
Re: Demand to Reconsider the Segment 12 Alignment & Respect Property Rights

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Date Wed 10/28/2026 10:23 AM
To Alberta James [REDACTED]
Cc Brian Zamora <bzamora@sccrtc.org>; Joel LaCagnina <jlacagnina@sccrtc.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,
Vanessa Yniguez
SCCRTC

From: Alberta James [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 9:43 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Demand to Reconsider the Segment 12 Alignment & Respect Property Rights

To the Commissioners of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I am writing to urge you to exercise your authority and direct RTC staff to stop pursuing the current Segment 12 Coastal Rail Trail alignment through Aptos Village.

RTC's latest attempt to claim land in the village is not in the best interest of the community. Further pursuit of property acquisition through either eminent domain or an appeal will be expensive. Tax payers have already shouldered a substantial amount on train studies which have highlighted low ridership and staggering costs.

I am hoping the commission will come to the realization that the county cannot afford this expensive train and will railbank the corridor and install the trail. Let's do the financially responsible thing: ditch the train and build the trail.

Regards,
Alberta James
[REDACTED]

Re: Trail Now Calls for RTC Accountability: Respect Property Rights, End Costly Litigation, and Build the Coastal Trail

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 9:08 AM

To Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Sent: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:16 PM

To: Sarah Christensen <schristensen@sccrtc.org>; skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov <skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov>; Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov <Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Felipe Hernandez <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Kim De Serpa <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Manu <manu.koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Fred <fkeeley@santacruzca.gov>; andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov <andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsvally.gov>; monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Eduardo Montesino <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; Rebecca Downing <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>; Gerry Jensen <gjensen@ci.capitola.ca.us>; fabian@communitylifeservices.org <fabian@communitylifeservices.org>; leonorfabian72@gmail.com <leonorfabian72@gmail.com>

Cc: Matt Machado <matt.machado@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Shannon Munz <smunz@sccrtc.org>; Corey Aldridge <caldridge@scmetro.org>; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>; Nathan Nguyen <nnguyen@santacruzca.gov>; Robert Tidmore <Robert.Tidmore@santacruzcounty.us>; Riley Gerbrandt <rgerbrandt@sccrtc.org>; info@jimmypanetta.com <info@jimmypanetta.com>

Subject: Trail Now Calls for RTC Accountability: Respect Property Rights, End Costly Litigation, and Build the Coastal Trail

Dear RTC Staff and Commissioners,

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) has failed our community by pursuing costly legal disputes without adequately addressing the property rights of landowners adjacent to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The recent court ruling involving the Trout Gulch Station property owners raises serious concerns about RTC staff's and legal counsel's understanding of these rights and the advice provided to the RTC Commission.

The judge determined that the RTC holds only an easement, rather than ownership of the underlying property. This raises an important question: **Why did RTC staff and legal counsel continue pursuing litigation without adequately recognizing and communicating the legal risks to commissioners?**

Trail Now strongly supports private property rights. We oppose RTC's continued reliance on litigation against adjacent property owners and believe the agency must stop wasting taxpayer dollars on legal battles that delay construction of the Coastal Trail.

It is time for RTC to change course and pursue practical, affordable solutions.

The recent ruling further strengthens the case for evaluating railbanking, which could provide a more cost-effective and straightforward approach to constructing the Coastal Trail directly on the existing railbed while preserving the corridor for potential future rail use. RTC should begin evaluating this alternative now, while the Surface Transportation Board (STB) considers its pending proceeding.

Trail Now calls on RTC staff and commissioners to take the following actions:

1. **Stop unnecessary litigation** against adjacent property owners and respect their legal rights.
2. **Meet directly with affected property owners**, particularly in Aptos Village, to develop mutually acceptable trail solutions.
3. **Advance the Interim Trail Plan through Aptos Village and all the way to Watsonville**, rather than continuing to pursue costly and contentious alternatives.
4. **Evaluate railbanking immediately** as a practical long-term strategy for completing the Coastal Trail.
5. **Protect existing state and federal grants** by prioritizing construction, resolving obstacles, and preventing further delays.

