

Wyatt, Rosie

From: Renee Flower <renee@reneeflower.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 13, 2025 11:02 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Capitola City Council, Meeting of April 17, 2025: Park Avenue Alignment of the Coastal Rail Trail

To: Capitola City Council
Mayor: Joe Clarke
Vice Mayor: Alexander Pedersen
Council Members: Gerry Jensen, Margaux Morgan, Melinda Orbach

I strongly urge the Capitola City Council to approve the project to construct the section of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail / California Coastal Trail along Park Avenue ("Park Avenue Alignment of the Coastal Rail Trail, Segments 10 & 11").

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail along Park Avenue in Capitola will serve residents of Capitola and Santa Cruz County, as well as tourists and visitors to Capitola and other areas of Santa Cruz County. The trail will increase public recreational opportunities by providing an important connection between New Brighton State Beach and the village area of the City of Capitola, in addition to extending connections to other parts of Santa Cruz County located to the north and south of the City of Capitola (including the City of Santa Cruz and the City of Watsonville).

The section of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) along Park Avenue in Capitola is part of the larger MBSST project in Santa Cruz County — a major public works project. The MBSST is a critical component and central "spine" of the California Coastal Trail (CCT) network in Santa Cruz County. The California Coastal Trail was established by the Coastal Act of 1972, Proposition 20 (the "Save the Coast" initiative). The Park Avenue trail is included in Capitola's Local Coastal Program (LCP). As you know, Capitola is a general law city and is bound by the laws of the State of California. The MBSST/CCT is a project with its roots in California law: the California Coastal Commission (California Public Resources Code §§ 30000-30900), the State Coastal Conservancy (California Public Resources Code §§ 31000 - 31414), the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (California Government Code §§ 29535, 67940, 67941), and Santa Cruz County, a legal subdivision of the State (California Government Code §§ 23000 - 33205, § 23144).

Capitola owes its existence to visitors and tourists. In the late 1800s, the train brought tourists from the San Francisco Bay Area to Camp Capitola. Today, Capitola continues to be a destination for visitors from within and outside Santa Cruz County. And, Capitola is closely connected to the greater population of Santa Cruz County through its business district along 41st Avenue, including major auto dealerships. The section of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail / California Coastal Trail along Park Avenue provides expanded and improved coastal access in the City of Capitola between New Brighton State Beach and the village area of the City of Capitola.

Please keep Capitola connected to all residents of Santa Cruz County and the rest of the State of California through your approval of the section of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail / California Coastal Trail along Park Avenue.

I live in the City of Santa Cruz near a completed segment of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail / California Coastal Trail and use the trail several times each week, along with many others, for recreation and errands. I look forward to enjoying the California Coastal Trail in Capitola in the future.

— Renée Flower

Applicable laws, policies and supporting documentation:

- A letter from the California Coastal Commission (dated December 7, 2021) written in response to the Notice of Preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project states the following:

“ ... we would like to emphasize that we continue to be very supportive of the development of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) as a critical component and central “spine” of the California Coastal Trail (CCT) network and for expanding multi-modal transportation opportunities in the region. We see this upcoming DEIR as another step in the process of ensuring that the MBSST/CCT are appropriately integrated into the preservation and implementation of a full suite of short- and long-term multi-modal opportunities for Santa Cruz County and the greater Monterey Bay area. The MBSST/CCT are envisioned as key ingredients of a sustainable and interlinked transportation system in the coastal zone, a goal echoed in federal, state, and local policies and programs alike, including the California Coastal Act and the respective Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) that the proposed system crosses.”

- “In 1972, Proposition 20 (the ‘Save the Coast’ initiative) provided that ‘a hiking, bicycle, and equestrian trails system be established along or near the coast’ and that ‘ideally the trails system should be continuous and located near the shoreline.’ The Coastal Act of 1976 requires local jurisdictions to identify an alignment for the California Coastal Trail in their Local Coastal Programs (LCPs).”

Source: <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/ca-coastal-trail/coastal-trail.html>

- City of Capitola Local Coastal Program (LCP):

Certified by the California Coastal Commission: June 1981, December 1981 Revised and Updated to Include Amendments: October 2001, January 2005 (CAP-MAJ-2-04)

Excerpts:

“ ... LCP will reflect the coastal issues and concerns of the local jurisdiction and must be consistent with the statewide policies of the Coastal Act. Once adopted, the LCP becomes legally binding on the City and provides a permanent program for coastal protection.”) II. Public Access Component, Policy II-17:

“Designate Park Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way along the bluff top as the lateral coastal accessway between Capitola Village and New Brighton and develop vista points and connecting pathways in cooperation with Southern Pacific Railroad and State Parks.” “Implementation: Acquire right-of-way easements from Southern Pacific and seek funding from the Transportation Commission, Coastal Conservancy, and private sources for development of bicycle path, improved pedestrian accessways, and vista points which are not hazardous.”

