

## Appendix B:

### Public Comments

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## Informational Community Session 4-7 Comments

- Could it be an issue calling it an Intercity rail project when it really isn't that type of service we need? Fewer stops mean less convenience for travelers. (5)
- [Tickets] should be free for locals who provide proof of residence. (5)
- If [Beach Street station] were at the Marine Sanctuary center, it seems like it could serve a very similar group of riders as the old SCruz depot park location, yet still allow the train to serve the westside. (5)
- Let's start with a pedestrian/bike trail! Less expensive. Much more use. From what I see, a train will have very few riders. Very expensive. Paid partially with parcel tax? How about paying with a general sales tax increase so everyone shares the burden?
- Thank you all for your hard work and for putting on this presentation. (5)
- More recently, it appears that the 41st Ave rail stop has been eliminated, which doesn't make sense since it is close to significant shopping. It would be ideal if every rail STOP did not need to be a vast, long STATION, but could be simpler—more like a bus stop. Ohlone Park, where commuter data shows the largest percentage of commuters to north Santa Cruz, was also eliminated. Why would two of the most potentially used stops be eliminated? Ideally, we want local regular shoppers and commuters to avoid driving. On the far West Side of SC, many people use the train to access the dining/shopping and wine/beer scene. Thank you. (6)
- Beach Street is a potentially congested option, as buses will have to contend with surface congestion, compared to more direct routes from a Bay Street station or a West Side connection from the Seymour area. (6)
- Regarding Capital Costs: We hope that the infrastructure being proposed and explicitly implemented due to highway widening or the trail will not be categorized into the RAIL bucket, especially regarding Measure D 2016 Funds. (6)
- Census info shows that most zip codes along the rail corridor have higher densities of people with disabilities than most other zip codes. It makes sense that cities developed around the corridor, making services more accessible. Thank you for helping to make Santa Cruz County accessible for everyone. (6)
- Is there to be no discussion of the astronomical cost? This sounds like a done deal for something extremely expensive. Concerns:
  - Cost versus scale: \$4.28 billion is massive compared to the county budget, significantly exceeding the costs of roads, bridges, or bike/pedestrian projects.
  - Road use reality: Hwy 1 sees ~80,000–100,000 vehicles/day; rail is projected at 3,500–6,000 boardings/day—Orders of magnitude difference.
  - Maintenance backlog: Roads already require approximately \$ 500 million or more in repairs. Spending nearly \$1B on bridges diverts funds.
  - Alternatives: Improving BRT or express lanes could move far more people at a lower cost with flexibility. (6)
- Headway & operating costs do not change linearly; the marginal cost per revenue train mile should decrease due to efficiencies. (6)
- The City Council has adopted the Downtown Expansion Plan for Santa Cruz. Ministerial actions are ongoing but will be completed soon. This should be included in projections. (6)

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



- You can't simply compare driving time vs train time: with driving, I go from house to destination; with train, it's house → station → train → next station → final destination. (6)
- FYI: During the morning commute, it can take 1–1.5 hours to drive 12 miles from La Selva Beach to the Tannery. The same is true for the southbound evening trip, which is just as terrible.
- Beachy [station design] looks good. (7)
- It would be nice to have different station themes based on location, like beachy by the ocean and woodsy near a forest. Think about adding closable or protected sections for winter storms. How can we submit design ideas? Thank you. (7)
- Requesting again: there should be a station at State Park. Seacliff is the primary entry point to the National Marine Sanctuary, and the village plan was approved to create a family-friendly welcome to the beaches. (7)
- Keep up the good work. Has HDR/RTC considered streamlining designs—saving money/time by using similar designs as METRO stations? (7)
- Please keep shelter costs as low as possible, provide shade/wind/rain protection, include solar lighting, and recycling containers. (7)
- Please consider a station at State Park & Seacliff—close to Seacliff State Beach, Hwy 1, restaurants, boutiques, shops, ice cream, etc. (7)
- One station design element could be historical displays—photos of old Santa Cruz, Watsonville, and Capitola depots. (7)

## Capitola Town Hall Comment Cards

- I support the trail alongside the tracks and rail transit. We need an alternative to highway traffic.
- I absolutely love the plans you're proposing. I'm a walker and biker and have been at risk of being hit by cars several times, so I appreciate protected spaces, preferably class IV bike paths. I also support keeping the rail and preserving another transit option that will help reduce traffic.
- With funding and ridership for a passenger train remaining a fantasy, the RTC's decision not to consider railbanking and a continuous, safe trail is a travesty!
- Please move forward with Option A or Option B as soon as possible. I support the Rail and Trail Project and urge its construction without delay. This project offers huge benefits for the county.
- How will this meet ADA compliance? No plan shows an acceptable grade %. This is NOT a Town Hall.
- Trail only works. Bike lanes are unsafe, poorly marked, and littered with debris. Build a safe, beautiful trail. Stop prioritizing a train. Capitola does not need or want one. Wait for the train study.
- I have lived here for 12 years. 1) You cannot have 1500 people ride through Capitola daily. 2) Park Ave cannot be impacted further. 3) We deserve to feel safe and be heard. This Town Hall meeting was a farce!
- For the Park Avenue section, Option B is the preferred choice. Concerns about the Village path & the Capitola Trestle. Rail seems inefficient & not best for Capitola residents.
- Capitola should hold off on options until studies are complete. Do not rush and lose the trail.
- Option A or B, please! I prefer A, but I'm happy with either. I dream of light rail in Santa Cruz County and a coastal trail.
- Concern about vehicle speeds on Park Ave. Request for a substantial barrier between road and trail to protect bikers and pedestrians.
- Thank you for another public forum. The Capitola population is increasing; I look forward to rail service. Concerns include operating costs, protecting the neighborhood from cut-through traffic, repairing the trestle, and holding MHP owners responsible for encroachments.
- This is not a town hall. Lack of info. Uphold Measure L. Do NOT put trash on the streets. Stay on the rail.
- We want the RTC to uphold Measure L. Option C should be presented. Keep trail on the rail.
- Key concerns:
  1. The trail must be on the rail bed.
  2. Trail next to tracks = too expensive
  3. Trail next to tracks = unsafe
  4. Train tracks should be railbanked
  5. The train must not go on the streets
  6. Stop wasting tax dollars
- I live near Park Ave. It's heavily used as a highway alternative and for school traffic. The trail shouldn't wait for a train that may never come. Please put the trail on the rails.
- Trail in the corridor is better for experience, cost, safety, and view. Wait for the train study results before making a decision.
- Keep the trail with the rail.
- Option C: Build the trail now.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



- Build the trail now and worry about the train later. Bank the rail and build the trail. No trail off the rail line.
- Taxpayers of Capitola were promised a trail with the train. We were lied to and regret Measure D.
- Please keep trail off Brommer – too dangerous at 41st/Brommer intersection. Use trestle instead. Village biking is too unsafe with traffic. A full presentation with details would be appreciated.
- Keep trail with the rail – not through Capitola Village, not on Park Ave.
- Please provide safe crossings. I was almost run over in the Village. Not safe.
- Capitola residents should not have to bail out the RTC for poor financial planning.
- The Coastal Trail must follow the rail corridor. Do not reroute onto Park Ave. Repair the trestle for safe trail crossing.
- Why is Measure L being ignored? Fix and repair the trestle. Keep trails off streets.
- Please plan new, safe bridges for rail and trail at Soquel Creek. The trail can be rerouted only if the corridor is kept for rail.
- We want a safe trail in the rail corridor and not on Capitola streets. Use a trestle for safe passage.
- I do not want a train. I want a Rail Trail where I can safely ride. The county needs a decent trail – NO TRAIN.
- Very supportive of continued rail planning. Benefits: environment, health, safety, and traffic reduction. This is about creating a long-term alternative to automobile dependency.
- The train will never happen. I've supported this since 1992 – despite numerous studies, there's been no progress!
- I fully support this project. Provide transportation alternatives. Keep the trail through Capitola Village and reinforce the trestle for light rail. Save as many trees as possible with Option B along Park Ave.
- Key questions:
  1. ADA compliance for Monterey Ave & Cliff? Not feasible
  2. Why no railbanking?
  3. Why ignore the original plan to keep the trail on the rail line?
  4. How many studies will it take to prove that the train is not feasible?
  5. Loss of beach access from Jewel Box & Clifford Heights
  6. 1500 bicyclists/day in Capitola Village? Not feasible
  7. Violates Measure L by moving the trail off the rail
- The proposed ZEPRT project is unnecessary without a community ballot measure to fund it. No support in SC County.
- We need a trail & rail connecting the westside with the south county. Please listen to constructive voices, not just those of your opponents. Change is hard, but it will benefit the majority.
- Until ZEPRT is funded and ridership assured, the rail easement should be railbanked and converted to a trail. Monterey rail conversion is a successful model.
- Displacing people during an economic crisis for a non-existent project is absurd. Wait for funding and approval first.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



- Thank you for your hard work. Uncovered trails are not accessible enough for people with disabilities. We need people movers. Don't disenfranchise Watsonville residents.
- Zero-emission vehicles are the way forward. Keep the mountain line open for emergencies, as fire chiefs have said. Cut a few invasive trees, save protected lands.
- When we voted for the train, we were promised a train on the rails. We were lied to. This disruption is a travesty. Keep the trail on the right-of-way, not on streets.
- Key points:
  1. No support for rail – too expensive, won't reduce traffic, low ridership, paid by homeowners.
  2. Build the trail now – affordable, safe, and immediate use.
  3. Save corridor trees! Don't cut until necessary.
- Zero-emission rail is a nice thought, but it will never pay for itself. No more property taxes. Do not cut trees before construction. Rail will never be built.
- Thank you for your work on the Coastal Rail Trail. I support preserving the right-of-way for future public transportation and a regional/state connection—support Option B for Park Ave Trail.
- I would like a train, but it's not realistic without funding. I would not vote for rail. Support trail now over existing tracks—support trestle revitalization.
- This event was a farce – a divide-and-conquer format. Measure L is the law. RTC is wasting money on special interests.
- The explanation of the interim versus the ultimate plan was confusing. Needed clear RTC representatives and consistent answers.
- This evening was a disappointment – it was not a true town hall. Looking forward to RTC's budget info.
- This was not a town hall. No give-and-take discussion. Keep Trail on Rail Corridor.
- I only found the comment card by accident. Poor communication. Expected a true town hall, not a show. This didn't help us understand the impacts on our village.
- This is not a town hall. Please explain this to residents.
- This is not a town hall.
- This is not a town hall!!
- This is not a town hall. We were promised one. This is a 'Flood the Zone' scam.
- This is not a Town Hall – there is no structure, no clarity, and all the burden is on community members to ask questions. Not helpful.
- What a waste of time. No dialogue, no feedback, only RTC claiming they held a meeting. Waste of resources. Bring on the audit!

## Capitola Town Hall Map Comments

- Bus interchange
- This is not a town hall – Regional Transport Con
- The Capitola trestle is the best route in terms of expense, cost, view, and safety. The proposed train is a viable driving option. Let's see the train study first!
- reserved bus slots
- The people on Park Street won't be able to get out of driveways with all the bikes and traffic this will cause. A + B is not a good alternative. Spend the money and put the trail as the original plan stated. A disaster for Park Avenue residents!
- Safe bike trails are needed, not concrete trails. Roads are dangerous and not maintained for bikes – they are often littered with glass, sand, dirt, leaves & sticks. Please give us a safe trail without a train.
- The future needs rail—support Plan B.
- I would love to have a Class I separated bike path on Park Ave in the next few years, while they work toward segments 10 & 11, instead of using painted lines.
- Love the proposed rail trail :)
- How does all this square with Capitola's Measure L?
- bus hub
- wide vegetated ped bridge
- Capitola Village business owner – doesn't want the detour through the village. It is a traffic catastrophe and a liability.
- Love Rail Trail

## Community Workshops Comment Cards

### Santa Cruz

- Hydrogen is a boondoggle that postpones the transition away from fossil fuels and does not meet the caps of S.C. & CA.
- Significant concerns exist over the already highly impacted Beach Flats/Boardwalk/Beach Street area, as well as surrounding neighborhoods and narrow streets.
- Rising tides/king tides/flooding – crazy to build there.
- Electric train – anything less would be going backwards. Solid-state batteries within the next 5–7 years will address all concerns, and as the grid transitions, they will continue to be cleaner.
- I am very concerned about the cost to build a train that will not be used. What is the cost estimate for the entire project? What is the timeline? Who will fund the system once it is operational? Consider the light rail in San Jose as an example.
- 3 stations please for downtown:
  - Station @ Marine Center
  - Station @ Bay & California
  - End Station @ Natural Bridges – For West Side
- Currently, the tourist traffic headed to the boardwalk parking lot has only the option to enter at Beach Street, necessitating a drive along Front Street and two roundabouts, which are usually gridlocked on summer weekends. Suggest negotiating with Seaside Co. to have that traffic enter a new entrance at the back of the parking lot, accessed via Ocean Street.
- One needs to model ridership numbers. How much is tourist-related? – Boardwalk, beach, etc. How much is work-related? Going to and from work. Answers to these and other questions would seem to be enhanced by systems thinking and modeling associated with that technology. Thanks. John Aurd
- West Side service is the highest priority.

### Watsonville (*None Received*)

## Santa Cruz & Watsonville Community Workshops Map Comments

- Every other train to the west side/turn around near Aptos/Rio del Mar – *W Santa Cruz Proposed Alignment (Sheet 1 of 2)*
- Every other street. Ped/cycle only crossing – Rankin St & Surfside Ave – *W Santa Cruz Proposed Alignment (Sheet 1 of 2)*
- Bay St. for UCSC connection? – Bay St & Lennox St – *W Santa Cruz Proposed Alignment (Sheet 1 of 2)*
- Why was no station mentioned at the Marine Sanctuary Center? That could serve downtown and still go to the west side. – *W Santa Cruz Proposed Alignment (Sheet 1 of 2)*
- Great idea – Class I trail on San Andreas! Connectivity to roads, driveways, and schools. Going through agricultural areas away from roads is not a good option. Access to farm worker housing and Sunset Beach. Top it off with access to Palm Beach. Yay! – Southwest of Sunset Beach & San Andreas Rd – *San Andreas Rd Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Alternative to the trail and ROW here. – North of San Andreas Rd; approx. 400' above Sunset Beach Rd – *San Andreas Rd Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Great option! Class I trail along San Andreas Road, connecting to MB Acad, farm worker housing, and W Beach to Palm Beach! – Southwest of Dairy & San Andreas Rd – *San Andreas Rd to Beach St South Side Option Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Another alternate to Beach Rd here – North of San Andreas Rd between Dairy Rd & Beach St – *San Andreas Rd to Beach St South Side Option Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Where would tractors access farms without conflict with bikes? Widen the Beach trail access for farmers. – Southwest of Clearwater Ln & Beach Rd – *Westside of Watsonville South Side Beach St Option Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Great option! Class I trail on W Beach! Accessible from Watsonville to Palm Beach, with a separate trail for safety – a great solution. – South of Beach Rd between Clearwater Ln & Lee Rd – *Westside of Watsonville South Side Beach St Option Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Please keep bikes and peds away from cars and equipment. – South of Beach Rd between Clearwater Ln & Lee Rd – *Westside of Watsonville South Side Beach St Option Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- I would like to see the Class I trail from the Beach to the existing trail connect at Ohlone – it needs to connect on Lee Road. Class I on Lee Rd to avoid industrial areas if possible. – Southeast of Beach St & (NB) SR-1 – *Westside of Watsonville South Side Beach St Option Proposed Bike Path Alignment*
- Loose sand or gravel under rails to deter cyclists/peds – *At-Grade Option Looking West from Beach & Cliff Streets Intersection*
- Ground level is less expensive, less obstructed view – *At-Grade Option Looking West from Beach & Cliff Streets Intersection.*
- Dedicated bus lane – *At-Grade Option Looking West from Beach & Cliff Streets Intersection*
- Bulk stop on summer weekends – *At-Grade Option Looking Southeast from Cliff Street*
- Bike parking – lockers and stations – *Traffic Circulation Map*

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



- Dedicated bus lane along Beach St. can be used by emergency vehicles – On beach south of Main Lot – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- Good idea, reversible lanes – On beach – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- Commuter Lot – Pointing to Main Lot – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- General plan history for circulation? – Pointing off map north of Front St – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- Transit of connections to Hwy 17 – Pointing off map east of Riverside Ave – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- Shuttle service between downtown and both stations – Upper right corner of map – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- Peak off-peak lanes for deliveries – Parking lot between 3rd St & San Lorenzo River – *Traffic Circulation Map*
- Remove all car traffic on Beach Street, accommodate more trains, bikes, and people – Main & 1st St – *Traffic Circulation Map*

## Office Hours Comment Cards

- Why not consider the corridor along Soquel Avenue, Soquel Drive, and UCSC? There are many more jobs and destinations along that corridor and the rail corridor. That combined with PRT could lead to ridership in the range of 20,000–50,000.
- Due to the project's cost, let's reevaluate and consider other types of mass transit. We need a system that provides the convenience of a car, is non-stop, pays for itself at the fare box, needs no state or federal funding, is safe, sustainable, can carry small freight, has handicap access, bike access, and residential stops. I'm talking about a PRT system that Santa Cruz can afford. Please think outside the box.
- Public rail service offers the most comprehensive options for serving the largest number of people. The Santa Cruz County Rail Line is the last open corridor connecting Watsonville to Santa Cruz. We should keep our rail line for future public transit. The county is required to build approximately 13,000 more housing units, many of which lack space for cars. Watsonville is the second-largest and fastest-growing city, and it wants rail service. Youth desire public transit, including buses and trains. HWY 1 and Soquel Drive are mostly parking lots! Greenhouse gases are highest due to transportation. A smaller zero-emission passenger train could serve the county.
- The train project is too costly and has limited benefits. Please consider alternatives, such as personal rapid transit (PRT), which can be built at a much lower cost and offer better service. The TCAA provided information that is now outdated—like train costs—or incorrect, such as the claim that PRT isn't bicycle-friendly. Therefore, it's appropriate for the RTC to reevaluate PRT, either as a replacement for trains or as a separate project. Santa Cruz County needs personal rapid transit!
- This would greatly benefit the community. Reducing pollution and having less traffic. I think that if you were to mention the price, more people would be interested. If I had the railroad, I wouldn't have to sit in traffic for most of the time and would be a bit less late..
- The Zero Emission Rail and Trail Project will benefit all communities in Santa Cruz County. It will create economic opportunities for those living outside Santa Cruz, as they won't have to sit in traffic and pollute the environment during their commute. I am concerned about habitat fragmentation affecting native species and the costs that might be imposed on the community. However, this railway will provide many opportunities for high school and college-aged students.
- The Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project is an exciting project for the city. My concern is that the community is not being given a vote in the project and is not being given a say.
- The plan to reroute Walker Street in Watsonville by shifting the railway line to the east side will cause significant harm to the neighborhood. I oppose this proposal.
- This proposal would create massive devastation to the stakeholders in the heavy industrial zone on Walker Street. There has been no meaningful traffic analysis of this heavily trafficked truck route, which is also a vital freight route. Alternative access is not feasible on side streets. The RTC has a highly problematic safety record in the area, with students crossing the rail trestle and multiple critical student injuries with zero improvement.
- This is also of concern: there are multiple PRUDS schools within 1,500 feet of the railroad, and no studies have been conducted regarding safety, despite problems at Walker & 1st, Walker &

**Public Engagement Summary**  
**Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail**  
**Milestone 4: March - August 2025**



2nd, Walker & Beach, and Spuds. RTC's lack of enforcement of safety protocols in the current area raises significant concerns as to the evaluation of student safety (500 student crossings daily). A realistic assessment of the properties and streets that would need to be acquired or rebuilt in the neighborhood has not been even remotely considered, in terms of both its impact on economic vitality and the overall cost of this rail project. Parking is not even considered. Industrial jobs, which are essential here, would be eliminated.

- Thank you for the information and outreach about the meeting. I support creating a rail trail for the community. The expenses and logistics of a rail commuter service are high, and the yearly cost to operate the train (\$41 million) is not feasible. How much does it cost annually to maintain an asphalt trail? (Please share this with the public.)
- Finally, information, money, and logistics are coming out! All this information was needed before our votes were cast in the past. We are currently unable to finance a metro system. We would not be able to run a train system. (West Side and Davenport are great).

## Virtual Open House Comments

- Keep up the good work. This needs to get done ASAP.
- Keep up the great work. Someday, I'll be loading my bike on the train and riding past Davenport and Watsonville. Can't wait.
- I am unclear about the proposed Aptos stations. I have read before that one might be at New Brighton Rd, but it also mentioned a location near Cabrillo. I want more details about this proposed station. Hopefully, it is not targeting NB Road, as that area doesn't connect to anything—Cabrillo, Capitola Village, Aptos shopping centers, parking, or anything else. Is this actually proposing another highway bridge crossing? Is it in addition to the new one planned for Mar Vista, or is it replacing that one? Where will parking be for this station?
- I am unclear about the proposed Aptos stations. I have read in the past that one might be at New Brighton Rd, but it also said close to Cabrillo. I want more information about this proposed Station. Hopefully, it's not aiming for NB road, since that doesn't go near anything - Cabrillo, Capitola. Village, Aptos shopping centers, parking, or really anything. Where can I find clearer information about the station location proposed?
- It's long past time you abandon this quixotic quest. The benefits are too small and the costs too high. Build us a nice bike trail that gives riders a chance for recreation and a safe, eco-friendly way to get around the county. Especially with the rise of electric bikes, these experiences are now possible for many more people. Accept reality, RTC, and stop wasting money!
- Even if funding could be found to build it, I'm very concerned that the ongoing costs to maintain a rail system would divert funding from our excellent and much-needed bus system and other climate-mitigation efforts. In addition, I'm concerned that high maintenance costs would lead to high ticket costs and fewer trips per day, resulting in lower ridership and a downward spiral of costs and disuse.
- I also believe that e-bikes will be an increasingly large and essential part of the county's transportation mix, and the rail plans do not adequately provide for 1. biking next to the rail line, 2. having truly secure e-bike storage options at rail stations, or 3. bringing your e-bike on the train.
- I seriously question whether, when the state is already promoting the transition to electric cars, the removal of a few thousand trips per day (only some of which would be in gas-using vehicles), if that even materializes, would be worth the high costs (both financial and emissions) of manufacturing, installing, and maintaining a rail system. The same funds could be used to subsidize e-bikes for county residents, improve the bus system further, support improved building insulation and efficiencies, and so on. These actions would likely reduce emissions more and more reliably and predictably. I know money can't always be moved from one pot to another the way I implied. However, I still think that if we were just to ask the question of how we can improve SC County transportation options for users and reduce overall emissions, there are many creative solutions that are much more cost-effective and much less risky than an active rail line.
- Finally, I'm very concerned about the county's treatment of the people whose mobile homes are currently located on the rail right-of-way. I think the transportation commission, not the mobile home residents, is morally responsible for the costs associated with finding new locations and relocating those residents and their homes. I'm upset that the government, which presumably

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



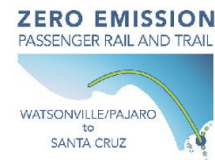
represents me, could be treating these low-income residents, who find themselves in an impossible situation through absolutely no fault of their own, so badly.