The potential loss of significant state and federal funding for Coastal Trail Segments 8–12 would represent a serious failure in project management and oversight. RTC staff and commissioners must be held accountable for decisions that unnecessarily delay construction and jeopardize these critical investments.

Our community deserves a completed Coastal Trail—not more litigation, escalating costs, and years of delays.

Trail Now urges RTC leadership to shift its priorities from fighting property owners to working collaboratively with them. The public expects responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, respect for private property rights, and meaningful progress toward completing the Coastal Trail.

Stop fighting the community. Start working with the community. Build the Interim Trail now.

Sincerely,

Brian Peoples



Re: RTC Closed Session / Trout Gulch Property owner legal challenge

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Tue 10/27/2026 8:35 AM

To Trail Now <brian@trailnow.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Trail Now <brian@trailnow.org>

Sent: Monday, October 26, 2026 7:37 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: RTC Closed Session / Trout Gulch Property owner legal challenge

On Thursday, October 29th, the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) will be holding a closed session to address the legal dispute between RTC and Trout Gulch property owners. Letters can be submitted to info@sccrtc.org by noon on Wednesday.

Agenda: [SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION](#)

The following is Trail Now letter to RTC:

To: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission Commissioners

Re: Direct Railbanking Action, Resolve Trout Gulch, and Protect Segment 12 Funding

Dear RTC Commissioners,

The recent Trout Gulch ruling presents an opportunity to respect property rights, protect public funding, and advance a safe, accessible Coastal Trail. Trail Now urges the Commission to resolve the Aptos Village dispute through negotiation and direct immediate work on an Interim Trail and railbanking.

1. Negotiate a fair Trout Gulch agreement.

Direct staff and counsel to pursue a limited purchase, lease, or easement for only the property rights needed to construct Segment 12. Protect existing businesses and compare any agreement with the cost, delay, and uncertainty of further litigation.

2. Advance the Interim Trail on the railbed.

Develop a buildable alternative through Aptos Village and Segment 12 on the existing railroad alignment, consistent with the approach for Segments 9–11.

3. Initiate concrete railbanking steps.

Direct staff and qualified independent railroad counsel to begin the necessary federal process and identify required agreements, approvals, costs, and decisions. Clarify which corridor-rights issues railbanking may resolve and which require separate agreements.

4. Protect trail funding.

Provide commissioners and the public with a clear accounting of affected grants, deadlines, and risks from property or regulatory delays, together with actions and decision dates needed to preserve funding.

The Commission should set a clear direction now: negotiate rather than prolong litigation, pursue railbanking, and establish an achievable path to construction.

Sincerely,

Trail Now

This email was sent to info@scrtc.org
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Trail Now 195 QUAIL RUN ROAD Aptos, CA 95003 USA



Re: Oct 29th RTC Closed Session Agenda / Direct Railbanking Action, Resolve Trout Gulch, and Protect Segment 12 Funding

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Tue 10/27/2026 8:38 AM

To Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Sent: Monday, October 26, 2026 7:41 PM

To: Sarah Christensen <schristensen@sccrtc.org>; skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov <skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov>; Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov <Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Felipe Hernandez <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Kimberly De Serpa <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Manu Koenig <manu.koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Fred <fkeeley@santacruzca.gov>; andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov <andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsville.gov>; monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Eduardo Montesino <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; Rebecca Downing <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>; Gerry Jensen <gjensen@ci.capitola.ca.us>; fabian@communitylifeservices.org <fabian@communitylifeservices.org>; leonorfabian72@gmail.com <leonorfabian72@gmail.com>; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Cc: Matt Machado <matt.machado@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Nathan Nguyen <nnguyen@santacruzca.gov>; Robert Tidmore <Robert.Tidmore@santacruzcounty.us>; info@jimmypanetta.com <info@jimmypanetta.com>

Subject: Oct 29th RTC Closed Session Agenda / Direct Railbanking Action, Resolve Trout Gulch, and Protect Segment 12 Funding

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4. Protect trail funding.

Provide commissioners and the public with a clear accounting of affected grants, deadlines, and risks from property or regulatory delays, together with actions and decision dates needed to preserve funding.

The Commission should set a clear direction now: negotiate rather than prolong litigation, pursue railbanking, and establish an achievable path to construction.

