

Wyatt, Rosie

From: Jim MacKenzie <jimmo@cruzio.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 3:32 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Measure L (Capitola Municipal Code Section 8.72) and MBSST trail alignment

To: Capitola City Council
From: Jim MacKenzie, resident of Santa Cruz

April 16, 2025

Mayor Clarke, Vice Mayor Pedersen, and Councilmembers Jensen, Morgan, and Ohrbach:

You have my wholehearted support in approving either Park Avenue alignment (Option A or B) of MBSST Segment 11, as proposed by the SCCRTC.

The Capitola City Council's pending decision regarding the county's and RTC's proposed alignment of Segment 11 of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) along Park Avenue has been characterized as being "controversial." But I believe that the "controversy" surrounding this decision has been manufactured and amplified by a small cadre of trail-only, anti-rail activists bent on ending, forever, the possibility of future passenger rail transit in Santa Cruz County.

Despite the overwhelming countywide 73%-to-27% defeat of Greenway's 2022 anti-rail Measure D, the same well-heeled lobbying group, four years prior to Measure D, concocted, collected signatures for, and provided overwhelming campaign funding to effectuate the narrow 206-vote passage of a Capitola-only ballot initiative, Capitola Measure L (Greenway), in 2018.

Measure L stipulated that any segment of the MBSST designed to run through Capitola Village must be contained completely within the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) right-of-way, i.e., the Capitola rail trestle. And saying that Measure L was also designed to make Capitola Village streets safer by routing bicycles off of them left out the very important fact that Village streets already had designated bike lanes and that it would never be unlawful for bicycles to use these streets to traverse the Village. This seems even more ludicrous in light of the fact that the City of Capitola is currently in the process of installing 100 BCycle docking stations and bringing 50 for-rent e-bikes to its streets — including in the Village. And that Capitola Village is also hosting a day-long event that will ban cars and allow only cyclists and pedestrians on the streets..

Following its passage seven years ago, Measure L (Capitola Municipal Code Section 8.72) became a ticking time bomb embedded in Capitola's municipal code, designed to do one thing and one thing only when the right time came: force the trail, as it passed through Capitola Village, onto the rail trestle — which would require removing the rails, thus making it nearly impossible for rail to ever be reinstated there — rather than routing the trail temporarily, through village streets until a new bicycle-pedestrian bridge could be constructed across Soquel Creek.

It should be pointed out that Measure L (Greenway, 2018) was enacted in direct contradiction with the Capitola City Council's unanimous resolution only three years before, in 2015, to adopt the 2013 MBSST Master Plan, which clearly stated, regarding Segment 11:

"The greatest challenge in this segment is the rail trestle crossing of Soquel Creek. The current rail trestle passes through a historic district. There are current discussions about improvements to this bridge trestle due to structural conditions. Coastal trail access through this area will need to continue on existing surface streets and sidewalks to

cross Soquel Creek and navigate through Capitola Village.”

It also should be noted, for the record, that the Capitola rail trestle IS NOT OWNED BY the City of Capitola, and that Capitola has no jurisdiction over its use. The rail corridor, right-of-way, and rail infrastructure, including the trestle, were purchased by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) — a state-established regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) — with state rail bond funds from a 1990 statewide ballot initiative, Proposition 116, which stipulated that the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line would be used for the development of passenger and other rail uses. So, in essence, the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor, right-of-way, and rail infrastructure belong to the people of California.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Jim MacKenzie
Santa Cruz