- Thank you for your attention to my feedback.
- Thank you for all of your ongoing work on this!!
- Is there any way to get to 15-minute headways? 30-minute headways and 234-person train capacity really seem to limit the system's rush-hour throughput, which is a reason for its existence (as an alternative to Hwy 1). If passing sidings are the issue, could you have lots of faster northbound trains in the morning with only one or two slow southbound trains that always wait for the northbound trains to pass, and then vice versa in the afternoons?
- Is it worth re-questioning the intercity rail choice over light rail, given the cost/headway projections? I'm sympathetic to Roaring Camp wanting to stay on the national freight rail network, but otherwise, I am a bit skeptical of 1-seat rides to locations beyond Pajaro Junction, and I wonder whether state funding is truly that adamant about intercity vs. light rail. Would you expect light rail to allow you to have shorter headways and/or save a substantial amount on capital and/or operating costs? Or does it not help that much?
- I like all the comments and want the RAIL and BIKE trails to connect Watsonville to Santa Cruz ASAP. Also want to connect through Pajaro to the projected train Station in Pajaro. To connect to the projected extension of CalTrain to the Bay Area.
- I would like to know if other operators, such as CalTrain, will be allowed to run service on the Branch Line. A tourist train could serve people in CalTrain's service area. A tourist train on our branch line would be desirable because it is a beautiful trip.
- While coordination with the regional rail network is desirable, committing to similar vehicle types and weights adds a huge cost burden to this project. If the SC County branch line were separated from the existing network, even by one rail length (e.g., near Pajaro), then FRA rules would not necessarily apply, and CPUC would regulate the line. Running light rail vehicles and renovating bridges for actual vehicle weights, rather than hypothetical freight trains, would reduce project construction and operating costs. Since Federal and State funding are repeatedly in flux, lobbying for more flexible funding provisions could be built into the planning process.
- I'm already on your mailing list. Have been following the rail and trail process for decades. In recent years, I've been reading your emails and following your posts on Facebook. There was a period of time when I received a deluge of large, flashy mail via USPS.
- I can't even begin to imagine how many millions of dollars (public and private) have been poured into the whole process over the past thirty or so years, but I would like to know that figure. Has RTC published annual financial reports? Perhaps you can send me a link to those.
- Thank you.
- I am so supportive of this project. As well, I'm disappointed that some vocal faction has managed to delay this project so that costs have increased. That said, the people of Santa Cruz have voted for the rail line, so it makes no sense that a small group can deride this process. I say GO RAIL!!! One day, I hope to travel by rail to visit Davenport, Watsonville, and Monterey eventually!!! Should I live so long?
- I think the trails are a great idea and have experienced many of them all over California and other states. I do not think it is realistic or cost-effective to aim for passenger rail as much as I love BART, Caltrain, and SMART. I think it would delay the project too much and cost more than it is worth.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



- Please consider vehicle and bicycle parking at the station locations. Unless there's a convenient way to get to the stations or you are taking your bike on the trains, the location of the train route is not connected to transit; it's in the middle of neighborhoods.
- I have been following the rail corridor saga for 10+ years. I have read many of the multi-million dollar studies, analyzed the triple bottom line benefits and financial impacts, and attended and spoken at several SCCRTC meetings. While history would suggest another decade of studies and unresolved direction, I hold some hope that the latest study will finally lead to a sensible conclusion.
- Please note:
  1. Every successive study has shown increasing cost. In 2021, the capital cost was 465M\$. Now the projected cost is over 4.2B\$. Even discounting for inflation, the 2025 projected cost is 8x the 2021 projected cost. 4.2B\$ represents 40K\$/household - more than the cost of providing every household with a new electric vehicle. I am not suggesting that as an alternative - just providing a reference point for comparison.
  2. Ridership levels and travel times have not changed significantly. The annual operating cost estimates have gone up from 25M\$ to 34M\$. Best case 2035 revenue projections are \$3.7M, which just barely covers 10% of the operating cost.
  3. The 30-60 minute service times may significantly decrease ridership due to the long travel + wait time. The projected 40-55 min end-to-end travel time does not account for the total trip time. The impact of service times is even more significant for short trips. Waiting 15-30 minutes for the next vehicle could double travel times, which will often be significantly longer than driving by car.
  4. The preliminary study does not provide details regarding environmental factors, but it seems unlikely that they have improved from the negligible benefits in the 2021 study. The ZEPRT rail system would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic fatality rates by less than 0.5%.
- I agree with Greenway's assessment of the ZEPRT plan: Don't ignore the numbers. Don't delay any further. Don't waste more money. Start the rail banking process.
- Our roads are in horrible condition, and the maintenance backlog is growing.
- Even if the cost of further rail studies and plans is covered by State and/or Federal funds, the process of continuing to study and promote rail consumes valuable staff time and resources. Those could and should be spent focusing on the critical county transportation needs, not an endless pursuit of a rail system that will never be implemented. Between 1) endless studies and 2) actually implementing an impractical and unaffordable rail system, endless studies are less damaging to the county. But neither alternative makes any sense. The only sensible choice is to terminate the project and focus on high-priority transportation needs, such as roads and the Metro.
- Stop planning for the train. \$4.3 billion in 2025 dollars is absolutely crazy. For a fraction of that amount of money, we could have free buses running every 5 minutes. Rail bank and build a trail now. Wake up and get real!
- The cost is too high, and 45 minutes is too long. Consider creating a wide trail that can accommodate throttle e-bikes. This would allow riders to complete the trip in 20 minutes, eliminating the need for transfers to reach their destination. Or pave it and run a bus line on it.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025

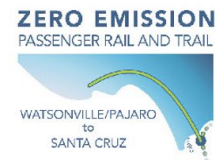


- I'm struggling to go beyond the \$4 billion projected cost, not to mention the yearly operating expenses. Projects like this rarely stay under budget, and voters usually don't want to impose higher taxes. The sales tax needed to support operations is a regressive tax that undermines the fairness argument I often hear from train supporters. For that kind of money, couldn't we instead vastly expand bus service and make it free? I bet that would genuinely help people and reduce the number of cars on the road.
- I'd like to see the county put up a more balanced presentation comparing ZEPRT with other ways to improve the traffic situation while providing a usable trail with no auto traffic.
- Please build the passenger rail portion as fast as possible. This county needs relief from auto traffic for both locals and tourists. The passenger rail installation is essential to a healthy and prosperous future in Santa Cruz County, potentially providing an equitable, alternative form of transportation.
- Stop. No rail, it's too inflexible and way too expensive. Stop now, no more \$10 10m+10 studies, no more station style designs.
- Please just stop throwing good tax money at what is clear at this point, an unaffordable money pit.
- Great work for employees in downtown SC, for tourists, and for families going to schools.
- That's too expensive, build the rail between lanes of Hwy 1 with the money from employees' overzealous salaries.
- This is well done. Keep going! Don't let naysayers drag you down.
- If feasible (I am sure you have already considered this), prioritize the bike trail while waiting for full train funding. For example, remove tracks only where necessary (such as the Capitola trestle and mobile home area) and then replace and widen them once train funding is secured.
- Thanks for all the hard work.
- Build the trail. Stop wasting our money. Train travel is not practical for commuters, and a tourist train is just not worth the cost. Folly from the bloated RTC filled with transit nerds out of touch with reality.
- This is why people dislike government and believe nothing ever gets accomplished. A project nobody wants? Check. Outrageous costs? Check. A massive tax hike? Check. The high-speed rail fiasco should be proof enough that sometimes things aren't meant to work out. It can be hard to see clearly when your livelihood depends on it. I'm pretty sure that if you're working on this project, nothing anyone says could change your mind. This should be a light rail project linking Santa Cruz to maybe as far as Cabrillo College. But the money is available to connect population centers, and you can't get funding for light rail, so let's do the wrong thing for possibly the right reasons. Add a trail to make people feel better about placing a heavy train on an eroding bluff. And don't forget those two bridges in Aptos crossing the freeway. I guarantee your cost estimates are way off. And what about traffic estimates? You're probably the same experts who have been widening the freeway for what seems like a decade. That's turned out great. We'll finish that, then start on those bridges. Another decade of traffic? And in 2025 dollars? The only 2025 dollars being spent are on your salaries. The real expenses are in 2030, 2035 dollars. And you really believe this anti-climate federal government we have, or may have again in 15-20 years, will be okay with funding California rail? Maybe if you promise to use coal-powered engines. Please stop, return the money to CalTrans, and find something useful to do.

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- How many individual passenger seats are in one ZEPRT train? How many safe, secure spaces for those not occupying a seat are on the train? I read the words high capacity in the document, but the number of persons seated and standing is not specified. Thank you.
- I believe there should be excursion trains to help cover the operating expenses of the passenger rail service.
- In the interest of transparency, please ensure ridership projections in the final report include the projected subsidized cost per trip / per rider.
- So two comments:
  1. The proposed passenger rail should be a joint project of the two Monterey Bay Area Counties. Seamless service from Santa Cruz to Salinas and Monterey. 80% of the passengers will be regional. The connection to Caltrain / Capitol Corridor at Pajaro will be a secondary source of ridership - not the primary source.
  2. Zero Emissions is a myth and should be removed from the language. Model the service on SMART up in Marin / Sonoma County using affordable Tier 4 diesel-based equipment more suitable for a small regional market. Do not pursue utopian dreams for a small regional market like Monterey Bay. Electrification is for major urban markets due to its high infrastructure costs. And hydrogen is experimental.
- Here is today's broadcast on the successes of SMART service that ran on CBS News out of San Francisco.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKd9enlZhBA>
- Douglas Hawes San Jose
- I am excited about what the train will mean for me and my children in terms of the types of transportation it will allow for. But transfers and coordination with the metro system are critical. To allow for Downtown and westside access to doctors' offices and shopping in addition to beach and entertainment options.
- Why not consider bus rapid transit as an alternative solution along the corridor, rather than relying solely on rail service? BRT could provide the same service capacity as the proposed rail service, especially if double-length trolley buses are used. Trolley buses offer many advantages, including lower initial costs and greater flexibility; they can be rerouted onto city streets if there's a problem along the rail line, allowing transit service to continue during repairs. I'm sure you already know all this, since Santa Cruz Metro supports BRT as the main solution, but I wanted to share my thoughts because I really want to see transit development happen sooner rather than later. It seems to me that BRT is more feasible, cost-effective, and has a better chance of actually being implemented. My concern with the rail option is that it may face legal and fiscal hurdles that could delay or prevent its implementation. So, I believe BRT should be seriously reconsidered.
- Dear SCCRTC, I find your ridership projections to be quite optimistic. I don't believe we will reach levels comparable to the service in the San Diego metro area. I'm concerned that this project is taking too long and is caught up in the same processes that are hindering our CA high-speed rail, when we could have a rail trail used by thousands of people every day right now. Please be realistic with your ridership projections so we can make an informed decision.
- Please do not move forward with this project. It costs too much for the limited results. It's not scalable or affordable. Too few people can use it effectively.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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- The Zero Emission Passenger Rail system under consideration is enormously costly (billions in construction costs, hundreds of millions in annual operating cost subsidies).
- It will consume billions in local tax revenues, but ridership projections are wildly inadequate; congestion on the Highway will not improve. Dump this egregiously expensive boondoggle and build a trail. A trail can be completed quickly and at a fraction of the cost, benefiting far more people with far fewer dollars spent by local taxpayers.
- Great to see a matter-of-fact appraisal of this project.
- I like trains and love the romance of an electric trolley travelling along a route of ocean views and charming neighborhoods, but it's way too much money for too little when serious challenges of traffic congestion and housing equity should occupy our attention.
- The Electric Train Rail project is too expensive, serves too few people, and will not relieve highway 1 congestion. I vote for rail-banking and to get the walking, hiking, and biking trail from Watsonville to Santa Cruz open ASAP.
- I love the plan as is! Please definitely come to the westside. I live on the west side, and it's a huge pain getting anywhere further east of downtown, as you always have to transfer buses at least once. It would be amazing to have one service that could go directly from the westside to, say, the Capitola mall without transfers.
- The \$4.3 billion price tag makes this project impractical. I do not believe the public voted on tax increases, and if they knew the real cost implications, I believe the outcome would be different. As a county, we face many issues, such as climate challenges, road repair costs, and more. My road, Rodeo Gulch, has major damage that has gone unrepaired for years. I see no value in the train to justify the cost when improved bus service can meet the county's needs. Additionally, we now have the opportunity to build a world-class trail that could support new transit options, like e-bikes (which don't face the last-mile problem). I will not pay any more in taxes to support the rail line and will oppose anyone in our county who still holds the naive view that this is feasible here.
- I like the beach design for train station stops.
- Since it will be costly and significantly increase our taxes, why not design the tracks in an area of the county that serves more homes and businesses? Just go all out and make it as good as possible. As it stands, it will cost more than we can afford and won't alleviate traffic. Let's put it where it would work best and truly reduce traffic. How about a train down the middle of Freedom Blvd and Soquel Ave? It'd be closer to more homes and businesses. That's something I could support and might be worth mortgaging our future for.
- It's time to prioritize getting the trail finished before any more effort or money is spent on rail. The \$5 billion estimate for rail in 2025 is absolutely crazy for a county of 250,000 people!
- I would love to see this in Santa Cruz. As a student, I am very frustrated by the lack of public transportation in SC. Coming from San Diego, where I would often use the Trolley and Buses to go places, it was very frustrating to move here and not be able to get to but a handful of places and have those few buses be so unreliable. I dislike how dependent I have become on a car.
- Projects like this boost excitement and ridership of Public Transit at large. This is a small but crucial step for the dream of not needing a car to travel around our cities, states, and (I hope one day) the country.
- I strongly support moving forward with this project, as the voters have repeatedly expressed.

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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- End the project, cut your losses, and fix the roads. It seems to take forever to add a half mile to Hwy 1. Look at what Wyoming did when Highway 22 collapsed—closed a main road into Jackson Hole. After sliding out on June 6, 2024, they built a new road and opened it on June 28, 2024.
- Building a single-track train through Santa Cruz County isn't economically feasible or sustainable. It doesn't meet any of the needs of our citizens. Stop wasting any more money on this.
- Please stop wasting money on more and more studies that tell us what we already know: the train is not feasible. It is a boondoggle that's going to break us. Invest in Metro, which is flexible, scalable, affordable, already exists (!), and is infinitely nimble compared to a single track (and which is also underfunded right now! ). Please prioritize a bike and pedestrian trail, which will do much more to alleviate congestion than a train that doesn't serve the major employers of this county. I recently walked the High Line in New York for the first time. What a revelation. Not only is it functional (and packed with people), it is beautifully integrated with elements of the old track system and features many amenities. Of course, our situation is different; nonetheless, all I've thought about is why there is such a stunning lack of imagination in Santa Cruz County. Come on - quit beating a dead horse. Many other communities have created world-class trail systems at a fraction of the cost of a train. We can do this.
- We cannot afford a rail project in Santa Cruz County. We do not have enough population to justify a train at this time. How about ZEBT [Zero Emission Bus and Trail]? We already have an efficient metro system that serves our county. Let us improve it with zero-emission buses that serve the whole county without the HUGE capital outlay of a pork-barrel train system. Rail banking is the only viable option at this time. I vote for Metro [Bus system that already serves our mass transit needs] and TRAIL NOW.
- Ditch the Rail and complete a bike/pedestrian trail. And rebuild the Capitola trestle.... don't run more bike traffic through the already crowded village. Thanks.
- Think long-term for the future Generations. Once the rail infrastructure is built, it could also be used as a cargo train service at night. There are a lot of Quarries that could use a cargo train service. This would significantly reduce the number of trucks on the road. Thus increasing the funding for the passenger service.
- Stop wasting taxpayers' money! The train is not feasible to build, and the estimate for maintenance and operations is the final straw. The \$4.3 billion doesn't even cover the cost of the pipe dream of an elevated station at the boardwalk. Please start designing and awarding contracts to build a paved path that the community can use now!
- I am concerned that there is no stop with a way for students to get to Aptos High School. Many of the commuting problems are exacerbated by students going to Aptos High.
- Great article! Thank you for explaining the situation. Totally unaffordable! Most people who live in SC Co cannot afford a 2-3% sales tax rate. The whole idea is terrible.
- This is a ridiculous waste of money. I wonder how many people who commute from Watsonville have jobs that require them to drive work trucks and carry their own equipment and tools? They wouldn't be taking a train to and from work. Invest in our freeways and Soquel corridor.
- All the selling points above were thoroughly refuted in the ad that Lookout published. I live right by the train tracks. They will be accessible to me. If the train isn't filled by the time it gets to me, I think it's an incredible waste of money. I would sooner take the metro or Para Cruz. This entire

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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project fulfills the sunk cost fallacy. E. We've already got this much time and money into it, therefore we can't stop now. Yes, we can, and I urge you to do that.

- Dear RTC, I'm writing today in opposition to the ZEPRT project. While I supported exploration of a train, we now know the price tag is too high, particularly considering the opportunity costs. This train would serve too few residents, yet impose an immense tax burden on all county residents. It would take precious infrastructure dollars from projects that might be more impactful, such as expanding the existing METRO bus service or creating more protected bike lanes that encourage cycling. There are many transportation challenges in our county, and I feel that this train does not adequately address these challenges at a considerable cost. Kevin MacGuire's editorial in the LookOut could not have been more on point. The idea of a dedicated commuter train in Santa Cruz County does not make transportation or economic sense; it is a pie-in-the-sky idea that fits in Manhattan but not Santa Cruz. The train line would be the best rail trail the area could offer, and a lot of e-bikers would trade their cars for a convenient, free, flexible ride down the trail. Most commuters head over Highway 17, and this will not serve them or anyone who actually lives in Watsonville and works in Santa Cruz, based on the schedule.
- It seems pretty evident to me, a former rail and trail supporter, that this Zeppt project is completely unfeasible. Not only is the cost prohibitive, but it won't make any real dent in auto traffic with the severely limited capacity of a single-track corridor. It's time to railbank the corridor and allow the interim trail to be built now on the tracks.
- The more I learn about the cost of this project, the more I am against it. Then, seeing the studies on ridership, this is not a feasible or reasonable way to spend our tax money. I would support a world-class bike/ped path, similar to the one we have in Monterey. This would bring people to our county who will then spend \$ on hotels, food, and gas. Win-win. Can the train build the trail
- The ZEPRT project's estimated capital cost is \$4.28 billion in 2025 dollars, which amounts to approximately \$194 million per mile for the 22-mile corridor between Santa Cruz and Watsonville. This is an extraordinary figure, especially considering that the vast majority of the route would utilize an existing rail corridor and is not primarily composed of underground tunnels or elevated viaducts, which are typical cost drivers in comparable projects elsewhere. By comparison, commuter rail systems elsewhere in California and across the United States typically range from \$50 million to \$100 million per mile for new construction, and often much less for rail upgrades or diesel-powered systems utilizing existing rights-of-way. This suggests that the ZEPRT project, as currently envisioned, has cost escalations far beyond normal parameters for similar infrastructure.
- Key contributors to the high costs include: Full double-tracking of the corridor (rather than strategic passing sidings. Construction of a new maintenance and storage facility. Purchase of hydrogen-powered multiple-unit trains is a relatively novel and expensive technology. Reconstruction of bridges, tunnels, and road crossings throughout the corridor. Costs associated with trail construction adjacent to the rail line. Additionally, the project includes a contingency of approximately \$1.3 billion (roughly 30% of the capital cost) to cover unknown risks, which signals a high degree of uncertainty in their current cost estimates. The project calls for expensive features such as continuous double tracking throughout the entire corridor, rather than more cost-effective approaches such as partial double-tracking or the use of sidings. This decision dramatically inflates costs while providing only marginal improvements in service frequency for a line of this limited length. The plan also calls for the purchase of hydrogen-

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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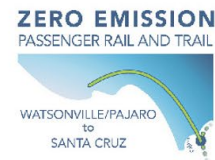
powered trains. Hydrogen rail technology, while zero-emission, remains experimental in North America. Hydrogen trains are substantially more expensive to procure and maintain than conventional diesel or electric railcars. Additionally, hydrogen production and fueling infrastructure add another layer of capital cost and operational complexity, which is not fully addressed in their published materials. The project also shifts significant costs related to the parallel trail onto local governments or future funding measures, as it explicitly excludes construction of major trail bridges from the current capital cost estimate. This means that the full cost of the project, including both rail and trail components, is understated in the ZEPRT presentation. The ZEPRT project anticipates annual operating costs of approximately \$34 million per year at 30-minute service intervals. This rises to \$41 million annually when including contingency. Given the modest ridership forecasts (ranging between 3,500 and 6,000 daily riders in 2045), the project would require substantial ongoing operating subsidies. At the higher end of the ridership projection, the cost per boarding would still be around \$15 to \$20 before accounting for fare revenues—far above typical targets for public transit systems. At the lower ridership end, the subsidy per boarding would approach or exceed \$30.

- These projections also exclude future capital renewal costs for trains, track, or structures, meaning that true long-term operating costs are likely to be even higher.
- The ridership forecast for the project assumes that the line will attract between 3,500 and 6,000 weekday boardings by 2045. However, these projections are highly speculative and based on aggressive assumptions about population growth, employment increases, and shifts in commuting patterns.
- Other commuter rail projects in similarly sized regions have struggled to meet far more conservative ridership targets. For example, the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) system in Northern California—serving a much larger population base—has historically achieved ridership figures below 4,000 daily boardings, despite offering similar service levels and fare structures.
- Additionally, ZEPRT's forecast relies on the assumption that significant numbers of people will shift from private vehicles to rail and that adequate first-mile/last-mile connections and housing near stations will materialize. These outcomes are not guaranteed and require major land-use changes and sustained transit investment that are beyond the scope of the rail project itself.
- The ZEPRT plan is heavily dependent on securing upwards of 80 percent of its capital funding from federal sources, including competitive grants from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and various Federal Transit Administration programs.
- However, such high levels of federal funding are neither guaranteed nor predictable, especially given the competitive nature of these programs. Many regions across the country are vying for limited federal rail funding, and projects with lower costs per mile and higher ridership potential are often prioritized.
- In the event federal funds are not secured at the assumed levels, the project would either require drastic downsizing or would force local taxpayers to cover a far greater portion of the costs—potentially through new taxes or borrowing measures.
- According to the project timeline, environmental clearance and preliminary engineering would begin in 2025, with full construction and service targeted by the 2030s. However, large infrastructure projects in California and across the U.S. frequently experience significant delays due to environmental review, litigation, permitting, design complications, and political shifts.

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- In particular, a rail and trail project traversing environmentally sensitive areas, beachfront property, and urban neighborhoods—many of which are likely to oppose new rail construction—poses a high risk of lawsuits, appeals, and permitting challenges.
- In addition, many of the project's components, such as hydrogen trains and trail infrastructure in constrained corridors, are still in developmental or conceptual stages. The likelihood of significant delays and cost escalations as engineering work proceeds is very high.
- The ZEPRT project, as currently proposed, presents an extremely high-risk and financially unsustainable approach to regional transit. It is marked by:
  - Excessively high capital costs relative to comparable projects.
  - Complex and costly infrastructure design choices, including full double-tracking and hydrogen trains.
  - Unsustainable ongoing operating subsidies with speculative ridership benefits.
  - Heavy dependence on uncertain federal funding sources.
  - Significant environmental, legal, and political risks to project delivery.
  - A more fiscally responsible approach would be to use the bus infrastructure we already have in place. We simply do not have the population density to support a rail project.
  - Without major modifications, the project's current plan risks becoming a prohibitively expensive failure, saddling taxpayers with billions in debt for a marginal transportation benefit.
- <https://lookout.co/trains-taxes-and-the-santa-cruz-and-highway-1-traffic-problem-that-still-wont-be-solved/story>
- It's time we face facts. This project started as a good-faith effort to bring a train to Santa Cruz County. But it is simply not feasible. Saddling future generations with our debt is fiscally irresponsible. Spending billions to serve a tiny fraction of our population is not good public policy. This train would drain resources from all other transportation projects. It's time to start the federal rail banking process and stop wasting time on a train that is simply not affordable.
- Please drop the rail idea and focus on the trail, the highway, and public transportation using buses. It is past time to cut our losses and move on from this very expensive pie-in-the-sky plan.
- I am writing to you with grave concerns over the \$4+ billion ZEPRT system that is being proposed. Please consider that the design, scale of the operation, potential usage, and ridership will not come close to justifying the cost to our county. With federal funds currently being withheld from our schools, even considering this project as a possibility is irresponsible. Zero-emissions modern rail is a nice idea in theory, but the location, old bridge infrastructure, and proximity to private property are highly impractical. If this corridor is used as a quiet and safe pedestrian and bicycle path, it would increase the livability of our area and be a valuable community resource. Expanding and improving the Metro bus system, creating better bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and reserving funds for critical services like schools would be a better use of the \$4+ billion + \$30-\$40 million annual operating cost.

Thank you!

Julie Kanagy
- Common Rail banking solves all the major issues of building an affordable, continuous, wide, environmentally friendly, and active transportation corridor while preserving the possibility of a future passenger train. Please investigate the successes of other rails-to-trails projects.

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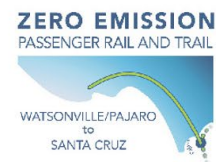


- It's time to walk away from the expensive, unachievable rail plans. The county of Santa Cruz does not have the ridership to support the \$5 billion price tag in 2025 dollars. A sales tax hike of 2.75% is crazy!!!! Prioritize getting the train completed.
- Please release the full ZEPRT Draft Project Concept. This presentation is nice, but it's not ok to only release the summary and not release the whole report. The full document should be available to the public.
- Please release the full draft project concept. This is more of a marketing release and is insufficient to really assess the plan thus far.
- You mention trail segments 13-20 as well as the Capitola Trestle, but offer no information about these sections. What's happening?  
Given all the money estimated for rail, it seems pretty pathetic that Watsonville won't even get a rail trail, but only bike lanes on busy streets. Why is this OK? - Or Equitable?
- The way forward is 25kv overhead electrification. This will maintain compatibility with Caltrain and CAHSR, allowing for one-seat rides to the Bay Area and Beyond. Hydrogen and batteries are wasteful, unproven technologies that still rely on petrochemicals and conflict minerals. Overhead electrification works across the world and is the most sustainable option.
- • Why is there no mention of our segment of rail facilitating our essential, ultimate connection to the rest of our Statewide and Nationwide rail system?
  - Also, why is there no mention of extensive CA building mandates that drop parking requirements for massive housing developments that will only increase traffic congestion on our already inadequate road infrastructure, while making parking here yet more impossible?
  - Clearly, opening the only other future transportation corridor is the only option we have to address these issues! If short-sided or misguided people don't comprehend this, or don't care, too bad! • It's the RTC's responsibility and obligation to adequately and optimally prepare Santa Cruz for our future transportation needs, whether the uneducated public currently comprehends them or not. Continue doing whatever it takes to plan, build, and preserve Santa Cruz rail transportation. Future generations will thank you for your foresight and determination!
  - Please do not succumb to the current disinformation campaign to sabotage rail for the insidious interests of a few property owners and developers that hope to cash in on railbanked or rail-adjacent properties. Thank you!
- I originally supported this project, but after reviewing the \$4 billion projected costs, I am now strongly opposed. Just do the trail for the minimum cost and forget the rail.
- Rail is too expensive to build and operate as a third mode of transportation in the County. Rail still requires road transport to get to stations. Stations are inaccessible to most of the County. Better just a trail for people to use. Improve quality of life, not add complexity.
- Stay the course! We need a vital rail system here locally to relieve traffic and to connect us with the rest of our State and the Nationwide rail system. Somebody has to invest in our future, or we won't have one. Ignore the short-sighted, fear-mongering naysayers and forge ahead!
- You mention that part of the ZEPRT project is rail trail segments 13-20, as well as the Capitola Trestle, but there has been no further mention of these parts. When will we hear more?
- I'm not very good at math, so could you help me with this logic? TRAIN MATH: ZEPRT's Peak Commute Problem: The Train That Leaves Riders Behind. Let's take a ride on the Reading Railroad... try to visualize what this means and its limitations... Let's break down what ZEPRT really looks like for commuters, especially during rush hour. Train Frequency: Every 30 minutes.

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



Max Capacity per Train: 234 passengers (116 seated, 118 standing). Now, imagine 334 people in Watsonville need to get to Depot Park in Santa Cruz by 8:00 a.m., a very realistic scenario for workers heading north. Here's what happens:

Train #1 (7:00 a.m.) can hold 234 people and will likely fill up immediately in Watsonville. That leaves 100 people behind. Those 100 would have to catch the earlier train at 6:30 a.m. just to arrive on time. So, one-third of those workers are either riding a half hour early or risking being late, just because the schedule and capacity don't match. And it gets worse... If the 7:00 a.m. train fills up in Watsonville, then no one from stations like Capitola, Aptos, or Seabright can get on. They're out of luck. That means the train can't serve the middle of the county during peak times.

Station reduction from 16-20 down to only nine stations results in over a 50% reduction in service! (Image only contains four stops for simplicity.) And this isn't a fluke; it's built into the system design:

1. Only 468 people per hour per direction can be moved. 2. Half of them have to leave 30 minutes earlier to avoid missing out. 3. The other half will block riders at every stop further down the line. 4. Morning traffic is northbound, so in a two-hour window, we can move 936 riders. These same riders would be on the return trip at night. And this is the best-case maximum capacity.

For a project that will cost \$4.28 billion+, this level of service is simply unacceptable. For less than 1,000 residents! Two Service options are proposed: 1 train every 60 minutes, or one train every 30 minutes. This can't scale up to anything that would be impactful, and limited density doesn't support the high cost to bring Rail here. Transit should adapt to your life, not force you to adapt to its schedule. Santa Cruz County needs flexible, frequent, and inclusive transportation solutions, not a rigid system that leaves riders behind.

- As the owner of a rental at Seascapes Resort and as someone who is planning on moving to the Seascapes area full-time for retirement within the next year or two, my main questions are:
  1. You have already heard about the need for a QUIET railcar... but how quiet is quiet? Is there a way to see how loud this will be compared to a similar railway that already exists? The railway in this area runs through a very quiet neighborhood, and property values as well as homeowner and renter enjoyment will be impacted.
  2. What about road crossings when a train is passing through? Would there be the usual arm blocking traffic with a bell, which might disturb the peace of the area?
  3. Bike path through this area (while enjoyable) would also open this area up more to those passing through. Would this lead to more crime in the area? Are there any projections from the police on this? Thank you for answering these questions.
- I appreciate all the hard work that has gone into this Zeptr project. However, hard work alone does not necessarily guarantee the right Mass transit system. Our goal as a community should be choosing the best system that is affordable, can be built in sections, effectively relieves congestion, and pays for itself. I'm referring to a PRT system (personal rapid transit). These are my friend Brett Garrett's comments on a PRT system.