Sincerely,

Brian Peoples





Outlook

Re: Trail Now Calls for RTC Accountability: Respect Property Rights, End Costly Litigation, and Build the Coastal Trail

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 9:12 AM

To Trail Now <brian@trailnow.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Trail Now <brian@trailnow.org>

Sent: Wednesday, October 21, 2026 2:06 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Trail Now Calls for RTC Accountability: Respect Property Rights, End Costly Litigation, and Build the Coastal Trail



LETTER TO RTC STAFF & COMMISSIONERS

RE: Trail Now Calls for RTC Accountability: Respect Property Rights, End Costly Litigation, and Build the Coastal Trail

Dear RTC Staff and Commissioners,

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) has failed our community by pursuing costly legal disputes without adequately addressing the property rights of landowners adjacent to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The recent court ruling involving the Trout Gulch Station property owners raises serious

concerns about RTC staff's and legal counsel's understanding of these rights and the advice provided to the RTC Commission.

The judge determined that the RTC holds only an easement, rather than ownership of the underlying property. This raises an important question: Why did RTC staff and legal counsel continue pursuing litigation without adequately recognizing and communicating the legal risks to commissioners?

Trail Now strongly supports private property rights. We oppose RTC's continued reliance on litigation against adjacent property owners and believe the agency must stop wasting taxpayer dollars on legal battles that delay construction of the Coastal Trail.

It is time for RTC to change course and pursue practical, affordable solutions.

The recent ruling further strengthens the case for evaluating railbanking, which could provide a more cost-effective and straightforward approach to constructing the Coastal Trail directly on the existing railbed while preserving the corridor for potential future rail use. RTC should begin evaluating this alternative now, while the Surface Transportation Board (STB) considers its pending proceeding.

Trail Now calls on RTC staff and commissioners to take the following actions:

1. **Stop unnecessary litigation** against adjacent property owners and respect their legal rights.
2. **Meet directly with affected property owners**, particularly in Aptos Village, to develop mutually acceptable trail solutions.
3. **Advance the Interim Trail Plan through Aptos Village and all the way to Watsonville**, rather than continuing to pursue costly and contentious alternatives.

4. **Evaluate railbanking immediately** as a practical long-term strategy for completing the Coastal Trail.
5. **Protect existing state and federal grants** by prioritizing construction, resolving obstacles, and preventing further delays.

The potential loss of significant state and federal funding for Coastal Trail Segments 8–12 would represent a serious failure in project management and oversight. RTC staff and commissioners must be held accountable for decisions that unnecessarily delay construction and jeopardize these critical investments.

Our community deserves a completed Coastal Trail—not more litigation, escalating costs, and years of delays.

Trail Now urges RTC leadership to shift its priorities from fighting property owners to working collaboratively with them. The public expects responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, respect for private property rights, and meaningful progress toward completing the Coastal Trail.

Stop fighting the community. Start working with the community. Build the Interim Trail now.

Sincerely,
Trail Now

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Trail Now · 195 QUAIL RUN ROAD · Aptos, CA 95003 · USA



Re: An appeal will lead to all corridor ownership to Boardwalk, an argument not heard

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Tue 10/27/2026 10:34 AM

To Carey Pico [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Carey Pico <carey.pico@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 9:32 AM

To: Sarah Christensen <schristensen@sccrtc.org>; skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov <skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov>; Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov <justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Felipe Hernandez <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Kimberly De Serpa <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Manu Koenig <manu.koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Fred <fkeeley@santacruzca.gov>; andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov <andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsvally.gov>; monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Eduardo Montesino <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; Rebecca Downing <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>; Gerry Jensen <gjensen@ci.capitola.ca.us>; fabian@communitylifeservices.org <fabian@communitylifeservices.org>; leonorfabian72@gmail.com <leonorfabian72@gmail.com>; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>; Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Subject: An appeal will lead to all corridor ownership to Boardwalk, an argument not heard

To all:

I was at the RTC vs. Laurie Negro court hearing of the Arano property. The reason the RTC's attorney bifurcated (split) the trial was to avoid having the judge rule on the defense's alternative argument that the RTC has no title to the property because it cannot prove chain of title. For this reason, Ngo moved to the court to ONLY consider that 2022 Settlement Agreement for the Aptos Village driveway/Parade St. switch.

