR doesn't increase. Annual O&M costs not paid by fares will be approximately \$5-10 million.

6. Of 16 funding sources for capital spending, only two score high (in terms of availability, revenue yield, etc.) and they require match rates as high as 65-70%. Of 16 funding sources applicable to capital and O&M spending, only two score high and they are farebox revenue and a local sales tax. These 32 sources exclude another 21 possible funding sources rejected as even more unlikely.

On these grounds, I believe the County is throwing good money after bad by planning rail service. Instead, we could pay back the \$11,000,000 to the state by avoiding about two years of rail operating costs. A trail is still a terrific idea.

From: Lesley Holtaway
Email address: fivepalmsjewelry@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 16:07:13

I grew up in NJ just outside of NYC where there was a train station in just about every town. It was a great way to get around and the best way to get into NY. They were true commuter trains and they were packed

Mon-Fri. So I have nothing against trains. Those towns were built to accommodate the trains. Traffic never stopped at crossings as the streets went under the tracks, the trains didn't have to slow down at crossings, there was ample parking and drop off lots, and the trains stopped in the middle of the towns where you needed to go. I don't see any of that as feasible here. I foresee traffic backing up at every crossing, constant train horns blowing, and people not using it because they are too far away from their destination when they get off and then either have to walk some distance or get on another transit system. I see this as a tourist attraction being sold to the public under the guise of alleviating work traffic. Now that the money has been taken for the project the rail has to be pushed through or the money has to be given back. I say we get out from under this boondoggle and finance the pay back, lick our wounds, and develop a walking/ biking/ wheelchair accessible trail that will most likely be used by more people at a fraction of the cost. People like me who never ride a bike in the County because it's too dangerous will gladly dust off their bikes to get around.

From: Charles Huddleston
Email address: ckhudds@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/17/2015 14:59:13

Electric light rail that goes all the way to Pajaro is the preferred solution for a better future. Heavy rail is not needed for the degree of farming and manufacturing north of Watsonville and state wide travelers can accept transferring in Watsonville.

The main problem you should be addressing is the TEN YEAR time frame. Get it done in five years. Time is money and we haven't got ten years. The usual excruciatingly slow pace is unacceptable. By 2025 gridlock will have overwhelmed the community, money will be increasingly hard to come by as voters face the realities of a more harshly competitive future and completion will be in doubt.

Caltrans coming to Watsonville and Gilroy in only two of three years will lead to the incorporation of those cities into the Silicon Valley housing complex and leave the north of the county in gridlocked decline. Connect with light rail, an improved Metro system and Monterey, and tourism and comity for those who live north of Watsonville is promoted.

From: Robert Hull
Email address: rhull@rhull.com
Submitted: 6/4/2015 6:20:54

- 1) The draft is a very thorough study of the existing rail line being reused for passenger rail.
- 2) As proposed, the rail line would poorly serve the 41st ave. commercial district.
- 3) As proposed, the rail line would poorly serve Seascape resort and residential community.
- 4) As proposed, the rail line would not serve the City of Scotts Valley.
- 5) As proposed, the rail line would not ease traffic congestion on CA17 or CA1.
- 6) As proposed, the rail line would not be useful to commute between Santa Cruz county and Santa Clara county. (Santa Clara county is where many of the county's residents work)
- 7) I doubt rail service would significantly contribute to "complete communities".
- 8) It is doubtful that county residents want "compact land use." Many residents live in Santa Cruz county to escape the "compact land use" of Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties.

The rail line would hog funding resources in the county. I recommend a more integrated solution that improves the existing infrastructure (freeways) and support Santa Cruz counties rural character.

From: Doug Huskey

Email address: doug.huskey@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 13:37:11

Feel that we should be cautious about committing funding for rail service. It needs to be cost effective and not heavily subsidized (more so than other forms of transportation). Rail service should look at new technologies for low cost, low weight, low emission services that could be cost effective without requiring bridge and rail upgrades or high maintenance. Other than such options, it seems that the future is going more to low cost low emission individual transit methods such as bike cabs, ebikes, scooters, etc. Support of these through the trail option of the rail/trail should be the highest priority, unless grants or other non-local funded options for rail funding are identified.

If rail service is initiated it should focus on Scenario E which has the best cost effectiveness and highest rider options... but for this we should look at electric battery powered trains and other new lower total cost technologies.

From: Karla Hutton
Email address: Karlatta1956@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 13:22:54

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives and seek additional information before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today? A wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths, digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars, and Santa Cruz could continue to be seen as an innovative environmental leader by embracing these ideas.

Specifically we need to know the following:

Where is the origin and destination data that provides information on Highway 1 commuters so we can strategize on how to reduce congestion?

What is the feasibility of a Trail Without Rail corridor? What are the usage forecasts for such a corridor and integration possibilities with existing transportation options?

How can the RTC thoroughly and respectfully explore the flexibility of existing rail related agreements with the California Transportation Commission, other Federal and State agencies?

What is the current freight usage of the railway (what materials are being transported, where [from-to], how often, tonnage, etc.)? Why would we limit our options to accommodate freight when there seems to be none or very little happening?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer.

Thank you.

From: Eric Jacoby
Email address: burningmanman@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 23:18:25

We need transportation solutions now, not in 20 years. A bike path that can support new electric ways of transport are the way to go, technology is the future, why revert back to outdated (and expensive) technology? And why not re-route some of the hundreds of thousands of dollars toward a functional bus transit on an already existing roadway?

Why spend money on old technology that is bad for the environment? That's absurd.

We want a clean, quiet community. No one wants to promote the dirt, grime and noise of a passenger train running through our mini paradise called Santa Cruz.

One concern of mine, however, is public safety: the homeless community in Santa Cruz is known for accumulating on bike paths. How do we take care of all members of the community when building this path?

From: Dottie Jakobsen
Email address: dottie614@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 18:58:39

Dear RTC,
Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.
Dottie Jakobsen

From: Jo Lynne Jones
Email address: jolynnenotes@icloud.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 6:21:45

A wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and provide a pollution free, low noise, safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation today, with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths (that generate energy to pay for themselves and provide nighttime lighting), digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars. All of these products and services are here today or will be a reality in the near future.

Do not invest in Rail.

From: Robert Jones
Email address: RJonesPE@aol.com
Submitted: 7/11/2015 17:01:30

The notion of passenger train service on the SC Branch Line is outrageous. A study was done by the RTC on this matter and concluded that it was very expensive and would do essentially nothing to reduce traffic on Hy 1. If such service is actually implemented what will happen is the ridership will be low but the RTC will save face and not discontinue it. Rather it will find a reason to subsidize the service .. a huge waste of taxpayer's

money. Further, for the thousands of us that live along the rail corridor, the environmental and financial impact will be significant. A prior EIS was a whitewash .. never fully considered important factors such as noise, vibration, emissions, accidents (on the poor quality tracks) .. the list is long. And anyone that thinks a trail can be co-located with the tracks is invited to my home to view the lack of room for both. This whole rail idea is a product of the anti-Hy 1 widening crowd who has convinced the RTC that passenger service is a viable alternative to an additional lane. It isn't and the RTC studies show it. Stop this madness.

From: Robert Jones
Email address: robert3847@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/9/2015 9:57:50

Frankly, I don't understand at all why a passenger train is being considered. This idea has been pushed by the commission for many years. Clearly there are development interests. The study data regarding ridership is mostly conjecture, and any positive impact on highway congestion is dubious.

This is not a metropolitan area, and I for one don't wish it to become one. When one considers the path of the corridor, and imagines trains running back and forth through residential and scenic areas it sickens the heart. Every street crossing will be impacted (and there are a lot of them), with delayed traffic waiting for the train to pass. Stations all over the place, undoubtedly with businesses clamoring to be built nearby. Developers will be ecstatic! Money, money, money for them. Those that own homes along the corridor (many many people) will have their property values impacted, as well as quality of life.

Everyone that has a brain knows that a train is not self-sustaining financially, and the cost to taxpayers is an unknown, but it will be there.

Do not destroy what is left of this beautiful area! I support a walking and bike path with no train.

From: Marceya Kagan
Email address: Lchaim@jps.net
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:05:45

I want to make sure there are ways to bring one's bike on the train or have some kind of bike share options. Without this, I believe it would severely limit people's ability to utilize this service because one needs to get to other places once off the train. It's absolutely crucial that we do all we can to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. If the only option is to use a car at the end of a ride, then it significantly shrinks our ability to call this sustainable "train-transportation".

From: Karen Kaplan
Email address: kaplank@hotmail.com
Submitted: 6/3/2015 3:12:37

Rail Stations should have concession stands and restrooms. Income generated from renting retail space to small cafes or kiosks, would help subsidize the train.

From: Mel Kass
Email address: hello@vicality.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 18:35:32

Forget the train... too many intersections, too slow, too noisy, people will HATE it... we need something like this, SkyTran... New, different, fast, scenic, runs continuously, no waiting, Zip cars at the stations, reserve on your phone. Company founder was a UCSC alum. Walking paths with overhead tracks give quiet, fast transportation..for passengers and freight. Add tracks over Hiway 17 too. It's so cool people will pay to use it.

SkyTran, check it out... anything else is last century.
<https://vimeo.com/98497797>

From: Jack Keenan
Email address: jacpkkeenan@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/28/2015 14:31:55

I feel the rail trail should be used as a bike-walk trail. Trying to combine it with a railroad would completely misuse its function. The congestion at rail crossings would cause traffic nightmares throughout the county. I live in rural Aptos and drive through Aptos Village multiple times a day. When Aptos Village is rebuilt there is going to be a huge traffic impact and if a train crossing is added to that it will get very ugly.

From: Peggy Kenny
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 6/19/2015 16:56:55

Thank you for the great work on the Draft Report. I look forward to the start of rail service as soon as possible. I look forward to the day when I can use a combination of walking, biking, and train transit to travel along the coast for appointments, shopping, and recreation.

From: James Kerr
Email address: jmkerrs@earthlink.net
Submitted: 7/27/2015 9:03:25

I read the Passenger Rail Study and just completed the survey. I completely support moving forward to provide passenger rail service.

My thoughts:

Trains should travel at frequent intervals, with more stops/stations.

It's the proximity to the population centers that makes the train attractive, but also creates the greatest likely push back from neighbors. Outreach to neighbors should begin immediately to address concerns – should provide a model showing how living near or adjacent to the rail could actually be desirable, attractive – an asset. The trains should be smaller and must be quiet. To be successful, neighbors must support the project.

From: Tom King
Email address: h2odog19@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 17:14:52

This whole thing is a disaster in waiting. I drive or ride my bike down Seabright Ave. every day to and from work. To work is rarely a problem, but coming home, it takes several minutes to get through the intersection

at Murrey & Seabright. Often it takes two or three light cycles, because traffic is backed up for blocks. That's without a train. The added congestion of train service will make for total gridlock for hours. That sure doesn't help the environment. I'm all in favor of trail use, but trains will be a nightmare. This is just one of many intersections affected. Not a good cause for the environment or traffic flow. Don't go overboard trying to please tourists. As to commuting, you know no one will use it for that.

From: Rachel Kippen
Email address: Rachel@saveourshores.org
Submitted: 7/23/2015 11:10:14

I fully support the Rail Trail Project and encourage that we move forward on both. I would love to see a vibrant network of options for pedestrians, bicyclists and train commuters that reduces the traffic on our roads, encourages healthier lifestyles and, most importantly, reduces emissions and benefits our environment.

Thank you.

From: Tom Kirker
Email address: tkirker@pacbell.net
Submitted: 7/31/2015 11:30:47

The purchase of the rail line was presented to residents as rail service and a recreational corridor of biking paths and walking paths. It is now being presented to also be a partial solution to traffic congestion. To be effective for bike commuting the corridor needs to be two way traffic lanes separate from walking paths or it will not be used for that purpose. Many areas along the corridor will need to be widened at great additional expense.

All proposed stations in the survey are currently serviced by bus. Any added rail service would impact current bus use.

RTC should look to solving the Hwy 1 congestion. Hwy 1 at 41st Ave is the gateway to most retail shopping in Santa Cruz County. In addition, land development in Santa Cruz County is primary retail and high density housing as demonstrated by projects like Aptos Village with little thought to traffic mitigation. Primary employment is retail, local government, the service industry, and construction. Jobs in industry are over the hill and require commuting.

Any rail service should focus only on moving people to and from 41st Ave and to a transit point over the hill during peak commute hours.

From: Barry Kirschen
Email address: lifeisaboxofchocolate@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 16:04:13

It would be great if bikes were allowed to be brought onto the passenger trains so that one could bike to the rail trail, take the train for a segment or two and then debark with the bike and ride to work, shop or home. Bike racks on the Metro bus work like this. Bikes are allowed on Bart during non-commute hours.

From: Christy Kirven

Email address: xy@calcentral.com
Submitted: 6/25/2015 5:55:05

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Passenger rail service goes hand in hand with bike use. I have a broken leg and arm for now but have never owned a car and use bikes for most of my transportation, now 61 years old.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:
Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes
Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking
Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail
Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents
So far you have done a great job of getting things together! thanks for all the great work!

From: Manu Koenig
Email address: rskoenig@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 10:23:53

A train will cost more money than the County has and compromise the creation of a world class bike trail. Furthermore, no one will ride the train by the time it is completed 20 years from now. Self-driving electric cars will make our highway much more efficient by then. We do not need to invest millions upfront and in upkeep in ancient technology.

I commute from Corralitos to Downtown Santa Cruz, I WILL NOT RIDE. Driving to Aptos, parking, waiting for a train, paying \$5 there and \$5 back to aptos, just ain't going to happen.

From: Bruce Korb
Email address: Bruce.Korb@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/29/2015 14:19:25

So the anticipated revenue is 15% of full costs and cost overruns are rampant in estimations like this, so 5-10 percent revenue is a more likely result. But let's call it 15% for the sake of argument. Each boarding would have a fare of \$2.50, or a round trip fare of \$5.00. \$5.00 is 15% of \$35. So your best case scenario with maximal passenger load over the most attractive service area has a cost-to-society of about \$35.00 per trip. In truth, it won't be much help for commuters because neither end is near large employment centers.

This is not a good idea.

Please google "dual mode bus japan" -- <http://bfy.tw/50o>

and then consider *light* rail vehicles that can switch to road-mode at either end.

From: Jesse Koshlaychuk
Email address: jessejasmine@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/26/2015 15:37:15

I am in full support of this!!!! Please make it happen!!!

From: Chris Krohn
Email address: ckrohn@ucsc.edu
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:30:49

July 31, 2015
Chris Krohn
123 Green Street
Santa Cruz, Ca. 95064
ckrohn@ucsc.edu

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to offer input as requested concerning the "Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, Draft Report." I am a strong proponent of using both the rail line for passenger service as well as having it function as a bicycle route for school, jobs and recreation activity. I am pleased this project is before the community and the commission. Thank you.

I urge the Commission to take up the following issues in light of the Study:

- 1) We should not leave Watsonville out of the passenger rail scenarios. I doubt folks in south county will vote for the tax increase if they do not have a chance of using the rail line.
- 2) How would bicyclists keep bikes protected, secure from theft, and not be turned away due to limited on-board capacity for bikes? My experience is that most cyclists do not like to lock their bikes at Metro bike racks for example, for fear of losing it.
 - Please urge UC Santa Cruz to connect their current bike-hauling trailer service further down Bay Street to a future rail stop.
- 3) I am greatly concerned about connecting the Harvey West Park area to the proposed service line. I suggest including a connection with Big Trees and Pacific railway line.
- 4) Please address the issue of noise. I do not recall the issue of horns being a major complaint for example in San Diego or Portland, lines I am familiar with. Please provide more details, the current study does not address the noise issue enough.
- 5) Please provide more potential ridership number scenarios. We are not reinventing the wheel here (maybe we are for a community our size?), other cities have a track record. What is it? (See pages 24 to 33 where the Study lists some other systems and some key features, but it's light on detail in the ridership area.)
- 6) I would like to see independent reviewers (outside of Santa Cruz County) look at this study's statistics, graphs and scenarios and offer their informed analysis. In other words, has the current draft been peer reviewed?
- 7) Many times it seems to me college students are not included in our local population numbers. My question here is: are UC Santa Cruz and Cabrillo Community College students included in the ridership model?
- 8) We need to look beyond diesel toward electric rail. Has this been, or is it being explored? Electric trains (and off-setting it with solar arrays locally) would play well in the public debate about lowering our carbon footprint and actually being the energy and transportation change that we seek.
- 10) Please investigate the following: "what is the travel time in rush hour on Highway One between Soquel Ave and Highway 9 now that the auxiliary lanes have been installed compared to pre-widening conditions? (If congestion has not been noticeably reduced, what is the purpose of auxiliary lanes compared to the originally stated purpose of the highway widening project to add a carpool/bus lane?")

I commend the SCCRTC for promoting a public input process that actually invites the public in. I support the following three goals as we move forward with a tax initiative that needs two-thirds voter support. Any initiative that goes before voters must:

- Utilize the great potential that the rail corridor offers in all its multitude ways—pedestrian, bike trail and train passenger service;
- It must make significant use of monies collected in repairing and maintaining our existing streets and roads and improve bike and pedestrian safety, while expanding accessibility;
- We must refocus our energy (and money) on restoring and expanding bus service and specialized transit services for the elderly and disabled in our community.

Sincerely,

Chris Krohn
ckrohn@ucsc.edu

From: Ronald Kustek
Email address: kustek@comcast.nett
Submitted: 7/19/2015 9:33:13

Option E, which includes Aptos, maximizes the 3 goals of the project, and with Aptos having population concentrations equal to or greater than similarly defined areas of SC County, Aptos is a must-station for rail.

From: Louis LaFortune
Email address: lafort@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/6/2015 15:56:04

Creating rail service for Santa Cruz County is essential. As a Highway 1 commuter for ten years (Live Oak to Watsonville--"reverse commute"), I observed an increasing volume of cars northbound in the am, and southbound in the pm. The northbound morning backup, which ten years ago began around Bay/Porter, now begins at La Selva. For the greatest impact on reducing traffic, the rail MUST SERVE WATSONVILLE. It should also extend to Pajaro to connect with regional trains, which are in the planning stage. To do anything less is to miss the opportunity to reduce traffic, travel time and expense, and pollution for our county. The rail is there-- we must utilize it to the greatest extent possible.

From: Ruth Landmann
Email address: tddynewf@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/17/2015 10:21:00

I've lived in Copenhagen, Denmark; Chicago, Illinois; and San Francisco, California and did not need a car to get around. At one point in my life, all five members of my family each had their own car while living in Santa Cruz. Why? Because there is no adequate public transportation in this county. We don't have well scheduled buses or commuter trains that take us where we need to go.

As much as I like the bicycle trail idea, it's not practical for most purposes. In this county the bike paths tend to be 2 feet wide and on narrow streets, which makes bike riding hazardous for both the riders and the motorists.

Bike trails won't solve the transportation problems or needs of the people in this county. It's a great idea for recreational purposes, but for shopping or getting from Santa Cruz to Watsonville or San Lorenzo Valley, they won't work for many, many people.

From: Neal Langholz
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:25:02

Walking and biking trails make seem ideal along some if not all sections. Passenger trains do not seem economically productive except for tourist trains.

From: Lawrence Laslett
Email address: llja@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/3/2015 18:29:59

I have read the study and answered the online questionnaire. Not asked, that I would like to comment on, is my view of the equipment to be used. I think there are many advantages to "light rail" or "trolley" equipment rather than heavy locomotives. The former are less expensive, less noisy, and less polluting; in fact I fail to see any advantage to locomotives for this purpose.

From: Larry Laurent
Email address: larlar@yahoo.com
Submitted: 6/9/2015 16:41:25

In addition to my concerns about sharing a too narrow corridor sharing incompatible and potentially hazardous uses, I cannot understand how the passenger usage numbers were calculated. Assuming that the destination of for the passenger train is Santa Cruz, of the top 10 employers, only one is definitely within 1/2 of a mile of the train. So in order to get to their place of employment, the passenger will have to board another form of public transportation, which will not happen.

<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showdocument?id=41833>

I love train travel, I commuted via train for 5-years on the east coast, but there existed a dense employment center and a sizable population. Santa Cruz has neither. The best use on the right of way is for bike/pedestrian travel.

From: Don Lauritson
Email address: lauritson@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/31/2015 10:26:02

I like the fact that this option is being studied. I think the option should be further studied and the corridor should not be turned into a trail only at this time.

I strongly believe that Highway 1 auxiliary lanes should be completed before much money is spent on a rail transit system. We have reached gridlock and local streets are extremely congested during rush hours. I will

not vote for a transportation tax unless Highway 1 aux lanes are included in it. Carpool lanes, ramp metering etc can be part of the auxiliary lanes project if they make sense.

I have serious concerns about the affordability of rail transit in our county because of low density development, lack of parking near stations and distance of many stations to destinations. If rail transit is difficult to afford in Santa Clara County, how can it be affordable here?

From: Carolyn Lawrence
Email address: joelaw95219@yahoo.com
Submitted: 5/25/2015 20:04:44

From: Romain Lazerand
Email address: romain.lazerand@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/21/2015 3:07:17

Hello,

To whom it may concern:

I have grown up and lived all over Santa Cruz, from Sand Dollar to Seascape, via Aptos, Capitola and Seabright. Not just to surf, but to work (Nordic Naturals), I used to ride my bike all over the place. However, the ride from Seabright to Watsonville proved not just to be physically hard, but mentally draining as there are no bike lanes along Freedom or San Andreas road, meaning cars were zooming by at incredible pace and I had a few close calls. The public transportation of Santa Cruz has improved over the years but is still not up to par if you want to get around. Moreover, highway 1 has become a torture for all commuters. However, the Santa Cruz community is very active and the weather permits us to always be outdoors. Imagine having a pedestrian / bike path cleared from any motor vehicle? You would open the road for many people to get around Santa Cruz on a safe path. This would not only allow people to commute or to enjoy nice long strolls on weekends, but it would also take away cyclists from the main roads and make it safer for everybody. While the revenue from it will not be as grand as people paying a railcar, the revenue saved from road accidents, cost of upkeep, and cost of keeping the railcar active completely overtakes a direct revenue. How many more cyclists - car accidents do we need to have before we realize we need to make a proper non-motor operated lane for people to travel around the Monterey Bay? I have moved from Santa Cruz recently to a little beach town named Hossegor - Capbreton in France. Here, all the bike lanes are separated from the road by a small cement bumper that cars cannot get over. To be honest, I have not seen any cyclists incidents with cars yet... I hope that when I return to Santa Cruz, I will not have to worry about cyclists on the road, or worry about cars while biking.

Cheers,
Ro

From: Heather Lee
Email address: hlee.tax@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 17:46:33

Please allow DOGS. I believe this will increase ridership. Did you realize that dogs are not allowed on the bus? For those of us who cannot drive, it limits our options significantly. I frequently bum rides even when timing isn't convenient.

From: Jascha Lee
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 5/29/2015 13:20:55

Rail is by far the worst option if you are serious about transporting people. At best it would be an expensive tourist curiosity. At worst (and more likely), it will be a money pit that drains money away from transportation projects people actually use. Rail is a favorite project for people who don't like the "public" in public transportation. A romantic notion for people who would never take the bus and make themselves feel better for supporting as they drive to their destination.

If you want to actually provide transportation and are determined to make use of the right-of-way, run buses on the line.

From: Ryne Leuzinger
Email address: ryneleuzinger@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 11:57:11

Santa Cruz County is in dire need of non-car transportation options. For far too long Santa Cruz and so many other parts of the United States have ignored the benefits of passenger rail. Having recently traveled in England and Scandinavia (where adequate rail transportation is a given even in smaller cities) I was dispirited to return to Santa Cruz and its traffic congestion and the wasted time and money that this entails. In this process we need to look at not just international examples of well functioning transit systems but also forward thinking cities in the U.S. -- Portland, Denver, et al. If public transportation options do not improve in Santa Cruz in the near term I believe many young educated residents (such as myself) will be leaving for cities that support a more forward thinking approach on issues such as this. I hope that my fellow residents of Santa Cruz support the rail initiative and come to the same conclusion that I have -- that the only thing more expensive than a well functioning public transit system is not having one!

From: Thomas Long
Email address: Longondsgn@aol.com
Submitted: 7/16/2015 17:34:36

Why do we need a full blown train, we have a great track system, we could use a system of Motor cars, such as refurbished school buses, fitted with the wheels that track workers use on their service vehicles, big and small. The idea would take work, but the options are endless

From: Pat Lordan
Email address: plordan2@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 21:45:53

Given the number of grade crossings in our community, the train would be forced to go slowly. I wonder if there's an estimate of the time it would take to go from Watsonville to downtown Santa Cruz or from Aptos to Santa Cruz. I remember how long it used to take the old freight train to get through a street crossing. It felt inconvenient then, but now with traffic so much worse it would be a greater frustration to drivers. I'm also concerned about safety at those grade crossings. If the train were elevated, it would be a great asset to the community. But at street level, I think it would cause as many problems as it would relieve.

From: Saskia Lucas
Email address: saskia_lucas@yahoo.com
Submitted: 6/24/2015 12:16:00

To Whom it May Concern:

Of the Preferred Service Alternatives, I support Option 1, with local service from Santa Cruz to Aptos initially, with the option to expand to Watsonville. This option is quieter and provides more frequent service. Low noise is extremely important for public/neighbor buy-in. Also more frequent trains will make it a more attractive option to customers. The advantages of Service Option 1 over Option 2 warrant the added investment required.

Expansion to Watsonville is very important too, perhaps initially just at peak commute times. However thought will need to be given to how passengers will reach their final destinations since the tracks are a 10-15 minute walk to downtown.

I would support a local sales tax measure that includes funding for passenger rail service.

Thank you! I am grateful for SCCRTC's leadership in expanding transportation options in our County.

From: Mihai M
Email address: mihman777@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 13:49:52

What is the highest and best use of our publicly-owned rail right of way?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to serve our community's transportation needs, BUT I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. I want the RTC to THOROUGHLY EVALUATE ALL OTHER OPTIONS before committing us to a \$600M+ passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

It seems obvious to me that a wide multi-modal transportation corridor could result in ridership numbers equivalent to what is being proposed for passenger rail at a fraction of the cost and also provide a pollution free, low noise, and safer alternative. There is a revolution going on in transportation today, with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths (that generate energy to pay for themselves and provide nighttime lighting), digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars. All of these products and services are here today or will be a reality in the near future.

Thank you for your serious consideration of my concerns regarding this important matter to all Santa Cruz residents.

Mihai M.

From: Jeff Mabert
Email address: jeffmabert@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/31/2015 20:01:13

I have a son with Autism and he can't drive. He needs public transportation to get around the county. He needs services to run closer to 24/7. Holidays with no bus service basically imprisons him at home. The rail service needs to operate weekends and holidays. Bus service, too. We are too concerned with saving money over helping people have the liberty to travel around the count.

From: Susan Mahler
Email address: suzimahler@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 7:54:03

No Train. 60 trains per day will generate noise, air pollution, and traffic, detrimental to property values, and not to mention cost, tax increases, and hidden cost such as station parking lots etc. Geez you guys, please this is not the solution for this corridor. Make it a trail for peds and bikes. It is the most economical, environmental solution proven by many cities around the country that have implemented this system. Trains are not the solution.

I am a home owner and pay my dues (taxes) to live in this beautiful city. Build the trail for people and they will use it. Guaranteed.

From: Linda Mandel
Email address: lindamandel@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/2/2015 13:57:25

I heard the train horn today. I imagined listening to this all day long. It would destroy the peaceful atmosphere in this community, not to mention, what it would do to property values. Public transportation is needed, but please reroute away from quiet neighborhoods.

From: Linda Mandel
Email address: lindamandel@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 6/4/2015 11:29:55

Environmental impact. Impact of noise, on local home owners. Effect on real estate values. Try locating the train near the highway, where it belongs, not on the ocean.

From: William Mansell
Email address: oldscouser@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/2/2015 12:58:54

I think that the project should go ahead sooner rather than later, and that given the amount of traffic on hwy 1 between Santa Cruz and Watsonville the longer line should be implemented first as opposed to the shorter one.

From: Robert Markstein
Email address: 1gough@msn.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 15:19:53

My own preference is for option G or G1. My reasons: Common sense and the ridership projections indicate that ridership would be greatest if it connected two cities -- Watsonville and Santa Cruz -- as opposed to connecting Santa Cruz with wealthier suburbs that are unlikely to give up auto travel options. On the other hand, the greatest potential riders are UCSC and Cabrillo students along with lower income riders in Watsonville traveling to work. Thus, any plan that seeks serious impact must include those three destinations.

Though G and G1 are among the most expensive options, they are also, far and away, the ones with the greatest ridership potential. I note that projections indicate a huge jump in ridership when a scenario includes Watsonville as a terminus.

I also favor a connection to Pajaro as a way to link with an emerging larger rail network. However, such an addition can wait, since the links in question are themselves years away from existing.

On the other hand, if the county pursues a piecemeal approach, starting small with only an option to expand as opposed to a definite plan, then the lower ridership between Santa Cruz and Capitola/Aptos will encourage naysayers to claim that they were right all along about low ridership projections. Effective rail travel cannot depend mainly on tourist travel between Seascap and Santa Cruz or similar plans.

I strongly favor an option that includes rail with bike paths. I would use such a path nearly every day. Such a path from Davenport to Watsonville would make Santa Cruz a premier location in the region for dedicated bike paths.

Those who advocated getting rid of the train tracks are fools. Tearing up infrastructure is almost never a good idea.

From: Christy Martin
Email address: cmartin@cm-squared.com
Submitted: 7/16/2015 16:33:08

I read the full report and appendices, and I was disappointed that the project was deemed feasible when it does not address the specific trade-offs of Santa Cruz County. Models based on San Diego and Portland don't seem relevant given that Santa Cruz is a sprawling suburban beach community that does not have a concentration of business centers, shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, professional sports teams, etc.

I did not feel that the report sufficiently considered the impacts of rail service along the existing tracks including:

1. Traffic contention at the 40 at-grade crossings, particularly those that are already heavily congested like 41st, 17th ave, Seabright, Downtown and Mission/Bay.
2. More detailed ridership and traffic reduction projections, particularly given that the proposed Scenarios E and S only cover a 6 mile corridor and do not include the Watsonville area. In practice, these seem like recreational use scenarios that will not result in meaningful traffic reduction and both commuters and recreational users would be equally or better served by accelerating the pedestrian/bike pathways.
3. Costs of establishing Quiet Zones in areas with a high density of at grade crossings. With the introduction of the train horn rule, an almost steady 100db train horn sounds for greater than 4 minutes as the train passes from the Downtown station to the westside station. This was not an acceptable noise level during the Train to Christmastown excursion trains, and is definitely not viable for daily train service.
4. How we will maintain long term funding for the on-going costs.

As an anecdotal example on item 2, I could not think of a single friend or family member who could use rail as a commute option for one or more of the following reasons:

1. They live and work along the 6 mile core segment, but the connections required to get to/from their home and work make it infeasible. For example, my 70 year old mother lives 1 mile from the Capitola station and works 1 mile from the downtown station. She can't walk or bike that distance and there aren't reasonable bus connections.

2. They work in Scotts Valley or Silicon Valley
3. They live in the San Lorenzo Valley
4. They work in the trades and need their own vehicle
5. They need to pickup/dropoff their kids on their way to/from work

I have used rail service extensively all over the world and am a huge believer in the benefits of rail when it is developed as an integral part of urban planning. However, retrofitting public transit on top of 100 year old tracks that are intertwined within residential neighborhoods and critical roadways does not seem like a good solution to our problems. Particularly when it diverts attention and funds from badly needed work on Highway 1 and pedestrian/bicycle pathways that serve a much larger segment of the resident and tourist population.

