

Wyatt, Rosie

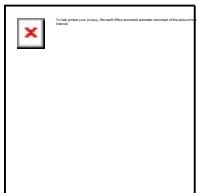
From: Iwalani Faulkner <equitytransitsantacruz@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 5:00 PM
To: City Council
Subject: [PDF] City Council Meeting Support for. April 17th Park Ave Alignment
Attachments: 2025-04-16_CapitolaParkAveAlignment_EquityTransit.pdf

Please find attached our letter of support:

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Best regards,

Lani Faulkner, Director
Equity Transit - Tránsito de Equidad
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831-278-1007





1840 41st Ave, Ste 102, #227
Capitola, CA 95010
831-278-1007

Capitola City Council Members
420 Capitola Ave
Capitola, CA 95010
April 16, 2025

RE: Approve FULLY FUNDED Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail segment along Park Avenue segment

Dear Honorable Capitola Council Members:

Thank you for your work on behalf of Capitola Community. Capitola extends beyond the village along the border of Live Oak near 30th all the way past Park Ave through New Brighton State Beach to Pot Belly Beach Road. Capitola runs adjacent to the beautiful Monterey Bay. Capitola and all county residents have the fortune of being able to access the beautiful parks and beaches and striking vistas in Capitola. The addition of a Coastal Trail for our community will provide families from all over the county with a safe beautiful place to walk, ride and roll.

In November of 2023, 70-year-old **Debra Town was struck and killed** crossing the street at Bay Ave and Crossroads Loop. Her family was devastated just as they were heading into Thanksgiving season. Many residents called for improved infrastructure seeking to calm traffic speeds and ensure safety for people walking and biking in Capitola. Capitola City Council members acted quickly with an investigation, report and implemented temporary infrastructure that slowed traffic and ensure safer passage for pedestrians. A number of local drivers expressed rage and opposition to the changes, despite the fact that the improved infrastructure made the streets safer for everyone.

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2023/11/20/pedestrian-killed-in-capitola-hit-and-run/>

If this were a rare occurrence in Capitola, those complaining might be justified in arguing that being made to slow down is unnecessary. However, in comparison to 76 similarly sized cities across California, **the City of Capitola ranked 1st for the number of pedestrian injuries/fatalities for those ages 65 and older!**

Families are afraid to let their children bike and walk to school, to the parks and beaches, and to local activity. This translates into more cars on the roads transporting kids to and from every activity, more traffic, increased frustration, and reduced safety. Compared to decades past when kids could safely walk or bike to school and activities, most families feel forced into driving their kids everywhere since they do not feel our streets are safe for their families to use outside of the car.



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The voices of a relatively small group of loud community members seeking to stop the construction of a 0.7 mile segment of the MBSST along Park Avenue, not all of them residents of Capitola, have overshadowed the greater sentiment of local families and the community at large. They offer misinformation and misdirection, bullying and proclamations which sound certain, but really are forms of posturing to push for their agenda.

The greater community wants a trail! We have been granted millions of dollars to construct a trail! The Capitola staff and RTC have identified an outstanding option to build a completely separated trail along Park Ave, in most respects better than the prior option proposed along the coast side which we cannot afford.

The vociferous opponents to the Park Ave. trail are trying to reopen an issue which has been closed. They want to reopen conversations about building the trail across the trestle and on the tracks. This is neither a feasible or timely solution. In order to build a trail on the tracks, the tracks would have to be railbanked which would require adverse abandonment. Attempts to adversely abandon the rail line would cost HUGE amounts of time and money and would not likely result in the outcome the opponents are seeking. Most of these opponents are retired or self-employed and have time to spend threatening council members, posting misinformation on social media, and expressing their opinions as facts.

Most Capitola families work full time and are extremely busy shuttling kids and commuting to and from work, often over-the-hill, and do not have the time to read Capitola City Council agendas and attend long council meetings. Many elders and people with disabilities are unable to attend the city council meetings in person – which means they can no longer speak publicly on Zoom, which is not equitable.

Capitola has a very high incidence of traffic violence. At the same time, Capitola has a handful of very aggressive outspoken residents who do not want to see changes implemented that would make Capitola safer for everyone.

Equity Transit supports the proposed alignments along Park Avenue for the Rail-Trail, both Choice A or B, as either option will offer a number of benefits; **1**-The newly proposed alignments, either A or B, will result in a 12-foot wide trail, fully separated from traffic by a 3-foot wide physical buffer via a curb as a barrier, **2**-the newly proposed alignments, both A and B, would allow for a faster more affordable implementation of the Rail-Trail making possible for people to have a safe mode of travel along this route months to years sooner than the prior oceanside rail-trail option, **3**- the newly proposed alignments would move the Rail-Trail away from the cliffside which dramatically reduces the costs needed to shore up the cliffside and



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reduces the risk of losing the Rail-Trail to erosion over time thus reducing costs over time while still providing a superior quality pedestrian and bike trail, and ~~4-~~ the newly proposed alignments, both A and B, would reduce destruction of monarch habitat and also offer improved access to neighborhoods. Both options A and B offer a safe high quality fully separated trail with vista views along the route.

Thank you for your consideration. On behalf of local community members who would like to see a world class trail as soon as possible, we are excited about the proposed staff recommendations.

Sincerely,

Lani Faulkner, Director