

Gautho, Julia

From: Kevin Maguire <kmaguire831@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:27 PM
To: City Council; Goldstein, Jamie (jgoldstein@ci.capitola.ca.us); Gautho, Julia
Subject: 3.13.2025 City Council Meeting Agenda Item 8 A. Rail Trail Project Town Hall Plan - Request to Postpone April 2nd Town Hall Meeting Due to Lack of Requested Information

Dear Mayor Clark and Members of the Capitola City Council,

We, the **Concerned Citizens of Capitola**, formally request that the **April 2nd Town Hall Meeting** be **postponed** until the **full set of requested information is available** for the public and city officials to make an informed decision regarding the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 & 11.

At the **February 13th City Council Meeting**, multiple council members, including **Councilmember Morgan, Councilmember Jensen, and Mayor Clark**, expressed concerns about **the rushed timeline, lack of critical project details, and need for a comprehensive public engagement process**. Following this, the Council voted to **postpone any decision until a properly informed Town Hall meeting could be held**.

The community is already **confused**, with the RTC meeting less than a month before this meeting. The Public will think this is a duplicate event, attendance and comprehension will be limited.

RTC acted against City Manager Jamie Goldstien **concerns** and hosted an unsupported,, **rushed** "Town Hall" / workshop, in an attempt to influence the public, without producing all the requested information. As this "Town Hall" was protested by many residents. A majority of the people I spoke with at the event were unaware the City had nothing to do with this event. They were shocked, and confused. I would estimate 150-200 people attended. If you count the "**Blue Circles**" stickers that were handed out to **Capitola Citizens**, you can see it was about 70-80% residents in attendants. A far greater attendance from any gathering to date, due in part to flyers and communications sent out from the Concerned Citizens of Capitola. The Public is not well informed on this issue.

However, with only a few weeks until the **April 2nd Town Hall**, the information requested **remains incomplete**. Proceeding without all the data contradicts the intent of the Council's February 13th motion and **denies the community the thorough discussion they deserve**.

RTC Director Sarah Christense told **Lookout Santa Cruz** after the Capitola Town Hall that the decision to push back the report until the fall was her decision. "**I don't want to rush this, because this is a big project that's transformative for our community**"

Based on those statements, how **critical** this project is to Capitola, so we are not **pigeonholed**, and lack of **requested information** for the public and council to make an informed decision, you have no choice but to postpone this April 2nd Town hall.

 **Key Missing Information That Justifies Postponement**

1. Capitola General Plan Supports Multi-Purpose Transportation, Not Just Rail

- The **Capitola General Plan** emphasizes a **multi-purpose trail system** that integrates various transportation modes, including biking and pedestrian paths.
- The current project proposal **diverts sections of the trail onto city streets**, which is **inconsistent** with the General Plan's goal of **safe, separated active transportation routes**.
- The community deserves **clarity on whether the proposed changes align with the City's long-term mobility goals** before making any irreversible commitments.

2. No Clear Plan for the Capitola Trestle & Rail Corridor Use

- The Council **explicitly requested a structural assessment of the Capitola Trestle** to determine whether it can support a **continuous Rail Trail within the corridor**.
- **The ATP Grant application** submitted by Santa Cruz County **presents the trail as being in the rail corridor**, yet the **current design proposes detours onto city streets**, raising concerns about the project's integrity and transparency.
- Additionally, the City needs to **evaluate the feasibility of railbanking the Capitola Trestle** to preserve future rail options while allowing a trail to move forward now. (I will send in the 47 pages ATP application from Rob Tidmore)

3. Legal Review of Measure L Compliance & Rail Corridor Rights

- Measure L, passed by Capitola voters, **legally requires the Rail Trail to remain within the rail corridor** and prohibits using city resources for projects that divert it onto city streets.
- Proceeding with a design that **conflicts with Measure L could expose the City to legal challenges**, yet a **full legal analysis has not been provided**.
- The City should also examine the process of **adverse abandonment and railbanking** as viable options to legally secure the corridor for trail use while maintaining the potential for future transit.

4. Capitola Was NOT Included in 2022's Measure D—Decisions Here Must Be Capitola-Specific

- **Measure D (2022) applied only to unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County, NOT Capitola.**
- The results of that vote should **not be used to override the legally binding Measure L**, which applies **specifically to Capitola** and was passed by Capitola voters.
- The City must ensure that any **decisions regarding the Rail Trail respect Capitola's unique planning process and legal framework**.