The RTC eliminated PRT from consideration during the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis based on incorrect or now-outdated information provided by the consultants. For example, the train cost estimate was \$478 million, and now it's \$4.28 billion — an increase by a factor of NINE. Also, PRT was presented as less friendly to bicycles and the environment, which simply

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isn't true. PRT is dramatically cheaper than the train, especially when considering operating expenses (roughly \$3 per passenger, compared to about \$20 for the train). PRT can serve many more locations, including UCSC, hospitals, and the entire length of 41st Avenue. (The latest train proposal completely drops the stop at 41st Avenue.) While the train proposal looks worse than ever, PRT looks better than ever, especially with recent innovations like Whoosh / Swyft Cities (low cost, minimal visual impact) and Line Mobility (speeds up to 85 mph). Even if train service is somehow initiated, we would still need a PRT connection to UCSC and other key locations, so let's start building it now. I completely agree with Brett's comments and want to emphasize the most important advantage of a PRT system.

It is the only mass transit system capable of eliminating car congestion by being as convenient as, or more convenient than, a car. How does it achieve this? 1. A dedicated guideway free of cars. 2. Nonstop service. 3. 2-5 minute headways. 4. Multiple small boarding areas. 5. Access in residential neighborhoods. 6. Capable of handling small freight. 7. Accessible to the handicapped. 8. Bike-friendly as well.

- **PROPOSED STATIONS**

#### West Side

- omit from initial service to save costs
- bus line on Delaware Ave. and Swift St.

#### Depot Park

- 2 platforms + layover siding (passing point, provision for Felton extension)
- initial western terminus
- bus station

#### Seabright

- 1 platform
- bus connection

#### 17th Ave.

- 1 platform

#### Capitola Village

- 2 platforms (passing point)

#### New Brighton

- 1 platform
- Hwy. 1 cyclist/pedestrian overpass
- bus connection at Cabrillo College

#### Aptos

- 1 platform
- bus connection

#### Watsonville

- 2 platforms (passing point)
- Relocate to near Kearney St. (reduces conflicts with traffic on Walker St.)
- bus connection

#### Pajaro

- 1 platform
- relocate to near Fremont St. (reduces conflicts with traffic on Salinas Rd.)

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- **FUTURE STATIONS**

- Felton

- 2 platforms + layover siding (passing point)
    - bus connection

- 41st Ave.

- 1 platform
    - bus connection

- State Park Dr.

- 1 platform

- Mirada Dr

- 1 platform
    - cyclist/pedestrian connection between Sumner Ave. and Townsend Dr.

- Calypso Dr.

- 2 platforms + layover siding (passing point)

- Manresa State Beach

- 1 platform

- MISC.

- catenary electrification

- 25kV, 60Hz (CalTrain network compatibility)
    - no complex charging infrastructure, lower electrical grid stress
    - lighter vehicles (better performance, reduced infrastructure and maintenance costs)
    - quieter than diesel/hydrogen combustion engine

- Beach St.

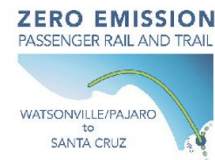
- ground level alignment (less visual obstruction, lower costs)
    - retain track behind Boardwalk structures for Beach Train service
    - omit siding between San Lorenzo bridge and Seabright Ave.

- For most of my 25 years living in Santa Cruz, I was a strong supporter of building passenger rail along the corridor. However, due to delays, ongoing cost overruns, poor planning, increasing costs, and declining ridership projections, the best option now is to rail bank the corridor and create a multiuse trail. Hopefully, this can be done within the existing right of way without having to relocate water mains or construct excessively large retaining walls.
- We've clearly spent enough time, money, and energy exploring the infeasibility of a train in this specific corridor. Can we please shift focus to a realistic public transportation option? Rail bank this corridor, build a straightforward, practical trail, and begin genuinely addressing our community's transportation needs by investing in Metro, ParaCruz, and other effective alternatives. Enough with the train idea. It's long past time to move forward.
- I'm writing to express serious concerns and demand accountability regarding the Zero-Emission Passenger Rail Transit (ZEPRT) project, especially in light of recent developments that raise profound equity, fiscal, and strategic questions.
  - Easement Inequities: Capitola Beach Villas vs. Mobile Home Parks  
Why is the RTC permitting Capitola Beach Villas apartments, a luxury development, to remain in the railroad right-of-way—even narrowing the track to accommodate them—while just 300 yards down the line, you're asking extremely low-income senior residents of mobile homes to move a few inches or feet?

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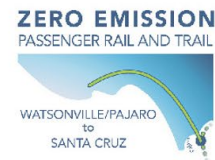


- Are the easement rules not uniform?
- Why does one group get special treatment while another, more vulnerable group, gets pushed aside?
- Has RTC conducted a disparate impact assessment or equity analysis on this decision?
- This glaring inconsistency reeks of favoritism and threatens to displace some of our most at-risk residents. RTC must explain this disparity and provide a moratorium on displacement actions until fair and consistent policies are applied to all residents along the corridor.
- 💰 \$1 Billion and Counting – Where's the Money Coming From?  
Your own estimates project over \$1 billion in local funding is required. How will this be raised?
- Sales Tax: Would that require a 2% or higher county-wide increase?
- Property Tax: What rate hike is proposed?
- Gas Tax or Vehicle Registration Fees: Are These Being Considered?
- How many years of increased taxes are required just to build this system—let alone operate it?
- And let's not forget operations: If the train launches in 2045, operating costs will be at least \$70 million annually (adjusted for inflation). How will we sustain this? Through massive new taxes? Or by cutting essential services like Metro, education, or road repair?
- Where is the transparent financial plan?
- And the reality is that any and all Tax proposals will be rejected. That is not an assumption, its reality. So if we can't get local funds by raising taxes, what cuts are RTC proposing to be able to allocate the \$50 million a year for 20 years to cover the local funding?
- 🚂 Capitola Trestle and Railbanking: A Practical Path Forward  
The Capitola Trestle is currently unusable for public transit without a complete rebuild, estimated to cost between \$400–500 million, adjusted for inflation. Why is RTC not pursuing railbanking now to:
  - Open this corridor for trail use over the next 20 years
  - Avoid \$400 million in early debt we clearly can't afford
  - Preserve the right-of-way if/when real funding and need arise
  - Railbanking would offer flexibility, community use, and preservation—a win-win RTC continues to avoid without explanation.
- 🗺️ From 20 Stops to Just 9 – A Shrinking Vision  
Originally, RTC promised 16–20 stations providing access to 90 parks, schools, and destinations. Now the ZEPRT plan offers only 9 stops. Major gaps include:
  - No 41st Avenue Station (one of the busiest corridors)
  - No Mid-County stops to connect families, seniors, or workers
  - UCSC still out of reach, Metro riders (68% are students) would face longer travel times - This was in RTC presentation, so if train will take longer than the Bus, WHY ARE WE DOING THIS??
- Where's the updated marketing to reflect this scaled-down reality?

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- And realistically, if there's no parking, only people within 1/8 to 1/4 mile can practically use the train. That's not a regional system—it's a very expensive, inflexible, linear shuttle.
- ☐ ZEPRT Doesn't Solve the Problems RTC Set Out to Fix  
Let's remember RTC's original goals:
  - 20-minute headways for fast, frequent access
  - Broad access to schools, jobs, and recreation
  - A system scalable over time
  - This new version:
    - Takes longer than the Metro for students and many workers
    - Eliminates key access points and reduces frequency
    - Costs \$4.28 billion to deliver a fraction of the original promise with local match at least \$1 billion.
  - So the question is: What problem is ZEPRT solving now? Because it's not the one you set out to fix in your 2016 or 2020 presentations.
- ☒ What RTC Must Answer  
Why are low-income mobile home residents being displaced while luxury developments are allowed to stay in the right-of-way?
  - What is the exact breakdown of how the \$1B+ will be funded? Be specific.
  - When will you update your marketing materials to reflect the new 9-stop system and lack of parking?
  - Why won't you pursue railbanking to provide immediate trail use while preserving long-term rail options?
  - The ZEPRT plan, in its current form, is a shrinking vision with ballooning costs, growing inequities, and a clear loss of public trust. It's time for RTC to pause, revisit railbanking, deliver honest financial projections, and stop displacing the very people this system is supposed to serve.

Sincerely,

Kevin Maguire

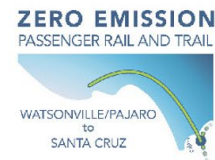
Capitola Resident,

- The proposed rail stop at Natural Bridges, being the only stop on the Westside, is severely lacking in its ability to attract riders because of its remote location on the edge of the populated area.  
A stop at Fair or Almar Streets would be central to the populated area, and almost everyone in the Lower Westside would be within walking distance!  
An additional stop at Calif and Bay would also attract more riders!
- Small cities' ridership similar to Santa Cruz with Watsonville population:  
The WES Train in Beaverton in 2024 had 119,000 riders, averaging 326 per day. The A-Train in Denton, TX has comparable numbers.  
Why is Santa Cruz's ridership expected to be more than 10 times higher?
- Santa Cruz County cannot afford this rail project. The right-of-way should be used for a pedestrian or bicycle trail. We should be using our resources to provide affordable housing for our residents instead. Zero emissions can be achieved with our efficient bus system powered by

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electric buses. Wake up. A large population is required to support a rail system. Your proposal will not sustain itself. Stop wasting our tax dollars on this wasteful project.

- Can Santa Cruz County and Monterey County create a joint regional network?

With seamless Santa Cruz to Monterey service?

Including direct service from Santa Cruz to Salinas?

Ending the service at Pajaro makes no sense to me. A regional network or joint authority needs to be set up.

Please replicate the successful SMART Service in Marin and Sonoma County using advanced, low-emission DMU diesel technology.

Extremely expensive electrified rail makes little sense in a low ridership passenger rail market like Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. And zero emissions is a myth; it only means outsourcing battery manufacturing, mining, and heavy industry to Third World countries. No pollution here, but plenty of toxins and pollution elsewhere.

I was a resident of Santa Cruz County from roughly 1975 to 1991, and talked about possible regional passenger rail options on KZSC radio news. I am from a railroad family, as my father was a career mechanical engineer for the Southern Pacific Railroad. My brother was a career Transportation Planner for the State of Alaska.

Otherwise, I need to renew my membership to Rail PAC. I let it expire.

Douglas Hawes

San Jose, California

- I believe this is a fantastic idea. Santa Cruz County is growing quickly, and our public transportation, especially intercity services, just isn't enough for the number of residents. Traffic on streets and freeways is already heavy and seems to get worse every year. It seems I could take this train from Watsonville to Santa Cruz in the same amount of time it takes me to drive from Santa Cruz to Capitola on a busy day (or even less)! People are always looking for better ways to avoid traffic and be more eco-friendly, and I think this would be a really popular option!
- 20 December 2024

As I stated in my 13 July comment regarding the Conceptual Draft for East Capitola and the proposed Cabrillo Station behind Pine Tree Lane in Aptos—not East Capitola—a light rail station in a quiet residential neighborhood is not acceptable and is rarely, if ever, done. I am glad you now acknowledge that R.T.C. does not own that land outright but only has a right of way.

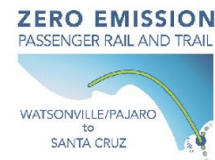
The negative effects on our neighborhood, such as noise, lighting, and a sharp decline in peaceful enjoyment, are clear, as are the impacts on habitat.

The original Soquel Rancho document calls out a picket fence to prevent straying livestock, but is a passenger rail platform even allowable, viz., a railroad right of way through private property?

The area has already been identified as environmentally and geologically sensitive in the Segment 10/11 E.I.R., and placing a platform or station at this location seems to go against the spirit and letter of that document. The environmental sensitivity of the entire area, from the State Park through Pine Tree Lane and beyond, was highlighted in the E.I.R., which led to a special exception to secure political approval for that document.

Where is the trail, anyway? That's why many voters initially voted yes, and why the Supervisors allowed for a virtual deforestation of the area.

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I'm glad you're considering a Cabrillo Station/Platform option east of New Brighton Road on a platform between Highway 1 and McGregor. Option 1, an elevated Cabrillo Station platform between McGregor Drive and Highway 1 with alignment shift, is a good choice—building a tunnel is ridiculous—as is placing a platform in a residential neighborhood.

Regards,

Richard Underwood

- I am already on the project mailing list, thank you.
  - To the RTC Commissioners, my thanks for all the work completed by you and your predecessors in support of effective transportation in Santa Cruz County.
  - This concerns me about the single stop in Watsonville. Two seem appropriate, even though they would be about a mile apart...Downtown and Ohlone Parkway.
  - Having two stops in Watsonville is essential to me because:
  - Ohlone Parkway is a large and growing neighborhood with housing for all incomes that deserve service. It's also an essential stop for families that utilize Second Harvest Food Bank. And for volunteers who support Second Harvest, or who would like better access to volunteering opportunities.
  - Downtown Watsonville is also growing and is an important cultural hub. I would greatly appreciate better access to the cultural events in downtown Watsonville.
  - Both of these stops are too important not to serve.
  - Additionally, I was disappointed with the survey, which limited me to only one choice for how I would use the rail service. It would be of significant value to me for school, recreation, work, and beaches... in between.
  - Thank you for your attention to this email and for your ongoing work on effective transportation in Santa Cruz County.

Sincerely,

J T Verbeck

- Already on project mailing list.

And I would like to add a comment about keeping the trail in the RT corridor. My name is J T Verbeck, and I appreciate all the work completed by so many people, past and present to bring the Rail & Trail project to Santa Cruz County. THANK YOU!

My observations/comments:

Please keep the Rail Trail next to the rail line, as it seems the logical choice by providing a fully protected route for walking, wheeling, and biking for all ages.

  - This choice creates a trail that's safe enough for children to ride.

This choice creates a new site for biking, wheelchair use, and walking that's faster, safer, and more pleasant than being alongside a street.

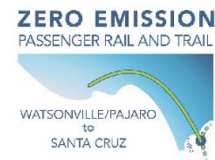
Thank you for your time and attention to this message.

J T Verbeck
- Thanks for your work, but please, no rail project! This project is senseless. It is too expensive, both fiscally and environmentally and it would be detrimental to the community, creating a barrier between existing neighborhoods. Please put it to rest. Our community has been begging for a safe trail, and the rail project is preventing this.
- The 2015 TCAA study was mentioned in the October 28th presentation but failed to mention that the business plan it contained was rejected by the RTC because it was full of problems.

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Since then, more and more issues have emerged from the Zeptr study: noise, significantly increased costs, no certain funding, and the list goes on.

Passenger rail simply doesn't make sense in Santa Cruz County.

- I watched the recording of the October 28th presentation on ridership forecasting. There was no mention of fares as an input to the models. It seems pretty obvious that a fare of \$5 will attract more riders than a fare of \$10, so I hope fares will be part of the model input. I was glad to hear that one speaker indicated that forecasting ridership is extremely complex and is only an estimate, not hard facts. I would like to see some examples of modeled ridership versus actual for any given project, along with some reasons why the actuals are different from the forecast. For example, the presentation included a lot of information about SMART ridership but did not include two important factors.
  - SMART ridership started increasing in May of 2024, mainly because in April they introduced free fares for youths and seniors (see my earlier comment about fares). These fares will expire in June 2025. This was not mentioned in the presentation and shows how important it is to go beyond the numbers where there have been one-off, temporary changes.
  - Despite those increases SMART is still running at a little below 60% of its daily forecasted ridership of 5100 calculated during its planning phase, a number that drops to closer to 50% discounting the effect of free fares.
- How much will METRO services and bus routes/schedules be revised to integrate with LRT arrival/departure times at stations? One hurdle to the success of LRT is the access to stations, and integrating METRO services would help with this immensely.
- Yay for rail and trail! As a fellow urban planner, I am very excited to see this initiative. I think it would be beneficial to see more stops within the west side.
- I am very excited for the potential of a train, but critical considerations need to be made to make sure stops are close enough together, but also maintain speed and efficiency.
- You should also include a stop on the Westside Santa Cruz
- December 18, 2024 - Comments on the Conceptual alignment presented in November / December Dear Riley Gerbrandt, RTC,  
As to the Station Location. I agree with the presenter Mark McCleran that the proposed station located near Cabrillo College, would need to be on a platform next to McGregor and Hwy 1. A number of curves in area, passenger experience, smooth operator of train and ability to operate at consistent speed. The number of turns / curves in the area presents a challenge; I looked at ways to straighten curves out, taking it out of the existing ROW. putting it next to McGregor & Hwy 1 - would provide better access across hwy 1 for use of the facility.  
This option would also reduce many negative impacts to our private street neighborhood of Pine Tree Lane and Pot Belly Beach Road. I noticed this is the current Option 1 and provides an overpass to Cabrillo. The design consultants are aware that there is currently a plan to put in a highway overpass at MarVista Drive in Aptos correct? Perhaps they could be integrated somehow.  
I understand that there will be an Environmental Impact report for the proposal. How will this correlate with the rail with trail EIR that has already been created?  
In the presentation of 12/16 the consultant mentioned some mitigation items: soundwalls, building insulation, extra glazing on windows - double pane, etc. Any mitigation items would be

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provided by RTC to those impacted as part of the project correct? Vibration was also discussed. When the freight train traveled directly behind Pine Tree 2 x daily many many years ago we could feel vibration in our house. The EIR for the Rail Trail states that there is ancient soil in the area, sediment from the sandy soils and old paleo fossils of the beach cliff area. For any vibration mitigation for residences in the project length (22 miles) will the RTC be bracing homes to strengthen for the vibration?

Thank you for your consideration.

Kim Geddes

- Can you expand on what High-Capacity rail service is? What does a Station mean? Will there be parking?

If Headway is every 60 minutes, or even every 30 minutes, how will that reduce travel times?

From my house in Capitola, I am either walking 15 - 25 minutes to get to a Station or riding my E-bike. Can I take my E-bike on the train.

From Capitola to Watsonville, its about 15 miles on the Tracks. How long will the Train stop at each Station?

With Trail setbacks at 8' from Center line, the Top Speed is 25 MPH Correct? So 15 Miles at 25 MPH is about 36 Minutes. Plus my 15 min walk, Another 20 min to take a bus to my work. How is this reducing travel times.

I can leave my house and be in Watsonville in 15 minutes.

2. Can you give us Data on the Most populated area of Santa Cruz you state this connects to. A map with Numbers within 1 mile of the Tracks.
3. See #1 it is not improving access from housing to jobs, and Most major employers are over 1 mile from a Station
4. We are only getting 12 miles out of the 30+ Mile tracks?
5. You state it passes within 1 mile of more than 90 Parks and 40 Schools. Can we get a list of that?

And A list that shows 130,000 people live within 1 mile of the Tracks.

The cost of this train, the very little impact it will have from Watsonville to the Boardwalk, it might take 1 Car out of 340 off the road. That leaves 339:1 ratio.

NO NEW TAXES!! The ROI on this, the little amount it will serve due to SPEED, due to STATIONS, due to No Parking at the Stations, due to time it takes to get, to the station, then time to wait for a bus.

This is not a viable option, and at a cost of 1 or 2 BILLION Dollars, Please dont mortgage our future on this.

- NO more wasteful outreach of local transportation funds spent on a train study for a future train that logistically can never be built!

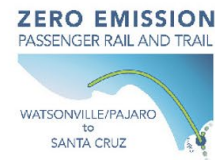
Lets get these questions answered before any more tax dollars are spent:

- What is the overall project cost including likely overruns?
- What will the projected daily ridership current and future?
- What will be the cost of quiet zones needed to overcome the loud horn blast ever 5-10 minutes?
- What will the environmental cost to our pristine coastline be?
- How will the RTC overcome the Boardwalk property owners refusal of allowing a train through private property?

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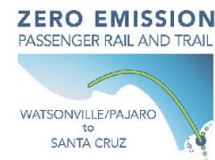


- How will the RTC overcome the unsafe roadway with train operation conditions on the westside of Santa Cruz, = NO train on the westside, that was recently discovered?
- If there is indeed no westside train, why are we building a trail next to a set of railroad tracks between Westside Santa Cruz and Davenport that will never see a train?
- Going forward let's get these and the dozens of other flawed train design and logistical questions worked out before any current train construction continues or new construction contracts are signed.
- Please stop wasting money on this doomed project. It will be colossally expensive and will never help traffic in a noticeable way. The RTC has already wasted millions of our tax dollars and hasn't come close to answering the most important question: will the capacity of the existing corridor ever significantly improve hwy 1 traffic? We already know the answer is NO. Please stop all rail development and finish the trail.
- It is important for the rail portion of the rail/trail project to have two stops in Watsonville. This will increase ridership and correspondingly decrease traffic on Highway 1 between Watsonville and Santa Cruz, which, among the many benefits of the rail-trail project, is the most important. In addition, safety for bicycle and pedestrian users of the trail, especially children will be best served by keeping the trail fully in the rail corridor. Moving portions of the route outside the corridor would, in addition to making the route less safe, would also make using the trail a less pleasant experience, thereby decreasing usage. And it would undermine compliance with the preferences of country residents expressed in the two-to-one vote in the election referendum favoring providing both rail service and bicycle/pedestrian paths in the corridor, as proposed, with the paths running alongside the existing rails.
- FORT is sending a letter under separate cover. Please include it in the survey responses.
- Thank you for all the hard work that has been and will continue to be done.  
I would like to see the trail stay on the rail line through the area near Thompson.  
Please keep the trail and the rail on the same corridor for safety and disruption of neighborhoods.
- I love the addition of a train. We desperately need another way to get to Capitola and Santa Cruz without getting on the freeway. BUT ... Where will people park? That has been my biggest question. I live in Aptos so I would be catching the train in Aptos Village. There has been a lot of construction there and I see no parking lots. How will parking be accommodated not only for train riders but also all of the people goign to shop in Aptos Village. Where will people park at each station? Please don't say that we should bus to station. I am by Seascape so that is not realistic if I'm trying to pop into Santa Cruz.
- I did not see any information about the environmental impact of this development. Where can I find EIRs? Also, how did this project originate? What is the anticipated outcome? Is it possible to stop this project or is it already approved? Who developed this project? How will it impact homeowners' property taxes?
- I attended your 12/16/24 presentation on noise and quiet zones and having seen the presentation in person on November 13, I can't figure out why you are still using community time to talk about this when there are so many more problematic issues with this project on which we've had no information at all - like ridership projections, project benchmarking with other similar rail projects, and, of course cost. Granted that the cost, approval, and construction of quiet zones is certainly another significant problematic issue suggesting that passenger rail is

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not feasible here, it seems to me that time spent in community meetings in which no new information is presented is really a waste of all our time - and certainly makes me wonder why you continue to focus on this over the many other topics we might more usefully learn more about.

- I was very disappointed with the public meeting yesterday completely avoiding some very basic project questions on the Quiet Zone topic. My questions were:
  - How many Quiet Zone (QZ) applications will be required for this project?
  - What is the estimated cost of each QZ application?
  - What is the estimated cost of the infrastructure required each at grade crossing?
  - Are all QZ applications expected to be approved?
  - Will we implement all QZ locations if approved?
  - Will there be liability costs for county and cities that are expected with the additional risk?
  - For insulation to reduce noise: Will the project be paying for these features to private property owners to avoid noise?
  - In your plans to study the sound, will you actually go to the neighborhoods and play the 4 blasts at each crossing approach at train height and at 110 dB to actually show residents the impact of train noise and the possible need for quiet zone?
  - Have the communities shown that they will apply for the Quiet Zones?

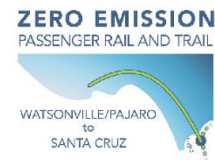
Answers to these questions would be greatly appreciated.

- I so hope that this project goes through. It would be an extraordinary asset for Santa Cruz County area.
- Please focus on the need for serving the entire county and thinking beyond the county lines too. This is important you get it right!  
This needs to incorporate a Pajaro Station connection for allowing us to connect to intercity services and provide an alternative to highway 17 when storms affect it.  
Also thinking locally. The line should eventually go to Davenport as it could be used as a feeder service for serving the mountain communities. Think Bonny Doon as an example. Less bus miles having to mosey up Highway 1, have a circulating service that drops passengers off to a station while also supporting state park tourism.
- I find your very your survey very slanted, as there's no options for not using any of the stations. I'm also worried that there's no parking at most stations. When are you going to show the actual cost to build an operate this train? When are you planning on bringing a tax to the voters?
- The RTC is wasting their time. It is not going to work, once it is installed and will be a money drain, and low ridership. Build the trail now and rail bank the tracks. Where the tracks cannot be rail banked, rip them up and build a world class walking and bike riding trail. Think Monterey County. Ask SMART if they feel theirs is successful.
- While I am commenting as an individual, I have worked as a transportation planner in this community for over 30 years, both at the RTC and UCSC. I think it is critically important to outline how the rail service could potentially benefit future UCSC commuting growth, both to/from campus sites. The main campus can easily be reached with more direct express bus service from a Bay Street station, and then the rail line is directly adjacent to the Westside Research Park campus on Delaware, new student/staff housing is being built on Delaware, and an easy walk or bike connection to the Coastal campus. I strongly encourage RTC staff to do

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direct outreach and planning meetings ON campus during regular class quarters to involve students and staff on campus in this important planning effort.