The reason starts with the fact that the RTC can only provide two deeds related to the Arano property:

- 1) the 1876 Arano deed to the Santa Cruz Railroad Company
- 2) the 2012 Union Pacific **quitclaim** deed to the RTC.

Understand, a quitclaim deed does NOT guarantee title and is a buyer-beware purchase.

In 1879 the Santa Cruz Railroad Company went bankrupt. Its assets were sold in 1882 as recorded in a deed to the Pacific Improvement Company, a subsidiary of Southern Pacific Railroad. That deed recorded in addition to its locomotives, etc. only 12 properties as part of the Santa Cruz Railroad's assets: 2 in Pajaro, 3 on Chestnut St., and 8 on the rail corridor (see attachment). The 1876 Arano deed is not one of them. I believe the Southern Pacific Railroad assets became one with Union Pacific when it merged years ago (i.e., I haven't followed its history).

MORE CRITICAL to the RTC is that the 1882 deed documents almost all of the Santa Cruz Branch Line between Pajaro and Pacific Ave. in Santa Cruz does not belong to the RTC. This is where the chain of title fails for most of the properties in that section. In other words, like proving an ancestry to say, George Washington, the RTC cannot prove title ownership because its chain stopped in 1882. By the way, there is an 1884 deed that sold the Pacific Improvement's Santa Cruz Railroad assets to another Southern Pacific subsidiary, Santa Cruz and Pajaro Railroad.

Appealing the RTC-Negro decision will open up this line of argument that the RTC will presumably lose. But, worse, it will be a ruling that will apply to the remainder of the rail corridor. Personally, I'd love it because I live next to the rail corridor with property sold by Conrad Bush to the railroad. I've research its chain of title and it too disappeared. I will benefit.

Carey Pico, Ph.D.

Re: Reconsider the Segment 12 Alignment & Respect Property Rights

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 12:32 PM

To Doug Huskey [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Doug Huskey [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, October 23, 2026 3:02 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Reconsider the Segment 12 Alignment & Respect Property Rights

I am writing to urge you to exercise your authority and direct RTC staff to stop pursuing the current Segment 12 Coastal Rail Trail alignment through Aptos Village. The recent Superior Court ruling (*SCCRTC v. Trout Gulch Crossing et al*, Case No. 23CV02345) rejected the RTC's attempt to claim land used for parking. This ruling should serve as a clear sign to reconsider this approach rather than continuing to spend taxpayer money defending or appealing it.

Pursuing an appeal or resorting to eminent domain to acquire property rights poses significant financial and local risks:

- **High Costs to Taxpayers:** Acquiring the parking area and compensating local businesses for the resulting financial impact could cost millions of dollars for just a 200 foot section of corridor.
- **Impact on Local Economy:** The parking in question is vital to the viability of local businesses in Aptos Village, such as Trout Gulch Crossing and the neighboring Bayview Hotel.
- **Feasible Alternatives Available:** A practical alternative, such as an over the tracks approach or utilizing the existing corridor, would deliver a continuous trail at a fraction of the cost without disrupting local businesses or historical landmarks.

Being pro trail means being fiscally responsible and delivering practical benefits our community can afford.

I call on the Commissioners to place this issue on an upcoming agenda to:

1. Direct staff to cease pursuit of the disputed alignment and refrain from further legal action or eminent domain proceedings.
1. Conduct and present a transparent comparison of feasible, affordable design alternatives and their total costs.

1. Prioritize completing a continuous Coastal Rail Trail while respecting established property rights and protecting local businesses.

Please prioritize sound judgment, fiscal accountability, and practical transportation solutions for our community.

