

Gautho, Julia

From: Teresa Maguire <tlcmaguire@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:51 AM
To: Clarke, Joe; Pedersen, Alexander; Gerry Jensen; Margaux Morgan; Melinda Orbach
Cc: City Council
Subject: Capitola City Town Hall too soon since RTC just held one - ** Protect the Monarch Butterfly ** - NEPA and ESA are pending!!
Attachments: Capitola_Escalona_Gulch_Monarch_Site.jpg

I am concerned residents in **Capitola, CA**, regarding the **\$84 million budget allocated for Segments 10 & 11** of the **Coastal Rail Trail Project** and the **lack of transparency regarding the cost breakdown, environmental impact, and tree removal analysis.** (Current estimates are 117 million or more now?)

There is pending **Federal Protection** to designate the **Monarch Butterfly's as Endangered species and protect their habitat.** We need to **Pause** Park Avenue plans!

While we support expanding active transportation options in Santa Cruz County, we believe it is **critical to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and that the environmental impact is fully understood before proceeding with irreversible decisions.** The public is prioritizing walking and biking over Rail.

RTC just held a town hall, with this so close, this is rushed if they haven't provided **ALL** the information requested by the council on February 13th. It's rushed to then turn around after April 2nd town hall have the council vote on these alternatives in a short period of time.. 2 Hour scripted Town hall is not enough time.

This needs to be pushed back until we have all the information. After **August** perhaps?

- Will the City of Capitola be **compensated** for the loss of our Land? A small 1100 sq foot house on Pine St is listed for over 2 million dollars. Our land is limited and valuable!
- If we are trying to prioritize **Housing**, removing over **26 parking spaces** on Park Avenue is not wise. The rezoning of 600 Park Avenue will negatively impact our neighborhood.
- **Safety concerns** about diverting trail traffic into the village and Park Avenue, **SCCRTC** stated in the Grant application process that Brommer, Park, Monterey and other streets as stressful, and unsafe and that is why the grant was needed to build a **separated trail** away from the roadway walking and biking trail on the **Rail Line**. How much of the Trail is in the Rail line corridor in Capitola?
- Grant also had funds for the Capitola Trestle. What was that for? Why did they ask for 67 million and have another 17 million. For 4.15 miles of trail, that is about \$20 Million a mile, that seems an awful lot.
- Where would Train Stations be? And would they provide Parking?
- It appears the 67 million dollar grant is not going to the trail with the rails as proposed.
- Capitola citizens' voices and concerns need to be prioritized, the impact, cost, safety, impact to business, summer congestions and ultimately how this will shape Capitola for decades. Do we want a 12 foot sidewalk? Or the proposed trail on the rail right-of-way that was sold to us. .

Keep the Trail on the Rail.

Specific Requests for Transparency

We formally request SCCRTC to provide a **detailed breakdown** of the following:

1 Full Cost Breakdown for the \$84 Million Allocation

- **How is the \$84 million being allocated?**
- What portion is for **trail construction** vs. **rail preservation costs**?
- How much is allocated for **tree removal, habitat mitigation, bridges, drainage, and safety barriers**?
- What **contingency funds** are included in the budget, and how are cost overruns accounted for?

2 Cost Estimate for an Interim Trail in Phase 1 (Without Rail Removal)

- What would be the estimated **cost to build a trail using the existing railbed** while leaving the tracks in place (railbanking)?
- How does the **cost of the interim trail compare** to the ultimate rail-with-trail project?
- Would an **interim trail qualify for ATP and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding** at a lower cost?

3 Tree Removal: Interim Trail vs. Ultimate Plan

- **How many trees will be removed under the ultimate plan** (rail and trail)?
- **How many trees would be removed under an interim trail plan?**
- What specific mitigation strategies are in place for tree replanting and habitat restoration?
- How will the removal of trees **impact sensitive habitats, including monarch butterfly overwintering sites near Escalona Gulch**?

4 Environmental Impact of Rail & Trail vs. Interim Trail

- What are the **stormwater, grading, and erosion impacts** of the ultimate plan?
- Does an **interim trail reduce environmental harm** by avoiding major excavation and tree removal?
- How does the ultimate plan comply with **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements** related to habitat destruction and mitigation?

Why This Information Is Urgent

The SCCRTC is making **long-term financial and environmental commitments that will impact Capitola and surrounding areas for decades. Residents, businesses, and environmental advocates deserve full transparency** before the project advances further.

Without a detailed cost breakdown and impact analysis, it is **impossible for the public to fully evaluate the financial and environmental tradeoffs** of the current plan versus an **interim trail solution that preserves trees, reduces cost, and still provides safe biking and walking access.**

Future Tax implications, funding and budget items from Capitola for the trail, and Rail and future rail service, maintenance. Will revenue be shared with our city to help pay for those expenses?

Request for Public Disclosure

We formally request that SCCRTC:

- ✓ Provide a **detailed cost breakdown of the \$84 million** budget, including trail, rail, environmental mitigation, and project management costs.
- ✓ Release a **full comparison of tree removal and environmental impact** for an **interim trail** versus the ultimate project .vs. Alternate Option A or B
- ✓ Schedule a **public information session** to discuss these issues and allow for community input.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We appreciate City Council commitment to improving active transportation, and we hope that **our concerns will be addressed with full transparency and accountability.**

We look forward to your response.

God Bless,

Teresa L. Maguire
CAPITOLA Resident