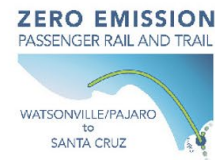
Teresa

- My comments concern the ZEPRT Fact Sheet on the SCCRTC website.  
I find this document remarkably misleading. For such a short, simple document, it manages to contain an extraordinary number of issues enumerated below:
  - Marketing, Not a Fact Sheet  
The document is not a fact sheet—it's marketing. It pretends to be an objective presentation but is filled with promotional language designed to sell the project rather than present verified facts.
  - Zero Emissions Are Impossible  
The claim of Zero emissions is misleading. Even in California, where cleaner energy is more available, nothing is truly zero emission. This claim ignores emissions involved in production, maintenance, and infrastructure (e.g., the environmental cost of concrete).
  - Electric Overhead Eliminated  
Electric overhead systems have been ruled out, leaving battery-powered trains as the only option. However, there are no comparable battery-powered train systems in the U.S. This makes the claim speculative at best and unreliable at worst.
  - High-Capacity Is Unsupported  
The term high-capacity is vague marketing fluff. There is no data to support the notion that this single-track system will qualify as high-capacity under any reasonable definition.
  - Capitola Trestle: A Potential Show-Stopper  
The Capitola Trestle is mentioned, yet its replacement is a requirement for the project to proceed. This is a critical and potentially project-ending issue that is conveniently glossed over.
  - Publicly Owned ROW Omits Critical Constraints  
While the rail corridor is publicly owned, the document ignores the severe constraints posed by the narrow right-of-way.
  - Speculation, Not Facts  
The second paragraph is pure speculation. Claims about reducing congestion and connecting communities are made without any supporting data, making them highly irresponsible.
  - Irrelevance of the 2015 Feasibility Study  
The 2015 Rail Transit Feasibility Study is largely irrelevant to this ZEPRT proposal. It focused on a diesel train, not an electric one, and could even be interpreted as evidence that an electric train is infeasible.
  - Misleading Map Labels  
The map labels much of the South County section as a rail trail, yet the majority of this section is not on the rail corridor—it's on roads.
  - Stopped at the Boardwalk  
The map implies service to the far Westside, yet there is no evidence that the train will extend past the Boardwalk. This could represent another significant obstacle.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025

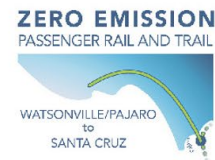


- Unsupported Premises on Page Two  
The second page assumes the feasibility of the train without addressing the many massive, unresolved questions that remain.
- Cost Concealment  
One of the most glaring omissions is any mention of cost. Nowhere does the document or associated materials (to my knowledge) mention the cost of the Project Concept Report, reportedly \$9 million. This report is just one of many planned reports. The concealment of such fundamental data exemplifies the marketing-driven nature of this so-called fact sheet. This lack of transparency undermines trust in the document and the project as a whole.
- Ridership numbers will never warrant costs. Only one track? Are you planning on building siding as well? Inconvenient to get from the train to wherever you are going. Crumbling cliffs near La Selva Beach (extremely expensive to build, especially with Coastal Commission approval). Trail diversion onto public roads (very dangerous). Massive expense for minimal benefit. All the dilapidated trestles should have been evaluated 20 years ago.
- Please keep service/stations extended to the Westside of Santa Cruz and NOT ending at the boardwalk. It should go all the way to Natural Bridges Drive or at least Swift Street. I live in California & Bay Area, and my dream is to be able to walk out my door when I'm an old woman and get on the light rail.
- Your project schedule suggests that at the end of this section, you're anticipating continuing on to the environmental phase (a rail EIR?) and then planning. I thought this project was meant to provide enough information to determine WHETHER it made sense to continue with rail, not as a first step in arriving at any and all possibilities to make rail possible. The snippets we've seen so far all suggest a project with so many engineering and financial constraints that, with little further study, seems clearly impossible in a county of 260,000 and limited financial resources. Nevertheless, I'll be looking forward to seeing definitive reporting on cost and passenger counts. A further note: I hope you will benchmark your passenger estimations with other similar rail services. SMART and Denton, Texas, come to mind as suburban rail services that do not connect to a large city.
- First and foremost, while this project continues to proceed in funding and design and compliance/reviews for the remainder of this decade (and beyond), please put effort into building a basic working trail so it can be used now.  
Re-Alignment: Please do not align the trail onto surface streets. Sending the trail onto surface streets is dangerous and will ruin the connectivity and usefulness of this as an active transportation corridor. Additionally, please consider running the trail on the ocean side, and not the mountain side. This would allow for more fluid connectivity between the trail and the beaches, parks, and other waypoints in the county that are frequented by people using active transportation.  
Re: Quiet zones: In District 1, 93% of the parcels that are within 50 feet of the corridor are residential. County-wide, this number is 89%. Please take this into account and hopefully designate 89% of the entire corridor as a Quiet Zone.  
Re Bridges: please respect the vote of the City of Capitola to keep the Capitola Trestle as a historic monument for use by pedestrians and cyclists.

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- The Beach St and Bay St stations proposed in the TCAA are overly close and serve a similar geographic area. There is also no major development proposed near either one. I would recommend replacing both of these stations with the Depot Park station. Depot Park would serve the same area as the Beach/Bay stations, and also has the benefit of being closer to the new development and jobs downtown (this is critical).

Given the amount of development proposed on the west side of Santa Cruz, much of it high-density, and the proximity to Metro lines serving UCSC on Western Dr, continuing service to Natural Bridges makes the most sense and I think would increase ridership. I also recommend adding a station at Almar Avenue as a replacement for the Bay St station to serve this part of the west side, and to serve new high-density housing in the Almar area, as well as the existing shopping nearby and connection to Metro.

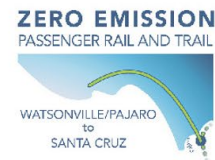
An alternative to an Almar station and Natural Bridges Station would be to consolidate those into a single Swift St station that would serve the far westside and add back the Bay St station if that is important from a ridership perspective to serve the upper westside.

- I like the plan as it is. We need this electric train. We do NOT need Grinchway (greenway). This is MY opinion, not the college, the college president, or the entire board of trustees of CABRILLO COLLEGE.
- Please finish the bike trail as soon as possible! I do not support building a train because our area's population is too small to support it, and it would be too expensive. A more realistic and affordable option is a bus system that arrives every 10 minutes. This method works very well in Fort Collins, Colorado. We could use zero-emission buses that run on existing streets and the new lane being built on Highway 1. This would be a faster and cheaper solution. In the meantime, please finish the bike trail!!!
- The RTC should abandon the rail project and instead create a continuous trail on the rail corridor. The County lacks the necessary population and ridership. The financial burden on taxpayers would be too high. County supervisors need to stop this ongoing, reckless, and unaffordable pipe dream. Focus your time and our tax dollars on projects that benefit our community.
- Concerned about impacts on Capitola. They need to be minimal!!!!
- Move the train away from residential and beach areas into the highway corridor that is already established and cut.
- I am very opposed to a rail going through my residential area. I am not in support of the traffic, the noise, or the cost associated with this project, not to mention the construction. I am very opposed to a rail going through my residential area. I am not in support of the traffic, the noise, or the cost associated with this project. Not to mention the construction.
- The pictures I've seen with a narrow trail next to the train tracks (that are expected to remain vacant due to the exorbitant and unnecessary cost of another entertainment train that will not help and will only worsen commute traffic) are absolutely unsafe for 2-way bicycles alone, much less including slow cruisers, e-bikes, pedestrians with or without dogs. Have you ever seen groups or pairs of people walking in a single file line? What will it take to stop the train fantasy madness and build a usable trail NOW? Please clarify exactly what we (most deceptively) voted for? Thank you
- My comment concerns the Quiet Zones on the west side of Santa Cruz, where the rail line passes through a residential area. Houses are situated next to the railroad, so train horns would

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affect many residents. Establishing a Quiet Zone would help reduce the noise impact from train traffic.

- What studies were done to indicate this is needed? What is the cost-benefit analysis? Where are the funds coming from? When was this approved?
- You list the trail segments as separate pieces. I believe the assumption is that the 12 miles of user-friendly trails for pedestrians, bikes/e-bikes, bicycle cabs (potential industry), bicycle pubs (like other outdoor enthusiast destinations), etc., being connected would allow greater safety for kids going to school, running errands on e-bikes, and getting more cars off the road. E-bikes will continue to grow as a preferred transportation method because they offer independence, direct door-to-door travel, and economic efficiency. Many people would love to use their e-bikes more for everyday activities, but it is not always safe along our roads. A connected 12-mile trail could significantly improve mobility, independence, and flexibility for many car drivers or isolated individuals. Thanks for your time and review.
- Do not route bike traffic into Capitola to accommodate a train that will likely never be a reality in our lifetime. Be realistic, please, and stop wasting taxpayer dollars on 30 years of study. The fact that Section 10 is too narrow for both a train and a trail keeps getting ignored. The width of the corridor from 41st Avenue to 47th Avenue specifically needs to be a trail only. Consider installing small underpasses at 41st Avenue and 17th Avenue to facilitate alternative transportation across town, thereby reducing traffic congestion on both streets, which currently experiences 40 trains per day. Nobody wants to ride a bike next to a train going 35-40 mph!
- As a Bonny Doon resident who shops, exercises, and socializes primarily on the West Side of Santa Cruz, I would depart from the Natural Bridges station most often. I would love the option to run errands in South County via train, especially on weekday afternoons when it can take over an hour to drive from my house to 41st Avenue. The train would also increase the independence of Bonny Doon kids, who could take the county bus down Empire Grade to the Natural Bridges station with their bike, bring their bike on the train, and go anywhere in the county without a car. Let's make it happen!
- Rio Del Mar station at Doris Avenue/Mirada Drive. Passing siding moved to Seascapes station (two side platforms). Every other eastbound train could terminate and start westbound at Seascapes, providing more frequent service for the more populated parts of the county. A map I've created, with future expansion possibilities: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1RHZV6IAYwE8wMbJkoINViHCEDJGaUzWY&usp=sharing>
- Broad curves, grade crossing indicators in quiet zones, catenary electrification, floor-level side platforms, shuttle bus transfers.
  - Layover track between Laurel Street and Depot Park. Depot Park, as the west terminus, could allow service to be extended through to Felton and San Jose.
  - Dedicated lane on Beach Street, tracks at street level.
  - No station at 7th Avenue, too close to adjacent stops.
  - Narrow trail in right-of-way between 30th Avenue and Jade Street Park. Bus hub between 38th and 41st Avenues.
  - Cabrillo Station option #2 with a wide, vegetated cyclist/pedestrian bridge and bus hub.

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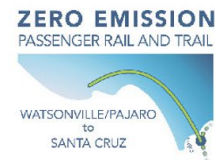


- Seacliff, Rio Del Mar, Seascapes, La Selva, and Ohlone Parkway stations.  
Layover track at Seascapes for more frequent service on the central and west sides.
- Yard near Walker Street.
- Pajaro Station, located near Pajaro Middle School, is closer to residential areas.
- I favor the McGregor station location due to its numerous potential connection options to Cabrillo and New Brighton St Park.
- I favor keeping the trail within the ROW near the Jade St station, but making a stipulation that it is open only to non-motorized vehicles (i.e., push the faster-moving vehicles/ebikes to adjacent surface streets).
- The rail option is essential and should be an available option.
- I would like to see the rail extended to the west side of Santa Cruz.
- *Thanks for collecting community input.*  
I live in Aptos and want to support stations at Aptos Downtown and Seascapes Village, both very accessible to a number of businesses, beaches, amenities, residential areas, and more.  
On the other hand, alternative locations proposed in Aptos, like the Hidden Beach Station and Rio Del Mar Station, are primarily located in the center of quiet residential communities. With far fewer amenities at these locations, fewer community members and businesses will benefit from the station. As such, I strongly discourage stations at Hidden Beach and Rio Del Mar.  
*Thanks for considering my input.*
- I do have concerns about a train going through neighborhoods that are now quiet, and it being a disruption to that tranquility. I also have concerns about having a train at all in the county of Santa Cruz, as we are a fairly small population to warrant such a huge cost. I'm not sure the train would get the use to warrant such a high cost. There are many other places we could allocate dollars in the county toward badly needed infrastructure improvements. Roads that are old and crumbling, beach facilities, railings, paths, and stairs, getting cell service improvements—much of the county is like a black hole when it comes to cell service.
- What you are proposing is unacceptable and takes away the property rights of individuals. The noise alone from a railway system in someone's backyard is offensive. I don't think people will utilize this system enough to make it feasible. Waste of money and huge impact on the community. People will still use their cars for the most part unless they want a joy ride along the coast to see the scenery. I don't see it as justifying the expense and the horrible impact on private property owners.
- I support any and all rail improvements in Santa Cruz County. Something is better than nothing. However, I would like to caution against ending service prior to the Westside. I understand that there are a variety of issues facing inclusion of this neighborhood (inevitable Quiet Zone applications, crossing arms, CPUC approval, alignment, and cost), but I think we'd really be doing residents and students a disservice by ending the line at Depot Park. That final hill from the bottom of Neary Lagoon up to Bay/California is a barrier for a lot of people who walk or bike up to the Westside. Providing a station at Bay St AT THE LEAST should be considered. Once there, passengers can take a bike share, walk, or use their own bikes to access restaurants, bars, shopping, housing, UCSC (take route 19 from the station), and Natural Bridges. In addition to the Westside, I would like RTC and others to be cognizant of safety issues along Murry Ave near the proposed station at Seabright... this is a dangerous corridor which I think should be considered for traffic calming or a modified signal at Seabright Ave that incorporates a combination of bike

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signal phasing for trail users, LPI, high vis or raised crosswalks, pedestrian scramble, and sidewalk gap closures. For the New Brighton Station, please remain steadfast with that Hwy 1 undercrossing... without it, there is a very minimal benefit for students unless they bike. Even with a bike, they still have to brave McGregor Drive, Park Ave, and Soquel Ave... at that point, they are essentially just making a loop back to the station. Bars and restaurants are important to note here and along the entirety of the rail corridor: drunk driving is a real issue in Santa Cruz due to the myriad of watering holes. By providing a safe alternative to get back home, we could potentially reduce this type of driving behavior. I will assume that coordination with BCycle will be part of the final station buildout, which should reserve space for bike share stations. This shouldn't be a difficult process as the docks aren't electrified. Finally (for now anyway), don't give up in Watsonville. Everything I said above is basically boutique transportation planning compared to the equity needs of providing frequent service to several points in Watsonville. I don't live there and have not investigated the alignments fully, but I don't want that area to turn into the Gilroy of ZEPRT. If you don't understand that phrase, I'm referring to Caltrain's unreliable and infrequent service to those two lower-income communities. Current and future Watsonville residents need to be a focus of this project... please.

- How can you, in good conscience, perpetuate this fraud? It's clear that a train preempts a safe, continuous trail. The RTC Staff, Commissioners, and the employees at this firm all understand that by saying we're going to have both a train and a trail, we get neither in our lifetime.
- The Majority of traffic on Hwy 1 between Watsonville and Santa Cruz is commuting to San Jose (Silicon Valley) because there are no good-paying jobs on this side of Hwy 17. None of those commuters is going to ride a train to nowhere. Please spend the train money on attracting high-tech companies to Santa Cruz County by offering tax breaks and low-rate lease property.
- This 'virtual open house' is a token effort to check the legitimacy box for 'public outreach.' The home page of the ZEPRT site begins with a declaration of 6 'benefits.' None of these benefits is credible without first determining the features, as in a normal presentation that joins both 'features' and 'benefits.'

What this ZEPRT website and consultancy most resembles is a Florida real estate advertisement. Doubtful value and doubtful outcomes in a sunny promises package.

BTW: [www.zeprt.com](http://www.zeprt.com) is not a secure website or connection. This is a basic web requirement and something a multi-million dollar consultancy should know.

- Four stations in the tiny community of Aptos/Rio Del Mar, and only two for Watsonville. I oppose that idea. One station for Aptos/Cabrillo is plenty.
- I see plenty of waste in growing Highway 1. Most of our population lives close to the shore, and a potential right-of-way already exists.
- No train, trail only. I will never support the train project. Run a fleet of electric buses on Highway 1 instead.
- HELL NO! Not in Aptos. This place has been ruined ever since Zach Friend was appointed supervisor. It has gone downhill. The urban sprawl is out of control. There are people filing in this place like a rushing river, mandated housing BS, but yet I just got home from the store and spent \$90 on 10 items. So if you think that we need more urban sprawl, well, you need to get out of the office. You're gonna take away from wildlife, cut down trees that we need to breathe there. You know we need those; there's always that. Did you ever think about that?
- I am in favor of a pedestrian trail for tourism.

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- The idea of a single rail train service, the number of stations, the distance from reasonable and realistic destinations, and the realistic time frame of travel is naive at best and ridiculously expensive for the notional value of servicing retirees and tourists. No one with a job or need to travel the Santa Cruz City to Watsonville corridor could be expected to use this train.
- Sounds great to me!!
- I think rail is ok. Make it quiet! They should make every 2 hours during the day.
- I would like a station in Soquel. My family lives up Main Street and plans to ride the train to UCSC and back daily. We will need parking at the station.
- My wife and I are very concerned about the cost and the impact of trains going through our neighborhoods. We lived through trains in our neighborhood before, and were very happy when they stopped. We are all in favor of the pedestrian/bike trail, but please, no more trains!  
*Sincerely, Rob Martin*
- I am in support of high-capacity commuter rail with dedicated BIKE cars, connecting to integrated bikeways and the state rail system.
- I was under the impression that the idea of this rail/trail was to have both train service and a bike pedestrian path where the train tracks are presently. This plan is really all about the rail, which looks extremely expensive to accomplish. I live in Aptos, which is 15 minutes away from both Watsonville and Santa Cruz. Why would I drive to a train station, park my car, and then take a train? Whereas if there was a bike path away from traffic, I would enjoy riding along the coast, get exercise, and leave my car at home. The bike path could be completed quickly and get our poor cyclists off our dangerous streets. It seems there are plans to extend this line, but I'm 70 years old and will be long gone by the time that happens. No one rides the bus, so why would they ride the train?
- We do not want this. Waste of money that is concealed as helping the community and reducing congestion. This is Santa Cruz, not San Jose. Go back to the valley.
- Please stop this ridiculous train project. It's a waste of our money. Remove the tracks and put a trail in.
- As one of the residents who actually has a home backed up to the proposed rail trail fiasco, the ZEPRT project represents a misguided, top-down approach that disregards the needs and well-being of local communities. It threatens to fundamentally alter the fabric of residential neighborhoods, imposing costly infrastructure and safety risks without providing tangible benefits to those most affected. The environmental toll, including disruption of natural habitats and the desecration of local landscapes, is both reckless and unnecessary. Moreover, the financial burden placed on taxpayers for a speculative and potentially underutilized system exemplifies poor governance and a failure to prioritize the long-term interests of residents over grandiose, impractical plans. The financial costs of the ZEPRT project are a significant concern. The proposed rail service and infrastructure will require massive public investment, potentially running into the hundreds of millions of dollars. There is no guarantee that the ridership or demand for such services will justify these expenses, leading to the risk of wasted taxpayer money. Furthermore, the ongoing maintenance and operational costs could place a long-term financial burden on local governments, potentially diverting resources from other critical community needs. This raises serious questions about the project's financial sustainability and prioritization of public funds. The ZEPRT project fails to meet the critical need for zero-emission transit solutions. Rather than adopting fully electric trains or renewable energy sources, the

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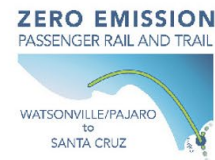
proposed rail service risks perpetuating reliance on fossil fuels. Given the urgency of addressing climate change, the project represents a missed opportunity to lead by example with a sustainable, carbon-free transportation system. Instead of investing in outdated, partially green solutions, the focus should be on truly clean, electric rail technology to align with broader environmental goals and reduce overall carbon emissions in the region.

- The additional cost and disruption of adding a rail system are not worth it. If a much denser San Jose can not succeed with a light rail network, why would Santa Cruz County? Push a trail through, sponsor e-bike share and usage. We have good weather most of the year, and this will provide a very usable solution.
- I am opposed to the idea of a train running through the Westside beyond Neary Lagoon. I also would like to see prioritization of the bike trail getting built asap and as best as possible (wide, safe intersections) while this project is getting designed and funded. A bike trail is achievable and highly beneficial. This rail project has higher uncertainty due to funding and design constraints, and therefore isn't worth delaying the bike trail for.
- Requiring rail infrastructure to be incorporated into the design of the trail before any trail progress is essentially dooming this project to years of contentious planning and mitigation. A more pragmatic approach would be to remove the tracks and arsenic contamination, lay down suitable trail material, and open the trail to public access while rail infrastructure winds its way through endless and costly studies.  
The public deserves a functioning trail before we all become too old to use it.
- Walking, biking, strolling. I realize I do not know all the finances about the rails, but a rail is not going to be worth the funds spent, time spent, and reduction of pathway for safe walking and biking. And then there is all the land destruction and tree and bush removal. So, please put an end to the rail. Build the path as wide as you can. Provide people who need to travel back and forth with e-bikes or other similar vehicles. You can provide funds for people in need with Lyft, Uber, or the ParaCruz. There are so many other modes of sustainable transportation that will actually be affordable. STOP the whole idea of a train. You all know it ain't going to happen, and if it does, it will not be of value to many. Note how Metro increased buses to run in Santa Cruz every 15 minutes and how well that works after so many years of running them just once per hour. Get the biking/walking trail built all the way to Watsonville, and see how happy people will be and how much the railway is used.
- I have 30 years of experience as a consultant urban planner throughout the country and internationally. While well-intentioned, the ZEPRT project is technically, environmentally, legally, and financially not feasible. As engineering continues, we see a project that is far from what was envisioned by and sold to the community. \$5B for 250,000 people and a well-established land use pattern makes no sense. We should stop wasting money and focus on an improved bus system and greenway that can be scaled incrementally. Railbanking is a good option because it will allow us to develop the corridor now while preserving it for future decades when rail might make sense.
- Saving the rail line is fine, although I am 100% sure that no affordable train will ever run on those tracks. Due to the need to keep the track, you plan to divert foot and bicycle traffic off the trail through the Capitola Village instead of over the trestle? THAT is absurd.
- These alternative maps are difficult to decipher. There are lots of technical notations, but it is unclear where, if any, are deviations from the current bike path/lane and from the current rail

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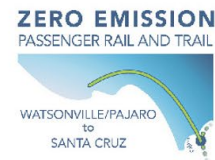
line alignment. There should be a simple portrayal of the above. Also, it is unclear where the elevated rail lines will be, as the elevations are cut off on the maps.

- My concerns are the following.
  - Population: Do we have the population to support commuter train travel between Watsonville and the City of Santa Cruz?
  - Funding: What is the total funding that will be required, initially and ongoing, in 2032? Even if we receive federal or state grants, Santa Cruz County will need to contribute funding. How much will the citizens of Santa Cruz County be required to pay?
  - Passenger Cost: What is the average cost per ticket? Is it expected that ridership will totally fund train operations (including infrastructure)? If not, what will the subsidies be per individual per ticket? How will these subsidies be funded?
  - Waste of Taxpayer Dollars: Both sales taxes and grants come out of the taxpayer's pocket. We should not be wasting our tax dollars on this project.
  - Substandard, Unsafe Trail: Placing a substandard trail next to the tracks is unsafe, noisy, extraordinarily expensive, and a danger to the environment. The trail would be very unsafe since it will be very narrow, sometimes dumping users onto surface streets.
  - Exorbitantly Costly: The rail trail project would be outrageously expensive, since the corridor is so narrow in many places, 15-20 foot retaining walls would need to be erected. Bridges for cyclists would need to be constructed for many of the trestles and overpasses. Some local residents would be forced to move their homes and even sell their businesses since the RTC is using the full power of its agency to claim the land that these homes sit on.
  - Environmental: A large number of trees will be removed. Precious, fragile habitats will be destroyed. Cement-retaining walls are not environmentally friendly. The tracks run along the bluffs that are crumbling due to severe weather and sea level rise.
  - Noise: Noisy, fast-moving trains make a lot of noise regardless of Quiet Zones.
  - Traffic: This train will not reduce traffic. Your own studies indicate that train ridership will not have any impact on Hwy 1 traffic or the other major surface streets that are utilized during peak hours.
  - The Best Solution: Railbank the corridor, build a world-class trail at a fraction of the current cost, and make the Metro free to everyone. The Metro has the flexibility to change or add new routes and increase or decrease frequency due to the changing needs of the population and business environment.
- In the decade or more before construction is completed, the risk of injuries for bicyclists is significant. Many studies have shown that the passenger train will not be worth it, so I encourage you to install a bicycle path within a year and install a train between the two directions of travel on Highway 1 when there is demand for that.
- Please be honest and show in your schematics clearly where bikers will be kicked off the train in order to accommodate a train that will never exist. Please indicate how much elevation gain (i.e., extra work) will be required for a biker who has been kicked off the trail in each direction.
- I live on Sumner Avenue. I cannot see on the map where you plan on diverting from the tracks to the street. It is too small even when you zoom in. I cannot read street names or tell what is

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going on. Can you send me something that would make it easier to tell what your possible plans are?

- This unrealized project continues, spending money the County does not have on an unrealistic dream it will never be able to afford. So, the RTC commission will continue to create new schedules and new funding goals and continue selling the dream. What a way to live a life of delusion.
- It would be of great benefit if your organization would publicly and succinctly answer the following questions:
  1. How much will this project cost?
  2. Where exactly will those funds come from?
  3. Do you anticipate the need for public funds, such as a property tax or sales tax, to support this?
  4. If property tax/sales tax proposals are not approved by voters, what then?
  5. What exactly is the plan to buy out or relocate property owners who abut the railroad corridor?
  6. Describe in simple terms the quiet zones, and how EXACTLY these are achieved, funded, and maintained.
  7. One of the proposed trail alternatives in the Jewel Box is a new one-way limitation on Nova Drive. Has your organization done any outreach to that community to support this idea?
  8. When would the earliest construction begin? When will it be completed?

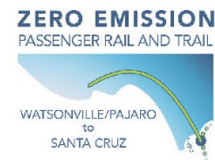
I attended your meeting in Watsonville, and it seemed none of these questions were publicly addressed—there wasn't even an option for questions to be publicly asked and answered—instead, we were forced to participate in small group discussions. Please do a better job of publicly addressing the basics to a very skeptical public—starting with how a project of this scale will be paid for without raising our taxes or increasing the cost of living here. Thank you.

- Pull the tracks. I am one of many frustrated community members who have grown old waiting for there to be a safe bike path across the county. It would be done by now if the reality in the several feasibility studies had been heeded and a simple, affordable trail had been laid on the rail bed. There will never be a train. Unfortunately, thanks to the train lobby, now there will never be a trail. The answer is simple: pull the tracks. Suddenly, you have a trail—a trail that goes over all the existing trestles, all the way to Watsonville and back. Pave that, paint some lines on it, post signs and garbage cans, and you are done! Pull the tracks! If a multibillion-dollar train is in our future, it's going to need new tracks anyway, so why are we holding onto these ones? Why are we preserving them behind fences? Why are we removing trees and carving up the Earth just to hold space for this rusted, obsolete track? It makes no sense. This is why we can't have nice things. Enough! Pull. The. Tracks. While we LIVE!
- I live in Aptos near Clubhouse Drive. As a younger person, I would love to use the train for commuting, returning home, and even taking the train all the way to the Bay Area when I prefer not to drive. That said, any modeling should consider current non-bus users, as I would never use the bus—you just sit in the same traffic as everyone else. There will be significant pushback from homeowners adjacent to the tracks, who are mostly older and white and would never consider using transit because they can afford to drive everywhere, and any train would be too inconvenient for them. I understand the project has a large price tag, which raises concerns, but

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



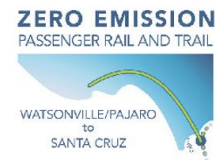
this is an investment in the future of rail for our community, reconnecting it to the Bay in ways that should never have been lost. Please bring rail back!!