Thank you for your consideration,
--Christy

From: Jerry Martin
Email address: m_martin48@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 0:17:28

I hope there will be a way to allow Amtrak type Service into Santa Cruz.

And I would like to see you work with the LOSSAN and CRCC Groups. As they are looking to add and create new Train service from Los Angeles.

From: Ellen Martinez
Email address: ellen@ellenmartinez.com
Submitted: 6/8/2015 17:54:49

I oppose having any type of train run on the existing tracks. That includes passenger trains for commuting, dinner trains, or exhibition trains. I oppose any costs passed to the taxpayer for studies or construction of any train travel. Please discontinue this study and plan.

- Train travel is not the most economical way to move people. Huge cities, that have used trains for mass transit, are struggling to keep them operationally cost effective.
- The existing train tracks are not adjacent to the major employers in Santa Cruz County (e.g., government, UCSC) so will not lessen the commute problems on highway 1. Please conduct a final destination analysis to prove that the existing plan is a dysfunctional plan.
- If mass transit is to be provided, then it should be a solar operated vehicle that runs adjacent to the existing highway 1 -- not a train by the beach.
- Widening highway 1 to 3 lanes through Aptos should be the #1 priority.
- The existing train track corridor should be used for a bike and pedestrian path.

From: Jacob Martinez
Email address: jacobxm23@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 9:37:25

I am a resident of Santa Cruz County and specifically the Watsonville area. I have many concerns about the study and the project. The costs of this project seem to high for a transportation system that is not forward thinking an innovative. Passenger rail systems are an archaic form of transportation.

I also have concerns about the ridership of people from the surrounding Watsonville area. I don't believe that residents of Watsonville will ride the train in the numbers that the project hopes. Yet, Watsonville is the biggest community in the County and would be contributing significantly through taxes.

I would propose a vastly less expensive alternative of the route that would include bike path or alternative energy efficient vehicles.

From: jose martinez
Email address: joexmart@comcast.net
Submitted: 6/8/2015 18:14:03

The survey is very misleading and is assumptive close. Meaning the train is going to be implemented because the RTC wants it. My belief is the RTC purchased the rail line and now they must do something with the purchase, if you build it they will come. If the RTC continues with the implementation of a train on existing tracks then they will confirm to all that they are incompetent as leaders.

What is needed is improved bus service and lower fee's for passengers. As well as 3 lanes in each direction on Hwy 1 from the fishhook to Watsonville.

Lastly, implement a bike and walking trail...

From: Maggie Mathias
Email address: maggie@2ndnaturellc.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 15:19:05

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I fully support a rail-to-trail conversion that supports a bicycle and pedestrian path along our coast. I believe that this type of multi-modal transportation corridor would bring a number of recreational, economic and environmental benefits to our community.

I do not support a rail trail and passenger train service along this corridor. I believe it is too expensive, puts unnecessary pressure on our existing infrastructure, and will likely be outdated before construction even begins.

We have a chance to create an amazing resource for our County that could truly transform how people enjoy and interact in our County. It could be that path that links North & South County, bringing together the community in a way many people desire. And this could happen soon with an efficient use of resources.

From: Kathleen McCreesh
Email address: kpmccr@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/26/2015 14:14:42

I have lived in Santa Cruz County since 1995. It is a wonderful, enchanting place. I have followed the rail conversion process from its inception. When originally proposed, I did support the "dinner train" from Felton up to Davenport believing this would allow the county to meet the federal funding requirement for purchase of the rail line. Once this plan was adopted that would open the rest of the line to be dedicated to a recreational trail.

I have become more concerned with the way the plan is to be implemented every week!

I DO NOT support passenger rail service as a viable means to reduce congestion, commute time, etc, of the county transportation plan. I would challenge the RTC to survey who would use this line when offered as a passenger line versus a dedicated walking/biking path.

I hope to see the RTC come out in support of a dedicated walking/ biking path - no rail service allowed - for the long term health and enjoyment of the citizens of Santa Cruz County.

From: Peggy McCulley
Email address: peggy.mcculley43@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 16:43:07

Add volunteerism to your categories of employment.
Would like to see Metro collaboration to make trips as seamless as possible.

From: Brian McElroy
Email address: brian.mcelroy@driscolls.com
Submitted: 7/24/2015 14:36:44

I support a trail (without the rail). I believe that the cost of the rail project is too high, and will take too long to implement. I think that the community will benefit more from a trail project that allows for a wider trail and greater ease of movement. A trail without a rail will allow people to cross at more points and make greater use of the trail.

I believe that most people will use the trail for shorter trips, not longer commuting. I live in Davenport and commute to Watsonville. But I do not believe that a train on this line would ever travel fast enough to be practical for me to commute all the way from Davenport to Watsonville.

However, if the trail is made accessible, and wider, then I think you will have a lot of users that take advantage of mid range and short range commutes. New electric bikes and vehicles will make the trail more effective for longer commuting.

Let's save our tax dollars and provide a great trail that everyone will enjoy sooner. Such a trail will increase property values and encourage tourism.

Thank you.

From: Mardi McRae
Email address: mardipants@me.com
Submitted: 7/21/2015 5:14:19

Trail NOT rail!!!!!!

From: Tom Medeiros
Email address: tmedeiros@losd.ca
Submitted: 7/18/2015 13:04:58

My greatest concern is that the trail portion of the discussion is taking a back seat to the train. I would like to see us go forward with the trail, even if it were a temporary DG trail between the rails. It would facilitate the use of the track and open the pathway to more and more users.

By putting rail first, we are locking the trail portion into a losing timeline. No matter the rail decision, it will be litigated, delaying implementation even further.

I say build the trail, win allies, and move ahead with the rail service as momentum builds.

From: Karen Menehan

Email address: karenmenehan@yahoo.com

Submitted: 7/30/2015 9:28:10

I am concerned about the potential for train horns and crossing bells going off all day long, from morning into the night. When the Christmas Train was running, it seems the horn could be heard for miles. It was disturbing to people and animals, and the thought of this kind of noise outweighs the environmental benefits of a passenger train. Although I support public transport, I would support ONLY the bike/walk path over a train unless the train is quiet. Quiet trains aren't oxymoronic; I was just in Minneapolis where clean, quiet light rail operates, and many other cities operate such forms of public transport.

From: James Merritt

Email address: mail@jamesmerritt.name

Submitted: 7/26/2015 16:22:26

Dear Members of the Commission-

I write as a 25-year resident of Santa Cruz County, who has lived for significant periods in Seacliff, Capitola, and Santa Cruz. I own a car and drive it routinely. On occasion, usually when the car is in the shop or being used by someone else in the family, I will try to get around by public transit. When I lived in Capitola, I made a particular effort to commute to work in Watsonville via Metro bus. I cannot count myself among the fans of the bus system here. For several years, I worked in South San Jose, next door to a VTA light-rail station. After doing my best to keep an open mind, as I attempted to use VTA rail on several occasions, I cannot count myself among the fans of that system, either.

I like to ride on trains, but I have never thought that passenger rail service would be especially practical or desirable here in Santa Cruz County. The Draft Passenger Rail Study released this past May does nothing to convince me otherwise. I am particularly disappointed to see that the service options recommended for follow-up include neither Watsonville nor Pajaro (thus forgoing the potential to transfer to other rail service). If passenger rail is to have a significant impact in the daily life of County residents, it needs at least to connect Santa Cruz and Watsonville. As I recall, potential for the rail-trail to be such a transit backbone was an important selling point to the public, when the idea to purchase the corridor was presented to us.

Of course, even a full, passenger-rail "backbone service" from Santa Cruz through Pajaro, with connection to Amtrak, would be just a "line haul" operation. As with any such system configuration, commuters and other regular passengers would encounter significant "last mile" problems at the ends of the line and at several of the stations in-between. The neighborhoods in the vicinity of stations could perhaps immediately or, with some development, serve as satisfactory destinations for tourists and day-trippers, but "last mile issues" will definitely need to be addressed for people who have to go between the stations and their homes and workplaces. Most likely, bus service will be used for such purposes, but rail travel with bus transfer will also most likely result in excessively long commute times, if my own occasional experience, trying to get around without a car in this area, is any yardstick.

The authors of the Rail Study have NOT, however, recommended "backbone service." Instead, the service options they do recommend would yield what I can describe most charitably as a quaint "tourist attraction," almost an extension of the Roaring Camp railroad, in terms of practical utility and relevance to the daily lives

of County residents. I don't think that the public supported the rail-trail purchase with the intention of enabling the establishment of an amusement park ride. We need practical transit options.

I would like to see the RTC do a similar study that focuses on a mode of transportation that I think could address a number of our local transportation and environmental issues, including the question of how to use our rail-trail corridor most optimally: Personal Rapid Transit (PRT). You have already been made aware of PRT over the last several years, and so I will skip over the introductory information. Instead, I will point you to a recently published first-hand account of the SkyCube PRT system that was recently opened in Suncheon Bay, South Korea: <http://kojects.com/2015/07/20/suncheon-skycube-prt-ride/>

When examining material at the link, it is important to keep in mind that, while it successfully demonstrates the technical and mechanical feasibility of true, modern PRT, SkyCube was actually conceived and implemented as an amusement park ride in a line-haul configuration. A comparable, practical system for Santa Cruz would differ in several respects, most notably by employing less bulky infrastructure and by involving an interlocking collection of squared-off loops, each with one side running along the rail-trail right of way, and each with several offline "stops" (or "System Access Points"). Small, 2-4 person electric vehicles would automatically drive themselves, at speeds of up to around 30-45 MPH, around the local loops or switch to adjacent loops until arriving at the loops containing their passengers' destinations; then, they would circle the destination loop until arrival at the offline destination System Access Point. After delivering their passengers, empty vehicles would await new passengers, or drive themselves to other points nearby, where waiting passengers summoned them. The loops of guideway would be dedicated to PRT traffic and elevated, so as not to interfere with, or be affected by, ground level traffic or events. Because PRT vehicles go directly and non-stop from point of trip origination to point of destination, the one-way trip between Santa Cruz and Watsonville should take no more than 30 minutes -- more than an unimpeded auto trip, but appreciably faster than currently contemplated passenger rail, not to mention a rail trip with bus transfer.

I can readily envision loops serving the Westside and UCSC; the Boardwalk and downtown area; Eastside, Seabright and the Harbor; Live Oak and the area around Dominican Hospital; Capitola Villages and Mall; Soquel and Cabrillo College; Aptos, Seacliff, and Rio Del Mar, and several neighborhoods in Watsonville. I would expect a proper PRT study to propose such loops, perhaps several different alternative collections of them, and examine the feasibility of each option, just as the present study did for passenger rail. At the end, we would have a good idea of potential and likely ridership, as well as the number of guideway miles, System Access Points, and vehicles we would need to serve that ridership. The next steps could be to arrange for funding and solicit bids from PRT vendors, based on the solid requirements that the study would enable us to articulate.

Here are what I believe would be the key benefits of a PRT system that was based on a rail-trail "backbone" extending from Santa Cruz to at least Watsonville:

- * **RAPID:** Passengers spend less time spent in transit: direct, non-stop trips on elevated guideway mean no need for transfers or "mode switches," no possibility of getting stuck in ground-level traffic.
- * **CONVENIENT:** Passengers enjoy safe, secure, comfortable trips on their own schedule, potentially on a 24/7 basis. "Two-dimensional" interlocking loops instead of line-haul corridor route configuration allow passengers to enter or exit the system at places much closer to (easy walking distance from) their real starting and ending points.
- * **CONSERVES SPACE, ALLOWS SIMULTANEOUS MIXED-USE OF RAIL-TRAIL:** Since passengers will generally start and end their trips close to system access points, they will not generally need to drive to and park at "stations," thus eliminating the need for parking facilities as a factor in choosing locations for System Access Points and allowing the establishment of System Access Points in crowded, busy areas with minimal disruption. The elevated guideway has a small ground-footprint, which allows it to be constructed along the rail-trail while not crowding out pedestrian, cyclist, or rail traffic at ground level.
- * **HIGH POTENTIAL FOR FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY:** Depending on system popularity and level of usage, even if individual trip fares are similar to bus fare, operations costs and some portion of construction costs can be recovered annually from fare-box receipts and normal operating revenues alone -- no subsidy-per-ride is necessarily required, as is typical with bus or rail modes.
- * **ATTAINS ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS, REDUCES GROUND-LEVEL CONGESTION AND INCREASES SAFETY:** Automatic, electric vehicles can outperform all other feasible options, in hitting ambitious GHG-emission and fuel-efficiency targets, as set under AB32 and other governmental initiatives. The more popular the PRT becomes, the more ground vehicles are not used for trips. This will ease congestion on the roads, promoting

greater safety and a cleaner environment, while making a significant contribution to California's efforts to mitigate human effects on climate change.

* **RELATIVELY IMMEDIATE RELIEF FOR PASSENGERS:** Other PRT systems in the world have needed 3-4 years for construction and testing, after all studies were completed, permits received, and rights-of-way secured. It is realistic to think that we could have PRT in place and serving satisfied passengers before 2025. At that point, we would have a system that could serve the "amusement park ride" function of attracting and delighting tourists, but we would also have a practical transit system that would serve well the needs of County residents, every day, and more than justify the price paid to acquire the rail-trail corridor.

As this is in response to your request for input about the Rail Passenger Study, I will say no more about PRT for now, but I urge you to give this 21st century approach to transit the same courtesy that you have now shown approaches from the 20th and 19th centuries, in your long-term planning for the future. As far as passenger rail is concerned, I will close by repeating my belief that any service option, which doesn't connect Santa Cruz with Watsonville, is a non-starter. Thank you for considering my views and the information I have provided in this letter. I wish you the best of luck, in finding a path forward that will be of true and lasting benefit to all of your constituents.

From: Mark Mesiti-Miller

Email address: mark@dm5.biz

Submitted: 7/26/2015 9:16:14

After reading the study, I offer the following:

1. I'm in favor of developing passenger rail provided the service extends from Santa Cruz to Watsonville at a minimum and to Pajaro for connections to rail service beyond when available (scenarios G and J).
2. Given the high likelihood of future population increase and increased commuter traffic from the Pajaro Valley to/from Santa Cruz, providing an alternative mode of transit to the Hwy 1 commute is essential to reduce traffic congestion, reduce our carbon footprint (vehicle miles traveled) and improve the quality of life for commuters (providing reliable and timely service)
3. Extending rail to Watsonville is also a matter of economic and social justice. To not extend service to the Pajaro Valley would be a disservice to the many hard working folks who live in that area.

From: Dan Miller

Email address: Dmiller@rightnowconsulting.com

Submitted: 6/13/2015 13:23:45

No train please. Build the bike and walking trail

From: Mary Miller

Email address: marymiller12@gmail.com

Submitted: 7/31/2015 12:45:16

Dear RTC,

Please pursue the passenger rail plan - a plan which should have been in place years ago and is long overdue. An electric train would be amazing and technology is moving forward in this area which would make this possible. There is a revolution going on in transportation with electric bikes, new battery technology, solar powered bike paths, digitized smart buses, electronic carpooling, and electric and clean gas driverless cars, and Santa Cruz could continue to be seen as an innovative environmental leader by embracing electric trains.

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm convinced passenger rail utilizing the latest technologies is the answer.

Thank you.

From: Karen Mokrzycki
Email address: santacruzers@earthlink.net
Submitted: 7/26/2015 20:32:04

I haven't had an opportunity to read this in full and slowly and carefully enough to fill out the survey yet. I am very concerned that you should be holding community town hall meetings in neighborhoods to increase the level of participation. I believe there has been insufficient advertising. Not everyone subscribes to the Sentinel and I don't think anything has been sent in the mail. I believe many residents are unaware. While I think the individual items in the Goals 1 and 2 could be swapped or combined I will limit my comment tonight to this. I seem to have read somewhere in the document, perhaps I am mistaken about this, that the trains would coordinate their schedules to fit those of the buses. I think if you want a truly successful transportation system, you need to look at this the other way around, that it is the buses that are feeding the trains. I spent a long time living in and visiting large cities and one of them, Chicago, is the grand master. Many train lines, multiple forms of other transportation possible. Since we don't have that option here, partly our geography, I think you need to make the train the primary mode in people's mind order to obtain funding and support. Otherwise, it will continue to look like a dream sideproject instead of a core needed project. Thank you for all your hard work, but please go full on with advertising and meetings for the next phase.

From: Tom Moreno
Email address: tomref655@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 7:47:10

I believe the train is a bad idea, what with the impact of slowing traffic even further in the county. Also the impact of noise from a train in the neighborhoods would be terrible. However I do think the bike and walking trail is a GREAT IDEA and would be used so much more than the train.

From: Dean Morrow
Email address: upward_path@yahoo.com
Submitted: 5/25/2015 9:49:48

Though we recognize that the rail is important for all of the obvious and stated reasons, the first phase of this undertaking should be construction of the trail only from Santa Cruz to Capitola. The RTC would likely find thousands of residents and commuters taking advantage of the trail each day, especially for short distances.

Is it possible to run a natural gas or electric powered train instead of "a Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) vehicle?" Not only will the train horns and noise negatively impact thousands of residents who live on/near the rail line, but the pollution caused by the diesel engines would be a deal breaker. Neighborhood impact reports should be completed that clearly project the degradation of quality of life issues for the thousands of residents living next to the rail.

From: Tom Mullen

Email address: tommullen38@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/31/2015 13:45:23

I am concerned that not enough people will ride the train and that they will not be willing to pay the cost of the service. The number of cars that this train will take off the roads is too small to even matter. I think it is time to start charging people for the miles they drive to reduce road congestion. Money should be spent on keeping a really good and safe bus system to move people. It's much more flexible

From: Erica Murphy
Email address: erica.ann.murphy@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/12/2015 13:39:42

I am very much in favor of the train being a commuter train that goes the full distance between Santa Cruz and Watsonville. I am also a huge supporter of having a bike path next to the rail line. I would use both every week day and would no longer need to drive a car at all. This would be an amazing benefit to me and to the environment. Please do not make this train a recreation train only. Please do not cut the train service short and end the route in Aptos or Seaside. We have huge number of people driving between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. This train could solve a big transportation problem for our county. It is also extremely important that the train service go to Watsonville because this an under served part of our county. Many of our youth in Watsonville need transportation to Cabrillo College and jobs at the Board Walk and other places in Santa Cruz. Additionally, we have our County Court for family law in Watsonville and families will need to travel from Santa Cruz to access the court.

From: No Name
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/28/2015 17:56:43

I would like to see a point by point response to guest editorial in Sentinel a few weeks ago that painted a fiscal train wreck to coin a phrase if we proceed with rail. My guess is it would be far cheaper and transport more people to buy back right of way and make a bike path. Could even purchase ebikes with savings. Trips would be faster as well.

From: Misty Navarro, MD
Email address: Mnavarromd@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/6/2015 11:32:13

Please just put a bike path. No train. You're going to kill my property values and disrupt my piece as I live next to the track.

From: Andre Neu
Email address: anneu@cabrillo.edu
Submitted: 7/29/2015 16:11:05

I continue to believe that running enough trains back and forth to make them available at most needed times (and driving Highway 1 leads me to believe people are traveling both ways at almost all times) would require two or more going both directions at the same time. The few sidings you have wouldn't permit this. Either

more sidings would be needed along the line or parallel northbound and southbound tracks would be required (actually the best method). That would also mean rebuilding all or most bridges and trestles, and reducing the size of the trail. If such a plan even being considered?

From: Jeremy Neuner
Email address: jeremyneuner@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 13:53:12

I grew up in Northern Virginia, just outside of Washington, DC. My house was close to the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) rail trail (http://www.nvrpa.org/park/w_od_railroad/), which runs about 45 miles from Washington DC into the Virginia countryside (well, it was still countryside when I was growing up!). The trail followed the bed of the old railroad, which went out of service in the mid 20th century (the rails were mostly gone and preserved in only a few historic spots). The W&OD was a key feature of my youth and my first real ticket to adventure. Nothing was better than hopping on my bike as a kid and riding for miles with my friends (or running for miles with my high school cross country team). Later, as an adult, I used the W&OD to commute from my home in Arlington, VA, to my job in downtown DC. Everybody knew about the W&OD and lots of people used it and still do today. There was nothing especially picturesque about the trail (in fact, it served as a right-of-way for huge utility lines in many stretches). But it was safe, free, and convenient. And it was a destination for bicyclists, walkers, runners, and horseback riders from all over the region.

I can only imagine what a similar trail might be like in Santa Cruz County. It would be an enormous tourist draw. It would be an important transit corridor. And it would put Santa Cruz County on the map as one of those special places with a rail trail. But that's all we need: a trail. No rail. At least not along this corridor. I'm all for better rail/bus public transit options in Santa Cruz County. But this corridor is NOT the place to do it. Build a bike/pedestrian trail now. Like, right now. Forget about the rail. It's expensive to build and operate. And it will ruin the opportunity to make the bike/pedestrian path a special destination. Instead, let's find other ways to improve rail/bus public transportation options like 1) more public buses along the Highway 1 corridor, 2) more parking structures on the edges of town and more buses and/or light rail from those structures to the beach and boardwalk, 3) (GASP!) actually make Highway 1 a real 21st century road with metered access, HOT lanes, congestion pricing, etc. or 4) (GASP!) revive rail service over the hill from Santa Cruz to Silicon Valley.

Rail along the rail trail corridor is small thinking. Let's make an awesome bike/pedestrian trail NOW and then let's think BIG about how to improve transportation around the county....

From: Lisa Nielsen
Email address: lmniel@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 12:56:04

I believe we should move forward with the Rail Trail and set aside the passenger train component. The time to market for the passenger train is too great, the cost is uncertain, and the logistics have the potential to fragment our community in ways that could ultimately make the project not a possibility at all and divide our community in a very toxic ways. We don't need more of that. These and other factors seem destined to make the passenger train project set up to fail from the start. I would be curious to know if starting from scratch and picking a less complex corridor for the train, like down the center of the freeway, would cost less and be less disruptive.

Our community should be a model of healthy living and a rail trail is a perfect back bone to enable this behavior as a way of life, and not just for the wealthy or tourists. Saving money on gas, medical bills, and expensive insurance are a few things that come to mind. I work with a person who tries to ride his bike every day from Aptos to the Westside because it is faster. His tales of near misses and scary corners make him wonder if this is the smart way to get to work. He has young kids at home. He doesn't have a fancy bike. He doesn't make a lot of money. He wants to do the smart thing.

Having access to a rail trail is also great way to train our youth to make cycling the norm for transportation, not the exception.
While I think the passenger train would be great I believe it is too great a risk. We can't afford to do nothing.

From: Jim Noble
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/28/2015 17:52:56

Rail service might be useful; however, the best way to accomplish this is for government to basically get out of the way, other than to expedite implementation wherever possible. Rail service should be provided by the private sector -- if it's a viable idea, it will be done. If it isn't, it simply should not be attempted.

From: Richelle Noroyan
Email address: rnoroyan@cityofsantacruz.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 13:31:29

Dear RTC,

My hope going forward in the planning process is to include some sort of rail service that will move people from south to north county with connections to other rail transit services that go beyond Santa Cruz County. I understand the concerns people have in regards to the cost of rail service, but it is time to be bold and have a transit service that should have been installed 40-50 years ago. As a nation, state and county, we are woefully behind when it comes to mass transit. Keeping this trail only for walking and biking is a great idea if we already had a rail system, but we don't and there are plenty of people for a variety of reasons that cannot use a bike during the work week.

Thank you for all the work you're putting into this planning process. It is greatly appreciated.

From: not now
Email address: nn@aol.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 8:58:36

Drop rail and use \$, net returned ctc funds, for mbsst

From: Peter Nurkse
Email address: nurkse@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/3/2015 14:50:30

Draft report calls for integration with SC Metro bus services, an obvious requirement for successful regional transportation. Rail service is very fixed, people will need and want more flexibility, which buses can help provide.
But SC Metro is cutting back as fast as they can. They've got a plan from current public input, but that plan only addresses a part of their continuing deficit.
If we put more money into rail, for example, will it fail because buses have been cut back? Entirely possible. The draft study certainly assumes bus service at the current level, and that's not likely.
Seems to me the SCRTCC has a chance to take a Regional Transportation point of view here. Not just a rail point of view, or a bus point of view, or a highway point of view, but a Regional Transportation point of view.

Which seems to be missing in this draft report, seems of everyone involved only you can provide that true regional point of view.

From: Abe Obama
Email address: jesuschrist@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/28/2015 11:29:43

this survey is incredibly weak and useless. The person who designed it probably has an IQ of about 50.

From: Chris O'Connell
Email address: smokinoke@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 9:42:53

I fully support the RTC's effort to build a Rail/Trail that will take cars off the road, provide a safe venue for kids to get to school, adults to get to work or recreate upon, build community, increase business along it and improve the health of those who use it.

Keeping a viable train component that can evolve over time as new technology enables us to build more efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transport is key to it's success.

It will link communities and provide access to jobs for those without cars who are now virtually disqualified due to the lack of transportation. More community building and job opportunities for all.

In addition, efforts around the country show that public safety is vastly improved when there are lots of people recreating and commuting to work on a daily basis. Criminal elements don't like being around lots of people and go elsewhere.

Property values along these corridors also increase along with increased business activity.

Tourism is also a benefactor of these projects. For obvious reasons, more people with more access mean more revenue for tourist attractions.

Let's get behind this and move it forward!

From: Dave Osterhoudt
Email address: soqueldave@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 9:40:16

Considering the short distance between stops, noise levels, local pollution/annoyance of large diesels, and intrusive size of full size trains, it would make more sense to use a light-rail or passenger driven type of train vehicle. Perhaps if full electric is not viable, maybe some type of hybrid drive for smaller railed vehicles is available. In any case, smaller quieter vehicles on the rails would be more attractive and would generate less complaints that large locomotives that are designed to pull heavy loads long distances.

In the long run, if passenger rail service is not economically viable, using the corridor for bike and pedestrian access only would still be of huge benefit to the county. Perhaps there is a way to "buy out" the commitment funding that required rail service?

From: Brian O'Toole
Email address: brian.otoole5@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 10:54:13

Passenger rail in Santa Cruz County is alluring because there is existing (if inadequate) infrastructure. Buying right of way and constructing rail is prohibitively expensive if we were to start from scratch. In addition, Hwy 1 and many surface streets are horribly congested during commute hours. However, the only way I can imagine rail working financially is to make it a realistic tourist option for the beach lovers from Santa Clara County. If there was a rail line attractive and affordable to tourists with bus links to Downtown San Jose the rail option could work financially.

Right now, thousands of Santa Clara County residents load the family in the car on a weekend, suffer through Hwy 17, find expensive parking, spend the day at the beach or the Boardwalk and then suffer Hwy 17 again to get home. If you can find a realistic alternative to this sad scenario that supports commuter rail during the weekday, rail MIGHT be financially feasible.

We know from enough examples throughout the world that commuter transit only works with high density. We have a low density community and that is not likely to change. So, on its face, transit in Santa Cruz County is nonsense. However, given the existing infrastructure and the potential of tourist ridership to carry a large part of the financial burden, it is worth looking at.

From: Lee Otter
Email address: Lee.Otter@coastal.ca.gov
Submitted: 7/24/2015 17:07:37

A comment letter has been drafted for signature by Coastal Commission Deputy Director Dan Carl, and is currently undergoing internal review. Expect to deliver this coming week. Thanks for the opportunity to review the Study!

p.s. Because I am now a retired annuitant employee, and will not always be up to the moment in reading my email, please also submit all email replies and notices to our Statewide Transportation & Development Liaison, Tami Grove. Her email address is Tami.Grove@coastal.ca.gov.
Best, LO

From: Nolan Paul
Email address: nolanapaul@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/20/2015 15:55:30

Is there any way that we can forgo the railroad and just have it be a bike/walk path? As a 29-year-old, I know that my generation would benefit much more from an incredible outdoor experience - which we would use everyday - than from a railroad, which is more of an attraction. The thought of having a route from Pacific Grove to Davenport would be one of the world's most scenic pedestrian paths. Pure unspoiled beauty. Please don't ruin it with a railroad and fences! It's not in the spirit of Santa Cruz county.

From: Jan Pearson
Email address: janpearson@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/13/2015 9:11:43

I live in the Freedom area of Watsonville and work full time in Monterey.
I would love to ride a commuter train from downtown Watsonville to downtown Monterey.
The traffic is very bad in both directions and I think it would be a good option for both commuters and tourists.
I don't know if rail lines go through Moss Landing, but it could boost tourism to that area and the Elkhorn Slough area as well.

From: Joan Peterson
Email address: jomic@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 12:34:47

This is not a comment on the Draft Report itself, but rather on the impact passenger rail service will have on my neighborhood. I live 2 1/2 blocks from the tracks at Bay/California, and during the time the Train to Christmastown was running, there were horns blasting every half hour. Even when the horn was changed out to be quieter, it was clearly and loudly heard at my house - I suspect the decibel level exceeds the city noise ordinance. In one case I timed the blast and it went on for 24 seconds (continuous). Because of the location of the tracks relative to the houses between California Street and Almar Avenue, the horn must be sounded almost continuously.

I have lived in this house most of my life, and when the regular freight service was running, the horn sounding was much quieter. I realize there are federal regulations requiring the sounding of horns, but there is a huge quality of life/property value issue here that I suspect will bring lawsuits before the service can be instituted.

As much as I support rail service, it is COMPLETELY unfeasible to think that a passenger rail service using the current rail lines will ever be cost-effective. If it went from Santa Cruz to San Jose, it would be a different story, but the amount of ridership between Santa Cruz and Watsonville will never be enough to support the cost. Better to invest in a more comprehensive bus system, which would provide a better payoff. And like it or not, Highway 1 must be widened to 3 lanes all the way to Watsonville. This doesn't need to be an all or nothing situation. Widen Highway 1, massively increase bus service (including express buses to places like Cabrillo, Capitola, UCSC and Watsonville), and if rail service must be included, make it light rail with the least possible impact on the neighborhoods it will be traveling through or stopping at.

From: Amy Pine
Email address: rgc@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 20:32:43

I would like the rail trail. I think that this community would be responsive to using it, reducing the carbon footprint, and creating an environmentally caring, low impact avenue for bikes, pedestrians, etc.

From: Michael Pisano
Email address: mpisano@ucsc.edu
Submitted: 6/12/2015 16:55:39

How about later times available for Service Workers;
ex: restaurant workers

How about later times available for Fridays & Saturdays;
ex: for Dining

From: Serge Pond
Email address: sergeles@cruzio.com
Submitted: 6/3/2015 15:24:48

Train goes nowhere. County should not own a money pit railroad. Noisy and impacts traffic at every street crossing. It is for a few diehard railroad buffs. Let's fund mental health and the homeless shelter. I am very against this railroad thing. It is piggy-backed with the bicycle trail to get it approved. We want the trail, not a railroad. Why not fix our roads?

From: Serge Pond
Email address: sergeless88@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/27/2015 8:04:43

I think the train is a bad/negative thing that we have no business operating. It seems to me, we voted it down twice. Somehow the die-hard railroad hobbists linked it up with the bicycle forces. with the train, there is no room for bicyclists and walkers. the train goes to nowhere; on the East coast. the towns were built around the trains. This modern california is about cars. Train is slow, noisy, and interrupts traffic. I think it is a bad thing, a waste. Use taxpayer money for fighting mental illness, and social problems. Mass transit cannot sustain itself-money losing bus system; no way the train is going to make money. Bad Idea. Anyone can hire a "study" to support anything.....They need to give it up, and make a good pedestrian/bike path.