Sincerely,

Doug Huskey



P.S. The RTC being fiscally irresponsible just convinces myself and others to stop supporting additional funding for the County and City governments in Santa Cruz County. (e.g. Measure E)

Re: Open Letter to the RTC: Stop the Segment 12 Fools' Errand

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 9:04 AM

To Jack Brown [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Jack Brown <jack.b.brown@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2026 1:43 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>; eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; Kimberly De Serpa <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Gerry Jensen <GJensen@ci.capitola.ca.us>; Justin Cummings <Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov <andy.schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Felipe Hernandez <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Fred Keeley <fkeeley@santacruzca.gov>; Monica Martinez <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Rebecca Downing <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsvally.gov>; Manu Koenig <Manu.Koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Jillian.Ritter@santacruzcountyca.gov <Jillian.Ritter@santacruzcountyca.gov>; larry.pageler@gmail.com <larry.pageler@gmail.com>; dlind@scottsvally.gov <dlind@scottsvally.gov>; Fabian@communitylifeservices.org <Fabian@communitylifeservices.org>; morbach@ci.capitola.ca.us <morbach@ci.capitola.ca.us>; joeclarke@ci.capitola.ca.us <joeclarke@ci.capitola.ca.us>; snewsome@santacruzca.gov <snewsome@santacruzca.gov>; gine@wmholl.com <gine@wmholl.com>

Cc: Sarah Christensen <schristensen@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Open Letter to the RTC: Stop the Segment 12 Fools' Errand

To the Commissioners of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

I urge you to exercise your authority and direct RTC staff to stop pursuing the current Segment 12 Coastal Rail Trail alignment through Aptos Village. The recent Superior Court (Case no. 23CV02345, SCCRTC vs. Trout Gulch Crossing et al) ruling against the RTC should be a wake up call to reconsider this costly approach, not an excuse to spend even more taxpayer money defending it.

Judge Syda Kosofsky Cogliati ruled in favor of Laurie Negro, owner of Betty Burgers and the Trout Gulch Crossing property, rejecting the RTC's attempt to establish ownership of land used for parking. The RTC is now considering an appeal or acquiring additional property rights, potentially through eminent domain.

The consequences could be staggering. The property owner reportedly spent approximately \$500,000 defending her ownership. Acquiring the parking area and compensating for the resulting financial harm to the affected businesses could cost the public more than \$10 million. That is an estimate, but it

is an extraordinary potential expense for just 200 feet of corridor, particularly for a train project that remains unfunded.

This parking is essential to the commercial viability of Trout Gulch Crossing and the neighboring Bayview Hotel. Why should taxpayers finance a costly legal battle and potentially undermine beloved local businesses when a practical alternative exists?

Rail supporters have vilified railbanking, yet building the trail over the existing railroad corridor in this section could cost a fraction of the price of the proposed property acquisition and business impacts. It would provide the community with a trail while preserving future transportation options, without unnecessarily disrupting local businesses or historical landmarks. The RTC has already approved an over-the-tracks approach for Segments 9, 10 and 11. It should seriously evaluate that alternative for Segment 12 rather than stubbornly defending a more expensive alignment.

Being pro-trail does not mean being anti-rail or anti-transit. It means being fiscally responsible and delivering practical benefits the community can afford.

I call on the commissioners to add to a commission agenda this year to direct staff to stop pursuing the disputed alignment, avoid further legal action or eminent-domain proceedings without compelling public justification, and present a transparent comparison of feasible alternatives and their full costs. The RTC must prioritize completing an affordable, continuous Coastal Rail Trail while respecting property rights and protecting Aptos Village businesses.

The question is no longer whether the RTC can find a legal path forward. It is whether continuing down this path makes any sense for the public.

Stop this Segment 12 fools' errand. Stop throwing good money after bad. Direct staff to find better, less expensive solutions that serve the community instead of forcing an unnecessary design at an extraordinary cost.

The public deserves sound judgment, fiscal accountability and transportation projects grounded in reality, not an unwillingness to admit when it is time to change course.

Sincerely,

Jack Brown
Aptos, CA

Re: Corrected Segment 12 Letter to RTC

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Tue 10/27/2026 10:42 AM

To Maria Gitin [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,
Vanessa Yniguez
SCCRTC

From: Maria Gitin <msgitin@mariagitin.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 9:48 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Cc: Kimberly deSerpa <Kimberly.DeSerpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Corrected Segment 12 Letter to RTC

Dear Commissioners: Please listen to the rational respectful request of Trail Now, copied below. As a long time resident and tax paying homeowner in overcrowded Aptos, I implore you to stop any further work on this segment other than what is outlined below.

