

**From:** [Brian Peoples](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Item #27 Comment: Save CTC Grant Funding by approving Optional Interim Coastal Trail for Segments 8-11  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:19:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)

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RTC Commissioners,

As the steward of state funding for the **Santa Cruz Coastal Trail Segments 8–11**, the **Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)** has a responsibility to **protect the California Transportation Commission (CTC) grant funds** designated for our community.

Right now, the **“Ultimate Trail”** plan carries a staggering **\$72 million funding gap** — making it financially unrealistic. To avoid delays, the RTC must act decisively and move forward with the **Optional Interim Trail**, which delivers the same connectivity at a far lower cost.

In **March 2023**, Trail Now reached out to **Laurie Waters**, the CTC’s Associate Deputy Director for the Active Transportation Program — the lead administrator overseeing funding for Segments 8–11 — to clarify whether CTC funding could support the Optional Interim Trail. She explained that CTC allows two types of funding adjustments:

- **Minor adjustments** — approved directly by CTC staff.
- **Major adjustments** — requiring full CTC Board approval.

Because the **Optional Interim Trail** was already analyzed in the **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** for Segments 8–11 and achieves **the same trail functionality** as the original plan, Ms. Waters confirmed it qualifies as a **Minor adjustment**.

Even more importantly, she highlighted that the Santa Cruz Coastal Trail is currently **the most expensive active transportation project** CTC is funding. A cost-effective alternative that delivers the **same results** actually strengthens the case for preserving — and keeping — our grant funds.

**Trail Now** urges the **RTC** to approve the **Optional Interim Trail** immediately to ensure Santa Cruz County doesn’t lose this critical funding and to keep the Coastal Trail moving forward without costly delays.

Best regards,

Brian Peoples



**From:** [Carl Bacon](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:04:19 PM

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Dear RTC,

A \$72 million shortfall for just four segments of the ultimate trail that just a few months ago was touted as fully funded (while there is no funding source for a \$4.28 billion train) should be a wake-up call.

**Please railbank the line and move forward with the interim trail.**

Enough is enough.

Sincerely, Carl Bacon Capitola, CA

**From:** [ROBERT STEPHENS](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Rail and Trail  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:29:42 AM

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Dear RTC Commissioners :

It is time to change directions at the RTC. You have spent a fair amount of money and time looking at the train and the trail. It is now pretty apparent to most people that the train cost is very high and the ridership is low. The cost of the trail is way over budget because of trying to work around a future train.

Who will pay for all this, where will the money come from? It would need to come from each and every one of us who lives in the community. While the train is a noble idea, it just does not pencil out. Please talk to your constituents and see if they are willing to drop every other issues facing us, go all in on a train and try and pay for it. The train will cost more than METRO to operate, but will have less riders. Santa Cruz county is not affordable to most young people living here, a train will make it even more so, so please move on and get something done.

With the current plan, Watsonville does not get a trail, only a bike path on San Andreas Road. It is time to help Watsonville have some of the outdoor recreational opportunities that north county currently has.

A few years ago, about 1/4 of the bike riders I saw were on ebikes, now a majority of riders are on ebikes. A few years ago, no one worked from home, but that too has changed. Look forward and help our community prosper. Please pivot and start building a health affordable trail from one end of our county to the other. The writing is on the wall.

Sincerely,

Robert Stephens  
Aptos

**From:** [michael routh](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Rail trail  
**Date:** Friday, August 29, 2025 4:40:55 PM

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Commissioners,

With the recently revealed \$72 million shortfall for trail segments 8 - 11, it's time to pull the plug on this costly train fantasy. Every report brings more costs that eat up the county's transportation budget. Borrowing costs could decimate the county transportation budget for decades.

It's time to stop this madness! It's time for common sense! Pull the plug on this entire train boondoggle! It will never be affordable! Leave the rail ROW in its current state, or build a world class trail that will have overwhelming popularity. PULL THE PLUG!!!

Mick Routh  
Former Mayor, Capitola.

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Pete Haworth](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Rail trial segments 8-11 financing  
**Date:** Monday, September 1, 2025 1:57:16 PM

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I see from the agenda for the Sep 4th RTC meeting that you are recommending that commissioners authorize staff to pursue a line of credit to finance the \$72 million cost overrun for segments 8-11.

What I don't see in the staff report, is how the borrowed amounts plus the interest will be paid back. Will this require a local tax increase of some sort?

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Pete

**From:** [Board Chair Friends of the Rail Trail](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** September 4 RTC Agenda Item 27: FORT Comment Letter  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 6:39:16 AM

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Chair Montesino and commissioners,

Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT) has the following comments on Agenda Item 27. Measure D Active Transportation Expenditures and Financing Options. We support the staff recommendations; and look forward to continued progress on these projects.

Matt Farrell  
Chair  
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail

[09022025 FORT Comment Item 27 Active Trans Update](#)



September 2, 2025

TO: Chair Montesino and Commissioners

FROM: Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT)

SUBJECT: September 4 Meeting Agenda Item 27. Measure D Active Transportation Expenditures and Financing Options

Friends of the Rail and Trail appreciates the hard work of Commission staff, Federal Highway Administration staff, the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, and County staff. We are excited about the progress on the North Coast Trail, which will connect Davenport to Santa Cruz; and the progress on Segment 8 at the Wharf entrance in Santa Cruz.