From: A. D. PORCELLA
Email address: adporcella@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 10:50:04

I read or skimmed the entire Draft Report, with a growing sense of unease and despair when I consider the unreality of doing anything so visionary in this benighted nation, even in a place as progressive as Santa Cruz. My first concern was with the "american exceptionalism" nature of the study, always comparing proposals to other U.S. rail / trail systems instead of systems worldwide. I hope the authors have lived in several of the western european or scandinavian countries for several years (as I have), including comparable smaller cities with regional rail lines to other cities, e.g., Varberg and Göteborg, Sweden, where a resident of a smallish west coast city very much like Santa Cruz can ride a bike down to the station, and board the coast train to a city roughly equivalent to San Francisco, in other words, a slick, high-speed (43 minute) commute. . . As well as riding and studying light rail and city trams in cities all over. I do hope someone spent some years doing this worldwide before issuing this study. If we're really concerned with providing a 21st century solution, I'm surprised we aren't just importing wholesale the experts and engineers from Netherlands or France or Singapore, as was done by Third World colonies in the 19th century, i.e., hiring advanced countries to help out the backwards ones. WE DON'T DO TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE in this country, we do warfare; why pretend otherwise? My belief in what is feasible: build the bike trail now, and in some far distant future, when politics and economics have been restructured in america, think about doing rail. I'm willing to ride my bike from the far West Side to 41st Ave DESPITE the current dangers; why not make Santa Cruz County safer for bicyclists by improving the rail ROW? Spend some time in Holland -- they have long-distance bicycle HIGHWAYS that are not associated with any auto or rail roadways. I reiterate: build the hike / bike trail!

From: Melinda Powers
Email address: meljeffaptos@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/30/2015 8:36:29

I am opposed to the rail line running through Seascap every 15 to 30 minutes. I am opposed to a passenger rail line running through Seascap period. The impact to our neighborhood, which hugs so closely to this old rail line, would be beyond detrimental. Los Angeles added a rail line to their existing freeways, which should be done here if passenger rail transit is deemed necessary. Count me as a solid NO.

From: Ursula Puglizevich
Email address: ullap@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 5/29/2015 15:49:54

Absolute "NO" vote again. This is the same proposal (running a passenger train)that the Seacliff Group nixed a few years ago. Ellen Corbit and the Seacliff home owners used to meet at the Aptos Public Library periodically to discuss. It was voted down!!!

Bottom line remains the same "Use it or Loose it"! You have a portion of the money from the State. The State requires you "To use it or Loose it." Simple as that!!! No need to waist any more tax payer money on this project, which clearly will become a tax payer burden!

We had it shelved then....this time, cancel this taxpayer burden for good!!!!!!

The Seacliff Group will fight it againall the way! No need to keep rearing its ugly head ever again!!!

From: Mark Ransler
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/27/2015 10:29:15

Why is RTC putting all its energy into focusing on train service. The cost, the issue of tussles being to narrow, ongoing cost, and how is this going to be supported financially over time? Why isn't the RTC not looking more into eco-friendly travel tourism such as bike/walking trails. The media like Sunset Magazine would promote the scenic views and health benefits of using the trail for bike races, group excursions and family day trips. The bike/walk paths could increase restaurant and hotel business for Santa Cruz. A bike path could be a great way to get around and get to work in Santa Cruz.

From: Tom Rath
Email address: trath1@att.net
Submitted: 6/22/2015 12:04:34

I just completed the survey. I have been a member of Rails To Trails Conservancy since 2005. I get a quarterly magazine that details rails/trails projects all over our country. I strongly support a rail/trail corridor in our County. Calif is sixth largest economy in the world. Other states are way ahead of us with their rail/trail projects with far fewer resources. For a county that portends to be environmentally conscientious, it saddens me that this project is running into so much resistance yet we commute Hwy 1 South weekday afternoons from fishhook to Park Ave at New Brighton stop-and-go at 7mph. This creates enormous amounts of pollution. The commute North in the mornings backs up at San Andreas road in Aptos. I also think the loud creaky old Union Pacific rock laden train left a lasting negative impression. I support single rail high efficiency low pollution quiet small push/pull trains. These trains have seats facing opposite directions on each side and bicycle corrals at the boarding points. Two would be perfect to provide short waits and quick travel times. They could divide their distances based on ridership needs and even make adjustments on weekends. Iowa Pacific would be well served to bring one in and give all stakeholders free demo rides so they could experience first hand what we could all have available in the near future. Finally, thank you for your continued support

and commitment in making this a reality for not only this generation but for generations to come.

From: Miles Reiter
Email address: Miles.reiter@driscolls.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 19:34:59

The feasibility study was, as stated, focussed on the potential of rail service along the Santa Cruz Branch Line. It was specifically not intended to assess the highest and best use of the subject property, which may or may not be rail service. Of the two recommended scenarios, Scenario S struck me as a relatively cheap, but completely inadequate, use of this valuable property. The line is tied up for slow and somewhat irregular service. This is a waste of a great resource and would do almost nothing to diminish congestion in the county.

The preferred option E is the one upon which I will comment further, as it does have some apparent merit. The 9.5 mile run is anticipated to cost \$85mm in capital costs and \$3-4 mm in annual operating subsidies. The ability to execute on this scenario is dependent upon a half cent sales tax and lots of outside funding. A deeper look indicates that most of the actual individual trips are likely to be 3-5 miles in length (page 101). Rides of this length could be done much more easily in about the same amount of time on a bicycle. There would not be station or various last mile issues and costs that are associated with rail service. Trips would shorten even more by bicycle, relative to rail, between individual users start and stop points for trips of the anticipated length.

While the average speed traveling between end points of Scenario E is 24.8 mph, that number includes 9 stops. The actual train speed between stops must be 45-60 mph according to the study, in order to maintain the desired transit time. This speed is frightenly fast for the densely populated areas through which the train will travel. There are many cross streets, which will add to the danger and congestion as the train zooms by at these speeds, roughly every 15 minutes.

The Feasability Study concludes that Scenario E, the most practical and preferred option, makes the train feasible. I believe a close reading demonstrates that it is not an attractive option, at all. I feel strongly that this effort to understand the practicality of train service on the Santa Cruz Branch Line has demonstrated very clearly that rail service is not realistic nor is it a preferred use of this connective corridor.

From: Philip Rice
Email address: philipr@cruzio.com
Submitted: 6/28/2015 17:18:57

Note: on the Rail Study page, I tried to use the Email link, but sending it caused a delivery failure. I am trying again, based on the email address from another page at your site. Both addresses look the same to me, so I don't know why I had this failure the first time:

Delivery to the following recipient failed:

info@scrtc.org

Technical details of this delivery failure are below:

Message Ref ID: 1435535566.98904.ams1-mh933

Error Message from Destination Mail Server:
530 5.7.1 Client was not authenticated

From reading sections of the Rail Study, I have a few impressions.

Acceptance will be far greater if we can avoid the required loud horns on locomotives. From a recent article in the Sentinel, it seems that road crossings could deal with the safety requirement, and avoid the loud horns. Even though that would not be ideal for the many nearby residences along the line (especially with frequent scheduled traffic through the day), it would at least be more manageable.

I think acceptance will also be better if we have EMU rather than diesels. This project is supposed to be about environmental effects, and this town should be progressive enough to accept a higher initial cost for this kind of benefit.

I see mention of bicycle lockers at stations. Allowing bicycles on the train would help with acceptance. A transfer to a bus would require extra waiting time, and make people less likely to use the service.

Ridership estimates were much higher than I expected. Of the people who voted for high speed rail a few years ago, many are regretting that vote, with the reality of overall cost effectiveness setting in. The biggest damage is that credibility will make other rail projects less likely. Success for local rail will depend on gas prices going up enough so people see transit as a good option. I am familiar with success of light in Minneapolis. The initial route was between downtown and the airport, which allowed sufficiently high ridership. I have trouble seeing how we have anywhere near that attractiveness here, until high gas price and/or other factors change the attitude.

I live on the west side of Santa Cruz, and I see that funding is already available for the west side trail development. Maybe this can be done right away because it is sufficiently wide so shifting the rail sideways is not necessary. I am baffled at the priority for this section at this time, because I feel relatively safe riding my bike between west side and the river. The true need is for a way to cross the river. I typically need to go by way of Broadway, which has noticeably more traffic, so safety is more questionable. I see a ramp installation at the river next to the Boardwalk, and I wonder if that implies a continued use of the existing pedestrian ramp on the south side of the river. I think I saw a sign on the north side that we must walk our bikes, which hints that this would not be the permanent solution for bicycle trail traffic. I mention all of this because a west side development down to the river is of relatively modest benefit in the near term, compared with the river crossing. I see that there has been a ribbon cutting ceremony for a bike/pedestrian crossing at the river, and I can only hope that is much better than the new ramp, with its 180 degree switchback that is only good for a pedestrian. The existing ramp/sidewalk use on the other side is entirely too cramped for navigation, even when someone walks a bike instead of trying to ride.

From: Lulu Richey
Email address: Langalang2000@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 16:09:10

After reviewing all the information I do not think this is a good plan. I don't think it will help the traffic congestion and it costs too much. I would say no to this Rail Trail.
Thank you

From: Elke Riesterer
Email address: eletouch@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 2:53:34

Hello

I live right next to the tracks and I am concerned about the impact the constant noise of the trains will have on my well being. I bought the house knowing the trains come only a few times. In the past three times a week on off and on days. Any consideration has been given for the residents along the line??? Also who is cleaning the trail along the tracks?
Many homeless and others sadly leave their trash behind.

Best
Elke R.

From: Kate Roberts
Email address: kate@thewiredwoman.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 15:59:12

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you,
Kate Roberts

From: Katerina Robinson
Email address: katerina.l.robinson@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 21:43:50

Hello--

I am very glad to see Santa Cruz finally considering a passenger rail system after many years. A passenger rail will reduce vehicle miles travelled in Santa Cruz, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve quality of life for many Santa Cruz residents who will be able to take the rail from home to work and school.

I feel strongly that the project should move forward as a joint passenger rail and bike/pedestrian trail system. Bike and pedestrian trails are crucial to a truly connected and multi-modal community, but not all citizens can use a bike or pedestrian path for their daily commutes. Older citizens, parents with young children, parents working multiple shifts, or even just people with nowhere to store bikes or nowhere to shower or change into work clothes will have a hard time utilizing the bike path for daily commutes. Even as a young, able-bodied citizen, I would have a difficult time biking to work every day. A passenger rail system would be more effective at permanently removing traffic from our congested freeways, as people shift from driving to commuting on the rail. Though a rail is more capital intensive, the investment will pay off in longterm improvements to traffic congestion and improved productivity and quality of life for many Santa Cruz and Watsonville residents.

Lastly, I will say that I grew up next to the rail line in Aptos (we live on Pinehurst Way) and I remember the trains running through town until very recently. We never felt there was a problem with the amount of noise they produced, and I loved going to see the train roll by when I was a child. I do not think there will be significant noise impacts to the community caused by re-opening the rail line.

I truly hope the RTC moves forward with the project as proposed and thank staff for their hard work.

Best,
Katerina Robinson

From: jenn rod
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 5/22/2015 12:16:53

test

From: sara roe
Email address: sara_roe@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/13/2015 14:51:31

please note that while I dont take public transportation currently is it because the system as is in inconvenient. however the train tracks are near my house and thus if there were sufficient times, I could take them to work in watsonville high... I would love that!!!!

From: Manuel Rosas
Email address: manuel.rosas@driscolls.com
Submitted: 7/20/2015 8:18:25

I fully support this project and in particular, I strongly advocate for the bicycle and walking trail. We need to have more suitable tracks for pedestrians and cyclist as it is in some European countries (the Netherlands) and US cities such as Davis

From: Linda Rosewood
Email address: lindarosewood@earthlink.net
Submitted: 6/12/2015 14:11:10

I just finished the survey.

I wanted to add that the questions were all about how I would use the rail/trail. I don't think I would use it that much, so I'm concerned that my answers to the survey don't reflect my views. This is a regional asset, but my transit needs are already provided for me because I live close to the Metro and take the bus to work. Just because *I* don't need it doesn't mean I'm not in favor of it.

I'm concerned that the people who would use a regional train most often aren't going to be included in the survey. I get terrible, twisted emails from the folks who want to "pull the rails." They are overtly trying to take this asset away from people who are now commuting from Mid-and South county (and Monterey Co) to jobs in Santa Cruz and beyond. But are those people who are suffering a 90 minute commute getting invited to this survey? I hope so.

I get it that for the purposes of the survey you need to know who would actually use it. But even if I didn't use it, I would vote for a tax to pay for it, because it would be a benefit to the place I live in and to people in this area in general. So I wish that there had been questions about my larger commitment to regional assets rather than just my own little self-absorbed universe. I know that most people are only listening to their own needs but I'm sure I'm not the only one who is sick of paying taxes to widen Hwy 1 for Aptos commuters, while trains are expected to pay their own way. The "per ride cost" is a red herring. None of the car commuters are paying "per ride" either. It's all a "free way for them." Same with the train.

From: Deepika Ross
Email address: deepika.shresthaross@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 13:12:33

Having lived most of my adult life in cities with great public transportation options (Washington DC, London, UK and New York City) I applauded the idea of the Rail Trail when I first became aware it was in the works.

But after living here for a while and being one of the few people who actually commuted to San Francisco for a year and half on public transportation (3 different modes), I feel qualified to say there is no culture of public transportation in this area. People only take it if they have no other option. We already have a bus system that very few people use, and perhaps may only be financially viable because of the UCSC Student Transit Fee.

This is not to say that people don't care about the environment, or feel that public transportation isn't a noble goal...they just find it inconvenient, even if it might save them some money and in the process, reduce carbon emissions.

While I lament the lack of a public transportation culture here, I do not subscribe to the "build it and they will come" notion of development. This has perhaps worked in the past, in more authoritative political systems. The Paris we see today is largely the vision of Baron Haussmann, but it came at a huge cost (financial and human).

So - I am NOT convinced that a Scenic Trail Network that includes a train is worth the initial big investment, and the continued yearly operational cost.

Interestingly, I see that the stated Project Goals could all be achieved WITHOUT an actual train system being implemented, and wonder if this was intentional...

I whole heartedly support a "continuous trail alignment that maximized opportunities for multi-use bike and pedestrian trail" that develops and enhances access and appreciation of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, especially if this can be done without running foul of the agreement to maintain the rail lines that was reached when this access was acquired. I do know that people will come up with many innovative ways in which to use the trail - green options that are also convenient to their lives - that we cannot yet envision, so creating a "rail bank" makes sense for the future. But an actual train and all the infrastructure that requires? No, I have a hard time supporting that based on this report.

Sincerely,

Deepika

From: David Ross
Email address: headhunt@stellareng.com
Submitted: 5/29/2015 11:38:55

I am against spending any money on this. Rail service to San Jose and San Francisco is more important. A good bike path to Watsonville would be better. WE HAVE BUS SERVICE TO WATSONVILLE ALREADY

From: Holt Ruffin
Email address: mhruffin@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 11:55:58

I oppose public monopolies of transportation services and wish this study had included some exploration of schemes which would allow regulated, private transportation services such as buses, jitneys, the leasing of "curb rights," and various contracted transportation options.

In general a major weakness of this report is the absence of financial and economic analysis. Numerous questions were posed as if the costs were irrelevant, or as if they could be answered without price and cost data. The answers to such question border on being worthless.

I also feel that it would help to have set this study in the context of a larger and more visionary approach. What about having frequent light rail service that goes all the way from Davenport to the Monterey Peninsula as well as Watsonville and Salinas?

From: Reed Rylander
Email address: reedrfelton@aol.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 11:41:47

Train service will just ruin what could be a world famous bicycle-hiking path. Keep it simple, cost effective and safe. The trains will always be expensive to operate and maintain and will not be a tourist draw. 20 years from now the bicycles will be cheap to maintain, the rails and cars will need to be replaced.

From: Bill Samsel
Email address: bill@ebold.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 13:58:06

I read the draft report. As it states, further study is necessary to more accurately know the true costs and actual ridership numbers. I don't believe and the draft seem to indicate that the numbers of people who will ride the train will not cover the initial and ongoing maintenance costs. Therefore we the residents will have to subsidize the costs.

I oppose using the rail line as a future form of transportation. I see some people using the rail line for transportation to and from work. Beyond that I don't see many uses for it. Who will use this form of transportation to visit a friend some distance away or to do their grocery shopping.

The report cites that the rail line is within one mile of 42 schools. I don't see the relevance. How many students live that far from their schools that getting to the train and then probably taking a bus is more convenient.

The report says that the "scenario with trains limited to morning and evening peak commute hours, serving significantly fewer stations had the lowest ridership estimate of 1,100 per day". I would think that the commute hours are a most crucial part of establishing the rail line. Yet, you estimate only 1,100 riders per day. This is such a small number compared to the thousands of people commuting throughout Santa Cruz County each day.

I have lived in Santa Cruz for 40 years. In the time I have lived here using such a rail line as my transportation to work would not have been practical because I have worked on the eastern side of the freeway and lived over a mile from the rail line.

I didn't fill out the survey because it assumes I am expressing my preferences only related to the option of the rail line.

I do support the biking/walking use of the trail.

From: Peter Sardellitto
Email address: payrollpeter@hotmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 15:11:26

I have reviewed this web site for the first time today and am impressed with the thoughtfulness that came before.

Point 1:

More people will cheer the project if we remain sensitive to potential noise complaints and try to select non- or lesser- polluting vehicles. This train needs to get along with its neighbors!

Point 2:

When evaluating the "success" of this project ridership figures will be important. The train route as currently imagined offers no incentives for use to the tens of thousands of commuters going to UCSC every week day. If the project could be routed directly up to any part of UCSC the "win" for rail, for Santa Cruz, and for UCSC would be huge. It would mean guaranteed ridership as options for driving or the bus would become less attractive. If possible, this solution would likely also be preferable for cranky Westsiders.

I would at least like to hear addressed:

- * whether the path of the train can still be open for discussion.
- * whether UCSC has been approached with the idea.

From: Bruce Sawhill
Email address: bsawhill@ucsc.edu
Submitted: 6/4/2015 13:25:03

To the RTC and its commissioners:

We are greatly encouraged by the findings of the RTC rail study. It indicates to us that some form of rail transit in Santa Cruz County is both attainable and beneficial, though many details remain to be worked out. There are very few communities of this size that could support a rail transit system, but a well-placed rail corridor coupled with unusually high population densities and a population that is ready for alternatives to driving make it possible. We look forward to working together to make this a reality.

Our recommendations going forward:

1. No transit system can be everything to all people. Better to start with a smaller system executed adroitly than a large system executed problematically. Benefiting a subset of the population directly will benefit the whole population by improving traffic flow elsewhere and other measures of quality of life.
2. Make every effort to reduce future operating costs by careful planning and execution, even if it costs more upfront. Upfront costs happen once, operating costs go on forever. Since money from other sources will likely be available to defray upfront costs (the Federal "Starts" programs, California cap and trade, etc.), it makes sense to spend more upfront so as to spend less later and reduce the required subsidy. Cut costs everywhere but efficiency and safety (no fancy stations!), and spend extra for a system that is low-maintenance, lightweight, low energy usage, and quiet.
3. Coordinate with Metro. The County is too small to afford multiple transit agencies. And, moreover, work with Metro to create a coordinated transit system where buses and trains work together in terms of transfers and timing for smoother and faster transit through the County. The overall goal should be to serve more people for the current Metro budget or the same amount of people for a smaller budget.
4. Reach out to the educational institutions, primarily UCSC and Cabrillo College. There are a lot of students and staff at both places, and they will be early adopters of a rail system if experiences in academic communities around the US are a guide. Make it easy for them to use it!
5. Consider transitional strategies such as leasing rail vehicles until transit usage patterns are learned, then purchase appropriate vehicles rather than trying to get it right without real data.

6. Reach out to neighbors and spend effort and money to reduce impact. (horn signalized road crossings, lightweight electric vehicles, continuously welded track, regenerative braking, sound walls if needed, low-noise wheels, even ultra capacitor powered vehicles to avoid diesel noise and smell as well as overhead catenaries.) CalTrain or Amtrak is not appropriate.

7. Locals first! This is a system to improve the quality of life for those that already live here, not to induce sprawl or provide entertainment for tourists, though they are welcome and invited to use it. We're paying for it, and we want the benefits to accrue to us!

—Respectfully,
Bruce Sawhill, PhD
on behalf of the FORT Board

From: Jeff Schmelter
Email address: jschmelter101@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/5/2015 13:21:19

As cool as it would be to have passenger rail in SC County, even as a strong supporter of alt transportation I can hardly imagine a scenario in which I would take the train around SC county. It would have to be cheaper and more convenient than driving a private vehicle, taking the bus, or bicycling. That's a pretty high bar. The cycle/pedestrian trail is still a wonderful idea though! Lets make sure that happens! I'd cycle that all the time!

From: Eric Schmidt
Email address: skatewheel@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 17:21:50

I love the IDEA of rail, and think that the location of existing ROW is pretty fortunate. Personally, I would use the bikeway MUCH more than train as long as it's not mixed use with inattentive pedestrians. Would almost always want to include my bike in train trip. Rail, if popular, could help urban development in good ways, but I know I am an unlikely frequent user since I don't commute. For rail, free tickets at start on shorter line would be fine. I am also concerned that new technologies like automated cars and electric bikes will undercut ridership substantially. So... I am a BIG proponent of moving QUICKLY to use the ROW for biking and experiments with multi-modal. Also ok with short haul rail where it is cheapest per rider. Then assess. If horn problem can be solved, downtown to westside would be great fit with budding Delaware project. Multi-modal shares the cost so that public provides roadway, person provides vehicle. That's good economics - all solutions should really prioritize multi-modal use.

From: Cheryl Schmitt
Email address: cschmitt@cityofsantacruz.com
Submitted: 5/22/2015 14:17:36

I grew up in San Leandro in the late 50s and 60s and remember my parents discussing the possibility of BART. They were very supportive. As it turned out, Alameda County benefitted from the first BART service; Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties opted out. What a HUGE mistake that was! I do not want to see Santa Cruz County make the same mistake. I know that this is an expensive investment but it is so important to see it as just that--an investment, not an expense. This service will greatly benefit our County, and I strongly feel we should pursue it. I support Option 1, Scenario E, Santa Cruz to Aptos, with a later phase implementation to Watsonville eventually connecting to Amtrak.

From: Keith Schuler
Email address: Keithschuler@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 5/22/2015 11:39:50

Take out the RR tracks and put in a walking path

From: Barry Scott
Email address: barry_scott@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 5/29/2015 11:57:18

For a publicly held passenger rail project to be "economically viable" a different standard is applied than for a privately held commercial project.

Public transportation is generally heavily subsidized, and for good reason.

Recovery ratios, the amount covered by fares, for operating costs may be 0.25 or less.

Recovery ratios for capital expenses are a different matter.

Citizens deserve a bit of a lesson in these matters and I hope that the RTC will create a page dedicated to educating us about the basics and include some examples, like for BART and other public transit models in California.

<http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Pages/NTDDDataTables.aspx>

I STRONGLY support preservation of the rail component, we owe it to the future generations.

From: Barry Scott
Email address: barry_scott@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 5/22/2015 15:41:13

I strongly support preserving the rail corridor for rail use, mixed with paths for bicycles and pedestrians where practical.

The corridor and easement and improvements, roadbed and tracks, are publicly owned resources that, once removed, are unlikely to ever be restored. In the interest of the greater public benefit and for future generations, we should strictly preserve this asset.

Further, we should beware short-sighted plans that recommend removal of tracks to favor use by cyclists, and we should plan around future needs, not present needs. It's likely that if not now, then in the future, we will need the corridor for public transit.

Sooner or later, we'll have it. What's not feasible or economically viable in 2015 may well be in 2020 or later.

From: pauline seales
Email address: paulineseales120@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/22/2015 19:59:29

The report seems thoroughly thought out and generally encouraging. It's good to know that funds will be available through Ca Cap and Trade. I'm a little disappointed that early service will NOT directly relieve the commute all the way to Watsonville, including lower income people. Hopefully that kind of service will soon be added

From: Charles Selvidge
Email address: cselvidge@comcast.net
Submitted: 7/26/2015 15:08:56

Draft Rail Study Comments

I am strongly opposed to the idea of passenger service on the Santa Cruz rail line, because I think it is a misguided use of public money. The costs for implementing this idea will enormously exceed the benefit; and it will compete with and reduce the availability of money that could be used to greatly improve people's lives. I am not opposed to public transportation. I support and use the Santa Cruz Metro system. The Metro service provides users, who do not have or choose not to use auto transportation, access and convenient service to all points that could be served by a Santa Cruz passenger rail line. The bus service covers a much finer grid than the passenger rail could, and few people who want public transportation would choose this Santa Cruz passenger rail line service instead of the bus.

Be assured that virtually no one who presently uses an automobile on the Santa Cruz to Watsonville Rt 1 section would choose the rail line instead of their automobile. If they wanted public transit, they would be using the bus currently.

The most important transportation need in this corridor is for increases in the number of traffic lanes on Route 1 south from Santa Cruz. The Morrissey extension was a big improvement for the section that it changed but the section from Morrissey to about Park Avenue is still in daily grid lock. Because of the lack of action on expanding that section of Rt 1, about 90,000 people are miserably inconvenienced each day. The RTC should work to improve the lives of this huge number of citizens, not by pursuing a railroad project that will provide them no consequential benefit, but rather by Rt 1 expansion. The suggestion that passenger service on the Santa Cruz line would significantly improve the lives of this 90,000 people does not make any sense. Essentially none of those people will choose to use the rail passenger service. This is because as bad as their current lot is, the inconvenience of driving a car to a train station, taking a slow moving train to a destination not near where they want to be and arranging connecting transportation from there will be substantially worse. Since the public funds (taxes) are finite and CA already has the highest tax rates in the country, the effect of spending the hundreds of millions of dollars on passenger train service (or any money) will reduce money that could go to expanding Rt 1 and actually improving people's lives. Instead the Santa Cruz passenger rail service will add no value to these drivers. Its only contribution will be to cannibalize from the Metro bus system and thereby weaken its viability and entertain a few curiosity seekers who would not have been driving on Rt 1 any way.

I find it less than forthright that people such as Leopold keep saying the California voters "approved" this idea of passenger rail service. The reality is that a nebulous bond issue from over 20 years ago approved funding for passenger rail in general, but this cannot intellectually honestly be stated to be a voter endorsement for every specific idea that might come along. Each idea must be evaluated individually. This particular idea does not bear up to critical evaluation.

The idea that this rail line will decrease air pollution is ridiculous. Anyone who seriously wants to reduce air pollution, should be championing expansion of Rt 1. This would substantially reduce the massive waste of resources and accompanying exhaust as automobiles creep along taking 30 minutes to travel what should take 3 minutes. Energy will still be wasted at this bottle neck even in the distant future when there is a substantial percentage of electric cars.

The idea that more options to transportation is necessarily better is nonsense. More options are better only if each option provides some special benefit and is cost effective. No convincing information is provided to suggest that public transport by train is better than by bus for this corridor. In reality the bus service will be far superior to the train because it offers a much finer grid of service more cost effectively. No one can argue convincingly that passenger trains will increase property values at any location along the line. Rather it will more likely significantly reduce property values.

The idea that this rail line should be preserved because it offers lower cost delivery than trucks is ridiculous. If rail service on this line could be cost effective relative to trucks, Union Pacific would still own the line. Does

anyone really believe that a public commission knows how to run railroads better than Union Pacific. It is not reasonable to think that this rail line reduces truck transport significantly.

The notion that this passenger rail service would increase housing near train stations is pure whimsical speculation. In the days of the early west train service increased housing along the lines because the area was empty, not so today.

Passenger rail service even in the highly dense Bay corridor to San Francisco does not break even on operating costs. The Santa Cruz passenger line would travel along with almost no one on board except an engineer. It would chew up tax dollars with negligible benefit. Claims of several thousand daily riders is unsupportable and grossly exaggerated. These days people have to produce to be employed and keep jobs. They do not have time to fritter away on a slow moving passenger train that is a hassle on either end to get where they have to go. If a passenger train would help the Rt 1 misery, it would be good. Unfortunately it will not help and only steal funds from value adding activities.

The argument was made that even bus service cannot support itself with fares. This is true, but this argues against adding another service that is not supportable by fares when that service does not produce a meaningful improvement over the bus system.

From: Shanti Sharma
Email address: shanti_n_sharma@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/12/2015 12:51:51

As a 35-year resident of Santa Cruz County, mother who has raised four young boys, grandmother, and senior citizen who enjoys my local walk to New Brighton Beach, I am alarmed at the negative impacts that this project will have on the ability for the general public to access our unparalleled, beautiful coastline. In effect, by not considering less-intensive transit options to get people across our county that will not impede coastal access and not create untold, harrowing miseries for residents and pedestrians in the vicinity of the rail, we are making a huge mistake in prematurely selecting a transit solution before thoroughly vetting alternatives.

This is the 21st century and Santa Cruz County has many relatively conscious, sustainable-minded folks. We owe it to our future generations, our grandchildren and theirs that will follow, to resist the slick veneer that this intensive transportation proposal presents and consider alternative solutions without the harsh negative environmental impacts of a light rail system across our fragile coast.

I'm sure a well-informed economist in our county can elaborate further on the financial train wreck (no pun intended) we will be imposing on future generations by rubber-stamping this project.

From: Christina Short
Email address: cshort416@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/6/2015 11:56:24

The online survey isn't working properly.

From: Gail Silvers
Email address: gaildawn@outlook.com
Submitted: 6/3/2015 9:19:56

Are you crazy? Think about how this would affect traffic on 41st Ave, not to mention the West Side. Especially in the summer. Sixty trains per day would greatly affect the neighborhoods that surround the tracks. If you do

decide to resurrect the train service, it should be limited to rush hours and a few during the day. Sixty is way crazy.

From: Randa Solick
Email address: rsolick@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/30/2015 21:47:10

- 1) Ridership estimates included existing travel, population, employment, times, and came up with 5500 daily weekday boardings - WITHOUT taking into account the price of a ticket!!!! Useless - how would people determine if it's worth it???
- 2) Especially since it would take 46 minutes to go from Santa Cruz to and from Watsonville on a weekday!!! WAY too long for workers.
- 3) Two of the 'preferred' alternatives only go between SANTA Cruz and Aptos - totally leaving out those people who most need the help with the miserable commute traffic on Hwy 1, the folks in Watsonville!!! The majority of lower-paid people live there too - they would benefit most from a decently priced and fast train. Don't leave out Watsonville.
- 4) 60 TRAINS A DAY!!! one every ten minutes for the 10 hour workday!!! Basically, continual trains - how will that affect all those using the crossings???
- 5) All this would, the report says, require a new sales tax - on top of the cost of tickets!!!

Please - give up the idea of rail transportation and make 1) our bus system actually useable, and 2) a rail-trail for bikers and pedestrians. If we had small busses - more like vans - every 10 minutes on all our major streets - Capitola Ave, Mission St., Water St., Hwy 1 - workers would be able to depend on getting to work in a timely and cheap way. And so many would use the trail. So many other places have already converted their old rail lines to trails, with such success - why not improve our buses considerably and give us a trail.