Sincerely, Maria Gitin Torres Residence: 159 Danube Drive, Aptos CA 95010

[REDACTED]

Re: Direct Railbanking Action, Resolve Trout Gulch, and Protect Segment 12 Funding

Dear RTC Commissioners,

The recent Trout Gulch ruling presents an opportunity to respect property rights, protect public funding, and advance a safe, accessible Coastal Trail. Trail Now urges the Commission to resolve the Aptos Village dispute through negotiation and direct immediate work on an Interim Trail and railbanking.

1. Negotiate a fair Trout Gulch agreement.

Direct staff and counsel to pursue a limited purchase, lease, or easement for only the property rights needed to construct Segment 12. Protect existing businesses and compare any agreement with the cost, delay, and uncertainty of further litigation.

2. Advance the Interim Trail on the railbed.

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3. Initiate concrete railbanking steps.

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Re: Decline Further Rail Corridor Easement Quiet Title Litigation

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 2:52 PM

To nadene thorne [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez
SCCRTC

From: nadene thorne <nadenethornedavis@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2026 10:15 AM

To: justin.cummings@santacruzcounty.us <justin.cummings@santacruzcounty.us>; Andy Schiffrin <Andy.Schiffrin@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson <skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov>; Kimberly De Serpa <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Manu Koenig <Manu.Koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Fred Keeley <fkeeley@santacruzca.gov>; Gerry Jensen <gjensen@ci.capitola.ca.us>; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>; leonorfabian72@gmail.com <leonorfabian72@gmail.com>; monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Rebecca <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>; eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsvally.gov>; felipe.hernandez@santacruzcounty.us <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcounty.us>; lhurst@baymoon.com <lhurst@baymoon.com>

Subject: Decline Further Rail Corridor Easement Quiet Title Litigation

Commissioners,

I hope the recent court decision on the easement in Aptos's Segment 12 of the rail corridor will encourage you to look closely at the rest of the corridor's width and title status moving south. The ZEPRT study made it clear that prospects for passenger or freight rail are many, many years into the future too many to responsibly commit any significant investment of cash or staff time presently. Therefore it seems imperative that you move forward focussing on the necessary width of the rail corridor needed for building the pedestrian and bicycle trail, and leave any further contemplated litigation or quiet title actions until such a time as resolutions might be meaningful. More to the point, as it appears that there will likely be numerous ownership ambiguities on successive sections of the corridor, now is the time to initiate railbanking to protect our community's hoped for trail and rail as well.

Without railbanking to guarantee future rail options and protect the RTC from ongoing expensive and time consuming legal wrangles, it seems unlikely that the long hoped for trail could even be built in our lifetimes.

Now is the time to explicitly instruct the trail planners in designing an interim trail for subsequent sections, and pursue railbanking to resolve the imminent issues of corridor ownership and access.

Re: Comment on Oct 29 RTC agenda items

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Wed 10/28/2026 9:52 AM

To Richard James [REDACTED]

Cc Shannon Munz <smunz@sccrtc.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Richard James [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 9:28 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Comment on Oct 29 RTC agenda items

To RTC Commissioners:

Thursday the Commission will conduct closed door discussions in regards to the properties in Aptos Village. I am writing to express my opposition to using eminent domain or pursuing additional court actions against these properties. The owners of these properties, and the businesses operating there, are members of the community in which I reside, and it grieves me that my hard-earned tax dollars are being spent in a way that harms these people and businesses. There is no need to take property once the Commission comes to the realization that a train is too expensive for our County, and the benefits too little to make a meaningful contribution to our transportation network. Let's focus on the feasible option of a trail, pass on the train, and eliminate the need for obtaining a wider right-of-way.

Richard James, Aptos

Re: 10/29/26 Special Meeting - plan after Aptos court decision

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 3:02 PM

To Tim Brattan [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez
SCCRTC

From: Tim Brattan [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, October 26, 2026 8:47 AM

To: andy.schiffrein@santacruzcountyca.gov <andy.schiffrein@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Justin Cummings <Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>

Cc: Supervisor Manu Koenig <First.District@santacruzcounty.us>; felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; shebreh4santacruz@gmail.com <shebreh4santacruz@gmail.com>; kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsvally.gov>; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>; eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; frederickkeeley2016@gmail.com <frederickkeeley2016@gmail.com>; gerry4capitola@gmail.com <gerry4capitola@gmail.com>; leonorfabian72@gmail.com <leonorfabian72@gmail.com>; rebeccad@transparentseas.com <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>

Subject: 10/29/26 Special Meeting - plan after Aptos court decision

Dear Director Christensen and Commissioners,

From change or loss there is always a way forward. The Aptos property rights court decision should be a rallying moment. The defendant's lawyers reportedly see other gaps and unclear property descriptions elsewhere on the Branch Line that could prevent the RTC from ever delivering a trail or any transportation solution.