We also support RTC staff's continued efforts to bridge the funding gaps for Segments 9 – 11, working with project sponsors the city of Santa Cruz and county staff. Construction cost estimates have risen 6% over the last year. We are encouraged that the project team has identified potential \$9 million in savings through Roaring Camp's help in relocating rail to accommodate the trail design. It is our understanding that these potential savings have not been applied to the current cost gaps or applied to specific trail segments' costs. We look forward to receiving that information.

Friends of the Rail and Trail supports the strategy of using a line of credit to help accommodate current project needs. This is a wise strategy for the short term.

We also support exploring and discussing the use of the Consolidated Grant Program funding to move these projects forward.

Finally, we urge the Commission to move forward with the ultimate trail design. Projects which have pursued railbanking have found that costs for replacing rail bed and ties with a trail can equal or exceed the cost of a trail project.

Matt Farrell  
Board Chair  
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail



**From:** [Board Chair Friends of the Rail Trail](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** September 4 RTC Agenda Item 27: FORT Comment Letter  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 6:51:04 AM  
**Attachments:** [09022025 FORT Comment Item 27 Active Trans Update.docx](#)

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Chair Montesino and Commissioners,

Friends of the Rail and Trail has the following comments on Item 27 Measure D Active Transportation Expenditures and Financing Options. We support staff's recommendation to work with agency sponsors on additional cost savings; and to pursue a line of credit as a short term project funding strategy.

We would again remind commissioners that Santa Cruz County voters have overwhelmingly rejected railbanking. Other agencies' railbanking analyses have revealed that its cost can equal or exceed trail construction adjacent to the rail line.

We appreciate all the hard work of RTC staff and agency partners.

Matt Farrell  
Chair  
Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail

**From:** [Jack Brown](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** The ultimate trail needs to stop  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:08:28 AM

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Dear RTC,

A \$72 million shortfall for just four segments of the ultimate trail—while there is no funding source for a \$4.28 billion train—should be a wake-up call. It's time to stop before we lose the trail altogether. Please railbank the line and move forward with the interim trail. Enough is enough.

Sincerely,  
Jack Brown  
Aptos, CA

**From:** [J Lighthill](#)  
**To:** [Regional Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Ultimate Trail segments 8-11  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:00:38 AM

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Dear Commissioners,

Please suspend development of the Ultimate trail segments 8-11 immediately. There's no reason to build it anymore.

Last April, Commissioners approved the trail in the Ultimate configuration—despite its having higher costs and more environmental impacts than its alternative—because they were **assured** it would save enough room for future passenger rail. Since then, we've learned otherwise.

Your staff has confirmed that the corridor is not wide enough for both ZEPRT and a trail. Any trail built is likely to be removed or rebuilt for passenger rail.

It's the commission's fiduciary duty to manage transportation funds responsibly. Please do not use the generous CTC funding grant to build a deficient trail. The EIR included two trail configurations. Build the one that's more affordable; one that's continuous, safe and wide; one that includes passage over the Capitola Trestle.

Now's the time to pivot.

Thanks for your consideration.

Regards,

Johanna Lighthill

From: [Cami Corvin](#)  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: [Regional Transportation Commission;](#)  
re \$72 million shortfall  
Date: Sunday, August 31, 2025 7:09:59 AM

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Dear Commissioners,

I have reviewed the Draft Concept Report, particularly beginning on page 272, and would like to submit the following comments for the record regarding the proposed rail and trail project.

First, the report references an apparent Memorandum of Understanding with Roaring Camp concerning track relocation. I respectfully request that the RTC make the exact terms of this MOU public. It is important for residents and stakeholders to know whether this is a binding agreement, what costs are being shifted, and how these commitments affect the overall financial outlook.

Second, the Draft Report acknowledges a funding shortfall of approximately \$72 million. The suggestion that this gap could be closed through “sponsors” and the use of a line of credit raises significant concern. Reliance on speculative sponsorships and debt financing for such a large-scale project places the public at unacceptable financial risk. I urge the Commission not to pursue a line of credit without secured, voter-approved funding.

Third, it is troubling that the report is written less as an evaluation of options and more as a roadmap for moving forward, despite unresolved questions about costs, impacts on residents, and viable alternatives. In particular, residents along the corridor—including those at Castle Mobile Estates—should not bear financial or physical burdens due to project encroachments.

Finally, the public was assured that this stage of the process remained conceptual. To move forward with implementation language at this time undermines transparency and trust in the process. I ask that the RTC pause before committing further until all fiscal, legal, and community impacts are fully resolved and openly discussed.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,

Camilla “Cami” Corvin<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>  
Contract Paralegal  
Notary Public  
Legal Document Assistant<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>  
LDA Registration #59  
County of Santa Cruz

Corvin’s Legal Services

[REDACTED]  
Capitola, CA 95010  
[REDACTED]

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FOR ATTORNEYS: I am a paralegal pursuant to California Business & Professions Code §6450. I provide paralegal services only under contract with a licensed California attorney.

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