From: Hal Stanger
Email address: Hjstange@pacbell.net
Submitted: 7/30/2015 8:22:26

The following are some of my concerns that remain to be addressed on the "Crazy Train:"

- 1) air pollution
- 2) noise pollution
- 3) traffic back up/ delays/ congestion at all major road crossings 41st, 38th, 30th, 17th, 7th, etc.
- 4) safety risks for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclist
- 5) Security enforcement
- 6) inevitable legal litigation on all the above
- 7) break down on total operation, security, maintenance, legal, ridership, insurance subsidized costs
- 8) who pays for #7 (on the financial backs of homeowners aka property taxes?)

From: kathie stark
Email address: kathiastark@hotmail.com
Submitted: 6/13/2015 14:51:17

we do not believe that a train should run through a residential neighborhood

From: D. Pureheart Steinbruner
Email address: env071@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
Submitted: 6/3/2015 15:53:52

Quite a lengthy and thorough presentation.
I was interested to learn that much of the line is made up of used, or "relay" rail.

While I understand that these things happen at the "speed of government" these days, I was quite dismayed to see that an 11 year headway to first service is envisioned. That effectively removes rail from ever being a factor in my commute to work before I retire!

I would much more favour an intense "fast track" effort that would get service up and running in three years.

I am glad that the service as far as Aptos got top billing, but connection to the Capitols at their eventual Watsonville/Pajaro stop (Coast Daylight, too) is also critical.

From: Doree Steinmann
Email address: tvdoree@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 6/21/2015 9:10:36

What will happen to all the residents living on Park Avenue and the houses behind us, in Capitola, who are crossing the rail to take a number of paths right down to the beach? Will we have to go to the entrance at the corner and walk with our kids and boogie boards and sand toys to the far left corner near Monterey Drive to cross the RR? Then we will have a long walk thru the parking lot. I guess it would stop all the cars from parking around our neighborhoods to walk down to the beach for free since they'd have to drive down then and all of us would have to buy a year's parking ticket. It's a trade off but going to cost us all money and make a lot of people very unhappy!

From: Carol Stern
Email address: simonebolbec@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/2/2015 18:04:58

I live on Balboa Ave. in Capitola and in the third floor condo the noise of the existing train is so loud and obnoxious, I can't imagine a commuter train per half hour each way between 6am and 9pm at 60 trains per day !!!!! Crazy plan.

Everyone around the Park Avenue and Balboa neighborhood are Against this insane noise commuter train idea. It will ruin the beauty and peaceful serenity of the coast line here in Capitola.

NO to future Commuter Trains ruining the peace and beauty of our coastline in Capitola!
NO
NO
NO!!!

Stop wasting taxpayer money on feasibility studies that the tax payers are just going to say NO to on the ballot.

Widen highway 1.
Widen Highway 1.
Do that.

From: David Sterry
Email address: dmsterry@me.com
Submitted: 7/17/2015 16:52:13

I would strongly request that the RTC consider a bike/pedestrian only path for the proposed rail corridor. The cost would be much lower. The time to completion much faster. The section of the line relevant to commuting is a fraction of the total. The width of the corridor is really too restrictive to accommodate rail, bike, and pedestrians. Creating a nonmotorized corridor on the full stretch of the right-of-way would be a world-class scenic and commuting route.

From: Jeff Stobbe
Email address: cjstobbe@live.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 20:01:47

I don't believe the projected use can be achieved because the SC rail station is to far from Pacific ave and UCSC. If the goal of 60 trains per day is desired gridlock is a guarantied on the city streets if the crossing guards a lowered at street crossing such as Bay Ave in Capitola every 10 minutes. The bells on the guards and the train horn would be intolerable on such a urban line. The frequency of stops, the huge number of street crossings and the state of the tracks make it completely impossible to run a train between Capitola and SC in 16 minutes. How come there were no fare projections in the survey?

From: John Stone
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/27/2015 21:49:26

I think it is important that any rail line include stops for Watsonville. This is important for commuters to and from Watsonville and support economic development in Watsonville.

From: Glen Stribling
Email address: Strib840@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/22/2015 2:42:25

Adding a few bicycle areas or even having a designated bicycle car could greatly improve feasibility and community attraction to a train between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. Very common in other parts of the world as getting to and from the train has always been a deturant to riding mass transportation. A link to a photo of what a bicycle area on a train looks like. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ade78/8118307870/>

From: Chris Stubendorff
Email address: cstubie@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:24:04

Dear RTC Memebers,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed passenger rail line as the feasibility study proposes. Each of the 7 feasibility scenarios outlined do not, in my opinion, help the transportation needs in our county. Just because something is feasible does not make it reasonable. Ultimately where the proposed passenger rail line fails is the user's end destination. The rail line, as it is, will not accommodate what local people need which is close access to work and shopping. It will do nothing to relieve traffic congestion on Highway 1 which is what the RTC should be really focusing on improving by widening the Highway. Santa Cruz County also does not have the population or the type of density to support a passenger rail system as a viable sustainable asset. Not to mention the initial capitol costs, ongoing annual expense, and lack of ridership.

It is my recommendation that the RTC abandon any plans to have a passenger rail system and to focus transportation efforts on Highway 1 improvements/ widening. In the mean time the rail corridor could be used as bike/pedestrian trail as a substantially less cost.

Thank you,

Chris Stubendorff
Aptos

From: Terrill Sutton
Email address: Terrillsutton@comcast.net
Submitted: 6/3/2015 15:43:58

Dump the rails. Overhead double mono rail system electric, thus no auto, hiker, bike, wild life etc. problems. Better view passengers and full use of the roadbed.

From: Woutje Swets
Email address: woutje.swets@gmail.com
Submitted: 5/22/2015 14:09:43

Would you please explain how diesel trains are better for the environment than the present buses which are touted to be "Clean Air"?

What is the advantage of noisy, smelly diesel trains lumbering through residential areas when a clean-air bus service is already existing and would be much more convenient and definitely cheaper by the millions of dollars?

Trains have to blast their horns at every single intersection, and as you know, there are hundreds of intersections, whereas buses do not have to honk and have a low noise impact, certainly compared to diesel trains.

Buses are not tied to rails, so can go anywhere in the community as needs change.

Public transportation is only as good as the public it serves. I would never use the train because it is not taking me anywhere close to where I want to go. Buses do a much better job of that, and routes can be added or deleted on a need basis.

I am aware that part of the grant money used to buy the railroad track had the condition that a train be run along the tracks, but it does not make economic sense.

I will definitely vote against your proposed tax increase to run the train system. I would however, be happy to vote for a tax increase to reimburse the grants that required a train system.

I do look forward to a wonderful, train-less, trail system in lieu of where the tracks are now. That would be welcomed with open arms by the entire community, and certainly is much, much cheaper. Rather than putting in all those millions of dollars, only to find out that, indeed, running trains is not economically viable, let's focus on building a trail system which can be used by walkers, bicyclists, runners, skaters, kids, and people with strollers and in wheelchairs. That also would eliminate the requirement to re-route trails in areas where the train track is too narrow to accommodate both trains and a trail.

WE NEED FRESH AIR, NOT DIESEL FUMES AND MORE NOISE.

Thank you.

From: D Taylor
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/30/2015 11:11:30

My thoughts:

1. If we lose the rails, they will never return. That should be avoided at all cost.
2. A large part of Santa Cruz' population lives within a mile or two of the rail lines. With traffic on the freeway being such a nightmare, I think a commuter line might be very attractive to many who now sit in traffic on a daily basis.
3. AFFORDABLE commuter service is essential.

From: Jim Thoits
Email address: jthoits@pacbell.net
Submitted: 7/29/2015 12:17:01

The heavily populated corridor between San Jose and San Francisco needs a subsidized train service to make it operational. Seeing that the population and demographics of Watsonville to Santa Cruz fall short of what is already subsidized in the populated San Jose to San Francisco area makes little sense. I support the rail trail use of bikes, walking and the newer up coming technology of electric personal transportation. The limitation of 2 bridges along this path that would exclude the use by pedestrians if the train option was allowed also is limited in foresight.

I encourage you to adopt a rail trail not a train option for the foreseeable future of this connector.
Thank you, Jim

From: Sierra Tobin
Email address: lakesnowflake@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/10/2015 8:01:33

It would be really helpful if this rail line could connect to places beyond Santa Cruz County, like Monterey, SF, Berkeley/Oakland, Marin, etc. Also, I think a goal should be to have rail transit reduce emissions significantly compared to what equivalent car traffic would emit.

From: Cathy Toldi

Email address: ctoldi@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 15:34:34

I am a longtime resident of Santa Cruz County (came here in 1975, plan to live here for life.) I am STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE PROPOSAL TO PUT IN A PASSENGER RAIL SYSTEM in the rail corridor. This would burden current and future generations with a hugely expensive outmoded transportation system that causes noise, pollution, and safety concerns for those of us who live near the rails, as well as the entire community. It would be far wiser to put in a multi-modal transportation corridor that would include electric bikes, solar-powered bike paths, foot transportation, as well as a plan that would include progressive technology such as digitized smart buses, and electric/clean energy cars.

From: Peter Truman
Email address: peter@mpressdigital.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 10:38:37

Best use of the corridor would be pedestrian / Bike path. A level relatively straight path from Watsonville to Santa Cruz provides a perfect bike commute. It is my opinion the impact on traffic would be greater by steering bikes on to the paths and away from traffic than the impact made by reducing the number of vehicles on Hwy 1 by creation of rail service. Any funds that would go to the rail service should be diverted to widening Hwy 1 to 3 lanes in both directions from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. Widening Hwy 1 will alleviate stalled traffic at peak commute times thus relieving vehicle emissions, create better emergency response times & remove traffic from surface streets(creating a better bicycle environment). The corridor as a pike / pedestrian path could be tied into the Monterey bike path for a scenic path fro Davenport to Monterey, creating a new tourist destination point creating economic growth (I envision multiple bike, Segway, etc. rental business's), increased restaurant and food carts along path. All at a fraction of the cost of rail service, even including giving back the 14 mil to the state if need be.

From: Doug Urbanus
Email address: firstboy@pacbell.net
Submitted: 6/21/2015 11:12:49

I don't fathom the notion the people will travel south to go north when connecting with the Capitol Corridor. I live in the San Lorenzo Valley. I particularly do not take the bus because of it's slowness and labyrinthine routes, nor will i drive to Scotts Valley and leave my car there with zero security for the few days I will be gone. But in the end I do take the Hwy 17 Express to connect to the Capitol Corridor, and thence by bus to Roseville. This is a car-bus-train-bus ride and it takes well over 5 hours in combined time. There is no analysis in comparing the Hwy 17 Express with a Pajaro Amtrak connection. Believe me I prefer the train part of my journey. But in time and cost why will anyone in the north part of the County (SLV, SV and Santa Cruz) go south to connect with a northerly destination to Sacramento?

From: Jane Usher
Email address: jau@baymoon.com
Submitted: 6/24/2015 11:53:48

A light rail line will be perfect for Santa Cruz/Watsonville -- As long as it goes from Pajaro all the way to the West Side. The cars need to be able to get off the highway -- and providing transportation for those Watsonville residents (and those commuting to San Jose in a reverse commute) seems the most sensible long-term option. It is imperative that SCCRTC think in the long term and light rail to reduce noise for those people in Aptos and Seascapes who might be the loudest to complain. If we do not act to do something now,

for the long term, traffic will only get worse as fewer and fewer people can afford to live in Santa Cruz and opt for living in Watsonville and commuting to Santa Cruz. And, for those people living in Santa Cruz, they will need their high paying jobs from Silicon Valley -- and the line that goes to Pajaro, then connects with the highspeed rail north will be PERFECT!!! Keep going in this direction.

From: Gerard Van Hoven
Email address: vanhoven@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 12:38:59

SCCRTC, We two, as residents & voters in the County, wish to express our strong opposition to the conversion of the Pajaro-to-Davenport railroad right-of-way to be an actual, as compared to theoretical, train line. Our objection is based, almost entirely, on a cost/benefit analysis.

We believe that the costs of upgrading the trestles and other parts of the right-of-way, and installing stations & parking will be much higher than estimated, and the passenger usage much smaller than estimated.

Sincerely, Gerard & Barbara Van Hoven
107 Montclair Dr.
Santa Cruz, 95060

From: Dee Vogel
Email address: dee@rattlebrain.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 17:01:49

The reason the system will never be successful is that there isn't adequate infrastructure, in other words, suppose someone goes from the West Side to 41st Ave. First of all, how far is the train stop from their home? And then, how are they going to get from the 41st Ave area to the shopping areas further up toward the freeway? There isn't bus service that would be practical; it would end up taking an hour or more if a person needs a way to their final destination. Unless a system is reasonably time-efficient, people will still prefer their cars.

Too bad the purchase of the rail corridor was tied to using it for actual trains. That was a huge oversight of the RTC, and too bad for them. Bad decision based on the unrealistic idea that masses of people will actually use the train. If there wasn't any way to buy the property without agreeing to make it a rail line, they should have taken a pass. It will never pay for itself and destroy all the neighborhoods along the rail line. Already the Train to Crazytown is so loud it disrupts every neighborhood it passes through for 5-8 minutes. multiply that by a proposed 30 trains a day? Good Lord.

I feel the RTC has been obsessed with their vision of a rail miracle, in denial of a lot of realities. When it proves to be an unsuccessful boondoggle, it will be too late to do what they should have done in the first place. The right of way that was obtained could be a treasure. it will be much cheaper to make a trail than restore a rail, so use some of the money saved by shifting to a train-only plan, and pay back the \$11M, right? Simple math.

Think of all the opportunities a trail corridor affords: coffee kiosks, pocket parks, restaurants in areas along the line like 17th & Swift Street, shady benches, dog parks. And bikers would not require additional transportation systems to achieve destination.

Thanks for all your hard work thus far. Time to DIRFT - do it right the first time!

From: Ellen Vogt

Email address: evogt@sonic.net
Submitted: 6/5/2015 18:07:09

Not being an expert in finance or construction issues, I have no specific comments on the costs or feasibility of constructing the infrastructure and operating the system. Nor do I have the knowledge to assess the accuracy of the modeling used in the report. I am a supporter of a modern rail line.

I live in Seacliff, and my property backs up to the railroad. I am concerned that full consideration be given to noise reduction and emissions when the environmental impact study is done. If one of the scenarios of this rail line is to be implemented, it should utilize the best technology and trains available.

Costs of course are very important, but the environmental benefits, if realized as projected, are equally important.

I do wonder if the projected ridership numbers and population growth are realistic. I especially question population growth given our lack of water resources. And, I hope consideration is given to any other technologies or transportation alternatives on the horizon.

Tentatively, I favor either scenario E (provided DMU rail vehicles are used) or B. Further information is needed to make this more than a tentative preference for me, and will depend largely on the environmental impact report.

Thank you for providing an easy, user friendly method to provide public input.

From: Branwyn Wagman
Email address: branwyn@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/29/2015 21:35:38

I prefer a trail-without-rail option. I do not believe a railway will attract sufficient use to offset the costs; rail is too limiting in route and necessitates a means to get to and from it on either end. Providing a clear, safe corridor for biking, walking, and driving small electric vehicles would serve our community much better.

From: Elissa Wagner
Email address: leeseve@aol.com
Submitted: 7/19/2015 14:54:14

The proposed rail must include service to and from Watsonville. Not to do so would be an act of discrimination. (By the way, I am white and live in Aptos.)

From: Scott Walecka
Email address: swalecka@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 12:43:26

- 1) I would bike on the trail but not use the train. Ditto for everyone else I've talked with.
- 2) The Christmas train was quite disruptive. 60 would be more so.
- 3) Caltrain is having to secure its tracks due to suicides. If these tracks must become secure, would there still be room for a bike path?

- 4) There is hope that a train may reduce cross-town congestion. Is there a study that has a recommendation for reducing cross-town congestion? This train is likely not the answer.
- 5) Due to traffic congestion I bike more. I expect this trend to continue in the future. While living in Palo Alto I would bike rather than take the train unless I was going to San Francisco.
- 6) Matt Lezin has a really cool electric bike. You should check it out. In Europe I have seen a healthy adoption of electric bikes. They seem to be more effective for short distance commutes than a train.

From: Oliver and Mary Warren
Email address: mjofwarren@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 9:26:02

The rail portion of this project is a perpetual money pit. It will cost millions of dollars to build and millions more to maintain. There will never be enough riders to make this viable. The voters of Santa Cruz County have never had an opportunity to vote on this project and will be responsible for the future expenses. If construction is paid by bond money, the cost will be more than double since interest will be paid.

The trail is too narrow in many places for both rail and trail. Extra bridges would have to be built in many areas and cost millions more. A trail that is narrow is extremely dangerous for walkers.

The funds for the rail would be better spent by providing express bus service on Hwy. 1, and more bus service in the county using smaller buses to access neighborhoods.

The money provided for the rail should be paid back. A viable bike/walking trail could then be provided. This trail would attract tourists to the area, as well as providing transportation options for local residents. We have visited the Cape Cod area in Massachusetts where the rails have been removed and there are now bike/walking trails instead.

From: Lynda Watson
Email address: lyndawatson@cruzio.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 13:57:21

I trust that you are considering options to use the existing tracks for something other than traditional trains. It seems to me that some lighter, smaller, quieter, more efficient vehicles could be used for commuter purposes. Are there such things and is that possible? It just seems so logical for our purposes!

From: Denis Webb
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/31/2015 11:54:28

To Rtc: I am frustrated by your survey questions; they seem intentionally designed in such a way that favors Rtc's agenda. There are many areas that are given vague consideration or no consideration at all: eminent domain forfeiture if freight service is not provided, overly optimistic ridership numbers, inevitable cost over runs, environmental bridge replacement expenses, bureaucracy over staffing, land purchases for parking and station platforms, the freight and passenger track sharing liability insurance concern just to name a few. The Rtc has purchased a 32 mile long freight rail line that no longer has a major revenue customer. So now you want to have some kind of adumbrated passenger, bike, walking path, with unknown length, fare price, cost. I was an employee for Southern Pacific- Union Pacific for 30 years. Give the money back, solve the eminent domain problems. Be honest with your ambitions, this is not a well thought out set of ideas.

From: Dr. Gerald Weber
Email address: jerry.e.weber@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/2/2015 16:09:01

I've briefly reviewed the report - it's a bit lengthy and repetitive. Only ten years to get the project up and running...nice! I personally will probably never use this rail line...even if I live long enough to see it completed. If this project creeps along at the pace I suspect it will...I'm guessing it will be closer to 15 - 20 years before it is completed. Perhaps longer. I would also suggest that it will do little to change the congestion on the roads.

Perhaps the lot of you should start thinking about the fact that you cannot stuff an infinite number of people into a finite space. In this area we have limited resources - in particular - water. Where is that going to come from in the future? As an engineering geologist who has worked in this county for the past 40+ years...I'd suggest that this project is another bit of wishful thinking. My suggestion: Prevent further development in Santa Cruz County - that will help more than anything else. If the "climate gurus" are correct...we're screwed. The water will not be here. But then...you can combine a desal plant with the railroad...and then...where will you get the fossil fuels? It will be fun to watch. Your end result is obvious. Yes. I'm a pessimist - I've watched local government and the university turn what was a lovely place to live into a suburb of San Jose. So it goes.

From: Scott Wedge
Email address: scott@wedges.com
Submitted: 7/30/2015 14:11:43

There is another, though seldom used alternative rail technology: Modified busses which can run both on the rails and on roads. This obviates new stations and coordinates and with existing bus routes and transfers. It would express or semi-express bus routes parallel to Hwy 17, but avoiding and not contributing to congestion on that route. For example, UCSC to Watsonville.

Please see:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O-Bahn_Busway

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Road-rail_vehicle

From: mary lou weidlich
Email address: w1242@aol.com
Submitted: 6/4/2015 11:43:28

The only passenger rail that should even be considered is one over the Santa Cruz mountains to San Jose transportation center. That could reduce traffic on hwy 17 tremendously and might even be self sustaining, unlike any other rail proposal for this county.

From: warren west
Email address: solartram@gmail.com
Submitted: 6/21/2015 14:48:48

Its dangerous to jog next to a raging train the loud screeching will cause runners to veer into each others path

From: Anita Whelan
Email address: anita.whelan@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 6/5/2015 10:28:01

This study did not specifically address the needs of our unique population nor take into account the impact of the noise of the trains on large swath of residential neighborhoods through which it will travel as well as the ongoing cost of operation that the County will have to commit to providing.

This study was not based on the population make-up of Santa Cruz County but rather a statistical analysis of a population this size. The reality is Santa Cruz County has a population of about 270,000 people with 23% of us living in the city of Santa Cruz, 19% in Watsonville, 37% in unincorporated areas and the remaining 21% scattered in the remaining cities. The issues this brings up - parking at stations and needed transportation to then transfer to work and services is not addressed in any concrete way.

As 'commuters' 24% of us leave the county for work everyday so the Rail would be of no assistance to this population. The largest employer is UCSC-on the hill-requiring an extensive shuttle depot and line to actually service employees and students. The other good sized employers, City and County employees, the hospitals and Plantronics (as well as students at Cabrillo) would again require substantial infrastructure to transport these commuters to their place of work or study. The "competition" the rails service faces in order to attract this population of commuters is to convince them rail is quicker, easier, and more cost effective than the convenience of driving their own cars.

This study does show there is a bike population that would benefit from a Rail line AS LONG As the train service provided for transporting bikes in the cars otherwise our rail line is too far from most services to allow for walking from the train to ones destination.

The resistance from the many residential neighborhoods through which the rail line will pass has not been addressed as yet: the noise is a significant factor yet to be addressed. Nor has there been a comprehensive outline of how the rail line will have enough operating capitol to keep it going without a large ongoing infusion of monies from the County.

The study you present is not comprehensive enough in addressing the where and how of getting people to their actual destination after disembarking at the train depot.

From: Marcia White
Email address: whiteme@sbcglobal.net
Submitted: 7/8/2015 13:58:10

I have seen no information on how rail service would impact local streets. I can't imagine how snarled the local traffic will become if trains are shutting down key intersections during commute hours. Just in my neighborhood the intersections of Seabright & E Cliff and at 7th Ave @ PG&E, almost approach gridlock...what happens when these intersections are shut down while trains pass through? It will compound the problem for sure. And train ridership is not going to reduce the traffic congestion in these areas.

From: Ryan Whitelaw
Email address: pacapp@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/3/2015 6:15:29

I've had an opportunity read the draft study, and in my opinion a commuter train is a stupendously bad idea. While Santa Cruz may be dense in population, it lacks significant job centers and most people commute over the hill. The proposed train does nothing to address this problem. Additionally, a function of public transportation is convenience and time savings. I live in Santa Cruz, and my business is located in Aptos. For me, the idea of taking a train to work is absurd. Its easier, and probably faster, for me to simply ride my bike directly to the office as opposed to ride my bike to a train station, pay for a ticket, wait for a train, etc. Lastly, the tracks are over 100 years old. Technology is moving at such a rapid rate - the passenger train will soon become obsolete. Cars will soon be able to "talk" to other cars, and traffic congestion as we know it will be a thing of the past.

From: Anna Wichansky
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/6/2015 15:51:57

I was not able to submit the survey form. After the demographic questions it just keeps looping back to the question on what factors are important. Have you tested this with the chrome browser? something is wrong with the survey form; no submit button comes up.

Anyway, I oppose this rail project and would prefer to see something environmentally friendlier like bike/walking trails. It would completely change the character of our neighborhood in Aptos Seascapes. This is a second beach home for us; who wants to hear a train coming through night and day! We go there for peace and quiet and to relax, not to commute to Santa Cruz or be in a transit hub.

I think it would ruin the community and cause a decline in property values.

From: Stephen Wiebe
Email address: stephen.wiebe@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 14:02:37

I'd like to see some late night rail transit options (possibly just on weekends). I often like to go into Santa Cruz from Capitola and enjoy some nightlife, but if train service stops early in the evening, I would be forced to continue driving to SC.

From: Chris Wilmers
Email address: cwilmers@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/23/2015 15:25:48

I think the idea of having passenger rail in Santa Cruz county is a GREAT idea. I've just come back from living in Europe for a few months, where rail is everywhere, and I can't believe we don't have this already. I look forward to being able to travel to the South County without getting stuck in traffic!

From: Stan Wilson
Email address: Alpine@pacbell.net
Submitted: 7/8/2015 13:38:19

Please consider any alternative to a heavy diesel locomotive. I know it may sound odd, but after the Loma Prieta earthquake, we can feel the big locomotives from the Davenport plant while standing on the ground in

our yard as they passed by. The noise level is bad as well. Then to top it off, the FAA lost a lawsuit in the east Bay Area to homeowners by class action to divert jet traffic. Well, money talks so now they fly right over the Santa Cruz area every 3 minutes. (Talk about pollution and noise!) when we have been near commuter trains (like Bart), the welded and sanded tracks along with light rail pullers (not electric) have been very much quieter.

Thank You

From: Brenda Wood
Email address: woodbrenda@aol.com
Submitted: 7/8/2015 19:50:38

I know that the rail will be expensive....but the longer we wait to do it, the more expensive it will be. Rail service back east is so convenient; it is time that we do something here in our area.

From: Mary Wright
Email address: maryeileenwright@yahoo.com
Submitted: 7/31/2015 16:53:27

Rail banking: trail without rail is the best option!

It will benefit more people and is the greenest option. It protects existing easements, protects the legal right of away and provides the biggest economic benefit to the economy and our community.

We won't be railroaded!

From: Daniel Wright
Email address: n/a
Submitted: 7/28/2015 16:21:40

To whom it may concern: I believe strongly that between the two options, a walking and bike path would be the most valuable and appropriate for Santa Cruz. There are many fiscal and temporal arguments that could be made, but my primary point is an aesthetic one. A walking/biking trail would make a much more beautiful and peaceful addition to the city than a railroad. Culturally, I believe it is a better fit and practically will get more use, both by Santa Cruz residents and out of town visitors. I can say personally, as someone who lives in Santa Cruz and works in Watsonville, that I would be much more likely to use a bike trail to commute than a rail service.

I hope you have found my comments helpful. Thank you for your consideration.

From: Esther Yoon
Email address: estherkim714@gmail.com
Submitted: 7/20/2015 15:24:25

Please don't make a rail from Davenport to Watsonville. It's a horrible way to use taxpayer dollars and it would be such a disrespect to the beautiful strip of land that we call home on the west side.

Draft Rail Study - Emailed Comments
Listed by date received during comment period.

From: Contact Request Form [mailto:admin@sccrtc.org]
Sent: Saturday, May 23, 2015 1:56 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Douglas Hawes
Subject
Draft Rail Plan Comments....
Your Message
<p>I reviewed the Draft Rail Plan. The concept as referenced in the Alta Study of self propelled two unit passenger trains from Santa Cruz to Watsonville seems like the way to go initially. But I would work with Monterey County to ultimately expand the range of some of these two unit trains to 1) Salinas, and 2) Monterey (each destination being a separate train ride - - they cannot be combined). Unfortunately, the City of Monterey has gobbled up some of the old Southern Pacific right of way, so the existing rails end in an eucalyptus grove a full half mile from downtown! Hopefully the City of Monterey can remedy the results of these poor planning decisions of the past.... Anyway, such Santa Cruz - Watsonville - Monterey / Salinas service would logically be based on diesel power, as electrification seems like it would be very capital intensive - - alth ough possibly a very long term option. (In any scenario, however, a stop in Pajaro/ Watsonville Jct. would allow for a transfer to the expanded Capitol Corridor service to Salinas. Direct daily Santa Cruz to San Jose service "around the hill" doesn't seem cost effective in my book.)</p> <p>As for renewed "Suntan Special" summer service, the logical thing would be to "buy into" the existing Capitol Corridor operation, with existing trains operating all the way to Santa Cruz (or Monterey) during the summer months. I am aware that Monterey County is already working to expand the Capitol Corridor service to Salinas. The Capitol Corridor service has very nice trains - - not junky looking Caltrans commuter cars from the Peninsula, or old, antique "vintage" equipment. Those folks coming from Sacramento would be dying to get out of the 105 degree muggy heat of the State Capital in summer - - and to the beach. Of course, more Capitol train units and crews would be needed - - but the technology and basic operating infrastructure is already firmly in place. The Capitol Corridor trains should end at a new station created along Western Drive near the old Wrigley's Plant, with ready access to Natural Bridges State Park, and with plenty of rental bikes available for people wanting to continue up the Coast on a projected bike route that parallels the rails to Davenport - - or for cruising by bike on West Cliff Drive. But an entirely new station needs to be created at Western Drive. (Perhaps a few of these</p> <p>"Suntan Special" / Capitol trains could ultimately head all the way to Davenport, with shuttle service to Ano Nuevo, Waddell State Beach / Big Basin, and the other State Parks. But this seems perhaps like a stretch.)</p> <p>Finally, as for classic steam excursions. The Golden Gate Railroad Museum should be contacted about steam excursions using their classic Pacific locomotive #2472 on trips to Santa Cruz or Big Trees from either San Jose - - or even from the Niles Canyon Railway in Sunol, where the locomotive currently is stored. It is likely that such a major steam excursion would occur at best as only an annual event, but it would be conducted to much fanfare. Such an ambitious steam excursion would bring back the historic route of the Suntan excursions to Big Trees, which continued up until the early 1950's - - and even rarely, afterwards. And this mainline Pacific (4-6-2) class locomotive - - if its 150 ton weight can be handled by the Santa Cruz, Big Trees & Pacific's rails - - would be considerably better than the yard switcher that typically passes for a historic steam locomotive on many of the tourist railroads. (And the #2472 is pretty similar to the Pacific class locomotives that hauled the passenger trains over the mountains from San Francisco to Santa Cruz, right up to the bitter end in 1940.) There is also the old SP #2706 that is currently being worked on by John Manley up on a property in Colusa, which is a Consolidation (2-8-0) class locomotive that was on static display in Watsonville for many years. This locomotive is exactly like the Consolidation locomotives that handled the freight service in the Santa Cruz area during the days of steam. But that locomotive still needs a few more years of restoration work (To Santa Cruz's advantage is that the "Colusa Steam" locomotive is orphaned in a large new</p>

shed in a town without existing rails - - the steamer will have to find a new home at some point, with actual rails to travel on....)

Also, dinner train service by the Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay Railroad, from Santa Cruz to Davenport, is also a very viable idea.

As for freight service? One trip a week will suffice to cover all the imaginable freight service from Santa Cruz for the foreseeable future. That is, unless the residents of Bonny Doon drop their opposition to quarry expansion, and one of the most modern kiln operations in the West is allowed to fire up again.... Return of the sand business is not going to happen, however. (By the way, sand was probably a bigger commodity for the railroad up through the 1960's or 1970's, or at least the equal of cement shipments from Davenport. The entire Southern Pacific system during the days of steam was based on traction sand mined at the Olympia sand pits, which is why the railroad made a point of reopening the line to Olympia within days of the disastrous storms of the last week of February, 1940. The railroad was hauling out 250 carloads of sand a month from the sandpits in February, 1940, per the news reports of the time. I have the old archival stories from recent micro film research to back up this claim.

Cordially,
Douglas Hawes
Consultant

From: JulianaCheng
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2015 12:34 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Re: RTC: Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study - Community Meetings June 4

Ref: Comment on Santa Cruz Passenger Rail Feasibility.

Bring back the freight trains services once or twice a week. Remembering seeing the freight trains that haul cement and I think brussel (sp?) sprouts also and perhaps beef in cart loaded with ice from the ice-plant on Laurel street ice-plant, i.e. frozen beef from Walter Shillings "Slaughter House" off Mission Street extension by Highway One....before all these industries were "chased out of town"...by strikes/protests etc.

Recently, saw old black and white photos of President Teddy Roosevelt left Santa Cruz on a train. The President came into town on a horse carriage and gave a speech on the Pacific Ave.