- Dear RTC Staff and Consultants,  
The passenger rail should extend from Watsonville all the way to Davenport, not end in the City of Santa Cruz as is currently being considered. The RTC should start now to petition for Quiet Zones along the entire length of the rail line and replace warning sounds with flashing lights unless there is an immediate hazard on the tracks. There should also be space beneath the safety fencing next to the tracks to allow small animals, such as skunks, raccoons, opossums, and domestic cats and dogs, to escape safely.
- I support passenger rail service in this County and want to see the improvements to support it begin in Watsonville and work toward Santa Cruz to provide relief first for the commuters in South County. The service must be compatible with freight rail uses in Watsonville; otherwise, it will cause hardship to Watsonville commerce. Please select the passenger rail model that is compatible with freight service. Thank you. Sincerely, Becky Steinbruner
- (Repeated duplicate comment by Becky Steinbruner)
- The rail project is doomed to be a multi-generational burden on us all. It will never be financially sustainable, not even close (consider the SMART project in Sonoma and Marin). The frequent use of the rail corridor and the resulting traffic disruptions will cause more problems than they solve. Running a train through all those neighborhoods will create chaos. The Seabright/7th Ave crossings will lead to severe delays. I doubt that 90% of daily Hwy 1 traffic from South County can use a train due to their destination or because they are trade workers who need their vehicles and tools. Additionally, the Coastal Trail is being compromised for a train that will be underused. The trail should have at least two 8-foot-wide lanes: one for pedestrians and one for bicycles. Sharing space is unsafe, irresponsible, and illegal in many places (like Downtown), so why would we design a path that way? We need those trails connecting the Monterey system to Waddell more than we need a billion-dollar tourist train.
- Please consider an alternative to Segment 17A and Segment 17B.  
I would appreciate it if RTC would explore different options for Segment 17C: reconnecting Harkins Slough Road and Lee Road with floating pontoon bridges, similar to those in Santa Cruz City's Neary Lagoon Park. (See the picture on the front page of The Santa Cruz Sentinel, November 27, 2024.) By reestablishing the roadway with these pedestrian and bicycle-only floating pontoon bridges, our community could enjoy the beauty of our wetlands. Since vehicles couldn't cross the floating bridges, only pedestrians and bikes would use the existing abandoned paved road leading to the pontoon bridges. This would create a shorter route between Watsonville and mid-county. After crossing the Harkins Slough pontoon bridge near the farm labor housing and Roundtree sheriffs' detention center, the route could continue onto Buena Vista Road. Alternatively, a gentle trail for pedestrians and bikes could be built on the County Landfill area to connect to the rail corridor at Buena Vista and San Andreas Roads. This plan would provide a much safer, car-free, and shorter alternative to Segment 17B. It would also offer a pleasant environmental experience. Additionally, it would cost less to build and maintain because the asphalt roadways already exist. All that's needed are the pontoon bridges and, hopefully, a trail through the soon-to-be decommissioned Santa Cruz County Landfill.

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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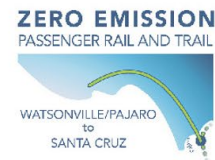


- I have talked to several people who live in the Watsonville area who would love to be able to avoid traffic on Highway 1. I would use the rail to visit some of my family who live in Watsonville.
- Noise levels are a major issue, and a potential 'deal killer' for our rail line that a handful of Quiet Zones do not address. The loud notification required for heavy freight rail is unacceptable with the frequency a new service anticipates across Santa Cruz.
- Neither rail freight nor its 'notification' is necessary west of Walker Street in Watsonville, and no modern manufacturing business opts for rail freight because it is not timely. In a manufacturing world where 'just in time' has become standard, rail shipping struggles to commit to delivery dates from start to finish. I speak from experience as a decision-maker who switched from rail to truck delivery for that very reason. Santa Cruz has no industry that depends on rail freight. (I also have decades of positive experience as a rail commuter on what is now CalTrain.) Light rail or multi-unit passenger trains can operate more quietly, both in their operation and notification requirements, than freight trains do, and 'quiet zones' can make them even quieter. Much of the world has quiet inner-city and regional passenger rail, and that is the approach we should follow for Santa Cruz. Please confirm receipt. Thanks!
- It won't work; it's too expensive and has insufficient ridership. Ask the SMART management and riders in Marin and Sonoma Counties. Ask them if it has relieved traffic on Highway 101?
- Keep up the good work!
- Please plan on an EMU train with overhead catenary. The system is working great for Caltrain, and it makes the most sense to plan on building to a modern standard, not an outdated diesel plan. If this train is fast and frequent, it will do great. If it is slow, and it runs once an hour, it will struggle. Open station areas to increased housing asap. No park and ride! Thanks, excited for the arrival of a green future in Santa Cruz County.
- I attended the public meeting—or, as I like to call it, a live-action email since they were very aggressive about not having a town hall-style meeting. I left feeling highly disappointed. Voters did not approve the rail trail project, and voters have never directly voted for rail in Santa Cruz County. The 2022 vote was to change the wording in the County's General Plan to remove rail and promote railbanking as a faster, less expensive way to build the trail, since there is no funding for a train. No official estimate has been published yet by the RTC, or even a preliminary one, but the last study estimated the cost at \$1.3 billion (pre-pandemic, inflation). One RTC consultant, Robert Yeates of HDR, mentioned that the cost might be higher than \$5 billion (Source: <https://youtu.be/HgpESpdaB6c?si=SwKRys3OC0fMKKe9b&t=3382>). Not only are there issues with mobile home owners being forced out of their homes, but businesses could also be forced to close in Aptos Village with this plan. It is a terrible idea, and people should ask ten serious questions about the project at zeprt.com, like:
  - How much will the overall project cost?
  - How long will it take to start construction?
  - How long will it take to complete construction?
  - What will be the maximum capacity of a train?
  - How many people could use the train vs. how many people use the highway?
  - How much of the cost will be paid for by local taxpayers?
  - Will it be a sales tax? Will it be a property tax? How much will they go up? For how long?

## Public Engagement Summary

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- What will be the subsidy taxpayers will be expected to pay per trip? (Metro costs taxpayers \$12–\$20 for every \$0–\$2 fare)
- How many 140db horn blasts will occur for a train going from one direction to another? How many times a day? What will the hours be?
- How much does a quiet zone study cost? How many will be submitted? What will be the cost for the additional infrastructure required to support quiet zones and possible liability for accidents (38 people were killed by trains in California in 2023)?
- The RTC has yet to answer these questions (and many more that should be answered) as they are very difficult questions that don't have good answers. However, these are some very fundamental questions that should have been scoped for the project before committing \$9 million for this multi-year study that confuses people into thinking that we are much further down the tracks than we actually are.
- I was wondering, will there just be one train running on this track, or will passing zones at locations like Depot Park allow room for a second train?
- Can the rail connecting to Felton be part of this project?
- How often will trains run?
- Does a single track limit the train to recreational use?
- The proposed rail segment of this project harms our community and is even worse for the local environment. Santa Cruz residents deserve a bike and walk-only corridor that enhances our pristine landscape. Jim Jordan
- As a Capitola resident, one of my biggest concerns is the Capitola Trestle. I know the plan was to divert bicycles through the village with a train, which is very unsafe. If the trestle is to be rebuilt to hold a train, it should also be designed to accommodate bikes as well.
- For Rail Trail segments 17B and 18, I'm worried that diverting the trail away from the coastal railroad will significantly reduce its quality, especially in terms of safety. This will affect residents of Watsonville and south county. How will you ensure W. Beach Street is safe? It is such a narrow road with large agricultural trucks, which is not a good mix for people biking and walking.
- I'm in favor of the Cabrillo stop and Watsonville-Ohlone station
- 1. What is the total cost of the project? 2. How long until construction begins? 3. How long will it take to complete construction?  
4. What is the maximum capacity of a train?  
5. How many people could use the train compared to how many use the highway?  
6. What portion of the cost will be covered by local taxpayers?  
7. Will it be funded by a sales tax? Will it be a property tax? How much will these taxes increase? For how long?  
8. What will be the subsidy taxpayers pay per trip? (Metro costs taxpayers \$12-\$20 for every \$0-\$2 fare)  
9. How many 140db horn blasts will occur for a train running from one point to another? How many times daily? What will be the operating hours? 10. What is the cost of a quiet zone study? How many studies will be submitted? What will be the cost for additional infrastructure needed to support quiet zones and potential liability for accidents? (38 people were killed by trains in California in 2023)

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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- I think building a railroad in Santa Cruz County is a complete waste of money. If put to a vote, I would vote no on this project.
- I'm sure you already know this, but the frequency of service is a huge factor in convenience and ridership. The SC branch line is mainly for local service.  
I want to take the train locally since I live near the tracks, but I won't do so if it's only hourly— that's only practical for long-distance travel. If the service ran every 15 minutes on the northern half, and at least every 30 minutes to Watsonville, it would become my main way of getting around.
- Assumptions are being made about the volume of individuals who would use rail. A traffic study should be completed to evaluate the number of entrances and exits on existing exits to guesstimate ridership. Also, a questionnaire should be given to service regions, allowing folks in the communities that it will serve to decide if they would use rail.
- I support establishing a rail service from Pajaro to Santa Cruz, and I also want it to extend to Davenport. I am very concerned about the cost of this rail proposal, especially since you mention an elevated rail line in Santa Cruz and the rail realignments. The original estimate was within local limits, but you have not disclosed the costs of these changes. I am starting to change my mind. I attended your meeting and found the information repetitive of many previous meetings. You clearly have a well-paid consultant.  
After so many years with no progress, I am becoming discouraged.
- I fully support the ZEPRT project and want to see it move forward as quickly as possible. Thank you for the virtual open house.
- Would love to be able to take a train from Watsonville to Santa Cruz
- I live in Aptos and am just a short walk from Aptos station. I know there is a lot of opposition to rail service. I highly encourage you to stay the course and bring rail service to this county.  
We all would benefit from it.  
Thank you for your hard work on this matter.  
Jaakko Mella
- This is a very impressive presentation but lacks any input from TRAIL NOW advocates. I urge the RTC to STOP WASTING TAXPAYER MONEY on this train concept! We don't have the density to support a train. Trains will create a huge NOISE problem at crossings. Vintage trestle bridges should be PRESERVED! The trail is by far the best choice - it provides plenty of SPACE for cyclists and pedestrians. A train would be incredibly DANGEROUS, going so close to pedestrians and cyclists. Build a great TRAIL NOW! If the trail had been built, my late husband, Ben Doniach, would be here today, and not dead from riding his bike on the narrow Murray Street Bridge, when a separate trail bridge was available 50 feet away but went unused.
- Regarding the proposed ridership modeling methods, is there any information available to show the actual ridership numbers compared to what the models predicted for the project? In other words, how reliable are these models?  
Are there any plans to include actual ridership numbers for comparable rail projects in California, e.g., SMART?
- How can I be involved in this project? I think is the greatest idea to have a better way to commute to Santa Cruz from Watsonville and vice versa.
- I like the possibility of an elevated track along the boardwalk, beginning on the higher ground near Bay Street, with a stairway/elevator down to the Sanctuary Exploration Center running above the

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boardwalk and across the river. With the expected sea level rise, this is a good investment. Also avoids traffic there, and could potentially replace it. Thank you for considering this.

- Skip Rail!

Focus on Trail Only.

Our county has too small a population to support such an expensive transportation mode. It'll be a tourist ride! Soquel Drive is the North/South corridor of this County.

- I stopped attending the workshop meetings on this project because the financial issues have always been overlooked. While we can all see value in both rail and trail, the ROI, particularly with respect to rail, continues to be ignored. Even if the federal government funded construction, the ongoing cost of rail service needs to be addressed. Where will the funds for running and maintaining rail service come from?
- Comment: I believe that with the imminent population growth everywhere in SC County, it makes sense to add a rail transit (RT). The RT should definitely extend to the west side of SC to accommodate and attract more youth who will attend or are considering attending UCSC. It's also important to plan for multiple rail cars specifically designed to hold bicycles and lightweight scooters, which are most often used by teens and college-aged adults. Reducing the number of vehicles that need to be driven and parked downtown is very important. Regarding the potential noise that railcars generate, that's a trade-off residents will have to accept; however, the rail schedule will matter most to them. I strongly suggest including a potential rail schedule that clearly states the times when the rail will not be active, so locals will be more likely to support the rail if they know their sleep will not be disturbed. I looked through the pages on the ZEPRT site, and there is very little to no information on how the RT will impact daily quality of life beyond improving access to travel. You should clearly outline the pros and cons of how the RT could affect lives and how the RT Committee plans to address these issues. Consider creating a graph or list, but provide enough information to answer the small questions and concerns about sleep, traffic jams caused by waiting for trains, and safety when crossing the tracks. Most people will know the general positive reasons, but it's important to list all the ways having a rail could improve their community and quality of life.
- FINALIZE & IMPLEMENT!!! Don't make this a forever project. It must connect to the California Train Network.
- I'm 100% FOR the train.
- The Rail Transit Feasibility Study indicated 5500 boardings per weekday between Santa Cruz and Aptos, and only an additional 350 boardings per day between Aptos and Watsonville. Doesn't this suggest that rail service should be focused on the high-potential ridership area? That is, more stations and more focus on non-commute trips? Doesn't this also suggest that if money is tight, service be rolled out first in the Santa Cruz to Aptos segment?
- Living in the Seabright area near the tracks, we neighbors do NOT want to hear a horn all day long. You will have tons of complaints. We know what it's like at Jack London Square with the Amtrak train, and it isn't very good. You don't put that next to \$2+M homes!
- I'm sorry to say that I believe this entire project is a waste of taxpayers' money. It's highly unrealistic to expect people to abandon their cars in favor of trains. If we were a different type of county, it might work. The money would be better spent on a walking and biking trail. We travel across the country in our motorhome, taking our bikes with us. There are more bike and walking trails than rail systems. This suggests that research in other counties shows that a rail system is neither as popular

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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nor as necessary. Walking and bike trails, however, are. I urge the authorities to reconsider this unnecessary project.

- Incredible opportunity for all of us to correct the removal of rails across CA by oil and gas companies to boost their profits. Implementing these light rail systems helps ease traffic congestion, decrease reliance on hydrocarbons and foreign oil, and solve many major issues for both local residents and the global community.

What a chance to move forward—rather than backward.

- Diverting the coastal trail onto Sumner Ave and Soquel Ave in Aptos, Rio del Mar, and Seascapes is not acceptable. These roads are currently unsafe for bikes or pedestrians, and there isn't enough space to make them safe.

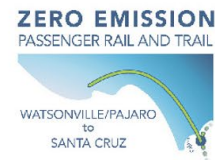
The noise generated by the train in residential areas is also a significant and valid concern. When freight service operated twice a day along the corridor, this was mitigated because the train schedule was during work hours. With more people working from home after the pandemic, the noise and vibrations from the trains will be a much greater disruption to residents along the rail line than the RTC presentations suggest. For reference, horn noise and vibration from the old freight line could be heard and felt on Cliff Drive, about 900 feet from the tracks along the Sumner Ave portion of the rail line.

- I am concerned about the trail being diverted onto Sumner. Sumner is not safe for bicycle or pedestrian traffic and is too narrow to effectively add sidewalks or other safe zones. Please consider other options to ensure the trail can stay along the rail corridor and off of Sumner.
- This is another useless project that has no merit or credibility. It makes as much sense as wasting millions of dollars making changes to Hwy 1 to accommodate buses.
- Has anyone but me noticed that the current bus system is already underutilized, and most of the buses ride around mostly empty?
- That's not just here; that's the trend nationwide. We might want to learn from that, rather than continuing to waste tax dollars on pipe dreams.
- Like it or not, the liberal dreamers need to learn that people are not likely to ditch their vehicles anytime soon for mass transit.
- There's way too much money being spent on pet projects that have little to no actual benefits.
- I tell anybody that's willing to listen. The government will get me out of my internal combustion-powered vehicle after they pry my gun out of my cold, dead hand.
- I live on Garden St. Putting a trail down this street would be problematic because there are always cars parked on both sides, the street hasn't been repaved or properly maintained for at least 30 years (it is literally crumbling into the roadbed), and there are long sections without sidewalks on both sides. I know that Brommer St. has a fair amount of traffic, but Garden St. does as well. Due to the number of parked cars, it is effectively one way. Also, people often drive fast down the street—several pets have been hit by cars—and you can't see all the way down the street, which apparently doesn't stop people from speeding. A lot of traffic from the businesses on Thompson—large trucks—uses Garden St. to get to and from. At the corner of Thompson and Garden, someone built a brick wall into the street easement. They also placed rocks around a fire hydrant, blocking access. Since the fire department and county easement patrol have been unable to remove the rocks, and many cars park well into the street, I don't see how taking easements to build sidewalks and trails,

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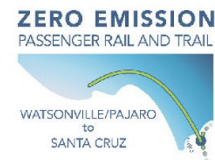
and then constructing them, is realistic or cost-effective. I understand there are many factors to consider, but I believe routing the trail down Garden St. wouldn't be a good choice.

- Do not divert the trail away from the rail trail corridor for Segment 10 through Capitola. Follow exactly what the City of Santa Cruz did: build the trail beside the tracks, even if it doesn't meet the setback requirements that might ultimately be needed for passenger rail service. There will be significant opposition from many Greenway/Measure L supporters if any diversion from the rail corridor happens, and it's not worth that fight. We need to construct Segment 10 as soon as possible to provide a safe and efficient active transportation route connecting Capitola to Santa Cruz, helping to reduce cross-town traffic and support more housing with less on-site parking. Then, shift focus to Watsonville, as they have received little to no benefits from this project so far. Regarding Watsonville, there is no need for a second station at Ohlone Parkway.
- I want to attend all upcoming meetings.
- I don't believe that this project will pay for itself. It will be more of a novelty. Hopefully, there will be a review of the funding and financial projections.
- I was initially for rail and trail before I educated myself on the details, including the frequent noise pollution that would occur at such decibels, not to mention the cutting of ancient and numerous trees along the line. I live in Aptos village. It is a HUGE system for a relatively small coastal community. I know the feasibility studies that have been done, and the costs far outweigh the benefits. Noise pollution is deleterious to the human/animal system. Strongly reject this proposal and any monies, construction that will be done to convince people that it is a wise idea. Trail only all the way. Thank you.
- Watsonville would really benefit from a rail line into Santa Cruz. A stop near Ohlone Parkway would be critical for riders and businesses.
- I have heard various unsourced claims about how much citizens would pay to create the service through sales taxes, property taxes, etc. Can you estimate how much the project would cost an average Santa Cruz citizen per year (for the purposes of this question, I'm treating non-local funding as free)?
- Support for catenary-based rail electrification. If using heavy rail, use rolling stock and explore alternatives that can through-run to San Jose or San Francisco. If using light rail, service will be key.
- Yay! We want the rail line to be used for rail and trail! We really need a clean alternative to that nasty Highway 1.
- Thank you all for your hard work on this complex project! The current Aptos Rail Station location appears to hinder the flow of heavy traffic at the Trout Gulch and Soquel Drive intersection. It's going to be challenging for riders to depart the northbound train and cross that intersection safely. In addition, any time the train moves through the area, it will back up traffic, causing even more delays than what is experienced now.
- 1.) Are you ignoring the first/last mile problem? How do potential riders get
- 1. How do people get from a station to their final destination? 2. What will happen to low-income neighborhoods that can't afford quiet zones? 3. Will there be ways for previously connected neighborhoods and traditional pathways to continue when everything is fenced off? 4. Why have bike paths only been built in Santa Cruz City? What about being fair to South County? 5. Are you really going to tear down the trestle in Capitola? If so, you will need to condemn or use eminent domain on quite a few houses! Do these residents know? 6. No parking at the stations? Are riders

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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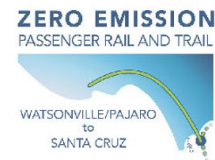
from areas without bikes or in rural regions supposed to park in neighborhoods? 7. Do the train tracks need to be replaced for a new train? 8. Will the bike trail leaving the train right of way be below standard compared to the rest of the trail—less protection from cars, lots of stop signs, and traffic? 9. Will a new local tax be required to fund the train? If yes (and it seems to be indicated), how much? We should know before moving forward! 10. I believe I am already on your email list.

- It's very important to serve USCS and Cabrillo students & employees. The rail line should go from Natural Bridges all the way to Ohlone Parkway and Watsonville.
- If we could get many of the people from USCS & Cabrillo campuses to use transit instead of driving, the rail system will be a success!
- I spent four years in college commuting from San Juan Bautista to Santa Cruz County—two years at Cabrillo College and two at UC Santa Cruz. I longed for a rail system that would have given me incredible freedom—trips when I was tired, the ability to study during the ride, take a nap, go out for a beer with a friend before heading home, and the financial relief of not having car expenses on top of tuition—freedom I lacked because of our car-dependent infrastructure. I am so excited to see the ZEPRT plans, knowing they will provide a safe, efficient, climate-conscious, economically sustainable, and equitable future for many Central Coast residents. In addition to these fantastic plans, please consider connections to your stops—such as safe bike lanes and walking paths from neighborhoods—and PLEASE coordinate with other counties (like San Benito!) because so many students would benefit from improved access between Hollister / San Juan and Cabrillo/UCSC.
- Please add a Westside station. Both residents and UCSC people will use it, relieving congestion downtown.
- As a homeowner along the tracks and someone excited about both rail and trail projects for our community, I encourage more direct communication with neighbors sharing a property line with this project.
- I like the bike and walk option, but I don't like the light rail idea. The light rail concept is truly a misguided idea!
- The train tracks should be covered over at Section 11. There is not enough room now for both a trail and the antiquated tracks. Cover the tracks now and rail bank them now. The trail will be highly utilized and needs to have enough room for all walkers, the elderly, bicyclists, parents, and babies in strollers. Re think this now.
- What percentage of the operating expenses will be based on local taxes?
- What is the expected yearly operating expense?
- How much is a round trip from Watsonville to Santa Cruz expected to cost?
- How long will it take to travel from Watsonville to Santa Cruz?
- Where will the bike trails come on and off the corridor?
- What is the average distance a Watsonville resident will need to travel to get to a train station?
- What would be the yearly operating expense of a train?
- What percentage of the population of Watsonville is expected to ride the train for commuting?
- How much will the local tax be on property?
- Will a property tax be needed to have a train?
- How will local intersections be affected by a train passing through? What is the expected wait time?
- Will existing tracks be pulled up to be replaced?
- Has there been a study showing how many people would use e-bikes vs a train to commute?

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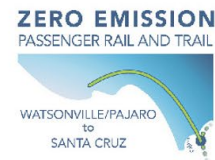


- Will the train tracks be moved in La Selva Beach due to sea level rise?
- How many Hwy 17 commuters will use the train?
- Will there be space on the train for Contractors' tools?
- Has there been a study showing the willingness of residents to be taxed for a train?
- Assuming the money is available to build a train, how long will it take to complete?
- How much will the train cost?
- Has there been any study showing how many residents ( % of )living north of Hwy 1 will use the train?
- This trail and line would connect everyone and everything we love in a safe and environmentally friendly way. Earlier this year, I was in a bike and car accident off of Soquel Ave after (thank goodness) dropping off my toddlers at SCM. We live near Marianne's in Seacliff, and it is harrowing to bike these little ones to school. The safest routes are still unprotected. Between distracted drivers, construction, and damaged, unkept bike lanes, it's no wonder I ended up getting a CT scan in the ER. Luckily, I was wearing my helmet, but if I had a protected rail trail, I would have one less brain-damaging event in my life and thousands of dollars saved for my kids' education. My elderly parents live off Fair Ave on the Westside, and it's very difficult to face Highway 1 and Mission St traffic to visit them as often as we'd like. My father is declining from lung disease, and he can't leave the house often either. The rail trail will be directly behind our house on North Ave, and we're thrilled to have the ability to get directly to and from all our favorite spots, including grandparents, the Boardwalk, Simkins Swimming, friends next to Jade Street Park, Capitola Jr Guards, elementary schools, Hidden Beach Park, Seascape Park, our friends in Oholone Parkway, and much more. I went to grad school at SDSU, and their rail trail system allowed me to bike from our great spot in Ocean Beach to the train station for school and back every day. It was wonderful—I saved hundreds of dollars on parking, got fit, enjoyed nature by the river, and read or met my community on the train. This would be a huge benefit for our community, and we're very excited.
- Please don't put the cart before the horse! I haven't seen anything to make me believe that a train (if it could ever be built here) would do anything other than cost taxpayers a lot of money, create traffic jams, and line the pockets of many consultants and engineering firms benefiting from this boondoggle. Trains might make sense in urban areas with many pedestrians. Have you studied the SMART trains in Marin and Sonoma, with 3 to 4 times our population, yet they are still not used anywhere close to their projections?  
Please stop spending money on endless studies and overly complicated rail/trail designs. A safe, wide, multi-modal trail would be fantastic, and I'd love to see one built that actually improves the quality of life for many county residents. Please choose this option or at least stop wasting money, destroying natural habitats, and leave the corridor as it is.  
Please use common sense and don't be swayed by misinformation! Trail, not rail!
- By not providing parking at the train stations, you discriminate against those who live in an area with no METO routes. How will you resolve this?
  - What is the expected ridership of the train? Please benchmark your train ridership estimates against actual SMART ridership data. I believe that SMART has about four times the population to draw from.