5. No Long-Term Cost Analysis for Capitola's Financial Commitment

- **Councilmember Morgan specifically called for a long-term cost analysis**, including the **financial burden of using city-owned property for the project**.
- The **RTC has admitted that project costs have increased by \$27 million**, yet **no clear funding plan has been provided**.
- **If new taxes or reallocations of local funds will be required, residents deserve to know before any decisions are made.**

6. Public Engagement Has Been Rushed & Lacks Transparency

- **Councilmember Jensen, Mayor Clark, and RTC Director Sarah Christensen all acknowledged that more time is needed** to gather and present a complete set of data.
- **The March 4th RTC Town Hall failed to provide substantive answers to community concerns, and residents do not want a repeat of that flawed process.**
- **Given the complexity of this decision, rushing an April 2nd Town Hall contradicts the City's promise of open and transparent public engagement.**

What We Are Asking

We respectfully request that the **April 2nd Town Hall Meeting be postponed** until all the following conditions are met:

1. **A full engineering and feasibility report on the Capitola Trestle** is presented, determining whether the trail can safely remain in the corridor.

2. **A complete Segment 10 & 11 project overview** is released, covering **Brommer, Jade Street, Park Avenue, and the Capitola Trestle** in a single, unified presentation.

3. **A legal review on Measure L compliance and potential litigation risks** is completed and shared with the public.

4. **A detailed financial report** is published, outlining **total project costs, city financial commitments, and any expected tax increases or funding reallocations.**

5. **A real Town Hall format is adopted**, allowing for **meaningful public input and direct Q&A**, instead of a rushed, pre-scripted presentation. (2 hours is not enough)

The Council originally voted to ensure that ALL of this information would be made available before a decision was made. This has not yet happened.

Moving forward with the **April 2nd date undermines the transparency and accountability** that the community expects. We urge you to **respect the concerns voiced by City Council members and residents by postponing the meeting** until a fully informed public discussion can take place.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to a more thorough and community-driven process.

Summary of February 13th City Council Meeting:

Council member Morgan said to the **RTC** they are putting us in a **real tough position with this change up**, she said **we owe it to our community to push further into exploring what else the RTC has to offer to us**, we want an **update on the budget, [what options beside A or B](#)**, what does a larger buffer look like? What does the buffer between the bike lanes and cars look like, **City needs to look at a long term cost analysis** if we are **going to use our city property, a less rush decision making process**. Make sure the **outreach is proper** and the information is there. **Council member Jensen** said he hears a lot of **conflicting information** an a town hall is absolutely imperative, this is a **Huge decision for Capitola**, referring to March 20th meeting that we have all the information, Budget information, at one time as a community together. **We need a whole overview, Brommer, Jade St, Park, the Trestle, need the whole story at one time**. Concerns about leagal review and Measure L. **Jensen** stated **"communty counts"** and its important we all have the information together and **make this decision together. I think its key to wait till after the end of March, lets have A town hall meeting, one meeting. Mayor Clark** wants to hear from the people in the **mobile homes, more info on Measure L**, pause and have a town hall, so we can **make a better decision. 2.13.25 City Council Motion (3 to 1) to postpone a decision** on this item and host a Town Hall Meeting where staff from the City and County will provide updates on the use of the Trestle, review long-

term impacts of the project, review impacts of potential litigation from Measure L, and an overview of Rail Trail Project impacts in Capitola **RTC Director Sarah Christen** stated after the Motion vote to postpone, that they bought the Rail line with the vision being passenger Rail and Trail, and the Trail aspect obviously has a lot more public support... The Transit aspect, that project is a long-term project and we have a lot of time from now until **IF** and **When** it comes to **fruition**... I am a little bit concerned about what council member Jensen requested. **Its a significant amount of information** and I'm worried that we're not going to be able to pull the information together on time. For us to detail everything in Capitola its going to take time... The Concept report summer to Fall (Coastal rail trail project and the Rail Project is larger and more complex) Council member Jensen mention if you need 8 weeks or more, we are patient we **want to do this ONCE**, and **do it right, it is complex**. There is more info coming out March 20th, and **whatever it takes to do it right, is what we're all about here in Capitola**

Sincerely,

Kevin Maguire
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Capitola, CA