However, in 2015 and beyond, one will need to find a way to stop these hobos(passengers) from hitching a ride by jumping onto the train passing by slowly, especially when it was passing by Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk area...I think there was at least one fatal accident back in the 1970's-1980's regarding hobos hitching a ride on the freight train, slipped and killed...

Juliana Cheng
Santa Cruz, Calif.

From: Theresa Martinelli
Sent: Monday, June 01, 2015 12:43 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No TRAINS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Rail to Trails, Rail to Trails!! What brain-trust decided shuffling 1200 people from Santa Cruz to Salinas was a great idea?? Fire them before they can do more damage! 1200 is not a blip on the Highway 1 radar. Certainly 1200 people are not enough "train" riders to justify the cost to repair, run, and maintain a railroad. The trains rather than alleviating highway congestion would impact the neighborhoods where the train will be traveling; noise, air pollution, hazardous waste, trash and a COMPLETE WASTE OF THE COUNTY'S MONEY.

Read what New Zealand is doing to improve quality of life and encourage tourism. Yes, the golden word "tourism" which brings in much needed money to hotels, restaurants, amusements parks, parking, bike rentals, and taxes for the hungry Supervisors. This is such a novel idea you probably have not heard the idea before; New Zealand is building 1600 miles of BIKE TRAILS, through all of its diverse environments, parks,

and towns. Yes, BIKE TRAILS!!! Instead of a old, used, tired, and expensive directions why don't you get on your thinking caps on and see the future, NOT A TRAIN SHUFFLING 1200 PEOPLE A DAY, but BIKE TRAILS on the old RAILS.

I am exhausted by the County Supervisors shoving the train idea down our throats. NO we will not like the taste of a stupid train no matter how often you shove the idea down our throats. The Highway 1 problem is not people traveling between Santa Cruz and Salinas, but traveling from Santa Cruz over the hill to Silicon Valley.

STOP YOUR RIDICULOUS QUEST OF A TRAIN! Rail to Trails is a way to enhance tourism (yes, more almighty dollars flowing into the county), and having the trails available for bike commuters within the Santa Cruz area.

Theresa Maratinelli-Jones

From: Nicola Halstead
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 4:25 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: PASSENGER TRAIN FEASIBILITY

Dear RTC Members,

I understand you are reviewing the possibility of having a passenger train run along the tracks. I understand it could potentially run from 6am to 9pm. I live along the tracks on a street where homes range from \$1.5M-\$4.5M. Do you think ANYONE who lives in the communities along these tracks has any interest in the noise and environmental pollution this would have? Have you taken into consideration how much it would decline our property values, reducing property taxes and in return city budgets? That must be put into the equation of your costs associated with this project.

Have you considered all of the residents who live along or close to these tracks that are sleeping in the early morning and evening hours you would be running this train and how disrespectful it is to them, they were there FIRST! Anyone who purchased a home in this area knew that the train only ran twice a day at respectable hours. To put in a train system that would cause so much disruption to the community show's how little you care about the residents of Santa Cruz. With 60 trains is not only a waste of taxpayer money, it won't have full ridership as the trains run in residential communities where there is no room for a parking lot or where buses don't run. Please do not consider adding more pollution filled buses into our communities. Put the budget into making HWY 1 better.

Another important item to take into consideration is the safety. Trains have never frequently run through these tracks, only slow moving freight trains came through. Our beach side communities are full of families, children and tourists on bicycles, skateboards and running. You cannot have a high speed train in these areas it is dangerous. Someone will be hurt. A few years ago I personally witnessed a man being life flighted off the tracks from being hit by a train in Aptos. The only option you would have would be to fence in the lines to keep it safe and that is not possible.

It seems you are clinging to some hope of seeing a train, most likely for nostalgia. The only trains cities are investing in now are electric trains, anything else is a complete waste of taxpayer money and completely environmentally irresponsible. Either subcontract the lines back out to South Pacific or pull them out and put a trail for the entire community of Santa Cruz to enjoy. A passenger train on archaic tracks is not the answer, do right by taxpayers and move on from this idea.

Best Regards,

Nicky

Nicky Halstead
Sr Director, Circulation Sales & Marketing
Financial Times

From: Peoples, Brian C
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 5:07 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Trail over Train

RTC,

The rail corridor from Santa Cruz Boardwalk to Manresa is not wide enough for a train and trail. Please remove tracks and build trail.

Brian Peoples

From: Justin Swett
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 5:34 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Please let us convert the train tracks to trail

I think the idea of a commuter train is unrealistic in Santa Cruz county and would much rather have a public bike trail available in place of the existing train tracks. At the very least, let the community vote on the issue.

Kind Regards,
Justin

From: Paul Nolan
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 5:43 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Is The Way Forward

In my opinion I think that passenger rail in would be very beneficial to a lot of people in Santa Cruz. Keep up the good work on the passenger rail feasibility study, can't wait for the final draft!

From: Calcagno Mail
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2015 9:12 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No train! Trail only

I've lived here for most of my life. I've studied all the angles. The train is a dead end. Remove the rails make it a bike / pedestrian trail, I'm confident the community will come out in droves to use it.
James Calcagno DDS

Sent from my iPhone

From: Paul Braga
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2015 7:48 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No to rail

Hello:

As a life long resident of Santa Cruz County, I am against the proposition of rail service through our community. I understand you had a feasibility study for such service and I read about it in the SC Sentinel this morning. I really think this would be an under-utilized, and costly mistake.

Please consider removing the rail and replacing with bike paths. We are a town of cyclists and families who like to be outdoors. In my opinion, this would serve the community most optimally, with little cost.

Thank you,
Paul Braga

From: Craig Neal
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2015 8:32 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

To whom it may concern:

My quick read of the summary of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Study suggests that rail is NOT an option for Santa Cruz County and that bus and personal transit options must be analyzed (immediately) before any decisions are taken regarding the development of the Branch Line.

1. As the study points out: *"... it appears unlikely that capital costs in excess of \$100 million can be met with grant programs and other sources that currently exist or could be potentially available. As with capital needs, annual operating subsidies in excess of \$10 million annually would be difficult to achieve in the current funding environment."* Accordingly, Scenarios D Peak (SC-W), G (SC-W), and G1 (FRA SC-W) are not financeable -- and thus not feasible. Note: Scenario J (SC-Pajaro) is marginally financeable - assuming no capital cost escalation.
2. The Study suggests that the remaining "financeable" Scenarios: B (SC-Cap), E (SC-Aptos), J (SC-Pajaro), and S (SC-Seacliff) are unlikely to generate the projected ridership - and thus hoped-for the environmental and social benefits. (See attached table.)
3. Even assuming the community-at-large absorbs all the capital costs (for the environmental and social benefits), the average O&M cost per boarding exceeds the current Metro Bus fares by over 4, 2, 3 and 6 times, respectively for Scenarios B, E, J and S. Accordingly, with fares set at O&M recovery, few riders will be attracted from the community that would consider riding a Metro Bus an option. Moreover, the average O&M cost per boarding-mile vis-a-vis the IRS mileage allowance (a proxy for automobile operating costs) is: over 2 times for Scenario B; approximately even for Scenario E; a bit over half for Scenario J; and over three time for Scenario S. Hence only the marginally financeable Scenario J (SC-Pajaro) would likely attract drivers in any number. Nevertheless, the absence of bus riders under Scenario J would most likely substantially raise the Average O&M per boarding-mile and dissuade drivers from switching.
4. If the beneficiaries of operations cannot cover the cost of operations, it is usually not a defensible public investment. Few riders mean there will be few private and social benefits - only substantial socialized costs.
5. The Study claims *"... service north west to Davenport is not precluded from future analysis."* and *"... This study does not preclude future analysis of these [bus rapid transit (BRT) or personal rapid transit (PRT)] and other options."* This, in fact, is NOT true. Movement on the rail option precludes options to create an integrated BRT/PRT system using the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Proper public finance practice requires that the cost-benefits of these options MUST be fully considered along side any rail-based options.
6. Admittedly without the benefit of hard numbers, I would confidently bet that an (overhead) electric bus corridor added to the current Metro Bus system would yield some encouraging cost-benefit results (including environmental and social benefits) - especially if some of the electric buses would be hybrids that could link to the main Metro Bus depots.
7. Whereas rail cannot safely do so, the surface of a bus corridor can easily accommodate cyclists. Thus a combined bus-personal transport system investment would yield even stronger results.
8. A bus-based corridor also admits easy and natural extensions of the bus/bicycle based transport link into the south county -- as well as up the coast to Davenport. (The latter alone would attract thousands cyclists from all over the SF and Monterrey Bay Areas - to the delight of the Davenport and West-Side merchants.) Rail is not remotely as flexible.
9. I understand that the terms of the bond issue mandates rail development. However, if rail is not feasible (as suggested by the Study), the County needs to seek forbearance on the bond terms or simply develop safe pedestrian access while leaving the rails/ties/ballast to decay in compliance with the bond terms.
10. Last point: The right of way of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line is NOT integrated into the County's surface street scheme. Anyone who has used rail-to-trails conversions in built-up areas understands how challenging it is to (repeatedly) cross streets at points not designed for car/bus/bicycle/pedestrian crossing. This would be a non-trivial design challenge for introducing traffic to this corridor - be it passenger rail or bus

or bicycle.

Sincerely,

Craig NEAL

Craig Neal- email Attachment:

TABLE ES –1: SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

	Scenario B: SC-Cap	Scenario D Peak: SC-W	Scenario E: SC-Aptos	Scenario G: SC-W	Scenario G1: FRA SC-W	Scenario J: SC-Pajaro	Scenario S: SC- Seacliff
miles	6.6	20.5	9.5	20.5	20.5	21.8	7.6
Annual O&M cost (operations, vehicle maintenance, general admin, & contingency)	6,900,000	3,800,000	6,900,000	9,900,000	14,000,000	3,700,000	5,400,000
Upfront Capital Cost (Outlay) (tracks, stations, vehicles, +30% contingency & 30% support)	77,000,000	119,000,000	85,000,000	133,000,000	176,000,000	93,000,000	31,500,000
Annual Boardings Low Estimate (Base Year)	846,000	287,500	1,413,000	1,509,000	1,509,000	528,000	420,000
Average O&M per boarding	8.16	13.22	4.88	6.56	9.28	7.01	12.86
Metro Bus Fare	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Average O&M per boarding- mile	1.24	0.64	0.51	0.32	0.45	0.32	1.69
IRS Mileage Allowance/Mile	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56

From: Karen Kaplan

Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2015 2:56 AM

To: Transportation Comm. - Cathy Judd

Subject: RE: Railbus, PRT, Gondola & Thurs. June 4, 6:30pm mtg.

Hi SCCRTC:

RE: Railbus, PRT, Gondola & Thurs. June 4, 6:30pm meeting at Simpkins Swim Center

Have you considered a Railbus, PRT (Personal Rapid Transit) and a Gondola?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railbus>

Railbus - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Railbus - Wikipedia, the freeencyclopedia](#)

A railbus is a very lightweight type passenger rail vehicle (typically non-articulated or rigid frame) that shares many aspects of their construction with a bus...

[View on en.wikipedia.org](#) Preview by Yahoo

It is my understanding that the rail bus runs on the existing track and has retractable rail wheels, so it can also travel on streets. It is already in use in the following countries:

Sweden
Britain
Italy
Germany
Bolivia
Sri Lanka
Ecuador
India

I suggest PRT or a Gondola from Harvey West Park to UCSC, similar to ski gondolas at Stateline, Tahoe.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_rapid_transit

<http://www.powderhounds.com/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/images/USA/Heavenly/Heavenly-02.jpg>

*Thank you for your consideration.
Karen Kaplan*

From: GARY PLOMP

Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2015 8:29 AM

To: Shaz Lint

Cc: Renee Mello; Dee Dee Vargas; Kevin McKinney; Kurt Overmeyer; Karena Pushnik

Subject: RE: Support Needed....Please!

To all:

This morning the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission will present the results of a passenger rail study on the Santa Cruz Branch rail line at the **Watsonville City Hall, 4th floor today at 10:00 am.**

Though I will be unable to attend, I respectfully ask for your support to bring passenger rail back to Santa Cruz County and specifically Watsonville!! The most viable: A train from Santa Cruz to Watsonville connecting with Amtrak and Cal-Train at Watsonville Junction in Pajaro.

Thank you for your support on this!!!

Gary V. Plomp



From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2015 3:36 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Charles Paulden
Subject
Rail Bus
Your Message
<p>Use a rail bus on the existing line. Put the retractable rail wheels on our Metro Buses. Come to SC in the AM on the tracks and back on the Freeway.Reverse in the PM. They could even go both ways on the track, because they can pull over to the street and then get back on the tracks after the two buses pass each other. Quick implementation, inexpensive and usable.....</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railbus</p>

From: Scott Schaaf
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2015 7:37 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

I am adamantly opposed to any sales tax to pay for a passenger rail service. Our roads are in terrible shape should have priority for any funding coming from tax payers. A possible half cent sales is far too much to support what would probably be a small percentage of the population. This county is already a very expensive place to live. We need to use tax dollars where they will benefit the greatest number of residents.

Thank you,
Susan Schaaf

From: Micah Posner
Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2015 8:22 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: Don Lane
Subject: my input on rail transportation

Dear Staff and Commissioners,

I am here at the presentation on rail at Simpkins Swim Center. I think the thing that struck me most was something that George Dondero said regarding the potential of train service to support and encourage new lifestyle choices by the 'millenials' wherein people choose not to have a car or to have less than one car per family member. Enouraging this kind of lifestyle should be our first priority. If we succeed in that goal, we reduce not just the specific car trips but an exponetial amount of car trips not taken by someone who elects not to own a car.

With that in mind, I think that our initial service needs to provide inter-regional transportation. It needs to go to Pajaro to meet trains that stop there. It needs to go to Watsonville to insure that we are really serving all county residents. This is not just about votes on the SCCRTC but about inclusionary politics. This looks something like option J. However, I do not think the train would need to stop as often as recommended. A train that stops in Santa Cruz, Capitola, Aptos, Watsonville and Pajaro would be sufficient (though of course not ideal) to create a real transportation alternative.

Using a slimmed down Measure J (less stops) as a baseline, we could, and should add more local transportation as soon as possible, perhaps even from the beginning. The 6 round trip trains per day could be interspersed with more local trains from the Westside of Santa Cruz to Cabrillo with very simply bus stop style

stops provided. Hopefully this would bring us, as quickly as possible, to a hybrid of alternative G and J, with J being the priority.

I think it would be entirely realistic to charge more than \$2.50 per ride without having much effect on ridership. I think \$3.50 would be fine.

One of the consultants referred to the option of studying a Bus Rapid System. I am not interested in that. A Bus Rapid Transit System is a very different option that has a very limited effect on land use and the types of life style changes I've described above. It is also a huge tangent and a waste of time and energy.

My opinions are based partially on talking to constituents and partially on my own experience as someone who has had limited access to a car for many years. I'll admit that the system I've described above would be most useful to me personally. George's comments regarding the 'millenials' describes my own lifestyle. Thus, my hope is that, in thinking about the train that my family and I need, that I am attempting to address the transportation needs of an increasing portion of our population.

Micah Posner
Member of the Santa Cruz City Council

From: Peoples, Brian C
Sent: Friday, June 05, 2015 6:08 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Train Feasibility Study - Thanks Jimmy!

Jimmy,

Thank you for standing up for Watsonville and requiring the train Feasibility Study support Watsonville. This is the right thing to do, not only for Watsonville, but to have a Feasibility Study that compares "apples to apples" in relationship to alternative transportation solutions, i.e., Highway 1 widening, express buses. As Supervisor Greg Caput rightfully stated, the passenger ridership calculations of 5K a day is questionably high and the RTC consultant confirmed that it is not based on ridership modeling analysis – which would be required to get a value that is more accurate. The travel time from Watsonville to Santa Cruz over 40 minutes is not going to make passenger train a viable option and the idea proposed by RTC Consultant to increase the speed of train to 20 to 35 MPH is really not appropriate with the tracks less than 15 feet from homes. A typical highway lane capacity is 2.5K cars per hour – and will typically have more than 1 person in the calculations.

Now that we are comparing apples-to-apples for the feasibility of a train to other alternatives, the train looks not economically viable.

Thanks,
Brian Peoples

From: Ka'ohinani
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2015 7:05 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study

1. We are against the rail for tourist transportation. We understand the need for commuter transportation & have begun to support that idea.
2. If the commuter rail is built, we are asking you to include a notification process for your pruning of plant growth along the trail. Perhaps a sign or banner could be centrally posted listing the dates; a newspaper announcement would be insufficient because we do not read the Sentinel regularly. We have a fruit producing persimmon tree at our back fence that borders the railroad tracks that would be affected.

Inani Eggleston and Gordon Hammer

From: Ka'ohinani
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2015 9:09 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Comments

After attending the informational meeting a couple evenings ago, we support the rail passenger system because of the benefit to so many people and because of its environmental benefit, but we do have **concerns** about our privacy at our townhome on 30th Avenue. By privacy, I am referring to both **visual and auditory....We request that the project include building higher fencing than what is currently permitted.....And a sound barrier to offset as much of the train noise as possible. Is this feasible?**

Of the two trains that the committee favors most out of the entire group, we do not want the conventional train and we do **favor the light diesel model because it is quieter and more efficient.**

It's taken a while to come to this (because of privacy issues), but we **also support the bike trail** along the tracks.

Thank you,
Inani Eggleston and Gordon Hammer

From: JulianaCheng
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2015 1:26 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Re: RTC: Join the Conversation about Rail Transit in Santa Cruz County

I probably won't use the Santa Cruz rails system to travel because Hwy 17 express will be more convenience to connect to Amtrack over the hill in San Jose and I probably won't live long enough to take the train to Salinas or Watsonville in order to connect to the high speed train to go down to Los Angeles area etc. whenever that is built.....I am still saving hard and trying to find out ways to save enough money to buy a new multipurpose vehicle like my 1990 Chrysler Mini-van....I am not a cyclist like million other Chinese although Chinese is my heritage and the Chinese built the rail roads in America and China....

I don't see sufficient ridership to keep the train going in Santa Cruz except summer tourists and campers, may be....

Sorry, I have not read the draft.

Juliana Cheng

From: Disqus
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2015 9:44 PM
To: sccrtc@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Comment on Street Smarts: Studying traffic lights, passenger rail

Barry Scott

Thank you, RTC, for purchasing the line, living up to this statement:
"The only way for the community to more effectively use the branch line is through public ownership," said Dondero. He argued that the closure of Davenport's Cemex cement plant this year - the line's biggest freight customer - leaves the corridor in jeopardy of being carved up and sold to private or adjacent landowners if the commission does not buy it.

It's an asset, it needs to be used to the advantage of the greatest number of county residents, and that will be public transit, rail service.

From: Dick English
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2015 9:51 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: Zach Friend; Susan Mauriello >
Subject: County Rail Project
Please forward the following to the appropriate members of the RTC.

My wife and I attended the event at Simkins last week to learn more about planning for the County rail system. While the professionalism exhibited at last week's meeting was palpable, I remain skeptical. There are two major concerns: (1) Use of mass transit requires population and destination demographics that I don't believe exist in Santa Cruz County; (2) The financial planning boils down to cost to create a system and cost to operate it. While the infrastructure costs could possibly be covered through bond measures and long-term financing, the operating costs, 75% of which would NOT be covered by fare receipts, would require public funding to the tune of \$8 - 10M/year if I recall the figures that were presented. Investing in a bond-supported transit system that might not live up to projected ridership and freight utilization could be a hard sell to a county that seems to weigh such measures very carefully. Scotts Valley, Felton, Bonny Doon, and the unincorporated mountain community would not be served and would likely not be supportive. Then when the realization that the bond measure would be followed by property tax, sales tax, etc increases to fund the operating deficit, the potential for acceptance will be further eroded. Spending more money on further analysis by the consulting folks seems to just mean spending more money. The consultants appear to have exhaustive analytical resources with which to analyze potential ridership, cost to upgrade the right of way, design and cost out station construction, etc, but I suggest that before spending more on such tactical analyses a big picture, strategic analysis be done. Consider that San Jose built a light rail system a number of years ago and the struggles that they went through to make it work - and then look at the demographic and other mass transit oriented considerations and differences between our community and San Jose. Perhaps there are other systems that would be better models. Mass transit seems most effective when there is ready non-vehicular access to and from transit stops - i.e. - urban, high-density settings. We are a car transportation people, like it or not. Widening Highway 1 has produced good results so far, and I encourage continued focus on extending the widening all the way to Watsonville, one step at a time. We've got to turn down the volume on those who believe that wider highways will simply bring more people. The people and their cars are already here. Santa Cruz County's Highway 1 is the gateway to the California Coast, and we're not going to change that geographic fact by restricting the size of the highway. One of the drivers behind the consideration of building a passenger rail infrastructure appears to be the conditions under which the railroad right of way was purchased. I understand that one key proviso is that the corridor be operated as a passenger rail line for an unspecified time period. I suggest that while we are looking into how to create a passenger rail line that could very well turn into a major budget item for all county entities, we also look at what it would cost to buy back the right to decommission the rail line and convert the right of way to the walking and bicycling trail that so many county residents hoped would be part of this project. According to the RTC Fact Sheet on the purchase of the right of way, the external funding was \$11.5M. Given the enormity of the options under discussion, it would appear that buying back the right to use the corridor without restriction would represent a significant cost saving without the future uncertainties of how a passenger rail system would be operated.

Best,
Richard 'Dick' English
Aptos, CA

From: Lois Robin
Sent: Friday, June 12, 2015 11:40 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: True thoughts on Santa Cruz rail line dilemma

Some studies of Santa Cruz rail trail have shown that the best use of our rail trail would be for buses, not trains, to drive along it with the capacity to turn into side streets, such as Bay Avenue, or 41st Avenue or even less traveled streets like Capitola Avenue. Not as glamorous--or appealing--as trains, buses could get the job done. They could be small buses in great number that could be agile and get people where they need to go. As a senior senior just about ready to give up driving, such a system would be the best for me. Buses are currently totally ineffective in getting people out of their cars unlike their effectiveness in places like Curitiba in Brazil where almost everyone rides the bus. We need to take a page from their book and get buses to provide efficient timely, comfortable, reliable service. That said, trains are captivating, and I would ride one to downtown Santa Cruz or Watsonville in a heartbeat. Just concerned that they are not sufficiently practical.

Lois Robin

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]

Sent: Monday, June 15, 2015 10:58 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Steve Czarnecki
Subject
conventional trains or light rail cars
Your Message
<p>I'm a supporter of your efforts to improve mobility in our county. Recently, there has been some implication that all the service on the corridor will be by conventional diesel locomotive.</p> <p>I believe that this is false, but it is damaging not to respond to this issue as it comes up in the Sentinel and elsewhere.</p> <p>I think you would be better served if your site had a link on the front page which dealt with this misconception promptly.</p>

From: Barry Scott

Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2015 5:57 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Expressing my strong support FOR rail project on the Santa Cruz Branch Line

Dear commission members,

I write in strong support of continued development of the rail corridor for use by commuter, freight, and tourist service, and ideally the scenario that will serve the greatest number of county communities and residents.

Primary reasons for my support for rail:

- The corridor is one of only three continuous routes capable of serving transportation needs, along with Highway One and Soquel Drive. It would be impossible to create such an right of way from scratch, we really need to use this asset to full effect.
- Aside from completing the third lane in each direction of travel for Highway One, additional improvements really won't reduce congestion, which is a manifestation of problems on connecting highways like Highway 17 and on surface streets like 41st Avenue.
- Feasibility has been shown to be comparable to other transit systems and it needs to be remembered that all transportation is subsidized. In fact, highways have a higher subsidy than Amtrak rail:
<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/archived-projects/subsidyscope>
- Trail only is unlikely to attract the kind of big federal funding packages that a true commuter rail service will.
- Trail only will bring in no revenue whatsoever and will require ongoing maintenance costs.
- Trail only sounds nice but as a 32-mile continuous trail will only serve a few cycling enthusiasts; it will be unlikely to be used as an alternative to driving and thus not significantly reduce highway traffic.
- Our rail system will be available to connect to other public transit services like Amtrak and other rail and bus services, and it's ability to be a part of that larger multimodal transportation future must be protected.
- Ridership might be low at first but with continued use we can expect ridership to grow and expect the urban metabolism of businesses and services to take greater and greater advantage of this new transport option.

In closing, I'd like to add three more insights:

1. This corridor is a county property, not the property of adjacent homeowners or of one community over another, so it needs to be used to provide value to the greatest number of county residents. Residents may complain about trains coming by the homes that they bought next to railroad tracks. I think they'll survive.
2. Further, if the tracks are pulled and easements are retired, parcel owners stand to gain valuable property use at the expense of others who paid for this purchase. That's not fair.
3. Finally, I'm confident that you all recognize an organized effort to fight the rail project in favor of an uninterrupted bike path from "Boardwalk to Manresa by 2016", and this effort might result in a significant number of letters coming which object to the rail project. I trust that the commission won't use the numbers of letters pro versus con as any sort of accurate measure of actual public sentiment or an indication of what is best to do moving forward.

Best regards,
Barry Scott

From: Barry Scott
Sent: Saturday, June 20, 2015 1:10 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Question for Cory Caletti and Karena Pushnik

Dear Cory, Karena, other Commission members,

Citizen Brian Peoples continues to make claims that, if true, aren't being shared with the public as much as they perhaps should be.

Quoting Brian from today in Sentinel comments section of the [June 18 Spin City: Watsonville article](#) about plans for the rail corridor (emphasis is mine):

Brian Peoples

Barry - "what ever they build"? The tracks are there already - if it was such a great opportunity and cashflow, why aren't there trains. The tracks remain as a "vacant lot" and serve no benefit to the community.

I standby everything I say, including that I will buy the property and build trail at no expense to RTC or taxpayers. I really don't find it necessary to show you any bank account record or anything else. At the end of the day, I believe that the property will be owned by County, Santa Cruz City and maybe Capitola - the funds will be available through private partnerships - and again, I don't need to show you any financials. Highway 1 widening and trail is our goal.

Brian Peoples

Barry - **Yes, it is public record within RTC that we will buy it. We have made offer.** Having said that, we are still trying to figure out the approach. Many within RTC want to have RTC still own the property. We think that we can get trail built without us having to purchase property. The issue is that the property is really "controlled" by CTC - and we have to see how that pays out. At the end of the day, private money will be provided to build trail and who owns the property will be worked out the details. The goal is to build trail by next year and make it a great community asset.

I don't take Mr. Peoples seriously, but in the event that his claims are true, that he plans to buy the corridor, or that it's even a scenario that could occur, I feel it's important that the public is aware of this.

-- Please explain, is it even possible for private funds to purchase the rail corridor property and rights of way?
-- Has the RTC received an offer and is it a matter of public record?

I'm reluctant to even bother you all when I know you have plenty of work to do, but Mr. Peoples is making these statements and I feel they need to be addressed in some fashion.

Warm regards and many thanks to all of you.

Barry Scott
State Program Director, [The NEED Project](#)
Educational consultant PG&E Company

From: Diana Adamic
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2015 2:47 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

I do agree that some sort of public transportation needs to be added to this county. I strongly do not want to see the old fashioned, noisy, constrained and expensive version listed in the report simply because the rail is there. It is an antiquated model and mode of transportation which does not fit into any plans for the future.

1. My biggest concern is the noise. I love train travel but the noise on a regular basis is horrible. The xmas train through Santa Cruz was driving me insane. Literally. I had to take extreme steps to calm myself that year and vowed to move away if it continued each xmas. Horrible!! I don't like the noise while on Amtrak. Not only does it bother me but the wildlife in the area is affected by the constant noise.
2. More important to this study is that it will lack ridership. Look at where you are going! To the beaches? On a train? Folks who go to beaches take a lot of stuff. They take boards and chairs and food carts. There isn't a reasonable way to haul these items along on a train. If I go to Capitola it is either for Home Depot or OSH. How am I going to carry those large items back on a train? Trains need to carry surfboards, LOTS of bikes, strollers w/o having to collapse them so baby and stuff can remain in the stroller. Large items for beaches and park time. Lots of luggage.
3. Or I am going to Beverley's Fabrics which is too far from the station. How would I get there on a train? I would like to take the train to Capitola village for dinner but then I would need a short walk and security. And that ride I would only do twice a year.
4. Dogs. Folks want to bring dogs with them. Look at how Prague manages this. Dogs get muzzled while on the trolley and muzzle removed once they are off the trolley.
5. Cost. There is one of me - OK, maybe it would be cheaper to ride the bus. But most of the time there are 3-6 of us going somewhere. A \$2 bus ride is now \$12. Too much.
6. We are always going too many different places. Parents are rushing to pick up kids and get them to the other side of town for a dance class. Bus or train not an option with the short amount of time.
7. Commuters for work are not going between downtown and Aptos. They are going from here to there and back again. Too many going over the hill.
8. UCSC and Cabrillo students and faculty are a big concern and they may be targets for mass transit. Fine. I do agree with that. But not big rail. Find another way to get them out of their cars. Maybe smaller, more electric buses that go more places and more often? This seems to be the big market for a train type system so you need a system that goes direct from Campus to where they live.
9. Trolley instead of train. Like a cable car. Or like the trolleys in Prague. Many places to jump on, pay easy and jump off. Like a cable car where it is easy to take a short ride. Few seats since the ride is short. Less noise, less stink from the train. Electric trolley type line that is quiet and clean and slow. Slow is fine since it will not be stopping in traffic.
10. Parking lots only at major stops, making smaller stops something to jump on quickly.
11. To ease local traffic, focus on making it more pleasant and safe to walk from one part of town to the other. Make more of a promenade from Capitola Mall to the beach area. On the westside we have so few sidewalks that are usable. Difficult and unpleasant to cross streets.
12. Get buses to carry more bikes so I can ride bike one way and get a ride on a bus the other way when I am tired. I don't often do this because most of the time there isn't any room on the racks for my bike.
13. The train is just too old and wrong for what we need here. Think more of the future and not about being "quaint" and a train just for a fun ride. You can keep the Roaring Camp train for folks that want to have the fun of an old train but if you are trying to get folks out of the cars you need to think how it will help their lives. Smaller, more frequent trains.

14. Look at the downtown trolley. "Ride to the Beach!!" but not the Boardwalk. How stupid is that? I rode it once just to confirm it does not work for me at all.

15. More folks will use a bike/walk trail than a train.

From: Steve Piercy - Website Builder
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2015 2:52 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail scenarios for south county

Dear RTC,

While reviewing scenarios G, G1, and J in the Rail Feasibility Study, I could not find an explanation for why there would be only 6 weekday trains for scenario J compared to 30 for both G and G1. The Pajaro station is only 1.6 miles further, and I have difficult time understanding the large discrepancy in headways for such a small incremental distance. Can you refer me to the data or analysis in the study that explains this?
Thank you!

--steve

Steve Piercy Website Builder Soquel, CA

Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2015 7:00 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: How do passengers get to the rail?

While I do like the idea of train travel, having taken Amtrak (a pleasant if always late experience), the getting to/from the station has always been the issue.

Quite a few years ago, when this issue came up, I recall writing in the Sentinel Letters asking exactly how people (kids, seniors, the Disabled) would get to the train as most of us do not live within easy walking distance of the planned stops but further away. So unless you have some kind of coordinated bus, tram, or jitney service to get us to and from stations to our homes, errands, schools, etc. I don't see how ridership will be financially feasible or sustainable.

Do you have a 'peoplemover' plan to supply/support rail travel?