The following is on the first page of the 2010 RTC Santa Cruz Branch Line purchase FAQ #A.3:

"Therefore, even if freight service ceases on the Branch Line, federal law would permit the RTC to "railbank" the line, preserving the line as a continuous 32-mile corridor for transportation uses."

<https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/100504-RailLinePur-FAQ.pdf#page=1>

Your 10/29/26 special meeting is time to ask Director Christensen and legal counsel what they think about railbanking, what problem it solves and whether they believe it is the best course of action to

ensure preservation of the rail line, maintain local control, and minimize overall cost.

Though the question of timing may come up, it is more important for your Commission to **ALL AGREE that railbanking is the best way forward.**

This is a pivotal moment and the stakes couldn't be higher. More than \$200M in grants are at risk by not moving to railbank and protect the corridor now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tim Brattan
Santa Cruz



Outlook

Re: Judge Syda Cogliati's ruling on Aptos Parking Lot

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Mon 10/26/2026 2:11 PM

To Tom Hart [REDACTED]

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects. Your comments have been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Tom Hart

Sent: Friday, October 23, 2026 5:01 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission

Subject: Judge Syda Cogliati's ruling on Aptos Parking Lot

Dear Commissioners

In light of the ruling, please put this train to bed and save our financial resources for the trail.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Re: RTC Closed Session Agenda: RTC Commissioners Must Question Outside Legal Counsel's Advice to Appeal the Trout Gulch Ruling

From Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Date Tue 10/27/2026 8:49 AM

To Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in RTC projects, your comment has been recorded.

Best,

Vanessa Yniguez

SCCRTC

From: Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 8:33 AM

To: Sarah Christensen <schristensen@sccrtc.org>; skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov <skalantari-johnson@santacruzca.gov>; Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov <Justin.cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Felipe Hernandez <felipe.hernandez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Kimberly De Serpa <kimberly.deserpa@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Manu Koenig <manu.koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Fred <fkeeley@santacruzca.gov>; andy.schiffrein@santacruzcountyca.gov <andy.schiffrein@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Steve Clark <sclark@scottsdalevalley.gov>; monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov <monica.martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Eduardo Montesino <eduardo.montesino@watsonville.gov>; Rebecca Downing <rebeccad@transparentseas.com>; Gerry Jensen <gjensen@ci.capitola.ca.us>; fabian@communitylifeservices.org <fabian@communitylifeservices.org>; leonorfabian72@gmail.com <leonorfabian72@gmail.com>; Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Cc: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: RTC Closed Session Agenda: RTC Commissioners Must Question Outside Legal Counsel's Advice to Appeal the Trout Gulch Ruling

RTC Commissioners.

The recent Trout Gulch property dispute court ruling raises serious questions about the legal advice this Commission has received.

A judge ruled that RTC holds an easement, not ownership of the underlying property. Yet we understand RTC's outside legal counsel is advocating an appeal.

Commissioners, whose interests are being served by continuing this litigation?

Outside attorneys receive additional fees when litigation continues. This creates at least the appearance of a financial conflict that deserves scrutiny.

More appeals will delay the Coastal Trail and could jeopardize millions in state and federal funding.

There is a sensible alternative: **negotiate a fair agreement with property owners and initiate the federal railbanking process** to advance construction of the Coastal Trail.

If RTC Commissioners believe that the judge's decision is incorrect, and RTC owns the property at Trout Gulch, we urge commissioners to seek independent legal advice rather than relying solely on the attorney who argued the case.

Stop the litigation, protect taxpayer dollars and trail funding, and move forward with a practical solution.

Thank you.

Brian Peoples