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025

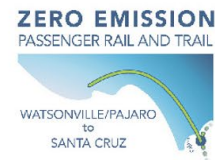


- Please answer how much it will cost to build and operate the train very clearly. How will both of these costs be paid for? What kind of local tax will be needed for this, and how much will the tax be for? When will the tax appear on the ballot?
  - How will local traffic be affected by a train? How often will horns be used at intersections? How feasible are quiet zones? What is the maximum speed these trains will be going through neighborhoods at?
  - When will the train operation begin? Do all the tracks need to be replaced?
  - What actual type of zero emission engine will drive this train. Who manufactures it and where else are these in operation?
  - What organization will operate the train?
  - How will Roaring Camp operating in front of the Boardwalk work with a passenger rail?
  - Why has the RTC decided on a trail type, when they don't know if a train is feasible yet? This seems backwards, or is this just a political move.
  - Why is the trail ending up costing so much? Why is so much of the trail being built in North county and virtually none being built in South county? How many times is the trail leaving the corridor, and why? How often is the trail not at the same grade as the rail corridor (making it harder for bike riders)?
  - Until you can answer these basic questions, you should not be building any trail type, as your action is causing great harm to the environment, to individuals, and businesses along the corridor.
- I hope officials visit the So Cal light rail and trails. I support this type of public transportation, but what people have observed is a significant rise in crime in areas that were previously not served by light rail. Additionally, many of the unhoused population live on the train, riding back and forth. This discourages people from wanting to take the train. Don't build a train that people don't want to ride or feel safe on. I hope there will be enough police presence on the train and at the stops. What I have seen is people hop on the train with their bikes, get off to rob neighborhoods, and then get back on to return to their starting point. This is unacceptable.
  - Thanks for all your good work. Please expedite this project.
  - Has the ZEPRT taken an important step in identifying the train speed limits at various rail line curve locations? In short, curves restrict how fast a train can travel to prevent derailment. Additionally, when approaching or leaving curves, speed is limited by safe acceleration and deceleration to ensure passenger comfort. The rail line curvature data per foot is available through the RTC as part of Union Pacific's dataset, which I have, allowing for travel time calculations. A couple of points to note:
    1. The minimum travel time between Pajaro and Natural Bridges is 54 min. for the CRT2 and LRT scenario presented in the TCAA and 51 min. for CRT1 (which has very few stops). This assumes maximum allowed speeds except 10% maximum on curves - probably not safest margin - and absolutely no delays along the line or stops (30 sec. loading). It also no slowing for side tracks or waiting on side tracks for opposite trains to pass... something that realistically must happen multiple times on the route (unless someone is magical about split-second coordination), and it assumes no slowing at cross-streets regardless of the situation. In short, a 1-hour travel time is unrealistic. Have you looked into this?
    2. The curves are many with varying speed limits, ranging from 9 mph to 46 mph (using FRA formulae). If train speed and acceleration are maximized, passengers would face constant speed

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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- changes leading some to nausea. In other words, the travel time would be increased beyond one-hour for a realistic train ride. Have you looked into this?
3. If everything were split-second perfect, would a maximum 5-minute turnaround time work for continuous rail operation? Don't conductors need a small break to make notes, clock in, snack, whatever?
- Someone asked, regarding SMART's daily ridership of only 3,300, how Santa Cruz County can do better. My response was:  
SMART's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) published in 2006 projected a 2010 start-up ridership of 5,300 per day. It also forecasted a slight decrease by 2025, after 20 years of operation, to 5,050 buses daily, due to ongoing Highway 101 improvements in 2006, which added lanes (see section 3.2-10 of SMART's FEIR). SMART began operation in July 2017, and its first full fiscal year (June 2018-May 2019) averaged 2,297 daily riders (data from the National Transit Database; I calculated this using six days per week, as weekends typically have about half the ridership of weekdays). If I had used the first year (July 2017-June 2018), the average would have been 2,039 per day. This raises the question again: how can Santa Cruz expect to reach 5,000 riders per day initially or even after 10 years if SMART started with 2,300 daily riders and has only reached around 3,300, especially considering that the area's population is four times that of Santa Cruz County?
  - Implore you to study ridership, cost over runs, tax measures, per ride subsidies, first mile-last mile, demographic of riders; all as it pertains to SMART Train in Marin et-al Counties, which has a population three times that of Santa Cruz County. Passenger Train in Santa Cruz County is not feasible and leads to a compromised, segmented, more expensive trail for Santa Cruz residents. Please, look at the facts. We don't need a boondoggle. Thanks.
  - This project is not fundable, and should be put to voters to decide. It will likely not pass. There are major environmental obstacles to overcome: the number of trestles to be rebuilt, significant noise issues from the train horns, unaddressed traffic (street) crossing issues, and low ridership.  
I fully support figuring out a pedestrian and bike trail only. It will be significantly cheaper, safer, and better for our environment. Thank you.
  - Great work and a totally worthwhile effort! I especially like that both the rail and rail-trail projects are gaining support. Stations and stops are each costly, so I guess we won't be able to do more than those originally suggested. I'm 70 years old, and this transportation option will help me remain independent for as long as possible. It's also really great to connect it to other networks like Amtrak at Pajaro.
  - I would love to see a safer bike passage along Park Ave connecting Soquel Ave to New Brighton and the rail trail. My kids do not feel safe riding so close to all the highway entrance traffic.  
I would love to see wider bike lanes along Soquel Avenue as well, or an alternative bike route if that's possible. Thank you.
  - We strongly support rail and would like to see this completed as quickly as possible. Thank you!
  - An alternative bicycle and pedestrian route along Segment 17 needs evaluation. I suggest not using the RTC Staff route of 17B but instead creating a route that connects the now flooded Harkins Slough Road and Lee Road with floating pontoon bridges designed for bikes and pedestrians, not motor vehicles. These pontoon bridges could be similar to those the City of Santa Cruz has floating in Neary Lagoon. They promote wildlife and natural water flow while providing a safe route for walkers and bicyclists. If Harkins Slough Road and Lee Road, which are currently dead-ended, were

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reconnected with pontoon bridges, a route along Beach Street would no longer be necessary. Although I would prefer a bike/walking route built parallel to Beach Street along the Pajaro River levee. Connecting Harkins Slough and Lee Road would create a shorter, more scenic route between Watsonville and North County. It would also give PVHS students emergency exits and reduce the need for cars for residents of Harkins Slough Farm Labor housing to access Watsonville's schools, shopping, and work. I have addressed this plan at several RTC meetings and Watsonville City Council meetings, but it seems to be overlooked. What's the reason for that?

- I just want to add that, as a SC Native, third-generation Live Oak resident, and the husband of two adult children, we fully support passenger rail through town and at all station locations. Our community has long needed this. Traffic has made living here nearly unbearable, causing high stress and growing resentment toward our town and its lack of proper infrastructure updates. If people complain about train noise because they live on or near the tracks, that is their problem and should not affect everyone else, as they chose to rent or buy a home there. That's like whining about living next to an airport and expecting no noise. It's their issue, not ours. Please keep fighting for our right to passenger services. Most of us must commute for work just to live in SC. Most of us don't walk or bike to work. The town has a bike/walk path, but we don't need more of that. It won't solve the real issue. Thank you.
- These plans look fantastic, and I eagerly anticipate the day when Santa Cruz—and maybe even San Lorenzo Valley—are connected again to California's rail system. My only concern is—does it really have to take SO LONG? At this pace, it doesn't seem like the rail will be built in my lifetime, and that's disappointing.
- Stop spending our tax dollars (local, state and federal) on rail studies. Our population cannot support a rail system. Build a continuous trail NOW. Make the Metro free to all.
- Thus far, you've presented primarily options for the various rail considerations, without actually selecting and evaluating any. The community doesn't need a list of questions and possibilities; it needs answers upon which to base its decisions about moving forward. That means specifics. For instance: 1. What is the likelihood that SC County would actually be awarded federal or state funding, given the many larger communities? 2. What are the costs and decisions necessary for instituting quiet zones? 3. Given previously acknowledged community priorities like the ability to move freight and to connect to the state rail system, you should have already decided on a locomotive vehicle - and it is NOT light rail/zero-emission. Not to state this is deceptive. 4. To date I see no consideration of effects on Highway 1 traffic: this is one of the main justifications for rail in the minds of many. 5. Passenger modalities need to be benchmarked with similar systems, national data, and population; no evidence of that in your presentation. 6. No discussion of prospective operations and maintenance funding prospects: what will be the taxpayer subsidy?

I hope you are not simply setting up parameters for more ongoing study, or this work will be a waste of the community's money and time, and not at all what we were lead to believe we would be getting from you as a work product.

Nadene

- Please use value engineering principles to reduce cost while maintaining usefulness and safety. Stations can be very inexpensive and simple to start with and upgraded later. Also consider extending the SC Westside to the UCSC Marine Sciences Center, as students are heavy transit users and the Marine Sciences Center is expected to grow, generating thousands of trips per day in the

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future. Quiet zones will be important for community buy-in. While expensive, I believe they will be essential for community support.

- Commenting in support of overhead electrification for the rail line. Please use overhead electrification that is compatible with Caltrain/CA high-speed rail so that express trains from SC to San Jose/SF will be possible later. This could also allow for some freight service, too
- This is one of the most important projects in Santa Cruz history. Congestion is becoming unbearable and is expected to worsen as the county adds more housing. Anything that can be done to speed this project up should be done. The 2030s are far too long to wait for this. Don't fall for the hydrogen scam; use proven technology, such as electric trains. The new Caltrain cars are what we should aim for!

## Virtual Open House Interactive Map Comments

- The Capitola Trestle (seg 11 phase 2) is considered part of the project, but costs are not? The report does not clearly explain whether construction costs of any portion of the trail are included in the ZEPRT \$4.3B estimate. Please specify what is and isn't included.
- Proposed diversion of the trail away from the protection of the corridor and onto busy streets will put trail users in danger from vehicular traffic.
- Private crossing to become public with trail crossing. Please describe crossing application and CPUC comments.
- Carving into an eroding bluff to make way for a train is not sensible.
- Constrained corridor with homes very near tracks. Please include boundary maps of segments 13-20, as was described in proposed scope of services.
- This is a very congested and dangerous intersection WITHOUT a rail project. Loss of parking will jeopardize local merchants.
- Constrained section. Near 212 Poplar st in Aptos, ZEPRT Conceptual alignment maps show corridor width of 51 ft, but RTC boundary maps indicate it's 35 ft. Please clarify and identify design solutions necessary to fit both passenger rail and trail within the corridor. 36 ft is minimum, yet no realignment has been proposed here.
- In comments submitted to the Trail Segments 10&11 FEIR, CPUC mandated the immediate closure of the informal crossing and removal of the staircase at Propect and Cliff Dr in Capitola. "The CPUC must authorize any new rail crossings through a formal application process. This process includes the closure of existing crossings to permit new ones for this rail line. A list of crossings planned for closure is required for CPUC authorization of new crossings." Please discuss the status of this crossing, CPUC comments to ZEPRT consultants, and which crossing(s) if any have been identified for closure to allow approval for this one. This crossing currently remains open and serves as an important connector between Jewel Box residents and Capitola Village and Beach.
- Grove is listed as a private crossing, but CPUC specifies that "private crossings used by more than four parties...are classified as publicly used." Seg 10/11 FEIR. Please include rail/trail crossing applications.
- The existing, well-used, informal crossing at Coronado provides community access to New Brighton State Beach. CPUC has stated that its goal is to reduce the number of at-grade crossings. As part of the Concept Report, HDR was to request an informal field meeting to review crossings, and incorporate comments from CPUC into updated concept plans. Please include CPUC comments about this Coronado crossing.
- The ZEPRT report explains that "right-of-way constraints of the rail corridor through these areas have been identified." Please be explicit. Passenger rail with sidings cannot fit with a trail between Monterey Ave and Grove, yet potential solutions have not been discussed and the report defers to the EIR. Please include cost estimates for right-of-way acquisition necessary to include both passenger rail and trail within the corridor, whether it is to come from homeowners on Escalona, or from the City of Capitola on the Park Ave side.
- Diverting the trail onto existing streets is inconsistent with Capitola's Measure L.
- The ZEPRT report explains that "right-of-way constraints of the rail corridor through these areas have been identified" between 30th and 47th Aves., but fails to discuss what measures will be

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necessary to implement passenger rail after a trail is constructed. The corridor width ranges between 30 and 35 ft, yet 36 ft is the minimum width necessary to meet CPUC regulatory requirements (and RTC commission-adopted design guidelines). Please include discussion of what measures would be necessary to implement passenger rail within the corridor after the trail is built: remove or narrow the trail, or acquire additional right-of-way from all property owners living adjacent to (and south of) the the SCBRL between 30th and 47th. Removing or narrowing the trail would be inconsistent with CTC's ATP grant awarded to the RTC for this section, so please include row acquisition cost estimates for widening the corridor through this section.

- In the MBSST EIR p545, the CPUC states that "publically used private crossings...may require safety modification and/or crossing closures based on the necessity of the crossing. Any private crossings in which the properties have alternate access will be required to be closed. As part of its mission to reduce hazards associated with at-grade railroad crossings, the Commission's policy is to reduce the number of such crossings." Since there is an existing crossing at 17th Ave, please address whether the private (existing) El Dorado crossing is subject to closure with ZEPRT. Closing this crossing would restrict community access to Twin Lakes State park, the beach and Simpkins swim center.
- Intersecting rail, cars, bikes, pedestrians and more is not a good idea.
- It seems like it makes sense to route the trail out of the corridor in this location, so long as it is fully separated from traffic and of an equal width to other trail sections.
- "If this is the location of the Capitola Station, and a 500 foot Passing Siding / lane.  
With North bound train at the platform, Southbound train in the passing lane.  
How do people board the south bound train? Does that train wait until North is gone, then pulls forward and backs up? Or backs up then forward after the North bound train leaves...  
Wont that break the 40-45 minutes End to End time?  
Did anyone thing of the logistical issues of this?  
Pretty glaring issue here!"
- "Since there is no funding or plans currently to replace the Capitola Trestle, and as part of what RTC told the Capitola City Council as Design Option A, that the Soquel Creek Bridge could be converted into a pedestrian path as part of the Ultimate Rail and Trail plan.  
Why is the RTC not working on that? Until the funds are secure for the \$224 million or \$300+ Million to build two new bridges. We can have SAFE Passage for our kids to Schools, and avoid the dangers of biking in the village.  
In 2023? RTC FAQs it said a conversion could be done for about \$7-10 million, Today's dollars that might be \$11-14 million, a fraction of the \$224-300 million and decades needed to remove and build two new bridges.  
Give us answers on why design option A wasnt included in the ATP Grant, and why are we leaving a derelict, unsafe, un-usable line in place. And not using it for the benefit of the community? We know a Train will never cross it again. But people can.  
You can railbank a portion of the line, it happens all the time."
- RTC must work with other agencies to ensure there is a safe path from Seacliff to the Aptos Village station - specifically pedestrian sidewalks on Spreckels Dr and accessibility improvements for the Soquel Ave bridge over Aptos Creek. The current option of walking in the roadway with blind curves is too dangerous for prospective riders walking to the station.

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- Please continue to educate the Capitola City Council and residents about rail banking. Rail banking is not an option to have the rail trail project move forward. There is no approved, planned funded trail only project. Even if the Interim trail was included in the environment studies for a few segments, track removal and mitigation was not included. And once the rail is gone, there will never be a rail trail in the future. The cost is too high to have an interim first and then remove and rebuild the tracks for a train service years later. Stay the course, build the trail and keep the rail for the future of Santa Cruz County.
- The realignment from 30th to 47th Ave – I prefer to see the trail in the RoW. There are issues with the Brommer St intersection at 41st Ave – it is constricted for cyclists already with only a shared traffic lane and a bike box
- An elevated option for the tracks is too expensive and would block the view. Even if it was a more streamlined Boardwalk ride like a monorail instead of a track that could potentially accommodate a freight train (probably never) I don't think it could be approved by the Coastal Commission, especially if there are on grade options. I do not support elevated tracks.
- Not sure if I like the rerouting the trail thought the Boardwalk's ped tunnel to access the cantilevered bridge. Bikes would conflict with peds and likely be required to walk their bikes? It would be a shame if the cantilevered bridge is not part of the part and has to be rebuilt on the coastal side of the trestle.
- Would be great to reroute the trail on the coastal side of the tracks to avoid riders crossing the tracks at Beach St and Cliff, near the carousel will no longer cross the tracks. Much less hazardous to cyclists
- "Glad to see the bike path at the roundabout will be routed into a separated median out of the round about traffic lane to get onto the bike path to continue on Pacific from the wharf. This gets rid of the hazardous angle problem. Faster riders will continue to use the traffic lane. Would be great to eliminate the trail crossing the tracks at the bottom of Cliff Street near the the carousel."
- Do not route the trail through Jade Street Park - this is a heavily used park all day, everyday and facilities would be required to be removed to add the trail.
- Although it may be the last segment completed, continue to pursue the rail and trail along a new trestle bridge. The existing rusting hulk has outlived its functional use and we could have a beautiful architectural gem as a new icon for Capitola in the future.
- It's a shame that Capitola City Council caved in to the vocal minority and voted against the Park Ave realignment. That would have saved a lot of \$, been more scenic, connected to neighborhoods, and was environmentally superior. We could have been riding on the Class I bike path in 2 years instead of years waiting for the rail trail Segment 11 to be further along.
- This would be a fantastic stop location for the westside; basically the only missing piece is having good bus connectivity (but other stops could fill this role)
- This would be an excellent location for a stop, as it is both in a higher residential density area and there are a number of destinations near it, such as the mall.
- This is the wrong spot. Please move this stop to Bay street or to Almar Ave, and save this stop for an expansion.
- Please add a rail stop between at or near this location or at Bay Street. The proposal to have only one Westside stop, at Natural Bridges, emphatically does NOT serve the existing residents.

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Westside residents should be able to take the train to Cabrillo without having to bicycle 5 miles in the wrong direction or go down into the Boardwalk congestion.

- It would be better if the station was directly next to either Swift St or Natural bridges. The former seems to have more bike and foot traffic.
- Direct trolleybus connection to UCSC on dedicated right of way would make the train far more effective.
- Removing private vehicle access from this area would make the train crossing much safer. Removing cars from Beach St would make room for more double-track sections.
- Strongly prefer the at-grade option, but car traffic should be removed entirely from Beach St and rerouted onto a two-way Riverside Ave/Third St. Tourists upset by this can... take the train!
- Since the Capitola Trestle can not support a train, lets convert this to a Trail, riding a bike though the village is dangerous and stressful
- omit siding
- provision for phase 2 extension to Felton
- Make sure that the tracks in the roadway from the round about to the SL bridge are as flat as possible making it safer for bike wheels. A lot of issues in this area where cyclists cross the tracks not perpendicular (at 90 degrees) across rails and less experienced cyclists fall.
- I prefer that the trail remain in the right of way in this area. The alternative onto streets are roundy-round. Brommer at 41st Ave intersection is constrained for cyclists already. Jade Street Park is very busy all day and does not have space to add a 12 ft multi-use trail in the park without taking our other recreational facilities which are desperately needed.
- Very disappointing Capitola City Council caved in the vocal minority pressure and against the the Park Ave realignment. It was a superior alternative, more scenic connected and less expensive.
- I hope there will be bike lockers, restroom facilities at the stations if possible
- Great idea for a trail along San Andreas so we won't have to be on the tracks near the BV landfill!
- See my comment about Beach St. Class I separated trail should only be considered. Makes more sense at Buena Vista Rd where the rail goes into the ag land and wetlands in the middle of nowhere. Alignment on San Andreas would allow connectivity to roads, housing, schools, worksites, beaches & parks.
- Great idea to realign the trail on Beach St! It does not make sense to put the trail along side the rail right of way from Buena Vista Dr. through a nowhere agricultural and wetland area not connected to any Only a separated Class I bike path is acceptable This would align with a future extension and connection to Palm Beach and Pajaro Dunes. Would this be an additional cost not included in the Coastal Rail Trail project? How could it be funded? Would it save money to separate it?
- The trail should be in the rail right-of-way from Lee Rd or Ohlone. There are industrial uses with multiple driveways and heavy vehicle and truck traffic all along Beach St. Beach Street is always a mess of debris. A separated Class I bike trail is the only acceptable trail, but there would be vehicles crossing the trail and leaving a trail of debris on the trail. I know there are railroad spurs along the rail right of way, but surely there would be less disruptive to the trail users?
- I like the idea of a separate bike-ped trail from Rodriguez if it does not increase costs over having it part of the railroad trestle over the Pajaro.

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- "The topics all sound like a negative. I have a positive comment, but only ""other seems"" to be an appropriate category.  
I like the re-alignment to Rodriguez. It makes sense as there is a bike path there already and it is closer to the transit center, businesses and other destinations. Since this trail is out of the right of way will this trail be an added cost for a bike infrastructure to the City that is not yet funded?"
- platform on north side of track would separate waiting passengers from trail traffic
- moving Pajaro station here would improve accessibility
- moving Walker St. station here would reduce interference with road vehicles while boarding
- additional station would benefit nearby residents
- two platforms at Seascap
- additional station would benefit nearby residents
- additional station would benefit nearby residents
- additional station would benefit nearby residents
- nearby residents would benefit from additional station
- single platform at Seabright
- at-grade tracks will be less expensive and less visually obstructive
- start service with Depot Park terminus and west side bus service
- station would be obsolete if Felton extension is built
- two platforms at Depot Park
- I like that the proposed trail extends into downtown Watsonville. This has the added benefit of providing an enhanced bike/facility in town and better connecting existing residential and commercial areas. The proposed alignment also comes within a block of the Watsonville Transit Center, which is working with the City to provide an enhanced bike facility along Rodriguez St as part of their plans to redevelop the transit center with housing above, which would connect with RTC's proposed enhanced facility and help create a more connected bike network in Watsonville.

## Virtual Open House Station Design Concept Comments

- I like the wood the best
- Varying design of stations to give each neighborhood a unique identity is possible. While shade structures, benches, platforms, and signage can be uniform, roofing material (opaque or light transmitting) and design of backdrops/safety barriers can be determined through local art competition.
- The rail seems unlikely and costly. I vote to just do the trail for multi-use such as biking and hiking/walking/running. This is done in many other states for low cost and pretty quick rates.
- Please consider bike garages (think Netherlands train stations) rather than only outdoor racks for locking bikes to.
- Cart before the horse
- I much prefer the wood concept. The brick concept is fine, I do not like the beach concept.
- I'm sure you have reasons, but the glaring absence of a station between Aptos and Watsonville requires detailed explanation of the pros and cons leading to this decision. As a Trestle Beach/La Selva Beach resident (with tracks in front of our condo), I strongly support the Rail and Trail project but urge reconsideration of the need for a La Selva/Manresa Beach station. As regular Watsonville shoppers/business users, there is simply no way that I will be driving north on Rt 1 into Aptos Village in order to get on a commuter train to Watsonville. — Chris Benz, 406 Camino Al Mar, La Selva Beach 95076
- Woody
- Lovely and thoughtful design — feels like it belongs to Santa Cruz!
- Where would the station be located in Aptos Village? That place is a congested mess already.
- I am in total agreement with the rail plan. My primary concern would be adequate parking at the stations. Parking lots in general are a huge problem in Santa Cruz — always congested and small. Many provide spaces only for small compacts. I'd love for the rail stations to have larger spaces for SUVs and pickup trucks.
- As a Felton resident, park-and-ride and bus connections are critical for us. It is also critical for these options to be economically feasible. As far as the shelters, I like the beachy concept best.
- Secure bike valet service; lockers. Nicene Marks near the future Aptos Village station is a popular running trail and I'd like to store my stuff while I run so I don't have to use my car. Shuttles to the State Park there would be great too!
- The wood one looks great! Industrial is pretty bad though.
- Woody design concept is by far the best option! Industrial is second best. It's also hard to tell where the exact stops will be from the map vs. how lists have been provided in the past.
- Amenities: car parking should be limited, with land immediately around stations ideal for local institutions, parks, businesses, and housing. Bike parking should be secure and neat (see UC Davis "wheel well" racks which are easier to use than U- or O-shaped racks). For the concept, I prefer woody or industrial — more classic; beach often reads tacky/too Southern CA.
- This plan looks great! When I go to San Jose and other cities, the train option is very useful.
- The initial number of stations seems very low; the "stations previously considered" map looks like a much more useful service. Extension to Gilroy for Caltrain/HSR would be greatly appreciated.

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- None for rail! Complete the trail now before any rail. There isn't enough money for rail. The \$5B (2025 dollars) is crazy for a county of 250k.
- I think the woody theme is the best one. I do like the waves; dislike the beach umbrella look.
- Improve bus service instead of promoting an impossible rail project. We cannot afford a train; we have insufficient tax revenue and population to support it.
- Roll-on ramp for wheelchairs and bicycles at one or more train cars.
- Please ensure stops are in densely populated areas. The only proposed westside stop is far out of the way; no stop near the east Live Oak/west Capitola area. The TCAA station recommendations there were important.
- Please put at least one station on the Westside near densely populated neighborhoods (e.g., Almar Ave). Expecting residents to go to the Boardwalk or all the way to Natural Bridges to catch the train to Cabrillo is unrealistic.
- I prefer the Woody concept; may be easier with the Coastal Commission as it's a natural material.
- Industrial concept seems least desirable aesthetically; materials selection should consider long-term maintenance/durability vs. cost, with aesthetics lower-weighted.
- Please railbank and build a trail.
- Bike lockers; shelters with seating; fare stands (with Clipper integration); transit diagrams; no new parking. Stations should match their immediate environment (beach at Boardwalk/Seabright, wood for Aptos/Cabrillo, etc.); no fabric shelters; feature locally created public art (murals, sculpture).
- I like "woody" and "industrial & rail" concepts but not the "beachy" concept. Consider incorporating elements from woody and industrial.
- I really like the beachy concept designs the most, but the others are alright. The mosaic tiling is great — Santa Cruz is full of incredible artists; a collaboration would make the structures artistically vibrant (e.g., Capitola wharf kelp forest mosaics, beach wall mosaics with kids' art).
- Woody concept is preferred; landscape with native plants.
- Definitely not the industrial concept!

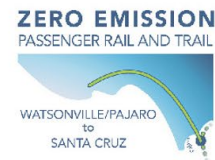
## Project Email Comments

- Dear RTC staff, RTC members, and the public (I apologize, but I cannot find an email for Fabian Leonor; please forward this to him):  
Here are my comments on the ZEPRT draft final report dated July 30, 2025. As background, I live in Rio Del Mar and have attended all the virtual meetings and most of the in-person sessions for ZEPRT and the previous train-and-trail discussions since approximately 2019.  
I read the ZEPRT draft report carefully and with great interest. Thanks to the SCCRTC staff and consultants for their hard work and expertise in preparing this report and conducting outreach meetings. The details they provided are necessary to develop the best operational and cost estimates. Overall, I believe transportation systems in the County—including roads, freeways, bus services, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure—need improvement. A high-capacity, zero-emissions rail service that is efficient, reliable, and quiet could contribute to a better overall system in the County, if it remains affordable. The associated trails system is vital for safe local movement within SCC.  
Here are my summary comments (more details follow):
  - • A low-capacity train with long travel times and low ridership estimates will not benefit the County and is not worth the large cost and sales tax increase.
  - SMART (along with COASTER and SPRINTER) a poor models for SCC rail, especially regarding population size, density near stations, and potential for outside and local funding.
  - Measure D was not an accurate measure of current public opinion on the proposed rail project, given the high costs (measured in 2025 dollars) and minimal benefits of ZEPRT.
  - As noted in the draft and previous reports (such as the 2021 one), train ridership will have a minimal impact on Highway 1 traffic and will not significantly reduce commute times from home to work.
  - Please halt the ZEPRT process now and focus on improving METRO services and other transportation options in SCC.Detailed comments on the draft report include:
  - The Project Needs in Section 3.2 and the Elements of the Project Purpose in Section 3.3 accurately describe our needs in Santa Cruz County and appropriate goals for the RTC. However, when I evaluate the supposed benefits listed in Section 2.1, I find the draft does not support them, as follows (in order):
    - The proposed rail is not high-capacity and will not reduce local travel times.
    - Although it will connect major population centers to the California State Rail Network, these connections are not convenient, especially considering first- and last-mile challenges.
    - With only 9 stations serving key areas like Santa Cruz and Watsonville, the rail will not provide easy access to community or major employment centers. First- and last-mile connections, although discussed, will complicate and lengthen trips.
    - While 12 miles of new multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails will improve connectivity, routing these along major roads like Sumner Ave. (which lacks sidewalks in parts), San Andreas Road, Lee Road, and Beach Street will not significantly enhance safety or enjoyment. The same applies for trails off the corridor along Jade Street and Park Ave. in Capitola.
    - The trail from Natural Bridges to Zils Road will improve connectivity as it passes near many residents and destinations; however, the Watsonville segment is not near the majority of the population there, and the actual route from home to station is often

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longer along roads or paths. I live 0.6 miles from the Aptos station, but by road, it's 1.2 miles.