Diane Reymer

From: Anita Whelan
Sent: Monday, June 22, 2015 6:00 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: To: George Dondero

Mr. Dondero,

After reading your June 21st commentary in the Santa Cruz Sentinel I was curious to understand how I, as a resident in Rio Del Mar might use the rail service. If I wanted to go to a movie at the Nick in downtown, use the Mall on 41st Ave, visit a PAMF doctor at the main clinic, take a class at Cabrillo or UCSC there would seem to be very basic impediments to make the rail a viable transportation option:

- where would I park my car at a local station or otherwise access the local depot
- how would I readily get to any of these desired destinations after disembarking from the train other than waiting for a bus service to be tied to each station

I attended the June 4th meeting at Simpkins. The consultants working on this project are very knowledgeable about their own areas of study. But I was unable to determine who is the anticipated user population in our county other than "people reported" they would support using the rail service.

Anita Whelan

From: Peoples, Brian C

Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2015 8:42 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Comment on train Feasibility Study and long term plans for Corridor

RTC,

I think the latest DeCinzo comic tells the story well about the idea of 20,000 trains per year operating along the corridor 15 feet from homes and businesses. Michelle Sippen's comments in the Sentinel (below) hit it on the head.

It is unlikely that a train would run along the corridor in the ever in the future. If a train was even possible, it would be more likely to run down the middle of Highway 1 – but again, this is not the best way to improve mobility across the County.

As RTC transitions to the next phase – construction of trail with removal of tracks, I encourage you not to do "railbanking". It is not necessary because the properties are zoned as parcels and the easements through farmland can be addressed with partnerships. It also is not a positive approach to the farmland owners who have easements going through their property. We have the largest farming organizations in partnership with Aptos Rail-Trail and believe that RTC will be most successful through positive collaboration with the neighboring property owners.

Actually, it can be argued that railbanking will lose in court because of the 2014 Supreme Court decision in favor of property owners over rail-trail conservatory. Local farmland owners will be able to show that a train is not economically, socially or safety viable. Most important, railbanking will delay the construction of trail and add negative relationships with adjacent property owners.



[Online Sentinel Comments: Michelle Shippen](#)

I was so looking forward to the biking and walking rail-trail. Just what I need. Just what my kids and grandkids, and all their friends, have been dreaming of. Now I find out that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) Draft Passenger Train Feasibility Study envisions 60 trains a day, 15 minutes apart both ways, with speeds between 45 and 65 mph--and when you throw in the train horn that starts blasting at deafening levels starting 1/4 mile away from each crossing (there are 44 between Westside Santa Cruz and Capitola Village alone), I get a little sick to my stomach. This is what the bikers and babies in strollers will

experience, not to mention the neighbors, businesses and anyone else anywhere near the rail corridor, which cuts through the heart of our cities and unincorporated areas. Oh, and we will be asked to pay for this intensification of the rail with a new sales tax--for 30 years. Thank you Steven DeCinzo for saying in one spot-on cartoon what it will take a community a lot of work to explain well enough to get past the RTC Draft Feasibility Study spin

From: Sarah Kauffman
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2015 11:03 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Bike-friendly rail service

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes
- Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking
- Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail
- Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents

Thank you!
Sarah Kauffman
Santa Cruz

From: Prentice Steffen, MD
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2015 12:01 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

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- Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail
- Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents

Thanks,
Prentice
Prentice Steffen, MD, FAAEM

From: Sheryl Kern-Jones
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2015 1:05 PM
To: info@scrtc.org
Subject: Comments on Rail Study

To: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Fr: Sheryl Kern-Jones
Resident of Santa Cruz and Employee in Aptos

The community is very excited about the opportunity to bring passenger rail service to Santa Cruz. As you develop these plans, it will be crucial to develop safe paths from the rail service to our community. We will need to get families from their schools, workplaces, parks, beaches, and community gathering spots to/from the rail trail. Developing safe bicycle corridors to/from rail service stops will be important. This will create a huge boost in usage of the rail system and reduce parking needs and the impact of stations to neighborhoods.

I encourage the Commission to work with each of the local communities from Santa Cruz through Watsonville to create safe walking and biking access to all schools so that families can bring kids to school and then head off to work. Passenger rail service should be smoothly integrated with the Coastal Rail Trail. And, the Commission should work with large local employers like Cabrillo College, UCSC, the counties, the school systems to create pathways and incentives for the large numbers of people needing to access these locations. I also encourage the Commission to consider the needs of teens and elders who need safe methods of transportation to schools, colleges, senior centers, health centers, sports, beaches, and local dining and entertainment options. There should also be room on the trains for bikes, walkers, wheel chairs and adequate seating and bike racks at stations.

Thank you for considering these suggestions.

From: Rebbie Higgins
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2015 6:46 AM
To: info@scrtc.org
Subject: Rail feasibility must be bike friendly

Dear Members of the SCCRTC,

I am so excited about the progress on a Santa Cruz train! Passenger rail connecting Watsonville to West Side Santa Cruz will benefit a huge number of people.

I would like that you consider two things while researching the options:

- 1) The Coastal Rail Trail must be kept intact and accessible - bicycle trail advocates put a lot of work into making sure the rails are not just ripped up to become a Rail-to-Trail. We're huge fans of trains AND bikes, and the bike trail is going to be one of the things Santa Cruz is known for, and will be a big asset to commuting.
- 2) There will be a large number of potential train users who do not live and/or work within walking distance of the train. Successful public transportation recognizes the need to accommodate bicycles for the start and end points of long distance travel. Please make sure you are thinking about:
 - a. Bikes on trains (no one wants to leave their bike locked up all day at a train station and have all their parts removed AND they still need to get to their destination on the other end, which might be an easy 1 mile bike ride from a train stop, but an impossible walk).
 - b. Sufficient space for bikes on trains. The Highway 17 Express' limit of three bikes has been a huge deterrent to over-the-hill commuters.
 - c. Plentiful and safe bike parking at the stations - plenty of racks, covered parking, and bike lockers are helpful.

Thank you!

Warmly, Mrs. Higgins

--

Rebbie Higgins
BayView mom to Ruby (5th) and Huck (3rd)

From: Ryan Donlon
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2015 5:12 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Santa Cruz branch line

Hello,

Thank you for your time and attention to my email. It was with great interest (and anticipation) that I read Executive Director Dondero's recent comments in the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/general-news/20150619/george-dondero-envisioning-future-with-passenger-rail-service>

I was especially intrigued by the prospect of access to the prospective high speed rail at Gilroy. I'm wondering: is Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation System studying extending the conceptual Santa Cruz branch line to Gilroy to make that direct connection? As I'm sure you know, ridership plummets when riders must make transfers; a seamless transit option from north Santa Cruz County to high speed rail would be quite an opportunity for access to other parts of the state.

I had another question about Monterey County. Since Monterey County is considering its own rail line that would terminate at Pajara (I believe), has there been consideration of providing a through service covering both counties?

Thanks again,
Ryan

From: Ron Davis
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2015 10:36 AM
To: info@scrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear SCRTC,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Being a frequent visitor to Portland OR, I am always impressed by the way they have incorporated bicycles into their overall transportation planning. Having space for bikes on trains (light rail) as well as bike parking at the stations is a great incentive for commuting.

Sincerely, Ron Davis

From: Douglas Hawes [<mailto:dhawes@terra-law.com>]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2015 6:09 PM
To: info@scrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments - round two.... Monterey....

Dear RTC members,

I have submitted comments to the RTC about the Draft Rail Study previously. But my submissions were focused mainly on the rail potential in Santa Cruz County itself.

So my travels brought me to the City of Monterey yesterday, where I am acting as an informal "consultant" to a consultant.

On historical issues - - not railroad related.

However, after finishing the meeting, I swung by the area of the Monterey Yacht Harbor to study up close the existing situation regarding the possibility of restoring rail service to the City of Monterey.

As you well know, a huge boon to Santa Cruz County's rail efforts would be if Monterey County came fully onboard...

And if the two counties worked together, that one day a seamless rail link from the City of Santa Cruz to the City of Monterey could be established. (This direct link has not been known since the day of the "Scenic Local" passenger trains of the 1920's, to my best recollection.)

Below is a brief summary of my Monterey survey.

So it seems to me that it is possible for the County of Monterey to restore passenger rail service to the City of Monterey - - but it will take a rebuilding effort.

Specifically, the old historic passenger depot - - still intact - - is now a good half mile from where the "right of way" currently ends in an eucalyptus grove. (The old depot now is operated as a business, "Wharf Marketplace.")

Furthermore, the "right of way" to the historic depot is now lost - - conceivably forever. On the old right of way are now townhouses / apartments, and at least two or three fabrication or repair shops - - or other small businesses.

To reach the site of the Old depot in the future, a projected rail line would probably have to switch to an entirely new alignment along a freshly created median on Del Monte Avenue.

The rails could then veer off to the right to the location of the historic depot. Or else to the location of an entirely new, modern depot which would need to be built from scratch. (The historic depot, while cute, is rather small.)

The location of the historic depot is along the edge of an enormous parking lot, tied to the Monterey Yacht Harbor. Creative thinking could combine both a realigned, perhaps "double deck" parking lot - - and a new intermodal (rail / bus/ taxi / bike) depot location.

It is sadly an example of poor city planning that the City of Monterey allowed this right of way to be lost - - and did not take steps to protect it.

Nonetheless, a rail line could conceivably be rebuilt to the Yacht Harbor area, where pedestrian (and bike) traffic would find ready access to nearby shops, museums, and Cannery Row. The walking distances are easy, and completely doable.

But a rail route to Monterey that ends a good half a mile from the core downtown area would be unacceptable. Unfortunately, rebuilding is necessary. A truncated line would nix the whole project.

So I see the possibility down the road of 1) direct rail bus service from Santa Cruz to Monterey, and 2) Capitol Corridor service to Monterey. As I mentioned in earlier submissions, Capitol Corridor service is cutting edge and modern, as good as it gets short of high speed rail. The Capitol Corridor trains are attractive and modern. (BART trains by comparison are now completely shabby.)

So my father worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad from 1932 through 1970 - - except for World War II service - - out of the Market Street headquarters. And my brother was a career Transportation Planner for the State of Alaska. So I have a certain interest, and instinct, for these issues.

I was also a resident of Santa Cruz County for over a decade, mainly back in the seventies and eighties (and early nineties).

Cordially,
Douglas Hawes
San Jose
dhawes2002@yahoo.com

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]

Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2015 12:35 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Name

Georgia Carreras

Subject

rail study

Your Message

I m very pleased that there is now a way for the public to have an input regarding public rail transportation. It is a very necessary need in our community. I have been here almost 20 years and the traffic gets worse every year. We need to save energy and by providing trains it will help decrease the need for gas. Accidents will hopefully decrease as well. The tourist trade will also benefit from the easiness of getting from point A to B.

Please keep getting the message out. Thank You

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]

Sent: Thursday, July 02, 2015 12:42 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Name

Pepper Golesh

Subject

Rail Transit

Your Message

I support rail transit for Santa Cruz County. Pepper Golesh

From: Carol Stern

Sent: Thursday, July 02, 2015 7:47 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Commuter Train Opinion & Info

Mr. Cory Caletti,

I understand your work is important to you but, this idea to build a commuter train system along side the scenic coast line of Capitola, Santa Cruz and along ANY coast in California is a tragedy for the environment.

Yes, we need to commute smarter, but ruining the scenic peace and beauty of the only coastline we have is NOT THE WAY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

NO TRAINS along the coast.

The one we have is a noise honking rumbling noise nightmare. Get rid of it.

I live on a third floor condo on Park Avenue here in Capitola, and the auto traffic noise day and night along Park Avenue is loud enough already. I have to close my windows day and night in order to block out the existing noise.

NO MORE COMMUTE TRAIN NOISE ALONG THE COASTLINE ! ! ! !

That's my vote.

Sincerely,

Carol Stern
Capitola Resident

From: Peoples, Brian C
Sent: Friday, July 03, 2015 9:20 AM
To: Peoples, Brian C; info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Aptos Rail-Trail update; stop train, build trail

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>).

60 TRAINS A DAY FROM 6 AM TO 9 PM

The passenger train Feasibility Study has been released and the proposal is to operate 60 trains a day from 6 am to 9 pm. The comparable system RTC consultant is using is the Sonoma SMART Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) as a case study. It is actually a good example because it is costing the community a lot in dollars and noise pollution. The Bay Area Metro Transportation Commission recently did not support funding of the SMART DMU because of ridership projections that were short of requirements for an effective train operation.

Here is video of local homeowner who is mad that the train is operating next to his house. Let's not have La Selva, Seascape, Aptos, Seacliff, Capitola, etc.:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eft2Ab_2QnY

CORRIDOR NOT WIDE ENOUGH FOR TRAIN & TRAIL

To demonstrate how narrow the corridor is, a drone flyover of a Live Oak neighborhood is shown in youtube video. Not only is the corridor not wide enough for a train and trail, the 60 trains a day passing homes will be within 10 feet of homes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuiiZog0DGw>

HARBOR RAIL-TRAIL

The immediate benefits to the community can easily be visualized with the drone flyover of the Harbor Trestle – where it sits vacant as cars and bikes squeeze-in on Murray Ave.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vw1nzUwi3IQ>

RTC BOARD & NEXT MEETING

RTC is looking for input on the train Feasibility Study. Please send them and your local representative (below) an email that we want trail now. You can submit comments to info@sccrtc.org.

RTC Commissioners:

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

- John Leopold, County of Santa Cruz, 1st District
- Don Lane, 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
- Dennis Norton, Capitola City Council
- Cynthia Chase, City of Santa Cruz
- Karina Cervantez, City of Watsonville
- Ed Bottorff, City of Capitola

Brian Peoples

From: Peoples, Brian C

Sent: Friday, July 03, 2015 10:40 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Barry Scott stating it is not wide enough

RTC,

I would like to submit the comment made by Barry Scott that the rail corridor is not wide enough for train and trail. His true goal is to leave the tracks sitting vacant forever – he does not support improving our community. This shows evidence that the corridor is not wide enough.



Barry Scott > Brian Peoples • 13 minutes ago

This part is definitely not wide enough for rail and trail. We need to lose the trail through that section. An occasional train is a lot less troubling than 24/7 pedestrians, cyclists, criminals, etc., running behind those homes. Trains, baby! Let's build it!

△ ▾ • Reply • Share ›

Brian Peoples

From: Robert Hull

Sent: Saturday, July 04, 2015 7:13 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: 7/4/15 rail study editorial in Sentinel

I agree with Lou Rose about the proposed commuter rail. The benefit of the proposed rail service has been overstated. The costs have been understated. I oppose the project. I doubt that many people will use it. The time to travel would not be effective for most users.
Please cancel the rail project. We have other transit needs that are more important.

Robert Hull

From: Linda Feldbrugge
Sent: Saturday, July 04, 2015 3:07 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: "Draft Rail Study Comments"

Hello,
I would like to show full support for the train to come in to Santa Cruz.
I live in Seascap and would love to take the train into town. It is an idea who's time has come.
Please move forward with this plan and put a daily stop in Seascap. It just makes sense for my family and me.

PS. I had the opportunity to live in Manhattan for 5 years and loved the public transportation there.
It was reliable, dependable and I always felt safe using public transportation and time of day or night.
Thank you,

Linda Feldbrugge
Independent Consultant
Executive Area Manager

From: howard sosbee
Sent: Saturday, July 04, 2015 5:20 PM
To: santa cruz
Cc: SCCRTC General
Subject: Rail study on wrong track

(Special to the Sentinel)

It is unfortunate that the Rail Feasibility Study focused on a commuter train as the vehicle for passenger service on the Union Pacific rail line. For reasons too numerous to enumerate here, a commuter train is the worst possible option for this particular rail line in this particular county situation. But Lou Rose, in his July 4th commentary critical of the feasibility study, poses a question which is completely irrelevant. He asks: "would you rather. . . ride a commuter rail. . . or speed along on an uncongested highway in your car?" Come on! Passenger rail is for people who do not even have a car to speed along in! Mr. Rose cites examples of new rail projects in other cities to illustrate how costs are typically under-forecast, and ridership over-forecast by consultants. But his examples of new rail projects would typically involve huge initial capital costs for right-of-way acquisition and rail infrastructure, neither of which apply here. He also calls Santa Cruz County a "low population area" to indicate low ridership. Yes, the strawberry fields between Watsonville and Seacliff, and the beaches between Davenport and Natural Bridges are definitely low population. But what about the area between Seacliff and the Westside? And how would you evaluate the existence of a rail line already built running smack through the population center of the county? Rose prefers freeways, and describes several ways to get more utility out of the ones we have, but Santa Cruz County desperately needs an alternative to freeways, especially for the thousands of students, seniors, workers, tourists, and others who cannot, or prefer not to, drive a car to school, work, doctor appointment, or just for dinner and a movie. Fortunately, Santa Cruz already has its rail line in place, ideally located, with numerous cross streets to act as feeder lines. It is ideally suited for passengers. For perspective, take a look at Los Angeles County. They once had a superb rail passenger system covering the entire market area. It was purchased and then torn up by a consortium of automobile industry giants for the single purpose of encouraging more people to buy automobiles. It worked. People bought cars, lots of them. And the resulting cost in taxpayer dollars to build and continually expand their hopelessly congested freeway system is far beyond what anyone can estimate. Now, they are investing additional millions to expand what? Their passenger rail system.

Howard F. Sosbee

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Sunday, July 05, 2015 5:21 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Joseph MacDonell
Subject
Commuter Rail
Your Message
<p>I believe that trying to run commuter trains through Santa Cruz County is completely unrealistic from a financial point of view. I urge you to explore alternatives as outlined in Lou Rose's commentary in the July 4, 2015 Sentinel. Rush hour congestion pricing certainly would be more economical than operating a rail system. Among other things, it would be a strong incentive for carpooling which has never caught on in our county.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>Joseph W. MacDonell</p>

From: Michael Watkins
Sent: Jul 6, 2015, at 2:49 PM
To: kpushnik@sccrtc.org

Thank you for the invitation unfortunately I am out of town and unable to attend but in full support of rail transit.

Michael Watkins, Superintendent of Schools, County Office of Education

From: Joyce Roby
Sent: Tuesday, July 07, 2015 9:47 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: An idea for rail service

To Whom It May Concern,

My husband and I traveled to Perugia this spring and saw a passenger rail service they use in their city. It is called the mini metro. It is small scale and doesn't need a conductor, and runs continuously back and forth in the city. I googled a link about what it looks like because it may be an idea you could pursue for our county. Here is the link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zA8jP_Vic_g

If you wanted my help getting more information about it in a volunteer capacity, I could gather more information for you.
Best regards, Joyce Roby

Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2015 9:51 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

RTC

please no rail passenger service.

This will be a taxpayer nightmare.

Please focus only on a bike and pedestrian rail trail

Jeffrey Werner

From: DAVID A BYRON
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2015 1:53 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: stop the idea of a train now!

It will be the dumbest thing and most expensive thing our county has ever done. Build the bike trail now, don't spend another time on the train. It will not be used , it will cost the taxpayers a fortune to keep it going.

Bikes will use it (I know I will) rail passengers will not!

VERY IMPORTANT:

Driverless cars which are just around the corner for us will change everything. There will be far fewer cars on the road, more will be electric, people won't need public transit. This all equals a smaller carbon footprint.

Making rail will be a huge waste please don't do it, build the bike path now, give back the money if you have to!

David Byron

From: Brian Corser
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2015 2:35 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- *Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes*
- *Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking*
- *Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail*
- *Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents*

Thank you for your consideration!

Brian Corser

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2015 10:07 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Elena Herrick

Subject

Passenger Rail

Your Message

I am writing to voice my concern over the passenger rail project along the rail-trail corridor. I strongly urge you to support the alternative of developing, instead, a multi-modal transportation corridor that could be used for bikers and pedestrians. My reasons are many.

1. I live near, but not adjacent to the rail line. So I would be directly effected, by increased noise and air pollution. I think that the neighbors whose lives will be seriously negatively impacted should be considered: DECREASED property values, INCREASED disturbance. Many of us are already impacted by increased noise of new flight pattern. if we were to have a more friendly bike/pedestrian path it would enhance our neighborhoods, be more friendly to people and all living things.

2. From the inception of the "Rail-Trail" project MANY years ago, I was concerned, and still am concerned about how the county is going to afford to maintain the rails. I also do not believe that the cost to build the project will remain in the current projected budget. I believe that over time, maintenance and repairs will ultimately result in increased sales taxes and diminished resources for other public transportation projects & maintenance.

3. I believe that the concept of a shared corridor between trains, bikes, foot traffic is not really possible. The corridor is not realistically wide enough for trains, bikes and pedestrians. It would really only accommodate the rail; people would not have room to bike and walk. Many adults would not want their kids to use the rail unsupervised owing to the danger of the adjacent trains. Worse: I can imagine fatalities caused by the frequent commuter trains moving through residential neighborhoods.

4. The passenger rail is not a realistic, efficient option for every day commuters: I believe that the rail line is more appropriate as a tourist attraction than as a useful commuting tool. I can imagine that people who do not have jobs, or jobs PLUS children would enjoy a scenic ride along the corridor in a train.

However regular everyday people who are doing every day things such as: commuting to work, transporting kids to school or taking to daycare before work, and maybe driving from work, to school to take kids to extra curricular activities then needing to return to work or people going to doctor appointments, after work, before work or somewhere in between-- will all still use the roadways in their cars. People need go directly from point a to point b. People need to carry stuff, we need to sequence our trips to various destinations throughout the day. Especially working parents, are going to need to use the roads which go directly to wherever they need to go. Especially in our county owing to the high cost of living, families are mostly two-parent working families.

I believe there are many merits to the alternative: build a wide multi-modal transportation corridor that will be useful, environmentally friendly, pollution free, cost-friendly. The adjacent neighborhoods would be enhanced rather than spoiled. Those folks who are dedicated to reducing their carbon footprint, and who have room in their lifestyles to adjust their transportation needs accordingly, will have a great bike route. They will not need connecting transportation to get from the train to their destination because they will already have their bikes!

The pedestrian bike path will be a wonderful attraction and activity for local families to get out and enjoy the scenic route which will be pollution and vehicle free. Bicycle commuters will have a great, vehicle-free safe north-south route across the county. I believe the commuter railway will be costly to build and maintain, will add noise and air pollution, will decrease property values and detract from the lives of many in Santa Cruz County. Please support a mult-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you,
Elena Herrick

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]

Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2015 6:24 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Frank Anderson
Subject
Rail Trail
Your Message
Time to change course and give back the funds for rail purchase. Rail transportation is outmoded and logistically will not work for Santa Cruz. Need a plan to remove rails and proceed with new technologies. Solar and battery power is the way to go. Bikes of all sorts can travel the corridor. Maybe an alternative fuel jitney. To keep trying to come up with viable rail transport is insanity. It was a deal done many years ago and times have changed.

Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2015 8:24 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: rail trail

Your attention please,

I'm writing in regards to the rail trail. I feel the bike trail is a more appropriate use for the County. The benefits to the public would far outweigh the train option. The cost alone for rail is way beyond what the taxpayers want. I believe a rail line down the middle of highway 1 would maintain the corridor as the County's transportation corridor. Recently I visited Seattle and they have a system under expansion that works quite well and would be a great model for Santa Cruz.

As a taxpayer I would be glad to pay more in taxes for a bike trail than a train. The cost benefits of a bike trail in terms of the public health, safety and welfare far exceed those of a commuter train. Also the bike trail could be operational within a couple years whereas the train would likely take decades. The economic benefits of a bike trail would be huge for tourism and local businesses. This trail would become a vital public asset for the County.

Thank you,
Mark Wegrich, ASLA

From: Temujin Kuechle [<mailto:temujinkuechle@me.com>]

Sent: Monday, July 13, 2015 5:21 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Suggestions box?

Hi,

I'm interested in offering an additional concept to the RTC regarding using the rail transportation resource that crosses our county.

This is really a rough concept for a mid to long term solution that could benefit the environment and employment picture for Cities and towns within the County of Santa Cruz and surrounding counties as well. I am fairly certain that it will work in conjunction with the main efforts that are already in progress.

This concept came about due to diminishing opportunities for waste management and watching a useful resource being underutilized.

This Concept combines using several local collection points within the cities and county to transfer garbage and recyclables to covered train cars that would be transported to the Salinas area for reclamation, industrial scale composting, etc.

Ideally, if the technology supports it, the PG&E facility (along the route) could be enhanced to utilize some of the waste stream to produce energy and create road building & construction materials.

The idea would generate funds, preserve our natural environment, reduce intercity and intracity traffic, and create long term local jobs and businesses.

I realize that that there are costs associated with refining the existing rail infrastructure to create bypasses and collection points, but it should be cheaper than buying up large swaths of land to fill up with garbage.

Best regards,
Tem Kuechle

From: Henry Searle
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2015 3:14 PM
To: sccrtc
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

I have voiced my major concern before: the terms of the study and hence the report do not include all feasible alternatives to conventional rail. I think further action on the study should await consideration of these alternatives. Most particularly, PRT should be considered. PRT fits into the definition of "rail", depending on what type of system is being considered. But I also I think BRT and even automated cars should at least receive a cursory study.

Whatever we do with the rail/trail will be expensive and must be designed to last a very long time. We should not take short-cuts and we should investigate all reasonable and potentially feasible alternatives. It would be a disservice to the community to ignore a technology that could be economically feasible, quieter, and more convenient than the technologies described in the report.

To repeat briefly what PRT advocates said during past meetings: PRT offers a set of advantages that cannot be obtained by conventional rail or trolley. PRT operates above the surface and hence would not interfere with any recreational use of the trail or cause any difficulties at crossings. It is virtually noiseless. It operates entirely on electricity and would be at least partially solar powered. Operating costs are far less than conventional rail of any sort--pods are used only when there is demand, do not require bon-bold operators and when not in use, they sit and await need. They take themselves to wherever there is demand. Extra pods are easily manufactured. They provide point to point non-stop service--thus passengers wanting to go to e.g. Santa Cruz from Watsonville do not need to stop at any intervening stops. It can, if desired, operate 24/7.

PRT is easily expandable so could be expanded to provide direct service to population or activity centers such as Cabrillo, Dominican, 41st avenue or UCSC, providing non-stop service to these locations from any origin point. Many of the expensive constraints on rail would not apply to PRT.

Yes, PRT is an emerging technology. Great strides are being made, modern PRT installations are far superior to the Morgantown system. With careful planning, Santa Cruz could be on the very forefront of modern transportation systems.

I could write more, but I know the RTC is familiar with PRT.

One further comment: as I recall, one of the justifications for the purchase of the line was to provide convenient transportation for commuters from Watsonville to Santa Cruz, UCSC and Cabrillo. I know that finances are an issue and a start must be made someplace. But I think we should constantly remember that Watsonville service should be of the highest priority.

Kindest regards,

Reed Searle

From: Joe Ward
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2015 6:31 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Not in favor of running trains through residential neighborhoods. we already have a commuter corridor, it is called Hwy 1. lets widen it and keep the rail line for bike and pedestrian traffic.

Joe Ward
Corralitos

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2015 8:43 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Dee Murray
Subject
Rail Trail
Your Message
<p>Dear Members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,</p> <p>As property owners Robert E. Clark and Dee Murray who reside abutting the railroad, want to go on record as being wholeheartedly in agreement to the well written article by Bud Colligan and Miles Reiter, published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel on July 12, 2015.</p> <p>We appreciate your serious consideration considering these important facts that this article on July 12, 2015, put forth.</p> <p>Very truly yours, Robert E. Clark & Dee Murray</p>

From: Nina Simon
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 3:44 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft rail study comments

Dear RTC,

I have been excited about the rail-trail project for a long time. Having learned more about this project, I feel strongly that the best possible use of the existing rail line is redevelopment into a multi-use pedestrian/bike trail with NO rail attached.

The project has always been presented as if the rail components (passenger and freight) are a fait accompli. There are some community leaders who are now ready to seriously reconsider whether we must make a commitment to rail service in the long term. I urge you to consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor. Let's not be saddled with a substandard solution when a creative alternative may be possible.

I am writing this message as a private citizen of Santa Cruz County, not as a representative of the Museum of Art & History.

Thank you.

Nina Simon

From: Harriet Maglin
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 6:10 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: zach.friend@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies, and will add a sales tax increase to our County. An increase to our sales tax is a regressive tax and will burden low income individuals unfairly. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

Additionally, as a property owner I am gravely concerned about noise pollution, diesel fuel emission, and devaluation of property values along a proposed rail corridor. The opposite would be true for a bike/walk trail.

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you,
Harriet Maglin
Rio Del Mar, CA

From: Anita Whelan
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 6:28 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study comments

Please consider many other alternatives before committing to a passenger rail plan when the age of the railroad as a means of local transportation has long been on the decline.

The publicly-owned rail corridor is a terrific assess to our community if it services our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor more in line with the 21st century.

Thank you.

Anita Whelan

From: Dottie P. Jakobsen
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 6:59 PM
To: 'info@sccrtc.org'
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.

Dottie Jakobsen
Santa Cruz

From: Dick English
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 8:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Please do the math very carefully before moving towards a rail-based transportation option that may very well not realize the projected ridership and will definitely burden the county with operating costs for many years. It appears that it would be far more cost effective to simply pay back the grant money(s) that are tied to a passenger rail commitment and then be free to make decisions on use of the corridor without the passenger rail constraint.

Mass transit is best suited to high density housing and employment settings, and Santa Cruz County isn't such a place. We're also very accustomed to going where we need to go, when we need to get there, and being constrained to a fixed rail corridor with relatively slow and infrequent service just won't compete with current modes of transportation. Issues associated with operations are being understated and undervalued - adding an annual operating cost of approximately \$10M will be an unpopular tax burden; noise issues associated with grade crossings and frequent operations in residential areas will create a backlash that will make the current furor over new airline landing patterns look like a minor issue...

The Santa Cruz Public Library system will shortly be looking for a tax measure to support much-needed upgrades and repairs to its facilities. How will a competing tax measure fit into the public's willingness to support either or both?

While the consultants engaged in this project appear very professional and are using interesting tools to project potential ridership, costs, etc, they are at the same time interested in furthering their consultancy with this project. I am suggesting that there is a potential conflict of interest, and that it would be a big surprise for such a study to conclude that the project isn't feasible or worth taking to the 'next phase'.

Please weigh the potential interest of well-intentioned but inexperienced citizens with the realities of fiscal responsibility.

Best regards,

Richard 'Dick' English

From: Philip Boutelle
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2015 11:53 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

RTC Staff,

Thank you for such a comprehensive study/report on adding passenger rail to Santa Cruz County. Our family of 5 is very excited, and we would take the trains all the time (both parents would take the train to work, for starters). The future prospect of having a connection to Pajaro and then Gilroy and the HSR would be amazing, a huge step up for our regional transportation options. This project has been described as expensive, but I see it as visionary, and I wish we would have invested in this years ago. All roads are funded using public money, and trains should be no different, as they provide a much greater benefit than the roads. Thanks again for your efforts,
-Phil Boutelle

From: Penny Ellis
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2015 7:55 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: rail survey comments

Hi,

I want to thank you for your survey and for all the energy your organization is putting into addressing the transportation issues that plague our area. I am a huge proponent of mass transportation and reducing the carbon footprint we have upon our environment.

As much as I appreciate your efforts and research into rail transportation, I don't believe that the current model you are suggesting will be enough to adequately address our mass transportation issues into the future. Technology is rapidly changing the way we think about transportation and even though I believe that rail transit is a fantastic way to move commodities, it is not the best way to move people.