[NOTE: On October 12, 2012, the SCCRTC closed escrow for the acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line from Union Pacific. Source: <https://www.sccrtc.org/projects/rail/rail-line-purchase/>]

- City of Capitola General Plan (Adopted June 26, 2014 — Updated March 13, 2019) “Action LU-14.2: Regional Trails. Cooperate with the Regional Transportation Commission to encourage connections with regional trails such as the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail.”

“Action MO-1.2: Regional Plan Implementation. Participate with Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), and Santa Cruz County to create and implement programs that coordinate the multi-modal transportation needs and requirements across jurisdictions, including but not limited to the Regional Transportation Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Master Plan.”

- Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission: MBSST Network Master Plan Final EIR — Page 2-4: 2.3.1 Existing and Planned Trail Networks “The proposed MBSST Network project’s relationship to other existing and planned trail networks is described below.” [...] “California Coastal Trail. The California Coastal Trail is a statewide project that endeavors to create a continuous public right-of-way along the California coastline. Some of the Coastal Trail’s key objectives are to provide a continuous trail as close to the ocean as possible, with connections to the shoreline, to provide sufficient transportation access to encourage public use, to create linkages to other trail systems, and to use the Coastal Trail system to increase accessibility to coastal resources from urban population centers. The Coastal Trail network alignment was developed by the California State Coastal Conservancy in conjunction with the California Coastal Commission, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Coastwalk, and segments have been incorporated into the proposed MBSST Network project. The MBSST Network project would also serve as the California Coastal Trail in Santa Cruz County and follow a blufftop alignment wherever feasible.”

Source: <https://sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/MBSST-Network-Master-Plan-FEIR.pdf>

- The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Master Plan was adopted by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission on November 7, 2013 and was subsequently unanimously adopted by the Capitola City Council, per Resolution No. 4019, on April 9, 2015. With Resolution 4044, adopted unanimously on January 28, 2016, the Capitola City Council endorsed a regional sales tax spending plan calling for the expenditure of 15% of certain sales tax revenues on the development of the county-wide scenic trail called for by the Trail Master Plan.

- “Completing the California Coastal Trail”

This report is prepared pursuant to Chapter 446, Statutes of 2001.

Excerpt: “The Legislature and the Governor directed the Coastal Conservancy, through SB908 of 2001, to report on a proposed trail that would stretch 1,300 miles along the entire California coast, across dozens of political jurisdictions, and to develop that report within a thirteen-month period (by January 31, 2003). To meet this challenge, the Conservancy relied principally on two sources of information: (1) the Local Coastal Programs adopted by 60 local governments, further elaborated through interviews with staff members of these local agencies and the Coastal Commission; and (2) the two-volume Hiking the California Coastal Trail (by Bob Lorentzen and Richard Nichols) developed by the nonprofit organization Coastwalk, Inc., and further elaborated through many site visits conducted by Coastwalk volunteers.”

Source: <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/access/coastal-trail-report.pdf>

- California Senate Bill No. 908 — Chapter 446 “An act to add Sections 31408 and 31409 to the Public Resources Code, relating to coastal resources.”

[Approved by Governor, October 2, 2001. Filed with Secretary of State, October 3, 2001.] “The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

Section 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) The California Coastal Trail, which has been designated a Millennium Trail by the Governor of California, should be completed in a timely manner. (2) The California Coastal Trail is a trail that, to the extent feasible, should be constructed along the state’s coastline from the Oregon border to the border with Mexico.”

- California Coastal Commission

Coastal Access Program: the California Coastal Trail [CCT] Role of the California Coastal Commission in the CCT “The Coastal Commission is a state agency responsible for statewide coastal planning and regulation, operating under the Coastal Act of 1976. An important part of this responsibility is the Coastal Commission’s role as the lead agency for CCT planning and permitting for the entire coastline. A primary objective for the Commission is to ensure the selection of a continuous and coordinated trail alignment, which respects and protects natural resources in a manner consistent with the Coastal Act.”

Source: <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/ctrail-access.html>