– As the report states, anticipated ridership is only 1–2% of Highway 1 traffic, meaning it won't significantly reduce vehicle miles, congestion, or greenhouse gases. • Additional concerns: – This draft focuses solely on the rail component, omitting mention of the trail portion. – The end-to-end runtime (Pajaro to Natural Bridges) is 68 minutes, and reverse 73 minutes (Section 17.4), much longer than the 45-minute goal. The discrepancies between the Executive Summary (Section 7.0, 45–70 min), Table 18.6 (45 min), and Section 17.4 should be resolved for consistency. – Cost estimates exclude significant items like quiet zones, station connections, trail bridges, and off-corridor trail construction; these will increase overall costs. – Additional costs from public/private crossings and traffic signals should be included. – The capital cost estimate (Table 18.5) indicates a range of –30% to +50%, translating to \$3.0B–\$6.4B in 2025 dollars, with more in actual project costs. – Capital costs are in 2025 dollars while fare revenue projections are future dollars; both should be aligned for clarity. – No project timeline is provided, which is critical given the project's complexity; please include one. Thank you for your time.

Paul T. Roberts — 310 Martin Dr., Aptos, CA

- When describing the project benefits, you don't mention any 'challenges.' I understood the goal was to find out if passenger rail was feasible, not 'how it could be made feasible.' I've asked questions during community Zoom meetings, but only 'softball' questions from known supporters get answered; others are ignored or postponed. It seems more effort was spent on seeming to listen than on producing a \$9M report that honestly assesses feasibility. If more study won't make this possible or affordable, just say so—don't waste the public's time and money." — Nadene Thorne
  - PART 1 (commuter schedule concern):

"For an 8:00 AM start in Santa Cruz, the feasible train is 6:45 AM, arriving ~7:32 AM. That leaves a 28-minute (or 13-minute on a 7:00 AM train) last-mile window—too narrow for many whose workplaces are >1 mile away."
  - PART 2 (capacity bottleneck):

"Max capacity 234 (116 seated). Only the 6:45 AM arrival works for 8:00 AM jobs, creating an immediate bottleneck and inequity; later departures won't make 8:00 AM without extra infrastructure/first-last mile. Even 15-minute headways don't fix the core issue and increase OpEx."
  - PART 3 (alternatives & railbanking):

"ZEPRT overlaps existing Metro routes and is slower than current bus options for UCSC riders. If it can't outperform what we have, consider railbanking: save billions, pass a smaller tax to boost Metro and essential services, build the world-class trail now, avoid displacements (e.g., Capitola Beach Villas), and deliver immediate value." — Kevin Maguire
  - "Traffic is insane; meaningful investment is needed. Rail works in the Bay Area and substantial work's been done; expense alone isn't a reason to stop. Please continue peer review and compare capital/O&M to other systems." "If rides are \$5 each, daily costs add up—this isn't affordable for many; that's why people avoid transit. Too expensive vs. car."
- Feedback on ZEPRT Report (Greg Kassner, Scotts Valley):

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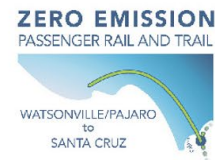


- Conclusion: The report doesn't justify proceeding.
  - Chapters 2 & 10 lack concrete core commuter ridership and quantified benefits; listed benefits are qualitative wishes. With ~5,000 riders/day in 2045 vs. 85,000–92,000 peak-hour vehicles on Route 1, the impact on congestion is minuscule.
  - Chapter 3 purpose/need is qualitative; Chapter 10 ridership method lacks demographic/job analysis; leisure is discretionary/seasonal. Section 10.5 (15% employment growth) doesn't prove intercity demand; Section 10.6 (college enrollments) is insufficient to justify \$4.3B; zero substantiation; weekend/leisureridership discussion weak.
  - Farebox revenue in 2045 estimated at \$5.1–\$6.4M vs. operating costs \$34–\$41M/year leaves a \$28–\$35M annual deficit. Any new taxes make SCC less affordable for the very riders intended to be served.
- Traffic is insane and it's not going to get better without meaningful investment of some kind. Rail is proven to work in the SF Bay Area and so much work has been done on the project. Just because it seems expensive doesn't mean it shouldn't be done. Please continue to evaluate the project through peer review and include an analysis of other systems' capital and operating costs to be sure decisions are made with full data.
- Not sure if the only reason to use the rail is for nostalgia; it can't possibly be for commuters. The subway in New York City is \$2.50, sometimes goes up to whole three dollars. How the hell do you think people are gonna be able to afford five dollars a ride? Not a day, a ride?!!! If you are trying to save traffic and the environment, this is not the way to do it. There's a reason half the people don't use public transportation in the Bay Area. It's way too expensive. It's cheaper just to use your darn car.
- Feedback on the ZEPRT Report – Greg Kassner, homeowner and resident in Scotts Valley, 21 Sunset Terrace, Scotts Valley, 95066, 404-290-3971. Commissioners and RTC staff: Please take under advisement my feedback on the ZEPRT project report. Conclusion: The report does not present a case for proceeding with a rail project of this magnitude and expenditure. Comments supporting the above conclusion: Chapter 2 and 10 provide no concrete numbers on core commuter ridership that would justify any expenditure on a railway. The report does not quantify the economic impacts (benefits) of a rail system based on core or combined core and discretionary ridership. The benefits listed in the report are simply 'qualitative wishes,' not quantitative projections that could substantiate a project. For example: Chapter 2 suggests the project will reduce vehicle miles traveled, congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions in Santa Cruz County. With a projection of approximately 5000 riders per day beginning in 2045, reducing the CA Route 1 traffic load by 5,000 autos would have a minuscule impact on traffic improvement. A scan of the traffic volumes on CalTrans' webpage shows traffic volumes approximating 85,000 to 92,000 vehicles at peak hours (2023).
- Chapter 3 project purpose and need – again, the project purpose presents a list of qualitative "wishful assertions" that in no way can satisfy a multibillion dollar project. Chapter 10 ridership and revenue forecast: The 5000 riders per day derivation does not rely on an in-depth study of demographics and current/projected jobs that would support or create core ridership. And, leisure use is only discretionary and seasonal load for the system. Even if the 5,000 riders per day is a solid estimate, how can this possibly justify constructing a railway for this cost???

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- Section 10.5 future use – shows up to 15% future employment growth. Does not substantiate any case for inter-city travel supported by a rail line.
- Section 10.6 ridership forecasts – talks of College enrollment forecasts. This discussion is certainly not substantive enough to justify \$4.3 billion to shuttle some students to and from UCSC or Cabrillo. ZERO data is presented to substantiate this.
- The explanation of weekend and leisure ridership is weak and doesn't address the impractical nature of taking a train to access the target activities.
- Conclusion: Chapter 10 does not present a viable case. Anyone with any understanding of economics would not support going forward with such a weak case.
- Ridership revenue by 2045: the report casts a bleak revenue estimate – “Annual farebox revenue for ZEPRT for the year 2045 was conceptually estimated at \$5.1 million to \$6.4 million.” Even with a simple, more optimistic estimate of 5000 riders/day at \$10/rider x 365 days = \$18.5M/year. With operating expenses estimated at \$34 to \$41 million per year, how could we possibly consider an outlay of \$4.3 billion and THEN operate the system at a \$28M to \$35M annual deficit???? Any additional taxes and measures to raise this kind of money will make Santa Cruz County even more unaffordable for the very people this project intends to serve. Few common folk will be able to afford food, clothing, etc., so why would they be riding the train to come to Santa Cruz?
- Plainly speaking, \$4.3 billion is a staggering amount – if this isn't an attention getter, what upper-level cost, if there is any, would the RTC start to think maybe this rail project is just crazy and out of reach?
- The costs are based on 2025 dollars. When adjusted for inflation and project cost overruns, once the project is finally underway, years later the actual costs will certainly be higher.
- If we go forward, the residents of the county will suffer economically. The project may not even be feasible to complete and we could end up with a partially finished, abandoned project, becoming a laughing stock for the state of California and the country.
  - Alternative solutions to improve life in Santa Cruz County:
    - Reduce the scope of the project – NO RAIL. Limit the project to provide bicycle and pedestrian linkages, and enhance safe access for a “rail trail.”
    - Spend money on street resurfacing – our county is riddled with potholes and poor surface street condition.
    - Spend money on vacant lot cleanup and wildfire abatement – especially around transit areas/roadside. Many fires are started by sparks along road shoulders in high grass.
- Dear ZEPRT RTC people:
  - Thank you for shepherding the ZEPRT plan this far.
  - I'm excited about the prospect of rail and have been for a long time.
  - That said, the current plan is the first draft, and I think improvements can and will be made.
    - The projected cost of \$4.3B works out to almost \$200M per mile. That's the same that CAHSR is turning out to be, which is a completely different animal, with huge property acquisition and engineering costs. I know that all infrastructure projects are seeing doubling and tripling, so it's a widespread problem.
    - Maybe the project needs to be built in phases. Start with Westside Santa Cruz to Cabrillo College or Aptos.

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- A radical consideration: Have the rail alignment *leave* the corridor south of Aptos, joining the freeway median where the southernmost rail bridge crosses the freeway for a rapid trip to Watsonville. This avoids most of the bridge replacements and heavy engineering in erosion zones.
- To whom it may concern,
  - Please advocate for railbanking and give Santa Cruz residents a safe, car-free transit corridor.
  - The future is personal electric mobility: electric bikes, scooters, etc. With a projected cost of \$4.2 billion, the funding for a rail option is impossibly high and would be a burden for all.
  - For a mere \$60 million, we could buy a \$1000 e-bike for every single citizen in Santa Cruz.
  - We could install B-cycle stations all along the corridor, instead of piecemeal throughout urban zones. The Greenway model could give citizens a safe, efficient, clean, and beautiful way to move throughout the county.
  - The Westside trail is already packed with only one trail for e-bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, strollers, joggers, club walkers, etc. In the interest of public safety, let's separate the bikes from the walkers.
  - Maintenance would be a nightmare. Santa Cruz already struggles with graffiti, urination, trash, misuse, vandalism, etc. Very quickly, the "train of the future" would become unsanitary and frankly unusable.
  - Please vote for Railbanking!
  - Best, Jeremy Ert
- This is a huge waste of taxpayer money!
  - We already struggle to live in the most expensive place in the United States and you want to raise our sales tax? It's already too high!
  - A train that would take 40 minutes from one side of town to the other is the same as taking the bus. Feels like a money grab by local politicians.
  - I'm AGAINST a slow train. The bus is already too expensive.
  - What will you do with all the new buses the city has purchased? Doesn't the bus provide the same service that the proposed train?
  - I'll never take the bus or the train. Too expensive!
- Hey there,

I wanted to ask about the implementation of passing sidings for the rail project. For a while, the project has been understood to be a single track line with passing sidings at various locations to accommodate for bi-directional travel. This has been a critique of rail opponents, who say that single-track service is inherently slow.

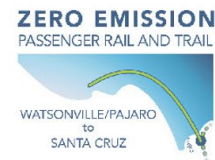
This to me seems like a valid critique. Although I understand the passing sidings will be designed to meet the demand of the system, I worry that as demand grows, more service would need to be implemented on the line. Improving the line would be bottlenecked by the nature of a single track with passing sidings, and I fear that could lead to an expensive rework of a system that didn't lay the groundwork for any expansion.

Double tracking the line would be a great way to prevent this problem, but with an already

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expensive project, I am not eager to double track the line before we need it. Still, according to the preliminary report, the Stadler MU's preferred for the design sit at a sleek 9'5" wide. In a 30' corridor, two of these passing each other would offer each other ~5.5' of clearance, and narrower corridors down to 23' still allow trains to pass through tighter, slower corridors. In the preliminary report, your team stated that operating requirements for the ZEPRT could require complete reconstruction of the rail line due to its condition. If this turns out to be the case in the final project, will there be attempts made to align the new rails such that the line could be double-tracked where possible?

I see where this could conflict with the goal of creating a trail alongside the tracks as well, but I would argue that both can be effectively done. The project is already likely to align the southern portion of the trail along San Andreas Road instead of the rail alignment, and I see no reason for this philosophy to not apply elsewhere along the line. Could roads running along to the line, from larger arterials like Murray St. or Summer Ave. to smaller residential streets like Poplar St. in Seacliff, be re-designed to accommodate more pedestrians and bikes in their space and the space next to the tracks? Could other parallel streets like Brommer St. or McGregor Dr., be used as detours for pedestrians and cyclists, with similar overhauls to those ongoing at Bay Street? Could the numerous open natural spaces along the route, such as New Brighton or Twin Lakes, which are publicly owned, not be candidates for trails? I think there are numerous scenic locations and densely populated central streets that would both serve well for a public trail.

For a good example, see the Humboldt Bay Trail

here: <https://humboldt.gov.org/1923/Humboldt-Bay-Trail>. Arcata in particular turned much of L street into part of its trail, and despite already being a small back alley, parts of it still remain alongside the trail as gravel access roads. It also has continuations of the trail in Shay Park and the Arcata Marsh, both of which have minimal environmental footprints and offer access to popular parks.

In summary, I believe that much of the rail corridor is wide enough to be double-tracked, and that for the longevity of a potential train, any replacement of tracks should be aligned so that double-tracking can be added with ease where possible in the future. Additionally, the trail alignment should still fit alongside parts of a future double-tracked line, but where it can't, alternate alignments or expansions into adjacent public property like streets and parks could be considered. I may be missing a lot of information as to why this is not a goal of the project, but I at least wanted to raise my concerns about a single track and the future hassle it could bring the county. Thank you :)

-Joe

- Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

I urge you to strongly consider implementing Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) as a superior alternative to the proposed train service – or, at the very least, as a necessary supplement to the train.

PRT can provide better service than a train, with potential 24/7 operation and dozens of boarding locations throughout the region, including direct service to downtown Santa Cruz, UCSC, Cabrillo College, emergency rooms, and throughout Watsonville.

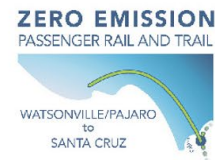
PRT nearly eliminates "waiting for the train," by providing on-demand service similar to Waymo – but using dedicated guideways, never stuck in traffic.

PRT minimizes environmental impact and avoids conflicts with Roaring Camp.

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PRT utilizes regular batteries, thereby avoiding the inefficiency and uncertainty associated with hydrogen as a power source.

PRT enables social distancing, allowing for continued service even during a pandemic.

The RTC's past decision to pursue conventional train service instead of PRT was based on faulty and/or outdated information, especially regarding cost. The TCAA anticipated a passenger rail service with 11 to 15 stations for under \$500 million. The latest ZEPRT Executive Summary has increased that cost by nearly a factor of ten! The proposed train is becoming more expensive every day.

PRT, on the other hand, is becoming increasingly viable and cost-effective. The Swyft Cities "Whoosh" system, utilizing inexpensive cables as shown below, is expected to be operational within two years in Irvine, California. It's a full-fledged PRT system that looks like a gondola. This system could provide outstanding service for Santa Cruz County, whisking passengers from the Boardwalk to UCSC within ten minutes.

Please take a closer look at innovative technology such as PRT (and Whoosh in particular), before spending \$4.28 billion on an inflexible train system. See: <https://swyftcities.com>

Sincerely,

Brett Garrett

190 Walnut Ave Unit 301

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

- Dear RTC Commissioners and Staff,

I urge you to PAUSE the passenger rail efforts for now and look into other transportation solutions. Voters are unlikely to approve a hefty sales tax for a system that fails to reach high-employment areas and also fails to provide any benefits until 2047.

Please acknowledge that the rail corridor is poorly located to meet the transportation needs of our community. It doesn't reach UCSC or hospitals, and it doesn't provide a convenient solution for downtown Santa Cruz.

Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) is a superior and more affordable transportation solution.

Since 2007 (or before), Santa Cruz PRT has advocated for a "Boardwalk to UCSC" system that is now needed more than ever (even without a train), given the new construction in downtown Santa Cruz and the growing population at UCSC. Just imagine, a ten-minute ride from downtown to UCSC, available on demand, 24/7. This system would meet current needs while also establishing a last-mile solution for potential future train service.

In other words, "passenger rail plus PRT" would be much more desirable -- with much higher ridership and more palatable to voters -- than passenger rail without PRT.

But PRT can be so much more than a last-mile solution. After a small PRT system is in place, people will see the benefits of extending the system to serve more locations, potentially as far as Aptos or Watsonville. I see a strong possibility that PRT could provide excellent service to those locations long before 2047, the projected start date for passenger rail.

The conclusion of the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis was incorrect! Commissioners were told in 2021 that PRT would be more expensive than a train, and less friendly to bicycles and the climate, none of which was correct. Now we know the train will cost about nine times the TCAA estimated cost, so the past decision to reject PRT (based on incorrect information) should be rescinded.

For more information, please see the attachments and reach out to me, or to PRT/ATN vendors

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and consultants such as Line Mobility (high speed): Robert Baertsch - local Santa Cruz resident  
Vuba: Peter Muller, - PRT/ATN project developer with access to many others such as Modutram  
Whoosh / Swyft Cities (affordable, low visual impact, coming soon to Irvine): Steve Raney  
Again, please pause the passenger rail efforts for now and explore other transportation solutions for our county.

Sincerely, Brett Garrett

- Dear RTC ZPRT Staff,

I attended the July 22, 2025, ZPRT informational session about rail stations. It was a complete waste of time. No meaningful information was provided about station location maps or infrastructure related to the proposed stations. Vague, themed descriptions like "Beachy" and "Woodsy" were not helpful at all. I also noticed that the other four attendees quickly left during the "conceptual" presentation.

I stayed and submitted about eight questions to the presenter, but only one was asked—regarding the Aptos station locations. I learned that the only station for Aptos would be in Aptos Village. How will this site provide the necessary parking for those who want to use the train? The Aptos Village Project is already severely underparked.

The plan should include a station near Cabrillo College to serve the 604-bed dormitory, which will be shared 40% with UCSC students, and extend rail service to the Westside of Santa Cruz to bring students and staff closer to UCSC for a bus shuttle.

Additionally, there should be a station at La Selva Beach to serve residents and commuters there.

Sincerely, Becky Steinbruner

- Hello members of the RTC,

PLEASE bring a demonstration rail service between Santa Cruz and Capitola ASAP so we can avoid the TERRIBLE automobile traffic that exists now that the Murray Street Bridge is out of commission. The traffic going from Hwy 17 and downtown Santa Cruz is horrible if you are heading south on Hwy 1 in the afternoon.

When this project is finished, I am really looking forward to putting my bike on the train in Capitola and taking the train through the traffic in Santa Cruz, and then getting off the train and riding my bike north to Wilder State Park and beyond!

We just rode a streetcar in SF, on the trolley tracks, and it was terrific to be OFF THE ROAD AND OUT OF THE TRAFFIC, even though our streetcar was not moving some of the time. It was so relaxing not to be behind the wheel of a car stuck in traffic!

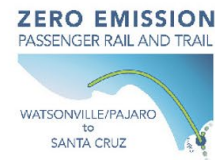
Thanks for your time, Kathleen Hansen Capitola

- Most people cannot believe this concept is still alive. It does not pencil out and is a complete waste of taxpayer money. It requires a federal investigation.
- The rail right of way is the only north-south route between Santa Cruz and Watsonville, aside from Highway 1. It should be preserved for long-term north-south transportation improvements in the county. Highway 1 is currently being upgraded and is unlikely to be widened in the future to increase capacity. It would be unwise to abandon it now and simply build a bike/pedestrian trail in the middle, as this would block future mass transit enhancements to meet long-term transportation needs. The controversy over the rail trail has persisted long enough. The bike/pedestrian trail should be constructed now, according to the plans underway by the city

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and county. These plans preserve a mass transit corridor beside the trail, wide enough to allow for future rail, trolley, bus, or other mass transit vehicles when funding becomes available. The larger community still supports rail or other mass transit options, as well as a bike/pedestrian trail on the rail right-of-way. I strongly oppose and find the disruptive behavior related to this controversy to be inappropriate. The Zeptr report has offered valuable information for the commission and the public. Cost-effective alternatives should now be examined to provide some form of transit along the rail corridor. A rail and trail bridge should be designed to replace the Capitola Trestle so that the trail project can proceed while other options, such as rail, trolley, or bus systems, are studied for the rail segment of the corridor. The commission should postpone its decision on the Zeptr report until its November meeting.

- I want to express my support for further planning of a rail transportation option. I look forward to the day I can ride the train all the way to a connection that will get me to San Luis Obispo and LA without driving. As the ZEPRT report indicates, the Capitola trestle needs to be replaced, so it seems wise to move forward immediately and build a bridge that can accommodate both rail transportation and bike/pedestrian crossings. This aligns with what Capitola wants—keeping the rail/trail on the trestle—making it a win-win. Please consider obtaining a peer review of this report that compares the project with similar ones regarding cost and alternatives. People are complaining about the Murray Street bridge being closed for the retrofit. An idea I've heard mentioned is to bring in a demonstration rail service that could transport people between Santa Cruz and Capitola. This seems like a great way for bike commuters and pedestrians to access businesses that are currently suffering from a lack of access.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts on this environmentally friendly project, which will help transport people within and outside our county and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Sincerely, Vicki Miller.

- My wife and I are longtime residents and are interested in multi-modal transportation options for our county, but the rail does not make financial sense given the many other priorities we face. Nearly every election cycle, we see ballot proposals for fire, schools, environment, roads, etc., and each of these critical funding requests should be evaluated at the same time to judge how we, as SCC voters, want our tax dollars to be spent. We vote no on rail. Tom and Becky Hart, 180 Barnes Rd, Aptos.
- We oppose the train part of the rail trail project. The train wouldn't reach the main population centers in our county and would be used by only a small part of our community. It is far too costly for what we would receive. We would vote against the tax increase, although we have supported every educational bond measure, whether passed or failed, over the past forty-five years. We urge you to expedite the completion of the trail. Everyone agrees that aspect of the project is important. Brian and Sally Legakis, Aptos.
- I strongly support the goal of establishing a transportation system that provides an alternative to cars. Traffic congestion is worsening. A rail connection between Santa Cruz and Watsonville—and beyond—is necessary and feasible.

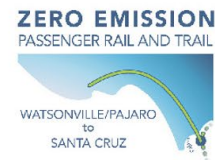
The price listed in the ZERPT report appears questionable. We need a review that compares other existing systems, including their capital and operating costs, so the commission and the public can gain additional perspectives and consider alternatives.

Build a rail/trail between SC and Capitola as soon as possible! I live in Live Oak and want to get around the now-closed Murray Bridge before it reopens in many years. Roland Saher

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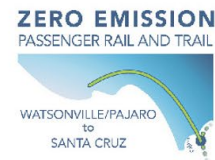


- We need rail transit because vehicle travel is unsustainable. Also, let's build a new trestle in Capitola. Thanks, Curt Coleman
- Why are the ridership estimates for the train from Santa Cruz to Watsonville ten times higher than ridership numbers in comparable small cities? Beaverton, OR, averaged 330 riders per day in 2024. Denton, TX, with twice the population, averaged 750 riders per day. A logical approach to determining ridership estimates is to start with small city numbers and adjust the forecast up or down based on relevant variables.  
Who is responsible for overseeing ridership estimates?
- Traffic from Santa Cruz to beach communities south is often horrendous and it's getting worse. Please support rail transportation. If we add more lanes to the highway, we all know they will soon fill up. Lynnwood Leroy Coppedge
- Not a suitable mechanism for funding.
- Dear SCCRTC,  
I am writing to express my strong support for the benefits of the Rail Trail in Santa Cruz County. I use public transit here and throughout the Bay Area and beyond, and I know that having access to a train in Santa Cruz County would be a massive boon to workers, tourists, and those who want to shop in various towns in our area. I attended the contentious meeting in Capitola a few months ago and have read disparaging letters to the editor in the Sentinel and Good Times. Out of environmental urgency, we cannot remain dependent on the automobile.  
I can send comments elsewhere if that would be more effective.  
Thank you, Lizann Keyes
- Hello, I am a resident of Santa Cruz County. Looking at the numbers in your flier ([https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/factsheets/ZEPRT\\_FactSheet\\_DraftPCR.pdf](https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/factsheets/ZEPRT_FactSheet_DraftPCR.pdf)), I see that the cost is astronomical compared to the benefits for SC County residents. The price is definitely way too high. But even if it were reasonable, the benefit just isn't there. 5k rides per day is barely anything, and once this train is built, we can't use that space for anything else, like a dedicated bus and bike-only road that would have a much easier time handling narrow right-of-ways and passing.
- RTC, please put an end to this inefficient public policy of endless studies, public hearings, and pushing your agenda for a train in the current rail corridor. The train is a waste of money, as shown by the last study estimating costs over \$4 billion. Please just stop talking about the train.
- Kind regards, Paul Braga (lifelong resident of SC County)
- What can the community do to stop wasting money? This train is a joke!  
If you are truly serving the community that pays your salary, you should provide a schedule and an itemized list of costs.  
Clearly state the operating expenses: \$  
34-41 million,  
\$788,461 per month,  
\$112,000 per day,  
5000 people use it daily, costing  
\$22,50 per ride.  
Build a path for pedestrians and bikes now.  
Honestly, what a joke.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025

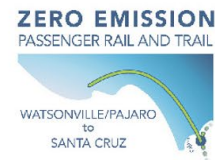


- I'm looking forward to taking the rail trail transit from Santa Cruz to Capitola and Watsonville. Traffic is terrible and getting worse all the time. We need rail transit for a better and safer quality of life.  
Please bring a demonstration rail service between Santa Cruz and Capitola ASAP so we can get across town during the Murray Street Bridge project.  
The ZEPRT report says that the Capitola trestle needs to be replaced, so let's move that project forward and make it a high priority. Let's replace it with a beautiful bridge that will accommodate both rail and trail.  
The \$4.28B price tag is out of scale with similar projects in the region. The report does not include an analysis and comparison of other systems' capital and operating costs. Please authorize a peer review of this report to provide the public and commissioners with alternative perspectives and options.  
Meaningful public review and comment on all the supporting documents, which are part of this study, will take more than a few days. The commission should defer action on the final ZEPRT report to its November 2025 meeting. This additional time will ensure a full and open discussion, as well as allow for a meaningful peer review.  
Thanks,  
Russell Weisz
- Dear Chair and Commissioners,  
My name is Kevin Maguire, and I am submitting this comment regarding the ZEPRT Draft Project Concept Report and related agenda items for August 7, 2025. I am sure you have all been busy reading the 312 pages. I am deeply concerned about several critical flaws in the ZEPRT planning process that undermine public trust, fiscal responsibility, and long-term viability: I urge the Commission to pause and reassess this project before proceeding to Milestone 4. There are serious issues in the report that must be publicly addressed before any further steps are taken. The report uses 2045 ridership and fare revenue projections while keeping all costs, both capital and operating, in 2025 dollars. This creates a distorted and misleading impression of farebox recovery and financial feasibility.  
If you adjust for inflation, the \$6.00 fare cited in the report would be \$10.84 in 2045, and the \$41 million operations cost would be \$74 million. This means fare revenue would cover only 29% of operations, not the 50% implied using mismatched years. Such accounting is inappropriate for a \$4+ billion infrastructure project and would not pass scrutiny in any private-sector feasibility review.  
Additionally, if you include public parking in Capitola for 9 hours, that would add about \$10 daily in costs in 2025 dollars, and approximately \$15 in 2045.  
End-to-end travel time discrepancies are significant; the 40-45 minute target is unrealistic, as the report shows that without stops, it took 53 minutes.  
Page 244 (290 in the PDF) displays the West and East-bound schedules. A train leaving Pajaro at 7:00 am arrives at Beach Street station at 7:58 am and at Natural Bridges at 8:08 am.  
Therefore, to help reduce Highway One congestion and get the 234 commuters to work on time, they would need to take the 6:30 am train. (As I previously stated to SCCRTC.)  
You don't need to read further to see that this isn't viable, but please consider some of our biggest concerns and red flags, especially if you're still undecided, and think about the lasting negative impact this could have on Santa Cruz for the next 40-50 years or more.