I propose a local REGULATED "Uber inspired" mode of transportation to get people where they need to be. I think this would be the best use of our funds, is something we could easily get up and running NOW and would offer the flexibility we need to begin to address our transportation needs. We need to get people used to not having their own cars and offering a more personal mode of transportation with outstanding customer service. The future of transportation is not waiting at stations. The future of transportation is in offering personal service based on your needs to move people quickly and efficiently to where they want to go.

I believe that public rail travel will be obsolete within the next 50 yrs. as technology increases and we move more towards developing personal modes of mass transportation. To build what you suggest now makes no sense and would be a better use of our energy to get some solutions we can use now while we work to implement new technologies that will transcend our modes of transportation into the future. We need to be flexible and not create any mass transportation systems that lock us into one path. This is really important!

I would like to see a public forum offered where citizens like me from our community could voice their opinions.

Thanks so much!
Penny Ellis

From: Jeff Hay
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2015 11:40 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Passenger Rail

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- *Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes*
- *Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking*
- *Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail*
- *Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents*

Sincerely,

Jeff and Karen Hay

From: Richard Roullard
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2015 1:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- *Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes*
- *Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking*
- *Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail*
- *Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents*

From: Susan Cook
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2015 1:12 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear sccrtc,

I am supportive of the rail trail. Selfishly, I hope there is plenty of space on trains to take a bike. I would definitely take the train if I could count on continuing my journey with my bike.

Susan Cook
Santa Cruz

From: Geri Lieby
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2015 1:18 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Hi,
I support the rail trail. My seven grandchildren deserve a sustainable transportation future.
Thank you,
Geri Lieby

From: Lisa Robinson
Sent: Saturday, July 25, 2015 8:35 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

The image on page 9 of the report depicting Chinese railroad workers should be courtesy of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association not the Smithsonian.
The Smithsonian used the image from the PVHA in an exhibition entitled "The Way We Worked."

Lisa Robinson
San Lorenzo Valley Museum

From: stuff
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 12:08 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Cc: 'Bike Santa Cruz County'
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Looking at the study all I can say is what a shame to be wasting so much capital on a rail line with so little projected use. The net result of all that investment will be a continuous fiscal drain for operations. I would hope that the study convinces you that investment in a walking / bicycle infrastructure will be the best way to utilize the right of way and invest available funds for a sustainable future.

I'm in my mid 60s and use my bike to travel to and from Santa Cruz downtown and 41st Ave. The Arana gulch trail has made this a much more pleasant run – shorter and safer. It would be so much better if the rail line was also part of the same bicycle infrastructure.

Fixed rail with low ridership is a solution of the distant past. Self-driving cars are going to revolutionize the roads, maybe not by 2020 but certainly by 2030. More and more people are going to embrace the need to use their bodies more - and one way that will manifest is increased human powered transportation.

I understand you have to go through the show of "trying to make passenger rail work" as a condition of the original line purchase. A train that only goes back and forth from Santa Cruz to Watsonville is a train to virtually nowhere. Please do what you can to kill this zombie and give Santa Cruz an infrastructure suited to the new realities of the 21st century.

Ryan Sarnataro
Live Oak

PS I have lived in the UK where they have a great bike and rail infrastructure. You can take your bike on the trains, they go everywhere and from many stations there are bike paths on what they call "disused" rail and canal lines. Sorry to say but California is never going to have that kind of rail infrastructure. It would be a shame if Santa Cruz went blindly forward building a tiny part of an impossible dream.

From: Justus Peacock-Broyles
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 9:19 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: RTC Bike usage

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

As someone who rides his bike daily, please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- *Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes*
- *Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking*
- *Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail*
- *Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents*

Thank you very much. Keep up the good work!

Justus Peacock-Broyles

From: Tom Graves
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 2:31 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: PRFS

Friends,

The need for expanding transportation options, especially on the Highway 1 Watsonville to Santa Cruz Rail Corridor, is so evident, I wonder why you are seeking input again about this. Haven't we already been asked about this at least once, if not twice, before?

Either way, now that you have the rail corridor, please expedite a transportation solution that will move people from Watsonville to Santa Cruz, and vice versa.

Tom Graves
Santa Cruz CA 95062

--

Tom Graves
Assistant City Clerk
City of San Jose

From: Neal Woods
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 2:32 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Trolleys not Trains

Just sayin' . . .

I think you would get a lot more traction with your project if you would change your emphasis from trains to electrified trolleys. This is the ultimate "back to the future" - one has only to look at the historical photos of the trolley line from Santa Cruz to Capitola.

The advantage of trolleys is that they are lighter, don't need train stations because you can embark or disembark from ground level and would be much more friendly sharing the "trail". In fact, can easily stop to pick up passengers.

On the Cote 'd Azure (forgive my spelling - it's been a long time since I was there) in France, they run these one car trolleys for all the beach goers, and tourists from one small town to another. The back of the trolley has a large luggage area, primarily for bikes!

I'm tellin' ya, change the emphasis on this, and you'll have a world wide attraction - and very useful as well!

Neal Woods

From: Pete Haworth
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 2:47 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Survey

I just completed the Rail survey and find it incredibly biased. There is hardly a page that caters to people like myself who believe that rail service in the county is a huge mistake due to pollution, noise, and the requirement for extremely high public funding.

The RTC blundered into purchasing the rail right of way without any regard to the feasibility and future costs of providing passenger rail service and are now madly scrambling to find a justification for it.

The constant references to the reduction of traffic on Highway 1 would be laughable except that there are those in the county that actually believe rail will ease congestion on Highway 1. Any effect on Highway 1 would be so small as to be not noticeable.

From: Andrew McKee [mailto:mckee_@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 2:47 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rails and trails in SC

I took the survey today. I'm very excited about the possibility of seeing rail in the SC County's future. I'm even more interested in the bike path possibilities and am wondering where I can find more information about where the trail will be put in and what the timeline for construction is?

Thanks,

Andrew McKee

From: Kate Bowland

Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 6:55 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: rail trail

I am totally in favor of rail train in our tri county area. Visiting Seattle and Portland is a total affirmation of planned public transportation. Thanks Kate Bowland

From: John Armstrong
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 8:09 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Passenger Rail Feasibility Study - Comments

Rehabilitating a railway corridor for passenger rail service between Davenport and Watsonville, with the expectation that it will generate regular use and reduce Highway 1 traffic congestion...is unrealistic. It's a pipe dream. And a waste of limited public funds.

Better to do the following:

- 1) Widen Highway 1 to three lanes in each direction, from Soquel Avenue south to Freedom Boulevard. Stop the nonsense and eliminate the tons of carbon emissions created daily by thousands of idling vehicles sitting in traffic, going nowhere.
- 2) Improve the frequency of bus service in the Santa Cruz/Capitola/Aptos corridor, and increase the number of routes so that no resident is more than a five-minute walk from a bus stop.
- 3) Study the feasibility of commuter rail between Santa Cruz and San Jose using the old railway right-of-way between Santa Cruz and Los Gatos. More people are likely to use such an option as an alternative to driving.
- 4) Reserve the "Rail Trail" corridor between Davenport and Watsonville for pedestrians and non-motorized conveyances such as bicycles and horses.

--

John Armstrong
Boulder Creek, CA

From: Evelyn Bernstein
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2015 8:19 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Train Travel

Train travel is so much a part of our American history, expressed in song and story, especially here in the West. I believe train transportation will continue to be an important part of our future here in California. Evelyn Bernstein Morris Dr. Soquel

From: KAREN CARLSON
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 9:35 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail system

I would love to see rail system connect Watsonville to Santa Cruz. With the high cost of housing in Santa Cruz, I believe many people (like me) will be living in Watsonville and working in Santa Cruz. I would love to be able to sit on a train rather than in bumper to bumper traffic. Let me know if there is anything I can do to help make this happen.

Excited at the possibility,
Karen Carlson

From: Gabriel Wolff
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 11:10 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- *Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes*
- *Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking*
- *Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail*
- *Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents*

Thank you for your consideration.

*Sincerely,
Gabriel Wolff*

From: Ken and Marilyn Files
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 12:52 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Railroad Transportation

The train sounds like a good idea if it is powered by a clean energy, and does not make excessive noise.

Ken and Marilyn Files

From: Ken Fein
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 11:58 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

You need to move to Electric Trains/trolley. The noise would be largely eliminated.
Thanks, Ken

Ken Fein

From: Ryan Whitelaw
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 1:23 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Some comments/questions on the proposed rail line:

- There are many areas between Aptos and Santa Cruz where the railway is 30 feet wide or less. Is it possible to safely accommodate a rail line and pedestrian trail in these areas?
- Assuming an average bike speed of 10 mph, and an average wait time for a train of 15 minutes, how much time would the train save the average user?
- What are the costs per minute saved?

- One of the stated goals is to reduce how long it takes to reduce the number of cars on Highway 1. Do we know how much of the current Highway 1 traffic is heading toward San Jose, and what affect the proposed rail line have on the San Jose bound traffic?
- In the study, it indicates that there are 40 public grade crossings and 28 private grade crossings. Will the rail line increase traffic at these crossings?

Looking forward to the upcoming meeting.

~Ryan Whitelaw

From: Susan Karon
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 2:20 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to encourage the RTC to more thoroughly investigate other options before committing us to a \$600M+ passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan and Stephen Karon

From: Rhia Gowen
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 2:53 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear RTC,

Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer.

Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.

Rhia Gowen

From: Rebecca Colligan
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 3:09 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please weigh alternatives before committing us to a passenger rail plan for which there are few funds today, and that will saddle future generations with large operating and maintenance subsidies. Why anchor us with 19th century technology when so many advances in transportation technology offer viable alternatives today?

I want the publicly-owned rail corridor to be put to its highest and best use to service our community's transportation needs, and I'm not convinced passenger rail is the answer. Please seriously consider using the entire width of the rail corridor to put in a truly viable multi-modal transportation corridor.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Colligan

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 5:03 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
David DeBoer
Subject
Rail Report
Your Message
Purchase of the rail line was a wise move. With the growth of the Silicon Valley job market, access "over the hill" is key. I have been a rail planner for many years. Operating the County's rail line to Pajaro to catch an (eventual) commute train at Pajaro to me is a non starter. It takes (from Santa Cruz) half an hour to get to Pajaro and then extra time to get to San Jose. S.P. (where I also ran marketing and pricing) abandoned its line between Santa Cruz, over the mountain to San Jose in the early '40s. The long range plan should be to relay this direct line for commute service. Really. Think efficient.

From: Philip Rice
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 5:30 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Only go forward if:

- 1) this can be done with electric (EMU if I understand correctly) instead of diesel. This town should be progressive enough to accept a higher initial cost for this kind of benefit.
- 2) we can avoid the loud horns at intersections typically required on locomotives, in accordance with federal law. Bells of modest volume could be accepted, but loud horns all day would be horrible for many people.
- 3) UCSC is realistically served, with cost and a specific means is included in the plan. Something like the cable car in Portland for the Health Center could go from a rail stop, minimizing the choked campus traffic on the West Side. Without a good end to end solution for UCSC, ridership estimates will need to be far lower.

From: WHM
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 6:24 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail feasibility study

I commute everyday to Salinas and Monterey. The traffic is heavy and consistent with the majority being single individuals in cars. Pollution, commute times, social connections would all improve with a rail system.

Between that and a desirable tourist destinations anywhere along the Monterey Bay, it seems a rail system would highly benefit the scenery and environment and reputation of this very popular area.

Thank you,

Wil Mundy

From: Charles M. Carlson
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 7:27 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Commuter rail line

The infatuation with railroads has lead some in Santa Cruz County to significantly overestimate the value of a commuter rail line. There is no supporting network to enhance a commuter line that will serve a very small portion of the county. Suggesting that it will serve between 400,000 and 1,400,000 passengers annually is pie in the sky planning. Even if it did reach the lower estimate, the line would be a budgetary disaster.

Embarking on this project will only divert funds from solving our most critical transportation problem: the increasing crowded conditions on Highway 1. I am not a daily user of Highway 1, but I think it is vital that we alleviate the congestion there to benefit those who must use it daily.

Charles M. Carlson
Aptos

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 9:11 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
jeff powers
Subject
My rail/bike/walk comments due today
Your Message
<p>I am opposed to the proposed to the rail being operated so that train traffic runs every 30 minutes. Noise pollution and train whistles alone would kill the quiet Santa Cruz environment and sense of place we love and know.</p> <p>In my view, making the trail more bike friendly would take more cars off the road, improve traffic congestion and mobility for the most people.</p>

From: carl casey
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 9:14 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

No trains. period. we already have a very nice train. thank you. do like other municipalities have done across the country. tear out the tracks and turn it into a pedestrian trail.

From: Frank Siri
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 9:47 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study

To SCCRTC.

There should be no plan to provide alternative transportation options until an expedited plan of action is taken to add another lane to Highway 1 from Soquel to San Andreas Road exit. Any idea that a rail system will alleviate highway traffic is preposterous.

We have seen what an extra lane would do to relieve congestion at the fishhook. The bottle neck was moved forward. If completed all the way through, there would be a huge difference in the traffic pattern.

As it stands now, traffic is terrible in any direction throughout the day.

The lack of local jobs and fair market housing dictate the need for people to move about in cars as the only feasible way to commute to home, job, and shopping.

Thank you for allowing input.

Frank Siri

Frank Siri

From: Ryan Whitelaw

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 10:12 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

In a recent Sentinel article on the proposed passenger rail, John Leopold was quoted as saying that the rail line is: "the last transportation corridor that goes through the county. I don't think you want to casually throw away a transportation line,"

The value of the corridor lies in the right-of-way access; not the physical tracks themselves. While I agree that no decision should be made in haste, removing the tracks in lieu of a pedestrian/bike path should not be viewed as "throwing away" a transportation line.

Financial feasibility is certainly a component to determining the highest and best use. However, an additional component that needs to be considered is the maximally productive use (i.e. the financial consequences and return on investment for each use deemed financially feasible). I believe that a cost/benefit analysis will reveal that a pedestrian/bike path can meet all of the goals outlined in the feasibility study at a dramatically reduced cost (upfront and annual) when compared to a rail line.

Regards,

Ryan J. Whitelaw, MAI

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From: Bill Malone

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 10:46 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

I am strongly in favor of the RTC building a viable passenger rail service for the County. We need an alternative to using our cars to get around locally.

I envision passenger rail service with feeder bus lines at each stop/station to get folks to their destination. Service like this would be especially helpful and useful to seniors and those with disabilities wanting to get around locally.

Passenger rail service would benefit the environment by lowering green house gasses due to fewer cars on the roads.

I would prefer electric or battery powered trains to diesel -- they are quieter and less polluting. I think self-propelled railroad passenger cars would be preferable.

I urge the RTC to continue passenger rail service to Watsonville as soon as possible. It is important to give folks that live there an alternative way to commute to jobs in Santa Cruz City area.

I have often used passenger rail service in other cities. It works fine. As a kid, I rode street cars to Junior High school in Los Angeles. It was no big deal.

For 7 years I lived 100 feet from a train track that had big diesel trains that went from San Diego to LA and beyond --about 20 times a day. They were annoying initially, but after a while, we didn't mind it.

Every day there are times when Highway 1 and local roads are congested. Passenger rail service will provide folks an alternative for many local trips. Of course it won't work for everyone and every trip, but everyone who rides the train is one less car on the road and/or Highway.

I have read your Executive Summary -- I agree with all the goals and objectives regarding Transportation Choices, Sustainability and Cost Effectiveness. I have taken your survey -- very thorough.

My preferred option is Scenario G: Santa Cruz to Watsonville. Scenario E: Santa Cruz to Aptos would be my second choice -- probably it is a good plan to start with.

If the RTC does not provide transportation alternatives to getting around locally then (obviously) folks are going to have no convenient choice but to continue to drive their cars. Pollution will get worse. Congestion will get worse.

--Bill Malone

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 11:22 AM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Henry Dall
Subject
The Rails/Trails project
Your Message
Hi I've never done anything like this ... so bear it in mind that my phrasing may be off. Somebody told me that you are still accepting (until July 31st?) people's comments on the whole Rails/Trails/etc project and I need to know how to do this & where to send it. I do have strong opinions, though ironically I both feel the pain of commuting AND the pain of having a train running near our house. Anyway, if you can please let me know the how, where, when, etc. of how to proceed that would be great. Thank You. Henry Dall

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 12:16 PM

To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
Phyllis Edmundson
Subject

Rail/Trail Uses

Your Message

I believe the cost of updating all the trestles on the rail road line does not warrant improving it enough for train use. It would be more cost effective to update the freeway and use the rail right of way as a trail for walkers, bicyclists and wheelchairs. Save the money it would cost to improve trestles and use that money to return the \$11,000,000 to where it came from. Later on if we want a rail line, we can still do it, but on our terms. It is most important that now and forever, our county have complete control over right-of-way uses. Phyllis Edmundson

From: Rick Longinotti
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 1:21 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

Thanks for your work on the Draft Rail Study.

I believe that the methodology for estimating ridership would benefit from factoring in the likelihood of higher automobile ownership costs as a percentage of income by 2035. Professor Anthony Perl spoke to the RTC last year, suggesting that fuel costs as a percentage of income could rise by large amounts. In periods of economic prosperity, limits on oil production will cause high fuel prices. In periods of economic recession, fuel prices will fall, but for the unemployed, incomes will fall proportionally further.

This trend in higher auto ownership costs will be further exacerbated in our county due to the high cost of housing that drives commuters to live farther from their jobs. The cost of rental housing in our county was rising before the recession that started in 2008 and continued rising after 2008, even with the high levels of unemployment that the county suffered.

In this context, a rail transit option would be very attractive to people who are squeezed by high housing costs that show no signs of reversing.

Another comment on ridership projections:

I'm not clear whether the ridership projections of the Study take into account trips that are not currently taken, but might be if there is an alternative to getting across town in a traffic snarl. I'm thinking of trips from the Westside to Capitola or vice versa, etc.

Thanks for considering,
Rick

From: Jan Lawless
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 2:30 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Passenger Trains from Watsonville , Santa Cruz and San Jose!

I would be extremely happy if they put Cal-Train from all of the above locations! Get the cars of the highways! We know lots of riders who would benefit from the mass transit system!!!

Thanks

Jan

From: Samantha Zenack
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 11:03 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Dear members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission,

Please consider the needs of people on bikes as you move forward with discussions on passenger rail service. Encouraging biking will be critical to reducing the need for parking at stations and getting people quickly and easily to stations from their home or workplace.

Specifically, please include the following bike-friendly policies if passenger rail moves forward:

- *Bikes allowed on trains, and train cars designed with ample space for bikes*
- *Plentiful bike parking provided at each rail station, including bike racks, lockers, and covered bike parking*
- *Rail sidings located so as not to impact the continuity of the Coastal Rail Trail*
- *Passenger rail service extended to Watsonville, providing multi-modal transportation options to South County residents*

Thank you, Samantha Zenack

From: Kendra Dorfan
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 3:10 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail trail

Dear Rail Trail Committee :

I am a supporter of the Rail Trail and am hoping it will be completed in my lifetime. I am an avid bicyclist and pedestrian. I think we live and work in an ideal environment for a multi use trail to be hugely successful.

The idea of commuters bringing their bikes on the train is so reasonable, it's hard to imagine someone preferring to sit in traffic when this user friendly alternative is available. Gas prices may rise along with other costs , housing for example. This project would meet people's needs in many ways to cut back on expenses. With this important commute artery available, owning and maintaining a car would no longer be mandatory. There is also a recreational advantage here with this RailTrail. Santa Cruz is already a destination for those living inland. Large numbers of our tourists come here to enjoy outdoor activities. Biking, hiking, the train, all can be a draw and asset for tourism here.

Here are some of my thoughts for completion of the project.

Best regards,
Kendra Dorfan

From: Ros Munro
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 3:33 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Just completed the rail study survey. Here are some additional comments.

I'm originally from England and throughout my life have been very used to using public transport. When traveling, wherever possible, I use public transport to get around, Including US cities such as LA and Las Vegas, much to the astonishment of my friends. I also use the bus from Live Oak to downtown.

I find the majority of folks here, have little, or no interest nor knowledge of public transport, let alone using it as an alternative to the automobile. So this unfamiliarity seems to me to be the major hurdle in getting the public support needed to fully embrace the rail trail. It will take a while for people's attitudes to change. Additionally, I have a few suggestions.

My son lives in Cape Town. In preparation for the 2010 World Soccer Cup, an extra lane was squeezed in along one of the major routes into the city. It turned out to be not for trains, but for buses. Traveling along the route now, I've noticed these 'fan' buses are always full to capacity. Which leads me to think, instead of a train rail here, how about a bus rail?? Or an electric trolley system, like the one used in the outskirts of San Francisco.

We used to live in San Jose, prior to the light rail system. There was much opposition to the concept to begin with, but Now, it seems the majority of folk accept the light rail even if they only use it occasionally. Is the proposed 'train' system in SCruz an actual large locomotive, or a light rail system? If the latter, perhaps the word 'train' should be dropped, and 'light rail' used instead. I can understand (but do not agree) why folks don't want a noisy, polluting train lumbering through their neighborhoods. One last thing. In the UK, local authorities offer free bus passes to Senior Citizens, which would seem to be a good way to increase the ridership, and though not providing revenue, helps many older folk get around without having to rely on auto.s. Good luck with the Rail Trail. Not sure I'll be around when it's finished, but it's too great an opportunity to lose, and the way of the future. I hope!

Ros Munro

From: Max Schweitzer
Date: July 30, 2015 at 3:54:22 PM PDT
To: <gdondero@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Fwd: Schweitzer,Max

George Dondero two things.

1. The RTC costs estimates for both construction and operation of the rail line are too high. This is fraud and corruption.
2. If you last name indicates foreign infiltration it's time stop.

From: Scott Wedge
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 4:55 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Photos below in support of comment submitted online.

There is another, though seldom used rail technology called road-rail or hyrail vehicles. Modify busses to run both on rails and on streets. This technology was inadvertently excluded by the study's definition of rail systems, which included only purely rail based solutions.

This approach would require no new stations or exclusive rolling stock. High use routes could be accomplished with minimal or no mode transfers (car / bus / train), e.g. direct bus service for UCSC direct to/from Watsonville without being slowed by or adding to Hwy 17 congestion. It could serve as an interim, minimal start-up cost service to build up ridership and validate demand to justify future investment in rolling stock and stations.

The basic road-rail technology is old, and in this country is most often seen on small service vehicles for rail systems, see 3rd photo below. While not widely used, the potential applicability to our needs deserves at least cursory consideration.

Scott Wedge
(9 years on Santa Cruz City Transportation Commission)

Please see:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O-Bahn_Busway

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Road-rail_vehicle

<http://www.ariesrail.com.au>



From: James Huether
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 5:16 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Re the Draft Rail Study, the single biggest issue I see is that any effective rail service will greatly increase traffic and gridlock at ALL intersections where there are no overpasses or underpasses. This was proven in the SF Peninsula with CalTrain. If the planners ignore this or think they will do later after regular service starts, they are LUNATICS.

The second biggest issue I see is that if the Rail project takes money away of widening the rest of Highway 1 or improving flow on other major cross counties arteries and roads, such as Soquel Dr., Capitola Rd, various highway 1 frontage roads, etc., it will be a MAJOR MISTAKE.

People think that providing rail service will reduce the use of cars. It will not.
They feel it will reduce pollution. It will not.
(Cars waiting at rail intersections will spew fumes into the air, and since they will not be moving, or be moving very slowly, the rate of air pollution will increase greatly!)

Personally I think using the right of way to put in a new road for the whole distance (something like a new Soquel Drive, but from around UCS all the way to Watsonville), would be the best solution to improve traffic flow, and reduce overall pollution. Buses could also travel on this road, and there could be bike lanes much of the way.

And finally for now, buses should run 24/7. There are many graveyard shift jobs for lower income people at UCSC and at or near the Boardwalk, but people without cars either can't get there or can't get back from late night through early morning. There should also be more express bus service to/from Watsonville and Aptos directly to/from UCSC and downtown, and making a stop at Cabrillo College.

Anyway, that's more than my educated 2 cents.

Jim Huether

From: Karen Brieger
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 5:21 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Trains going from Santa Cruz to....

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that I think rails running every 30 minutes from Santa Cruz to....is a mistake.

Firstly, the congestion on Route 1 North and Highway 17 South is what's causing the problem. Workwise, people have to get "over the hill" for work.

Second, once you disembark from the Station, how do you to specifically where you're going?

Third, Rails cause dirt. Either from the railroad itself, or the people sitting in the trains throwing garbage out the window.

Fourth, property values will see a large decline.

Rails make no sense for this route.

Thank you.

Karen Brieger

From: Maura Kelsea
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 5:35 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Thank you for making this opportunity to receive community input.

Having lived in Live Oak and now Seabright since 1980, I remember the cement trains well. They had to blow their horns at every intersection and tied up local traffic all across the area. That was roughly three trains a week.

Our county has changed drastically over the years since trains stopped running regularly. With the build-up of desirable residential areas near or next to the tracks through Santa Cruz City and the mid-county area of Live Oak and Aptos, and the massive increase in traffic on local streets trying to avoid the freeway "parking lots"; to add train traffic to our small arterials (ie: Seabright, 7th, 17th, 41st, etc.) will only increase congestion and difficulty for all. I understand hoping that trains will alleviate congestion, but they are not going to do that.

The current diesel trains and tracks are old technology. By the time the many trestles can be repaired, a train business operator can be contracted, there will be new and improved technology. Even the Light Rail in San Jose is much preferable to standard trains. They are fast and quiet, hindering traffic only briefly, without horns.

Given the many areas where the right of way is narrow, there is not sufficient room for both rail and trail.

The issues of parking lots for people driving to use the train, and congestion into currently residential areas is huge, there aren't sufficient open spaces. Having people drive a ways to park to use the lots to take the train as from downtown to Cabrillo, defeats the purpose of the short trip use.

If the goal is to build high density and affordable housing along transit corridors, it will involve tearing down the current housing and making high rises along the corridor. This will destroy the entire beach area ambience and value that the tracks run through. One of the questions was about the charm of the community, would a train add to it. Absolutely not.

Currently Metro has insufficient funding, having to cut back routes and raise fares, which further decreases ridership. If we can't afford to fund Metro sufficiently, how can we fund a train which will serve tourists more than locals? Depending on grants is always iffy, to do so knowing it will always need more grants and will always be underfunded seems foolhardy.

I believe the option of proceeding forward on standard trains is wrong thinking at the wrong time. Definitely we need to consider the population growth 30 years out and more. Therefore it is optimal to build the trail, preserving all the space along the train corridors. As new technology arises, there will be the ability to see if there is a way to fit increased public transit into the existing space.

Return the grant money, build the trail, continue researching options, build HOV lanes along the freeway so that Metro buses can move freely.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Maura Kelsea and Michael Brownlee
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

From: Enda Brennan
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 9:03 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Thank you for the good work you do. I am extremely concerned about the extremely high cost of the rail service component of the Plan. I strongly support the pedestrian and bike part of the Plan but cannot justify the enormous expense for the rail component. Please consider a non-rail trail Plan and explore the possibility of raising funds to pay the money back received for the rail component. A compromise could be a narrow monorail that traveled in one direction and then reversed directions once reaching a terminus. Feel free to contact me. Thanks, Enda Brennan

From: Dennis Speer
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 9:06 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Service Survey

I probably got the subject line wrong

Will the city council's and zoning commissions and planning departments of all jurisdictions the rail line goes through support the idea of increasing density around rail stops? Will they build more high rise apts there? Will the bus service expand runs to take care of rail commuter needs? What about the \$30,000 per parking space it costs for parking structures?

Rail companies got checkerboard square miles for building transcontinental and we never required them to maintain the railbeds or the bridges until when GM pushed against rail with cars and lobby dollars we ended up with most rail beds so poorly maintained the trains rocked a lot and had to go so slow no one would travel by them. Then some bliss ninny folks figured out rail is the best way to move lots cheaply and thought folks would ride so they stup[idly bought the rail beds with no repair required.

The Pacific Electric trains ran at 90 mph out through the orange groves of Southern Cal and were we running them that fast in Santa Cruz you could get riders, but due to lousy state of repairs 35 mph would be scary dangerous.

I support the idea but it will only work with zoning and planning departments forcing it to work with density at stations. Even including low income and poor folk in the density.

Dennis Speer Santa Cruz, CA

From: Joel Smith
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 9:35 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Excellent work! I have completed the survey and look forward to building a great rail transit system for our community.

Please let me know how I can help out.

Thank you!

Joel Smith
Watsonville, CA 95076

From: Joan Harrington Trendeh of Aptos/Rio del Mar
VoiceMail: Left on the RTC main number 07/31/15 @ 10:42 am

She is "in favor of the rail trail."

From: r hart
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 11:20 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: draft rail study comments

The elephant (though invisible) in the room on this issue is the potential for using the rail corridor near the new Aptos Village development to move people in and out of that area.....
Its really low hanging fruit, usability and traffic alleviation wise- Rail service near here could get people in and out of say New Leaf Market without the usual two lane street- at commuter- going home time- blues. After all, the future is what we make it and first we have to envision it. Also if the developers of the multi use Aptos Village development want to truly make it attractive as a place to live they will assist this rail transport corridor idea any way possible! Everybody could win on this one, not least those poor commuters who use the woefully inadequate two land street in Aptos Village now.

From: Tom Padula
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 11:21 AM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Trail announcement Wednesday

Hello, Luis-

As a supporter of the RTC, I thought you and the other RTC members might be interested to hear about something that's brewing in Santa Cruz. Two of our business leaders, Bud Colligan and Miles Reiter, are floating an idea for completely removing the tracks from Watsonville to Davenport in order to install a trail. As you are probably aware, Bud is a mover and shaker and has a lot of business connections, including being on the Board of Directors of the [Monterey Bay Economic Partnership](#), and has the resources to have this taken seriously. They will be formally presenting this to the public this coming Wednesday evening at the [Santa Cruz NewTech Meetup](#). They recently published [an editorial](#) detailing their reasoning in the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

While their numbers and arguments are debatable, clearly this would involve the RTC and its operations in Santa Cruz. I am concerned for the future of passenger rail in Santa Cruz county. Perhaps you and/or some of the other members could be at the meet up to express your thoughts on this idea?

Thanks a lot.

-Tom

--

Tom Padula

From: Medwin Schreher
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 12:28 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Both recommended plans require significant external funding (State and/or Federal) plus additional local funding via new taxation or other means in order to achieve implementation and ongoing operation. Given

the large capital outlays required to repair, replace and develop the infrastructure (tracks, bridges, stations, sidings, additional rights of way, vehicles, etc.), the very long time horizon for implementation, and likely project cost overruns for the "unexpected", the rail options presented appear to have significant financial risk and lack a path to financial sustainability.

Rail connectivity, particularly to Silicon Valley, is "without a plan" except possibly by the circuitous route through Pajaro. Thus for improved multi-mode transit connections we need to be making investments in areas other than these rail options - either in addition to or instead of. Such alternatives may include further leveraging the Metro system, improving Hwy 1 corridor effectiveness (for example, with bus transit lanes), and planning and implementing comprehensive mixed-mode transit centers. The rail study and promoted options and requests for comments appear in isolation from an integrated master transportation / alternatives plan.

Given the need for significant project funding and ongoing operational subsidies in order to proceed with either of the two rail options proposed, it is important to know in a broader context whether this is the proper choice or alternative of where to invest our limited resources.

Having secured the rail corridor is a great success. Going down the path of focusing on the resource-intensive rail options detracts and defers possible "quick wins" from implementing a pedestrian and separated bicycle/hybrid bicycle trail. We risk losing years of benefits in leveraging the corridor by subordinating these options to the huge and complex rail projects.

