

Wyatt, Rosie

From: Alfred carlson <alcarlton@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 10:53 AM
To: Alfred Carlson; Kahn, Jessica; City Council; GERRY JENSEN
Subject: Re: RAIL/ TRAIL SPECIAL MEETING

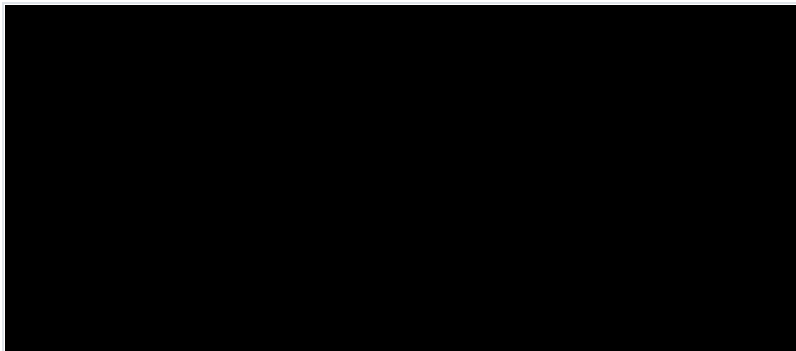


LET'S DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME. GOING THROUGH TOWN AND REPLACE THE STOCKTON BRIDGE WOULD BE MORE EXPRESSIVE THAN DONG IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME BY UPGRADING THE RAILROAD BRIDGE AND ADDING THE TRAIL TO SIDE OF R/R BRIDGE LIKE SANTA CRUZ DID. AL CARLSON

Capitola City Council to weigh in on contested rail trail design at special meeting



By [PK Hattis](#) | pkhattis@santacruzsentinel.com | Santa Cruz Sentinel



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CAPITOLA — After a two-month delay, the stage has been set for Capitola leaders to weigh in on the design of a multi-use trail that traverses the cityscape.

At a [special meeting set for 5:15 p.m. Thursday](#), the Capitola City Council will choose where it would like a pair of Coastal Rail Trail segments stretching 4.5 miles across the city to be placed.

Segments 10 and 11 of the rail trail project, spearheaded by Santa Cruz County in partnership with the county Regional Transportation Commission, move from 17th Avenue in Live Oak to State Park Drive in Aptos and are part of a larger trail network that is planned to span the entire county and region.

But for the county to secure a \$67.6 million Active Transportation Program grant it was previously awarded by the California Transportation Commission, it must finalize the design and put in a request for construction funding. And while that request doesn't need to be submitted until April 2027, the final design, permitting, utility coordination and right-of-way agreements are laborious enough to require about 24 months of work.

Two possible alignments for Capitola's trail segments along Park Avenue have been proposed by city staff in consultation with the county and transportation commission, but both would result in a new 12-foot-wide trail along the coastal side of the roadway, separated by a 5-foot buffer.

The recommended first option, referred to in the staff report as "option A," preserves the existing bicycle lane on the inland side of the thoroughfare with a dedicated space for on-street cyclists heading toward Capitola Village, according to the staff report. On the other hand, option **B eliminates the inland bicycle lane to reduce construction costs and minimize tree removals. Either alignment also requires construction of a new pedestrian rail crossing at Coronado Street.**

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But there's a third option that has been the subject of much public debate and scrutiny. The City Council reviewed similar Park Avenue designs at a [Feb. 13 meeting](#), but it decided to punt the decision after a contingent of city and county residents arrived at the meeting in protest of the choices. They did so on the basis of Measure L, passed by Capitola voters in 2018.



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The measure added a section to city code, Chapter 8.72 Greenway Capitola Corridor, encouraging development of the trail within the rail line corridor, [according to city staff](#). But those against the Park Avenue plans contend that it's more than just encouragement, and they demand that the planning involves placement of the trail in the rail corridor.

However, planners say this poses a problem, especially at the aging Capitola Trestle, which is not included in the segment 10 and 11 design or funding plans. A cantilevered pedestrian or bicycle path attached to the trestle is infeasible, according to the staff report, and if a trail was planned on it, it would require an estimated \$7 million investment in repair and construction work previously detailed in a 2021 study.

Any repurposing of the trestle would also require railbanking, an elaborate process managed by the federal Surface Transportation Board with an aim to temporarily repurpose the rail corridor.

If the council declines to approve the Park Avenue alignment, according to the staff report, the county is likely to pursue a previously studied route along a coastal bluff. This will bring with it engineering and construction challenges that carry significantly higher financial burdens and fewer neighborhood connections, among other things.

Still, that is the option that is likeliest to get a serious look because if the section of trail running 0.7 miles through Capitola is removed entirely from planning, it disrupts the broader trail's network — something state authorities have cautioned would jeopardize the \$67.6 million grant that makes the project possible.

After the February delay, the city staff organized a town hall to further engage with the public about the Park Avenue alignments. The event drew a crowd and provoked at least 400 questions from more than 170 community members.

At the request of the council, some kind of discussion or clarification of Measure L has also been agendized for the Thursday meeting.

If you go

What: Special Capitola City Council meeting.

When: 5:15 p.m. Thursday.

Where: 420 Capitola Ave.

Why: Park Avenue alignment for Coastal Rail Trail segments 10 and 11.

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