

Wyatt, Rosie

From: Natalie Goff <burroalley9@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 10:49 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Option A or B, Please vote YES:

April 15, 2025

Dear Mayor Joe Clarke, Councilmember Marguex Morgan, Councilmember Melinda Orbach, Councilmember Gerry Jensen, and Councilmember Alex Pedersen:

I am writing to ask you to accept either Option A or B for the Rail Trail segment currently offered to Capitola by the RTC at no cost to Capitola. It is truly a gift that will increase Public Safety along a busy throughway.

I am for safe pedestrian and bike safety along Park Avenue and through Capitola Village. Both Option A and B separate pedestrians and bikes from vehicles by creating a curb AND a buffer zone between them. Either option will be wonderful and an improvement over what is currently in place

I love that our children will be separated from traffic and will be visible to drivers as they walk or ride along Park Avenue east of the Village. I am a senior and I know that Option A or B will make me feel safer, as well. I feel safer these days when I can see who and what is up ahead when on walks. Also, I will feel safer walking at street level rather than in the gully because other pedestrians and drivers can keep an eye out for my safety, as well.

I attended the Town Hall meeting at New Brighton Middle School a few weeks ago and was dismayed by some of the themes of presenters. We in Santa Cruz County need additional modes of transportation badly. Workers from Watsonville sit in their cars or on buses sometimes 3 hours per day during their daily commute. The RTC is working hard and diligently to provide a fair and safe plan for all of us. I felt that topics such as Railbanking, arguing for 20 parking spaces, arguing against the widening because cars are wider were offered as a tactic to muddy the meeting's purpose - to discuss Safety improvements for pedestrians and bikes along what is currently a rather dangerous roadway.

- Railbanking. During the meeting, it was mentioned that the city council planned to revisit Railbanking. Several years ago, it was decided that this was an expensive and a complicated task. The ground underneath the tracks contains asbestos, tar, and years of oil that had dripped from the trains that passed over the tracks. Experts pointed out that removal of the soil to another location would release the contaminants and carcinogens that are currently encased within the packed soil and coarse gravel. Consensus by the RTC then was that it was safer for all of us to leave those materials in situ. Where would this soil and rubble be discarded? Who would do the work? Who would pay for the removal of the soil?

- Yes, I want for the Rail and Trail project to succeed. And your decision might put the entire 32-mile-long project in jeopardy. The California Transportation Commission allocated \$70 million towards the development of Segment 10 and 11. More recently, the project received a Federal Grant to help develop these segments, as well. These grantors have recognized our need to connect to the California Passenger Railway System that is being planned for and is being built currently. Capitola sits right in the middle of the county project. The thousands of students who attend Cabrillo College, a short distance from Capitola, will surely use the corridor's bike lanes and train system when built. If you refuse the project, the RTC will be asked to return the largest grant the CTC has ever given to a community our size. Afterwards, would the RTC and the County ever be considered as a contender for another grant?

- Some at the Town Hall meeting argued for 20 parking spaces they deemed important to the community. Another person argued that the bike trail should not become wider because people currently drive SUVs that are wider, These really are not viable arguments against Public Safety.

- Finally, there was a group of people who argued that constructing bridges would prove too costly and therefore the project will never come to pass. However, the RTC design team is excellent – they have found many cost-saving measures for this project and I trust that they will find cost savings as they research bridges. The CTC and the State demonstrated clearly with large grants that they believe the Rail Trail will succeed. The Santa Cruz County voters, 73% of them, said with their votes that they want the Santa Cruz Rail Trail to succeed.

Thank you for your attention,

Natalie Goff, Santa Cruz County Resident for 40 years