In summary, I am concerned that in pursuit of rail options we are diverted from taking advantage of the "low hanging fruit" that comes with having secured the rail corridor. The proposed options would be putting a bet on extremely resource intensive project options which do not have clear lines for funding for either the project or for ongoing operations. We need a clear strategic context for how these rail options fit into a sustainable mixed mode transportation plan and thus a way to judge alternative investment choices. Lacking this context, it is difficult to support the risky, large scope rail options. We should retain the privilege of developing rail options but we should extricate ourselves from being held hostage to those options as first priority, even if this means paying back some of the grant funding used to secure the corridor.

From: John Coho
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 12:51 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft rail study comments

Hello SCCRTC,

I have just completed the Rail Study Survey, and I wanted to mention a few things. I build electric bicycles, and I did find a reference in the FAQs that advances in battery technology could make possible electric trains without the need for overhead wires. I would heartily concur that these advancements, which are happening right now, are going to make light weight, low noise passenger trains possible. Also, I may have missed in the report the mention of the importance of having more than one (for example, roads with cars) transportation option available in the case of emergencies. I wish all the people who insist that driving a car is their only choice would see how beneficial it would be to have lots of people using a rail based transportation option, thus removing many of the cars that are now competing with them for space on the roads. Finally, it is quite disconcerting to read comments by some in the community who think the rails should be torn up for the trail to be built more quickly and to be safer. Not only are they ignoring the cost of removal of the tracks, but they are guaranteeing much greater costs in the future if a rail option is deemed necessary.

Thank you for all your efforts on behalf to the residents of Santa Cruz County,

John Coho

From: Henry Dall
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 2:51 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comment regarding Rails/Trails project here in Santa Cruz

Dear Mr. Mendez

I am writing this because of our (my wife and I) concern over the plans being considered concerning the railroad tracks in Santa Cruz. Somebody told us that today is the last day to get this to you ... I hope they were right and we aren't too late.

We can only imagine what a tough job you have in figuring this stuff out. Going across town can truly be a nightmare and I certainly feel that pain (I have to commute often, coming back at 5pm) because it can be awfully crowded and there's no viable alternatives for the driver.

Argh! However, increasing train usage to try and eliminate that problem to us is not the solution.

For full-disclosure, we truly have skin in the game: the train track borders our backyard (other side of the fence). So we have a strong reason for there to be no trains coming by at all, let alone with any frequency. The trains (or at least some of them) coming by have been awfully disturbing to us & pets since, because we leave near 30th Ave and the tracks, the whistle blows super loud right near our house & of course the ground rumbles. And the same goes for the hundreds (or thousands?) of other people (and their animals) whose properties border on or are near to the track. Just go and do an ad-hoc survey of them and you will see that. Don't just ask people who live away from the tracks. The effect this'll have on the long-term peace for we the people living along the track has to have some weight ... please. Our lives will be changed dramatically.

Besides the horrendous & persistent effect it'll have on nearby residents (i.e. us), the train also is not a viable commuter option for Santa Cruz. Most of the traffic is to/from over-the-hill and those people won't be using it ever - I won't. And most of the people driving within town don't live, work or go to school anywhere near the tracks.

So they'd have to either walk, ride their bikes or take a bus to facilitate using the train. They won't do it. Would you - really?

Imagine if you work at UCSC or at Dominican Hospital or go to school at Cabrillo College ... what a lot of effort taking a commuter train would place on you. Remember: the train hassle has to be weighed -vs- the driving hassle and if they are the same or close, driving will win every time. Because I have lived in Watsonville and commuted to SC City Hall (where I worked), I wouldn't have either. The hassle of going from downtown Watsonville out to the train tracks ... no way. Also, If not enough people utilize it (and remember, just because some people said they would doesn't mean they will), who pays for the system then? That also is both our fear and our expectation ... truthfully. And we are by no means alone - just as you, we have anecdotal evidence from ones we have asked.

The only options aren't mutually exclusive. They need to be done in tandem. And they need to have the funds spread amongst them.

Highway One from Dominican Hospital out past State Park Dr. in Aptos needs to be 3 lanes in each direction - without that, there will never ever ever be a relief of the traffic problem. Clear up the highway and people currently going across town via side streets will use the freeway. We all do on the off-hours, why wouldn't we then.

Second, there needs to be an encouraging (and subsidizing?) for riding buses and maybe more of them. The City of Santa Cruz subsidized my riding of the bus and that was definitely an incentive I utilized (though truthfully, I wanted to ride the bus ... even though I had a car).

And thirdly having a dedicated bike path running the full length of town using the train track corridor to do this will encourage ones to try biking across town. I have traveled extensively and I have family in Denmark where they/we rode bikes extensively to do the normal things of life. The reason people ride bikes in those places is because there are safe, easy and pleasant options for doing so ... none of which exist thru the middle of Santa Cruz. True, gas prices are higher and maybe economics may play a slight role. But my family has enough funds where if the hassle outweighed the cost they'd drive. Have you tried riding your bike down Soquel Ave past Frederick St. (as an example) anytime ...

let alone at rush hour. It is horrible!! It is scary. And it is ugly.

Having a bike path along or in place of the train tracks (though if I understand it, that option isn't on the table) might just be the catalyst needed to get people to try riding more. We will and our neighbors with their children have said the same. Towns where there is such a thing have seen tangible (and substantive?) growth in bike usage. Why wouldn't there be. However, if trains are going to and fro along with the bike path ... well, who would want to ride their bike next to a train. So if there is an expectation that train traffic & bike path usage will blissfully coexist next to each other, that seems ... in our opinion as ones who would ride the dedicated bike-only path, not realistic. Another positive by-product of the dedicated bike path is that it would be a fun & interesting thing for people to come to Santa Cruz to do. They could rent bikes and ride across

town. Places where there has been a true rails-to-trails conversion have seen such expectations achieved. And in a place as beautiful as Santa Cruz, why would this be any different.

Finally, there has been mention of having a recreational type train usage be promoted (like the Big Tree Railroad). Not only is it unfair to the residents along the traffics to truly sacrifice the peace lost in their homes from the disruption & sound for the fun of a few visitors, but one should give pause as to whether enough visitors would really utilize it to fully subsidize the gigantic financial undertaking being called for. Whereas using the train tracks as a commuter might have a societal benefit, as a form of recreation - that seems wrong and imprudent.

This wasn't meant to be a rant and probably nothing I said you haven't already heard at least a few times. My main hope is that you'll please consider this a plea from a couple of native Santa Cruz residents (SC High School '81, Mission Hill '77, Cabrillo College, etc) to not increase train traffic and to please have the bike path put in.

Respectfully,

Henry and Stephanie Dall
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

From: Liz Levy
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 2:59 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

My comments concern the claims of ridership for the train.

Page 97 of the Draft Rail Study titled "Ridership Forecasts" states that ridership data is based on the AMBAG RTDM Technical Document.

Pages 66-67 of the AMBAG report show what the AMBAG model predicts are the effects of adding BRT (branch rail transit) in Santa Cruz County. In particular, the chart on p.67 shows that the model predicts that rail will result in an almost 3% shift of riders from bus to train, and 7.5% of pedestrians from walking to train, but little or no shift (less than 1%) of solo drivers, carpoolers, or bike riders. The model does not predict significant mode shift for solo commuters on Highway 1, but just because the model doesn't predict it, doesn't mean it won't happen. We simply have NO EVIDENCE of mode shift. Nevertheless, the consultants who prepared the Draft Rail Study predict large numbers of riders -- where are the riders coming from that they've predicted? What evidence beyond computer-modeled census data do we have for train ridership?

It appears that there is no credible market research, such as an origin-destination study, that would provide county leaders and the public some real facts about potential ridership. This study as it currently exists, would never be accepted in a corporate product development environment where company dollars are at stake. Unless I am missing something, it appears that the entire study rests on a wish for ridership, and although many of us in Santa Cruz can't wait to go bicycling on a beautiful coastal trail, or even take a pleasant train ride to Davenport for dinner, I would be extremely reluctant to support a project with such flimsy substantiation.

Sincerely,

...Liz Levy
Soquel, CA

From: William Menchine
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 3:09 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comments on the PRFS draft report

Dear RTC Board,

I am not convinced that any of the specific scenarios outlined in the PRFS draft report represent the best use of resources to solve the critical problems of GHG emissions and freeway congestion or to provide a cost effective and operationally effective alternative to driving for a significant number of people.

My fear is that we may end up with a "worst of both" scenario. That the development of passenger rail service on the SC branch line will compromise the operational and aesthetic value of the MBSST, and in the end result in an expensive and ineffective "pseudo-transit" solution that fails to deliver on community and environmental expectations.

Of major concern is the lack of an analysis of potentially competing transit options, specifically Bus Rapid Transit operating in the freeway corridor or Light Rail along the SC branch line. Moreover there are logistical and technical concerns with respect to the replacement of the Capitola trestle and potential impact on the MBSST from the addition of bypass sidings in an already constricted corridor. The loss of an "at grade" crossing at Capitola trestle is a potentially crippling blow to the MBSST both operationally and aesthetically. The costs and logistics of resolving the trestle issue at Capitola must be fully analyzed and communicated to the public before moving forward with any passenger rail scenario.

There is little or no analysis in either the MBSST Master Plan or the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study that would inform the public as to the economic and transportation value of a fully optimized "world class" bicycle and pedestrian facility. We are lacking a full analysis of the potential environmental benefits of an optimized Bikeway design that could support a new class of faster electric assist human powered vehicles for transportation.

The value of a fully realized MBSST to our County's economy is potentially huge. The environmental and public health benefits are equally large. It is doing the community disservice to ask that we wait decades to develop a rail system that threatens to cripple the MBSST, defers immediate action on reducing congestion and GHG emissions and defers eco-tourism.

It is not clear that the capital and operating costs that have been estimated for passenger rail service represents the best use of public money to fight GHG emissions, reduce highway congestion or provide transit connectivity for the tens of thousands of people that commute by car each day. Because transportation funding resources are scarce, it is critical that we make careful and informed choices. As it stands, we do not have enough information to do that.

I urge that the RTC Board to direct staff to study the possibilities of a "Trail without Rail" option. In addition, more information is needed on possible transit alternatives such as BRT that could more effectively address the reduction of freeway congestion and GHG emissions while using the existing transportation resources within the RTC's domain, namely the Highway 1 corridor, SC Metro and the MBSST.
Sincerely,

William Menchine

From: Dave K
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 3:14 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: No Railroad !!!!!

To whom it may concern, I am very strongly opposed to this railroad going through the mountains. Too much noise, we live in the mountains to away from rhe noise polution of the valley and it only benifits the owner not the Mountain community. I will fight it in court if I have to. Put the money into Highway 17 to expand it and straighten the curves.

Dave Kichar

From: Karen Greenleaf
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 4:17 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

To whom it may concern:

I lived in Germany for 4 years and have visited in Europe multiple times. I have seen how efficient rail service, connected logically to bus lines provides people the opportunity to travel, for any purpose, safely and efficiently. Many friends commute from small villages to work in the large cities. Urban sprawl is contained. People have time with their families in the evening, rather than spending it on the highway. My husband and I are now retired and continue to travel Europe by train.

I moved to Santa Cruz Co. in 1965 to teach. My last job was at Harbor High School. My commute became longer and longer and I was involved in 2 accidents (not my fault) one of which severely affected my neck and back. Part of my decision to retire earlier than planned was due to my disgust with my commute and its effect on my health. I would LOVE to have been able to ride my bike to the train and then take it into Santa Cruz. Would have been okay to transfer to a bus too. And in the beginning, I could come home before the major commute hours and so had the difficult trip only one way.

The current traffic situation on Hwy 1 is ridiculous. Going from Watsonville to Santa Cruz is always a "crap shoot" and can easily take us 45 min of stop and go traffic. I'd much rather spend those minutes on a train reading a book.

Sincerely,

Karen Greenleaf

From: Sylvia Previtali
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 5:11 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Previtali Comment on Railroad

Dear RTC,

In my opinion the Short Rail Line is not to be used anymore as a 34-mile railroad track.

The idea that people who now would use Highway 1 to leave their cars to ride on trains, buses or other vehicles using the railroad tracks is ridiculous. The thousands who each day and night need to ride on Highway 1 will not get on trains to go to work or to shop or to go to appointments or to take their children to school.

I find it unbelievable that plans are in the making to have paths for walking, running or bicycling next to the Short Line. Was it RTC that claimed that having paths along the railroad would be great for children to get to school or parks. Tell me, where on earth is a parent who would allow their children to go playing or to go to school along the railroad. Railroads go through factories, malls, backyards where there may be areas unsafe for children. Also rail ties are filled with poisonous creosote, and children may play on the timber ties.

Unfortunately the Short Line and some of its areas are where many homeless people live. There have been murders, suicides, fights, injuries from falling from trestles. Who's going to police the entire Short Line?

Lately I haven't heard again about the idea of having trains on the Short Line carry trash and toxic matter from throughout the County because the public landfills are overflowing. Was the trash and toxic matter south of Watsonville? King City?

Some railroads rent out the ground where there used to be trains and now allow fiber wire, pipes, cables. What do you think about that?

Busses are needed to take cars off Highway 1. Look at Google, Apple, other technological companies in Silicon Valley bringing their employees to their neighborhoods. Some of the busses are double-decked. We don't need a Commuter train. We are not a New York City.

Thank you for your opportunity to write about the railroad.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Previtali
Aptos CA 95003

From: Contact Request Form [<mailto:admin@sccrtc.org>]
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 5:21 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org

Name
dwight trowbridge
Subject
rail trail
Your Message
Please hear my enthusiastic desire to see this come to fruition. My bike needs new vistas and I already ride the rail rightaway on my fat tire bike.

From: Bill Delaney
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 6:44 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission
Subject: Train Study

To members of the SCCRTC:

I am retired after a professional career of over 40 years as a transportation economist for two federal agencies but primarily as a consultant in the private sector. I participated in over two hundred rail studies including commuter and high speed rail for many private and public clients over the entire spectrum of agencies.

I and my family have been residents of Santa Cruz County for over 12 years.

I have researched the history of Proposition 116 and noted the legislative replacement of the requirement for commuter trains over the entire branch, as proposed to the voters, to unspecified recreational rail. In my view, recreational rail is and has been provided by round trips between Felton and the Boardwalk, which uses a segment of the UP branch line.

I have read the entire 158-page feasibility study as well as the appendices (another 82 pages) and made over 60 pages of notes in the process. Notwithstanding my experience as a journal editor, I found it a mind-numbing and frustrating experience.

My notes are primarily editorial in nature and not of help to the members of the Commission. I found the mass of material presented to the public in need of editing and to be supplemented by relevant data not provided. Further, important subjects were not addressed.

However, I do not think it in the public interest to spend any more staff time and resources in "fixing" this draft. I hope RTC moves on and does not issue a final report on this project.

I also read the trail study in depth and found it incomplete as well.

The train report demonstrates that, given the right of way with infrastructure in place, a feasible operating plan can be presented; essentially a no-brainer. That is, if you accept 60 trains a day as feasible and acceptable to the community! That is a proposition that fails the smell test and should not be accepted by the community as a "feasible" proposal!

I do think that staff correspondence and communication with the consultants should be made public. I see interference and blatant manipulation of the consultants. The published draft is obviously not the first draft. I understand the initial ridership estimates were ludicrous.

I conclude that the costs of any of the proposed train services will not exceed the net benefits. It seems unlikely that environmental benefits will materialize given that 0-car households are prominent among expected ridership.

But train operating impacts are inconsequential in comparison with the continued huge environmental and economic costs of auto travel in the three auto corridors parallel to the rail line, which I use regularly to travel between Mid-County and the west side of Santa Cruz.

I urge the Commission to evaluate the rail and trail feasibility proposals in the context of the infrastructure and service needs of all residents of Santa Cruz County. I would like to see the Commission put the issue of allocating funds among the three competing modes to the voters!

The "proposed" 2016 ballot measure skips the step of getting voter approval of either the train or the trail proposal, each over \$100 million.

Bill Delaney
Capitola

From: Kelly
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 8:55 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Rail Transit

My family is completely against the proposed rail transit system. Our backyard backs up to the tracks and we do not want to have to listen to the awful noise of trains and whistles 60+ times a day! It will ruin the whole atmosphere of our wonderfully quiet neighborhood.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Ed Porter
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 9:59 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Draft Rail Study Comments

Response to the RTC Rail plan

Better transportation in our County is an excellent idea. There is no doubt about it, when you look at the morning and afternoon traffic jams on highway 1, that something decisive should be done to improve our commute options. At the same time, any educated, aware person accepts that we also need to improve our thinking about transportation options. Not only does that automotive traffic jam frustrate tens of thousands of people, it also contributes massive amounts of unnecessary, wasted greenhouse gasses to our global climate problem. And keeping the planet habitable for our children and grandchildren is on most thoughtful people's minds. So, we NEED to do something. But what should we do?

Most people love trains. The opportunity to ride on one is exciting. The amazement that this huge thing moves and moves FAST is truly exhilarating! Our societal nostalgia and general love affair with trains is obvious.

Trains have come a long way since the year 1900. While the nation had the same nostalgia for the coal burning engines that belched unfathomable clouds of black soot, the diesel engines have replaced these obscene sources of pollution. But now, in regard to the sheer size of a modern diesel locomotive, it's hard to justify moving such a massive machine up and down Santa Cruz County. The weight of a typical locomotive may well be a staggering 432,000 Lbs or more! That's 216 tons! How many passengers need to be on that train before that sort of weight is justifiable? 1000 every hour??? From Day 1??

Our society is moving toward a "small is beautiful" philosophy. Gone are the days when unlimited cheap energy was available for the taking. And, now we must consider **not only** the fact that we have simply been burning TOO MUCH fossil fuel at too fast a pace for our planet, **but also** that the source of that fossil fuel is finite and will run out relatively soon. The result **SHOULD** be that we think twice when considering moving a conventional train with hundred year-old technologies up and down the Coast of Santa Cruz County.

But, repeating, we NEED to do something! If we purchase track and roadbed upgrades, along with new sidings right away and put a train on the tracks immediately thereafter, there would be a grand party at the ribbon cutting and some large passenger loads in the next few trips. Then, only a few people would ride the new service. RTC would do promotion and the ridership would gradually grow. But, when we look at the "track record" of other localities, we realize it is not common to get full ridership immediately. The opposite is proven to be true. In fact, the VTA Light Rail in San Jose and Santa Clara has never achieved its projected full ridership and is the subject of news derision in feature articles about disappointing ridership.

Another major factor is the subsidy of public transit. Those bus trips require well over 50% subsidies in order to operate. It seems clear that, while a passenger train service was in its early ridership growth chart, a similar subsidy would be needed for that service. And there is no guarantee that it would ever perform better than our bus system or the San Jose Light Rail in terms of ridership and subsidy.

But, we NEED to do something. Perhaps the trick is to do THAT something which is a little bit smarter, a little bit more economical, and a little smarter in regard to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

A single rail car traveling north and south on our rail corridor once an hour would probably meet the ridership demand for a year or so. As ridership grew, a second car could be added or operated at twice the frequency of the first schedule.

A Candidate vehicle to deliver this service. A diesel multiple unit or DMU is a multiple-unit train powered by on-board diesel engines. A DMU requires no separate locomotive, as the engines are incorporated into one or more of the carriages. This vehicle could deliver the service Santa Cruz County needs and the amount of rolling stock could be acquired as the demand grows.

But, there is still the problem of the GHG emissions from the DMUs. The vehicles should be converted to electric operation and solar panels should be installed in their roofs and perhaps along the rail corridor.

This combination of requirements would provide an elegant transition from the currently unused rail line to a much welcomed transportation corridor. And it could do so at whatever rate of growth the customers desire.

What then is left to do? It's frequently called the **last mile problem**. And that particular problem is clearly evident on our rail corridor. Let's imagine, for example, that passengers going to Cabrillo College were dropped off along the existing rail corridor. They would be in a rather forlorn spot with the gravel roadbed in front of and behind them. They could not walk directly to Cabrillo but would probably have to walk to Park Avenue to cross Highway 1 and then the rest of the way back to Cabrillo making it too long a walk and certainly impossible for some people with disabilities.

It's possible a new Metro Bus route could perform this last mile function. But, in recent years, the Metro district has had to cut routes because of financial issues. If it were possible to deal with this last mile ride in another way, it would be a good idea.

Fortunately, there is another way that would be excellent for this small trip. It would be the use of Personal Rapid Transit (PRT). This is a perfect example of a PRT route well matched to our County. This is the most minimal PRT route we have seen proposed anywhere. The County agencies have been reluctant to consider larger PRT systems because they are concerned about risk. This PRT system of roughly one mile would be the smallest possible PRT system larger than a demo system. It's an excellent way for the RTC to find out about PRT with absolute minimal risk!

PRT cars proceed from origin to destination non-stop. In the Cabrillo example, that would be a fun one-minute trip. PRT is advertised to be able to operate completely just from fare box revenue. That's a refreshing improvement over the 75% to 80% subsidies we hear about. Even if it required a 10% subsidy, that's an amazing POSITIVE development compared to currently required subsidies!

PRT will feature clean solar energy with solar panels along the guideways and on the cars. It's a match MADE FOR Santa Cruz County!

Conclusion:

The concepts I have outlined above would yield multiple wins for the people of Santa Cruz County.

- Provide a truly scalable transportation modality that begins from zero ridership and builds upon demand. Starting with full sized trains is NOT scalable.
- Offer a true reduction in transportation GHG emissions! Serious implementation of our Climate action plans!
- Offers an affordable product that can be offered with honestly frugal new systems
- A strong selling point for a possible sales tax measure.
- Provide something that residents could be excited about.
- Provide a modern, futuristic mode of transportation that will lower trip costs wherever used.
- Provide a first in our County solving the last mile problem with low-cost PRT.
- Allow a PRT industry to spring up in our County that's a welcome addition to our local economy.

Prepared by Ed Porter
Best regards, Ed Porter

From: Bruce Burroughs
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 11:40 PM
To: info@sccrtc.org
Subject: Comments to the draft train feasibility study

To Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission,

Please include these comments in the administrative record of this project, in the final report, and ensure Commissioners receive a copy in their packets.

I have read your feasibility study and I disapprove of your proposed plans. I live in district 1. Trains going through our community will create significant noise pollution and disruption to the peaceful community we live in. Additionally, traffic congestion at crossings will be a serious impact to traffic throughput.

I believe the money you are proposing being spent on the rail system would be better allocated to turning the corridor into a biking and walking trail that better fits the goals and needs of the local residents.

I believe your revenue projections are inflated and your expenses are underestimated. Improve the community rather than degrade it; put in a bike/walking trail instead of rail as the two make no sense coexisting right next to each other.

I strongly disapprove of your proposal.

Best regards, Bruce Burroughs

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What comments & questions do you have?

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Email info@sccrtc.org with the subject "Rail Study Comments"; or Fax 831-460-3215

The train needs to go to Watsonville.

- equity

- Workers living in Watsonville, working N. County

- Future connections South, East, North

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Dean Lundholm

Email: lundholm@cruzio.com; Phone: _____

What area do you live in? Live Oak

☐

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How CAN SCCRTC FAST TRACK this
to be completed ^{QUICKER} ~~FASTER~~ (LESS THAN 2 YEARS?)?

WE HAVE 120 UCSC STAFF AT SHAFFER ROAD
BUILDING AND 80 LIVE IN WATSONVILLE AREA.

A QUICKER RAIL SOLUTION WOULD HELP US
ALL MAINTAIN A PROPER WORK/LIFE BALANCE.

FYI: UCSC IS PLANNING ON MOVING 500 STAFF
TO SCOTTS VALLEY (OLD BORLAND BUILDING). STAFF
CURRENTLY WORK AT SHAFFER RD, DELAWARE, NATURAL BRIDGES, AND
ON UCSC CAMPUS. ~~STAFF~~ POSSIBLE SHUTTLES TO/FROM
SCOTTS VALLEY WOULD BE NICE.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: MICHAEL PISANO

Email: MPISANO@UCSC.EDU; Phone: _____

What area do you live in? WESTSIDE SANTA CRUZ

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Please address tonight:

* potential impacts of
sound/noise of HORN

The horn impacts are not
adequately addressed in study.
In study "noise & vibration" only
refers to sound of moving train

Law is: 96-110 decibels

20 sec. before each crossing

50: 60 trains/day (both directions)

est. 40+ crossings between

Westside & Aptos

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Michelle Shippen

Email: mshippen@yahoo.com; Phone: 566-2069

What area do you live in? family on west side



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I am very concerned that neither E or S
is going to Watsonville (and Pajaro).

Over the years it has become more and more
difficult for people who live in the
Watsonville area to consider jobs in the
Santa Cruz area, especially if the family
has children and needs childcare.

Sadly, as an overall community, we
have not much to address public
transportation needs in this county.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Gloria Garing

Email: ggaring10@gmail.com Phone: 831-684-0188

What area do you live in? La Selva Beach - and I do much of my shopping,
doctor's app'ts., mtgs,
etc. in Watsonville.

☐

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THE DECISION ABOUT STATION LOCATIONS AND PORTIONS
OF THE COUNTY/REGION TO BE SERVED, AND ABOUT
FARES AND RIDER CONVENIENCE SHOULD BE.

BASED ON PUBLIC POLICY TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION
ALTERNATIVES TO A BROAD SECTOR OF THE COUNTY
POPULATION. FOR EXAMPLE, AN OBVIOUS DECISION
TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO LOWER-INCOME WATSONVILLE
SHOULD BE A STARTING POINT, NOT A RESULT
OF A ~~GOOD~~ LEAST COST ANALYSIS WHICH REJECTS
~~AS A~~ THE INCLUSION OF WATSONVILLE.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: STEVE BARON

Email: COMMERCE@; Phone: _____

SBCGLOBAL.NET
What area do you live in? SANTA CRUZ DOWNTOWN



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(passenger)
Please extend rail service
to Watsonville to connect
to regional train service
corridors. This could help
alleviate Hwy 17 congestion
and promote a larger draw
for special event service.

Please keep the rails up to
Davenport. It seems the
Santa Cruz Redwoods National Monument
is going to happen — train service will
greatly alleviate congestion on Mission St.
in Santa Cruz, Hwy 1, and Hwy 17 — ~~if~~ the
passenger service goes
to Watsonville.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Becky Steinbruner

Email: kibotkba@yahoo.com Phone: _____

What area do you live in? Aptos



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How much Reduction in Traffic Volume on
Route 1 Will These Rail Services Offer?

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: STEVE BARON

Email: COMMERCE @ SBC ; Phone: 831 426 4910

GLOBAL.NET
What area do you live in? DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ

☐

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This can't happen quickly enough

Watsonville + Pajero are required!

Also... → This is going to require excellent publicity
of the NON-WONKY variety
(so far, way too wonky!)

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Matthew Baker

Email: iammattbaker@gmail.com Phone: 503-957-6675

What area do you live in? Boardwalk



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Build Kiosks or cafes at train stations.
Rent space to vendors for income to subsidize train project. Include restrooms w/ multiple stalls. People are in a hurry & don't want to miss the train. Overnight bicycle storage especially at Cabrillo College station. Shuttle service from train stations to Capitola Shopping centers, downtown SC, Cabrillo College etc. Taxis + other types of shuttles. Restrooms on trains. Cheap fares. Flat rate - go as far as you want. Long term free parking at train & bus stations, so people can use train to go on trips. Consider solar electric power!

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Karen Kaplan

Email: kaplank@hotmail.com Phone: 335-3342 afternoon

What area do you live in? Scotts Valley

☐

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I'd like to see the least polluting technologies used for passenger services. Also some quick on/off stops between bigger stops (30th Ave, for instance) in high population areas. I know there are newer low-pollution methods/vehicles in the testing ~~par~~ phase, and that may be available by the time a vehicle is being selected. I don't think RTC should get locked into diesel or DMU ~~if~~ early on in the planning process when there will soon be less polluting options

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: _____

Email: _____; Phone: _____

What area do you live in? _____

☐

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The feasibility Study presents the lowest ridership in Watsonville, implying that this route is least feasible.

I think we should provide this alternative transportation choice to the ENTIRE Santa Cruz County, ~~not~~ ^{the greater} and especially to Watsonville, where low-income population would benefit.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Gabrielle Stocker

Email: gstocker2@ cox.net; Phone: 436-0865

What area do you live in? Westside S.C.

☐

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- I already receive them

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- ① IN THE FEASIBILITY STUDY, I DID NOT SEE A DISCUSSION
OF THE INCREASED SURFACE STREET TRAFFIC CAUSED BY
TRAINS AT CROSSINGS AND STATIONS. THIS SEEMS LIKE
A SIGNIFICANT OVERSIGHT.
- ② THERE WAS A COMMENT IN THE PRESENTATION THAT
RIDER FEES WOULD COVER 20-25% OF OPERATING COSTS.
HOW WILL THE REMAINING 75-80% BE COVERED?
- ③ I WAS DISAPPOINTED THAT TIME WAS NOT ALLOCATED
FOR PUBLIC COMMENT/DISCUSSION. I WOULD LIKE TO
HEAR OPINIONS + QUESTIONS. PLEASE MAKE ALL COMMENTS
PROVIDED VIA THIS FORM PUBLICALLY AVAILABLE.
- ④ THE RIDERSHIP PROJECTIONS DO NOT SEEM TO SUPPORT
THE PREMISE THAT THE RAIL WILL DECREASE AUTO USE
BY ANY SIGNIFICANT FACTOR.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: CINDY MELTER

Email: cmelter@cm-squared.com Phone: 831-427-1608

What area do you live in? CITY OF SANTA CRUZ



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→
OVER

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There are approximately 3,000 children living in "doubled-up" households in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. There are many families with workers who ~~and~~ drive from Watsonville to areas north of Watsonville.

I ask that you survey in-person & online and ask non-profit service providers to help get respondents. Critical to get feedback from Spanish-speaking residents, from low-income workers and from parents with children in school in the whole South County Region.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Kimberly Ferm

Email: Kimberly@pvshelter.org Phone: 728-3649

What area do you live in? Watsonville



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Thank
you for
all the
work you
are doing!

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~~question on the~~
~~survey~~
~~...~~

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* Has there been any communication with Watsonville City leaders?
The proposed stop is in the industrial section of Watsonville and there isn't much to do there.

* Has anyone explored a partnership w/ Metro in Watsonville?
Most residents in the city don't live close to the proposed site, but the metro ^{station} is only 2 blocks away. If residents could take the bus and use the ticket for discount on the rail, it would encourage public transportation.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Abel Sanchez

Email: absanchez@ucdavis.edu Phone: _____

What area do you live in? Watsonville

☐

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I would encourage the RTC to consider a) bike storage lockers and b) bike share facilities at Key Stations for ~~for~~ commuters to ride the last connection between train and work etc.

You're doing a great job at collecting community response!
Thanks for all the hard work!

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: _____

Email: _____; Phone: _____

What area do you live in? _____

☐

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I feel strongly that incorporating bicycle ^{paths and} access along the train route (including being able to take bikes onto the train) will be essential for obtaining public support, as well as to keep support over a long period of time.

Thank you for starting this conversation!
Great job.

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: Justin Burks

Email: ecoburks@gmail.com Phone: 503-953-4044

What area do you live in? Downtown Santa Cruz, near St. River levee

☐

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Why show a schematic of
tracks relocation when that's
only needed for 1 mile?

It's the exception but showing
it gives the impression that it'll
be ~~the~~ the common scenario

In case we have follow up questions about your comment or questions, please provide the following:

Your Name: _____

Email: _____; Phone: _____

What area do you live in? _____

☐

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