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### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

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We will hold the title of the #1 most unaffordable place to live for decades, affecting our local businesses and citizens with higher taxes and forcing us to scramble for more funds in the future, just like every transit solution out there. Look at BART, CalTRAIN, SMART, SPINTER—they all lose money and require bailouts just to keep running. Have any of these options fixed highway congestion? No!

Pro-Rail talks about future generations at the expense of those who built this city and county. Should we be burdened with costs and be forced to move, subsidizing those who displace us, our children, and future grandchildren? Meanwhile, we face terrible roads, no bus benches or covered areas for Metro users, infrastructure problems, hospitals that can't serve our current population, and police and fire services that need more funding.

To quote RTC Executive Director Sara Christensen, "I will not say this project is infeasible; any project is feasible with enough money and community support. If you know this is an ambitious project, you're correct. It is very expensive for our community, but if we prioritize it over other needs and are serious about delivering it, our team will figure out how to get it done."

- RTC Staff Presentation, 6.12.2025

The votes will not support that plan; we will not prioritize this over all other needs.

There is no plan shown for how the local funding match will be raised. Will it be a sales tax, parcel tax, or bond? Voters deserve to know how much they will be expected to pay and for how long. This lack of transparency is unacceptable.

You are approving contracts to advance trail construction while knowing that ZEPRT plans call for rerouting or rebuilding sections of the trail to accommodate rail. This is a waste of taxpayer funds and risks duplicating work. We should railbank now to protect the trail from future disruption.

Building it twice is not a good business plan. Has that been well disclosed to the public by the RTC? The answer is no, as we discovered in Capitola, the real reason RTC wanted to move the trail out of the rail ROW and onto city streets was the need for more space for passing siding and station. And uncovered in a PRA request, County/RTC said if we build the Ultimate Trail on the coastal side (as promoted/promised), we would have to tear it out and build it twice for ZEPRT.

That is not the definition of "Ultimate Trail." That is not what was proposed to the City of Capitola back in October of 2023.

The proposed alignment and schedule will directly interfere with Roaring Camp's Beach Train, force construction through fragile coastal and wetland zones, and require replacing 28 bridges, many over sensitive areas. These impacts are too severe and the ridership too uncertain to justify.

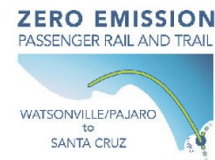
Red Flags That Undermine Public Trust and Project Feasibility

- Email:
  - Unrealistic End-to-End Travel Time  
The report claims the train will run from Pajaro to Santa Cruz in 45 minutes. But the ZEPRT rail simulation itself shows a realistic travel time of 68–73 minutes, after accounting for speed limits, acceleration/deceleration, station stops, and train passing delays. This discrepancy directly undermines the credibility of the operational and cost model.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025

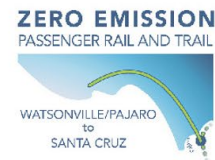


- Inflated Ridership Projections  
The report forecasts 5,400 daily riders by 2045, yet peer systems like the San Diego Coaster, serving a region 10x our population and tourism base, carry fewer weekday riders today. The ZEPRT model assumes higher per-capita ridership than almost any comparable system in the U.S., without strong justification. Hope and dreams are not a plan.
- Trail and Right-of-Way Conflicts  
ZEPRT will divert the trail off the rail corridor in multiple locations, including Beach Street, Jade Street Park, Capitola Trestle, and Walker Street, due to space constraints. In some cases, ROW is only 15–20 feet wide. This sacrifices trail quality and undermines years of community support for safe, continuous active transportation. What about Safe Routes to School? We should prioritize that, which is part of why the ATP Grants were funded, to help disadvantaged communities.
- Financial Mismatch: Future Benefits vs. Present Costs  
Ridership and fare revenues are modeled using 2045 projections, but costs are shown in 2025 dollars. This inflates the appearance of farebox recovery and hides the real operating deficit, which, adjusted for inflation, will be over \$74 million annually, with only ~29% covered by fares.
- Conflicts with Freight  
Freight was not modeled, despite being a federally protected use. This leaves serious unanswered questions about operational conflicts, noise, and safety in a shared corridor. No direct input from freight operators, despite assumptions being made about their future behavior (e.g., willingness to only run overnight).
- Requests to the Commission:
  - Do not adopt Milestone 4 until travel times, ridership forecasts, and cost models are corrected and presented in consistent-year dollars.
  - Disclose your funding strategy: What taxes or bonds are being considered? What's the expected local match? Voters need transparency.
  - Railbank now: Protect the corridor for public use, prioritize the trail, and avoid redundant trail/rail construction costs.
  - Reschedule the ZEPRT hearing for an evening meeting or continue the item until the full financial memo is released and reviewed by the public.
- The public is paying attention. This is not about being “anti-rail.” It’s about being honest, fiscally responsible, and protecting our community’s long-term interests.  
This is a \$4.28 to \$6.4 Billion Gamble on an Unproven System.  
We all want sustainable, equitable transportation, but not by misleading the public or building a white elephant project that drains resources from what we actually use: local roads, Metro, and safe bike/ped routes.  
Thank you for considering these concerns. Please slow down and do this right. Kevin Maguire, Capitola
- Dear RTC Commissioners, I urge you to reject any new taxes for the ZEPRT train project. We cannot afford more burdens on working families for a limited-use system. Stop funding more rail studies. The June 12 meeting showed that this project is financially unrealistic and cannot meet real transit needs. Start railbanking now so we can build a safer, more inclusive trail and keep

## Public Engagement Summary

### Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail

#### Milestone 4: March - August 2025



the corridor for future transit without displacing vulnerable residents. Santa Cruz needs flexible, cost-effective solutions— not another study for a train we can't afford. We must prioritize the metro, and if the bus on shoulder lanes isn't effective enough, we should consider dedicated bus lanes or stricter enforcement of non-bus traffic using those lanes only for exiting the highway. Sincerely, Doug Huskey,

- I completely agree with Kevin Maguire's op-ed article about the proposed train. He outlines the situation very succinctly.  
My wife is a lifelong resident, and I have lived in Capitola since 1976. We have watched our leaders go from no and slow growth to this expansive growth covering every square foot of available land in the county.  
I am somewhat confused by the fascination with trains, especially when we are looking at an investment of billions of dollars with no clear timeline and a vague idea of ridership.  
It's a pretty hard sell when you cannot guarantee me that my great-grandchildren will be able to utilize this train when they are adults.  
I would fully support converting the current rail corridor into a trail/road for biking and hiking. That is a viable and attainable project. Respectfully, Mike White
- The Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail Master Plan originally designated Segment 17A (Buena Vista/San Andreas Road along the rail corridor), but Segment 17B was later added due to agricultural interests, despite overwhelming public opposition; 17B forces walkers and bicyclists onto a 3-mile longer, less safe route alongside fast traffic (45+ mph), removing them from the natural ambiance of the corridor and pushing them onto steeper hills and poorly paved roads with no shoulders, which undermines safety and enjoyment; Active Transportation users in Watsonville and mid/south Santa Cruz County need the best and most viable route, and since Segment 17A reflects true public input from numerous forums leading to the 2013 Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail adoption, SCCRTC should endorse Segment 17A over 17B. – Peter Stanger
- To Riley Gerbrandt, SCCRTC SCCRTC BAC Comments ZEPRT Milestone 4, 8-22-25  
Ad hoc Committee: Paula Bradley, Sally Arnold, and Gina Cole  
Segment 8 - Beach St - Boardwalk: These seemed to be the same plans that the BAC previously reviewed. Paula asked Chris O'Gara, engineer with HDR, at the Watsonville open house on 6/23 to explain the alternatives, as it is not easy to see the differences. We do not support Alternatives 1 & 4, the elevated options. Chris explained that the above-ground is included as a conceptual option as part of the environmental review. We don't see that it would be feasible or visually acceptable in this scenic corridor. The plus is that it would entirely separate the peds & bikes from the train. Alternative 4 is further inland than the other.
  - We support alternatives 2 and 3, which are at-grade options with the track relocated 20 feet inland from the existing tracks into the street, where the bike path currently is, with the trail on the coastal side of the new track alignment. One of these options will be in the existing Boardwalk landscape strip, which is Seaside Company property and would require negotiation. The trail will still switch back onto the San Lorenzo trestle, but it will shift to the coastal side while the track moves inland. If the trail is elevated, it will drop to street level via a tunnel, which currently exists for Boardwalk pedestrians (narrow walk or bikes?). The elevation change is 15 feet, but it is unclear how the grade differences will be managed or what this will look like for cyclists. There is no preference

- at this point between alternatives 2 or 3, as they are similar; the engineers will further refine the details.
- The current issue with cyclists not crossing the tracks at a 90-degree angle at the roundabout on Pacific Ave can be addressed with a good solution: placing the bike path in a separate striped area outside the roundabout traffic lane, allowing cyclists to continue on Pacific from the wharf. The other dangerous spot on Beach Street and Cliff Street, with the proposed alternatives, will no longer require the trail to cross the tracks, as the trail will be on the coast side through that area, which is positive. Faster or more experienced cyclists will likely stay in the roundabout traffic lane and take their chances with the tracks. The roundabout is the pathway connecting Segment 7B to Pacific Avenue.
  - **Segment 10** – Thompson Avenue and 47<sup>th</sup> Ave, Capitola. We previously reviewed the options for realignments from 30<sup>th</sup> to 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue; we prefer to see the trail stay within the right-of-way (RoW). There are issues with the different alternatives on the streets—the Brommer Street intersection at 41<sup>st</sup> Ave is already tight for cyclists and vehicles. We do not support the trail going through Jade Street Park, as the park is heavily used during all daylight hours, and there is no space to add a 12-foot trail without removing other necessary recreational facilities. Off-the-RoW options onto the streets, such as Thompson Road, are indirect and zigzag through various streets to connect to the RoW at 47<sup>th</sup> and Cliff Drive. A Class 1 separated and protected bike lane is essential.
  - **Segment 11 – Capitola trestle** – The plans included a new “shared bridge substructure” with a superstructure, a concept that was new. Paula asked, and Chris O’Gara explained that there will be one new structure—the shared substructure with a superstructure (the top of the trestle) — that features a separated multi-use path and tracks, not cantilevered. Because the RoW is constricted, everything has to fit within the RoW's airspace. The trail would be on the coastal side, and the track will shift inland. A portion of the trestle will span the river, while the rest will have some kind of piers into the ground. There were no further details about this. This new plan seems to be a good option, but there are not many details available at this point.
  - **Segments 13 - 15.** We support the trail realignment from Hidden Beach trestle to the County Park onto Sumner Avenue with a Class 1 separated and protected bike lane.
  - **Segment 15 – Cabrillo College / McGregor.** The plans show a stop on the beach side of McGregor Drive, with an overpass across Hwy 1 to Cabrillo College Drive; this may be part of a future plan, but it is unclear how it would be funded. We do not support the tunnel. If feasible, an overpass connecting Cabrillo College would be ideal.
  - **West Side Station:** We support the Natural Bridges station with connections to UCSC bus routes.
  - **Segments 17B to 20 – Buena Vista Road to Pajaro River.** We support the trail realignments from Buena Vista Rd onto San Andreas Road and Beach Street to Lee Road, and onto Rodriguez St in Watsonville with a Class 1 separated and protected bike lane. We do not support the trail alignment on Beach Street between Lee Road and Walker Street due to the presence of numerous driveways, heavy industrial traffic, and road debris. We understand there are issues with the trail in the right-of-way (RoW) with railroad spurs and industrial users in this area, but it would be safer to avoid this busy

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- road. It was explained that Watsonville residents and stakeholders prefer the trail on Beach Street, and we respect their viewpoint.
- We support the alternative trail onto Rodriguez Street, closer to Main Street, which has an existing bike lane and a separate trail bridge across the Pajaro River connecting to Pajaro Park. The segments 17 to 20 trail would be outside the right-of-way (RoW) and would need to be funded separately; hopefully, this will be possible.
  - We prefer a station at the old train station if feasible, and a second station at Ohlone Parkway, which data shows has a high potential number of riders to Santa Cruz. A station closer to Rodriguez and Main Street makes sense – it's close to the transit center and future higher-density residential development downtown.
  - Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We look forward to progress on constructing the Coastal Rail Trail.

## Santa Cruz Community Workshop Survey Tables

### ACTIVITY 1

| <b>BEACH ST. ALIGNMENT</b>                                                                                                                  |              |                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What are the TWO biggest challenges that need to be considered for the proposed alignment along Beach Street?</b>                        | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                           |
| Easy access for beach and Boardwalk visitors                                                                                                | 8            |                                                                           |
| Scheduling regularly scheduled passenger rail service                                                                                       | 11           |                                                                           |
| Providing appropriate facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians                                                                             | 9            |                                                                           |
| Access to on-street parking                                                                                                                 | 0            |                                                                           |
| Access to off-street parking                                                                                                                | 1            |                                                                           |
| Traffic congestion                                                                                                                          | 8            |                                                                           |
| Other:                                                                                                                                      | 1            | - Emergency access to boardwalk                                           |
| Total responses                                                                                                                             | 19/21        |                                                                           |
| <b>What are the TWO most important considerations to you in the location of a rail station serving the Santa Cruz Boardwalk/Beach area?</b> | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                           |
| Close proximity to the Boardwalk and beach                                                                                                  | 9            |                                                                           |
| Close proximity to the beach                                                                                                                | 0            |                                                                           |
| Pedestrian and bicycle access to the station                                                                                                | 7            |                                                                           |
| Connection to the rail trail                                                                                                                | 6            |                                                                           |
| Available parking                                                                                                                           | 2            |                                                                           |
| Capability for shared use                                                                                                                   | 8            |                                                                           |
| Other:                                                                                                                                      | 2            | - Station on the main line so time to Westside is minimized<br>- Aquarium |
| Total responses                                                                                                                             | 19/21        |                                                                           |
| <b>When considering the proposed alignments for Beach Street, which THREE elements are most important to you?</b>                           | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                           |
| Visual design style                                                                                                                         | 6            | - At-grade is better                                                      |

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|                                                                           |              |                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use of promenade space                                                    | 5            |                                                                                                                                |
| Views (of the Boardwalk, beach, etc.)                                     | 7            |                                                                                                                                |
| Train service to a Boardwalk station platform                             | 10           |                                                                                                                                |
| Separating trail facility from other transportation modes                 | 3            |                                                                                                                                |
| Pedestrian access                                                         | 6            |                                                                                                                                |
| On-street parking                                                         | 0            |                                                                                                                                |
| Traffic circulation                                                       | 8            |                                                                                                                                |
| Safety (trail, track crossings, etc.)                                     | 8            |                                                                                                                                |
| Other:                                                                    | 3            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retain access for beach train</li> <li>- Cost</li> <li>- Capacity planning</li> </ul> |
| Total responses                                                           | 21/21        |                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Looking at Beach Street alignment renderings, which do you prefer?</b> | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                |
| At-grade                                                                  | 10           | - Don't have enough information                                                                                                |
| Elevated                                                                  | 10           | - Don't have enough information                                                                                                |
| Total responses                                                           | 20/21        |                                                                                                                                |

**ACTIVITY 2**

| BEACH FLATS TRAFFIC PATTERNS                                                                                                                                 |       |                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If Traffic circulation plan changes are considered within the Beach Flats neighborhood, what would you consider to be the TWO highest priorities for change? | Count | Comments                                                                                                                                  |
| Reduce vehicle traffic                                                                                                                                       | 9     |                                                                                                                                           |
| Increase capacity for vehicle traffic                                                                                                                        | 1     |                                                                                                                                           |
| Improve access and connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians                                                                                               | 10    |                                                                                                                                           |
| Retain as much on-street parking as possible                                                                                                                 | 0     |                                                                                                                                           |
| Redirect traffic patterns to limit cut-through traffic                                                                                                       | 5     |                                                                                                                                           |
| Reduce vehicular traffic speeds through the use of traffic calming measures                                                                                  | 4     |                                                                                                                                           |
| Other:                                                                                                                                                       | 5     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Back entrance to boardwalk main parking lot</li> <li>- Satellite parking and shuttles</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                    |              |                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                    |              | - Extend ocean street directly into the boardwalk                                                                                             |
| Total responses                                                                    | <b>17/21</b> |                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>How would you improve access to/from the beach and Boardwalk (Select ONE)?</b>  | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                               |
| Provide more multi-modal opportunities to encourage less vehicular traffic         | <b>13</b>    |                                                                                                                                               |
| Disperse traffic to more streets to reduce traffic on Beach Street                 | <b>0</b>     |                                                                                                                                               |
| Utilize one-way traffic on select streets to improve traffic flow to parking areas | <b>8</b>     |                                                                                                                                               |
| Other:                                                                             | <b>2</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safe access to and parking for bike</li> <li>- New back entrance to boardwalk parking lot</li> </ul> |
| Total responses                                                                    | <b>19/21</b> |                                                                                                                                               |

**ACTIVITY 3**

| <b>WEST SIDE STATION &amp; ALIGNMENT</b>                                                        |              |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What are your top THREE considerations for determining the end-of-line service location?</b> | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Station access                                                                                  | <b>9</b>     | - At marine center                                                                                                                                                               |
| Ridership estimates                                                                             | <b>6</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Noise impacts                                                                                   | <b>4</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Traffic impacts                                                                                 | <b>8</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Connections to Downtown                                                                         | <b>8</b>     | - Use sanctuary center to access downtown                                                                                                                                        |
| Connections to UC Santa Cruz                                                                    | <b>4</b>     | - Route 19 Bay/California                                                                                                                                                        |
| Easy transfer to Santa Cruz METRO                                                               | <b>7</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Other:                                                                                          | <b>5</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Needs of westside residents/businesses/schools/parks</li> <li>- Connection to north coast</li> <li>- Service the most people</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                        |              |                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                        |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service to westside</li> <li>- Surge capacity</li> </ul>                                               |
| Total responses                                                                                                                                                        | <b>19/21</b> |                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Which alternative do you prefer for end-of-line service?</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                 |
| Depot Park (Downtown Santa Cruz)                                                                                                                                       | <b>6</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Natural Bridges Drive (West Santa Cruz)                                                                                                                                | <b>13</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With station near downtown retained</li> </ul>                                                         |
| Total responses                                                                                                                                                        | <b>19/21</b> |                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>For passenger rail service from California Street to Natural Bridges Drive, would you (Select ONE):</b>                                                             | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                 |
| Only support train service with Quiet Zones                                                                                                                            | <b>9</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Support train service with horns                                                                                                                                       | <b>7</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Never support train service through this area                                                                                                                          | <b>2</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Total responses                                                                                                                                                        | <b>19/21</b> |                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>When considering the rail alignment from California Street to Natural Bridges Drive, what THREE elements for at-grade crossing improvements are most important?</b> | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                 |
| Reducing train noise heard at nearby properties                                                                                                                        | <b>13</b>    |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Providing pedestrian crossings separated from the road                                                                                                                 | <b>10</b>    |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Channelizing vehicles with medians                                                                                                                                     | <b>8</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Maintaining existing access patterns for properties                                                                                                                    | <b>2</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What does this mean?</li> </ul>                                                                        |
| Channelizing pedestrians                                                                                                                                               | <b>1</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Minimizing the number of road closures                                                                                                                                 | <b>5</b>     |                                                                                                                                                 |
| Other:                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>2</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Close more streets/crossing give rail and trail full ROW</li> <li>- Balancing all the above</li> </ul> |
| Total responses                                                                                                                                                        | <b>16/21</b> |                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>If initial service ended at Depot Park, would you support a future West Santa Cruz service extension?</b>                                                           | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                                                                                                                                 |

**Public Engagement Summary**  
**Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail**  
**Milestone 4: March - August 2025**



|                 |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes             | <b>11</b>    | - If you don't serve westside you won't have the political support to pass a funding measure for rail                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| No              | <b>5</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| If no, why?     |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too much disruption</li> <li>- Maybe, I don't know if it matters much</li> <li>- There are too many at-grade crossings it would increase congestion for residents of the area</li> <li>- Too many road crossing = traffic and pedestrian conflict</li> </ul> |
| Total responses | <b>16/21</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## Watsonville Community Workshop Survey Tables

### ACTIVITY 1

| WALKER ST. ALIGNMENT & STATION LOCATION                                                                       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Where would you prefer the Downtown Watsonville station to be located?                                        | Count | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Historic Depot                                                                                                | 13    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Either whatever is faster and cheaper</li> <li>- Welcome/orientation center</li> <li>- Make it look cool</li> </ul>                                                 |
| Walker Street                                                                                                 | 5     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- either whatever is faster and cheaper</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |
| Total responses                                                                                               | 18/22 |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Looking at the Walker Street rail alignment and station location, which THREE IMPACTS would affect you most?  | Count | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Access to properties/businesses                                                                               | 11    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I don't understand this question</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |
| Noise                                                                                                         | 1     |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Traffic                                                                                                       | 10    |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Parking                                                                                                       | 7     |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Pedestrian movement                                                                                           | 11    |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Other:                                                                                                        | 4     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safety</li> <li>- access to downtown/plaza</li> <li>- Truck movement</li> </ul>                                                                                     |
| Total responses                                                                                               | 19/22 |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Looking at Walker Street rail alignment and station location, which THREE BENEFITS are most important to you? | Count | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Access to station/rail service and transit connections                                                        | 11    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These are all good benefits of rail service. Are you saying one station location has more of these benefits than others/ Again I'm not sure I understand</li> </ul> |
| Regional connection between downtown Watsonville and Santa Cruz via the train                                 | 15    |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Improved quality of life and reduced commute stress                                                           | 4     |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Improved public safety and reduced crash risk                                                                 | 3     |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

**Public Engagement Summary**  
**Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail**  
**Milestone 4: March - August 2025**



|                                                                            |              |                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Maintained traffic circulation on existing roadways                        | <b>1</b>     |                                                                                                                         |
| Increased mobility for youth, seniors, and low-income residents            | <b>8</b>     |                                                                                                                         |
| Economic development catalyst for jobs and housing in Downtown Watsonville | <b>8</b>     |                                                                                                                         |
| Other:                                                                     | <b>3</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parking at station</li> <li>- Connection to main state rail station</li> </ul> |
| Total responses                                                            | <b>20/22</b> |                                                                                                                         |

**ACTIVITY 2**

| TRAIL ALIGNMENT & BRIDGE LOCATIONS OVER PAJARO RIVER                                                                 |  | Count | Comments                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------|------------------------------------------|
| Do you agree with the proposed trail route/ alignment along W. Beach Street to Rodriguez Street?                     |  |       |                                          |
| Yes                                                                                                                  |  | 17    |                                          |
| No                                                                                                                   |  | 4     |                                          |
| If no, why?                                                                                                          |  | 1     | - Not as safe as following the rail line |
| Total responses                                                                                                      |  | 21/22 |                                          |
| For the proposed W. Beach Street trail route/ alignment, what is most important for connecting to the train station? |  | Count | Comments                                 |
| Pedestrian access                                                                                                    |  | 2     | - ??                                     |
| Bicycle access                                                                                                       |  | 4     | - Safe way to get to station without car |
| Connection to the station via a dedicated multi-use trail facility branching off from the new trail                  |  | 13    |                                          |
| Connection to existing rail trail                                                                                    |  | 2     |                                          |
| Total responses                                                                                                      |  | 18/22 |                                          |
| With limited space along portions of W. Beach & Rodriguez Streets, what THREE ELEMENTS are most important?           |  | Count | Comments                                 |
| Safety of bicyclists and pedestrians                                                                                 |  | 17    |                                          |
| Buffer/protect bike lanes from vehicle traffic                                                                       |  | 17    |                                          |
| Retain existing street parking                                                                                       |  | 4     |                                          |

**Public Engagement Summary**  
**Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail**  
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|                                                                                                                           |              |                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Reduce street parking to accommodate wider trail                                                                          | <b>4</b>     |                                           |
| Maintain traffic lane width to accommodate vehicles/trucks                                                                | <b>11</b>    |                                           |
| Other:                                                                                                                    |              | - Landscaping space wide enough for trees |
| Total responses                                                                                                           | <b>21/22</b> |                                           |
| <b>Where would you prefer the trail bridge to cross over the Pajaro River?</b>                                            | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                           |
| From Rodriguez Street to Pajaro Park                                                                                      | <b>14</b>    |                                           |
| From Walker Street adjacent to existing rail bridge                                                                       | <b>6</b>     |                                           |
| Other:                                                                                                                    | <b>2</b>     | - Either<br>- No preference               |
| Total responses                                                                                                           | <b>22/22</b> |                                           |
| <b>When considering the trail bridge location, what are the THREE ELEMENTS most important to you?</b>                     | <b>Count</b> | <b>Comments</b>                           |
| Connection between residents in Watsonville and Pajaro                                                                    | <b>20</b>    | - And pajaro station (amtrak/caltrain)    |
| Connection to existing streets with low traffic volumes                                                                   | <b>8</b>     |                                           |
| Connection to existing public facilities (e.g., Rodriguez Park, Muzzio Center, Pajaro Park, Pajaro Middle School)         | <b>17</b>    |                                           |
| Impacts to roadways, parking, and existing infrastructure resulting from bridge approaches on either side of Pajaro River | <b>6</b>     |                                           |
| Proximity to existing railroad bridge                                                                                     | <b>3</b>     |                                           |
| Other:                                                                                                                    | <b>2</b>     | - Connection to bus routes/stops          |
| Total responses                                                                                                           | <b>22/22</b> |                                           |