

Gautho, Julia

From: Cheryl Ban <cherylban@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 12:52 PM
To: City Council
Subject: Trail in rail corridor

Dear Capitola City Council Member,
Keep the Trail in the rail corridor.

The April 17, 2025, special Capitola City Council meeting is premature, this early council vote on a permanent decision about Capitola's Trail/ Rail segment of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network is lacking in fundamental disclosures, complete information and promised extensive studies.

There are important questions to be addressed before a binding vote is taken by our City Council. Has a cohesive plan on costs, especially total costs of this rail/ trail project been reviewed by council? Has the fiscal responsibility been sufficiency considered? Are the future costs of the rail aspect of the project available? Will future taxes be levied through added sales tax, special assessments on property taxes be required?

Are there spread sheets and balance reports available for the public to review the costs, expenditures of proposed project?

Are budgets available to review?

How much has been spent over the years on consultants, engineers, alternative analysis, studies and reevaluated studies?

Regardless of grants and other source of funding, what has been the expenditures?

State and Federal grants and funding do come with high cost to individual taxpayers, they are not 'Free'.

What are legal ramifications to the City of Capitola in regards to the voter mandate of Measure L that was passed in Capitola?

What cost to overturn the citizen's choice, consider the time and division to override measure L, possible court/ legal involvements?

Is there a completed environmental report available?

Do right of ways need to be secured?

Will eminent domain be enacted anywhere along the 32 miles of the corridor for a train?

What plans are available to decide in favor of trains about the scope of Rail Stations?

How many rail stations? Where?

Impact on track corridor for the possibly of massive infrastructure of Rail Stations?

Consider many more high-rise apartment complex's being built on the Track corridor, not needing city of county approval or oversight

implemented through proposed California Bill SB 79.

Are there Capitola rail stations? How many? Are the requirements below accurate?

Is Park Ave near Monterey Ave. a proposed rail station?

Would the rail stations be subject to these requirements:

350 foot long platforms*

16 foot wide minimum for side platforms

30 foot wide minimum for center platforms

24-48 inch high platform (from top of rail, depends on vehicle type)

ADA accessibility

Safety and security features

Are there completed conceptual reports?

How many more studies are anticipated?

What is the cost of these ongoing studies?

What is the noise impact of trains and the cost to noise mitigation?

What is the liability to the City of Capitola for instance for noise mitigation, like signs, gates for crossings?

The most concerning are the financial aspects.

What is the cost? Do you know?

What is the current cost per mile of track?

How has the cost per-mile changed over the years?

The recent bridge report about the billion dollar cost for 28 bridges that need to be replaced and five that need rebuilding.

This cost does not address, new single tracks, double tracks (for rail cars to pass each other) the trains, maintenance, fencing, retaining walls, noise mitigation.

Did the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission change from light rail to intercity rail?

If correct, the trains themselves would not be slower moving light rail, other options, faster trains would be considered, like diesel?

Is it necessary to literally change the landscape through track realignment, from curved tracks to straight tracks to accommodate faster trains?

Decisions made only on a piecemeal segment basis, lack the integrity of the reality of the entire project.

Each segment, segments 5, 7,8,9,10,11,12, and 18 connect the whole county.

The council voting April 17, 2025, just days after the public meeting, on segment 10-11, Park Avenue limited options rerouting of Trail off of the expected track corridor is a pressured approach.

Is there an option to follow Measure L and keep the trail on the track corridor?

If detailed information about costs and impacts had been provided at the very onset of rail - trail conversations years ago, measure D might have been understood more accurately and the vote may have been more of a true representation of the people's choice.

Is there a option to build the Trail Now and rail bank the train?

Is Capitola Council having any council meetings about building the trail and rail banking?

The train orthodoxy is creating a looming untenable debt to the future.

Some state, 'the train is for our future, our families, children', hearing the refrain, build at any unknown cost, yet, we must consider the future, the financial untenable debt incurred.

Living in this County, affordability and housing has been at the forefront of government decisions.

The 'Cost of Living' and housing in Santa Cruz County *rises* with every new tax, reducing affordability for our children, elders, community, escalating the very problem of affordability and sustainability, the leaders proclaim to correct.

Stop taxing, realign the hard earned money already raised by this county, realign to the needs of the community, for instance, funding to repair deteriorating roads.

If these questions have been addressed, I apologize for the redundancy.

I have been unable to find clear direction, that is why I am taking the time to write to each of you.

If I a citizen of Capitola were to ask each of my council members about specific details to this proposed project would I receive information to understand the overall picture of the proposed Trail/ Rail project?

I ask as a Resident of Santa Cruz County and City of Capitola, will each council member in good faith seek out and request appropriate data, information to lead our community with vital information needed to make visionary wise decisions?

I want to trust you and that you have performed due diligence to guide your choices.

We have been patiently waiting for years and still waiting for the postponed studies to give us specific important information so we all can make informed choices about the Trail/Rail.

It is time to assess the costs that have been revealed, find the hidden cost and to evaluate what will radically change the landscape of communities, including removing hundreds of trees, forever changing the lands.

The train might have been an idea worth investigating at one time, now it has become a liability to the vitality of our community.

The train simply costs too much, burdening with indebtedness the future.

The train would take years, maybe decades to build.

Build a Trail and the community would be able to use the tracks in the foreseeable future.

The time is now to build a trail and rail bank the train.

Thank-you for reading this email.

A Concerned Capitola Resident,
Cheryl Ban