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GREENWAY PRESENTS 10,000 PETITION SIGNATURES TO RTC **Petition says county residents want trail, not train**

Santa Cruz, CA, December 17th, 2018 – On Tuesday, December 18th, 2018, at 10:30 am Santa Cruz County Greenway will present a petition with over 10,000 signatures of county residents to Guy Preston, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) at the RTC's office: 1523 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The petition says:

"I agree with the conclusions of the Santa Cruz County Greenway Study that a multi-use path for pedestrians, bikes and electric bikes is the best use of the rail corridor and that a train does NOT deliver the ridership, safety, or other benefits to justify its enormous cost."

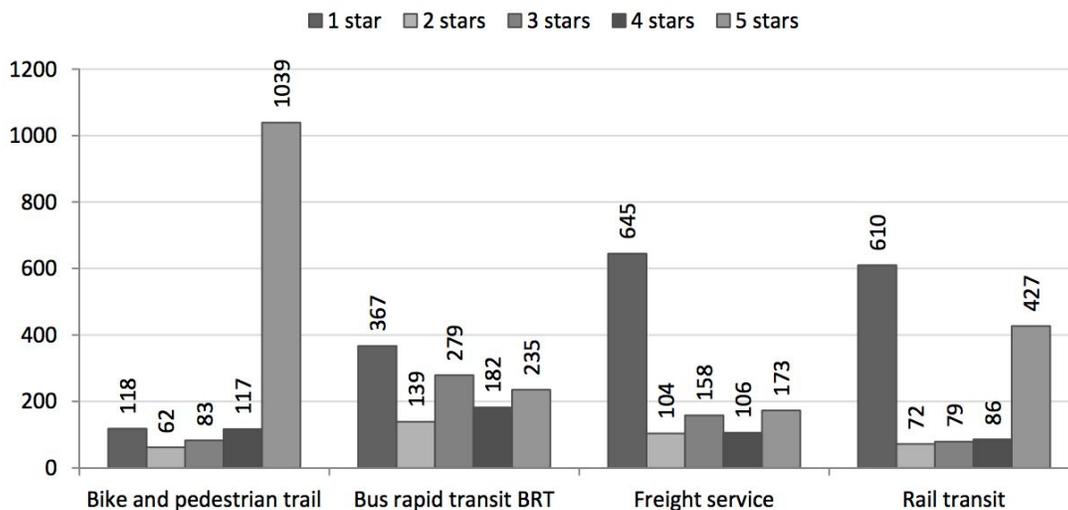
The signatures are being officially submitted to the RTC one month before the commission's planned vote on the "train plan" at their January 17th meeting. RTC Staff is seeking approval for a scenario which includes a \$1 billion+ passenger train over thirty years and spending \$15 million immediately to repair the old tracks so that freight rail service could operate throughout Santa Cruz County. A 'Yes' vote would trigger a 10 year contract with freight operator Progressive Rail. "If the RTC approves the 'train plan,' the rail corridor won't get used for serious public transportation anytime in the next 10 years," said Manu Koenig, Executive Director of Santa Cruz County Greenway. A potential passenger train wouldn't run for at least seventeen years (2035), and would only have 3,698 round trips per day, compared to HWY 1's over 100,000 round trips per day.

The 10,000 signatures dwarf the RTC's own public outreach efforts, which Koenig calls "not representative." The RTC held just two public presentations with limited input on its recommended scenario, one in Live Oak on Monday, October 15, 2018 and another in Watsonville on Tuesday, October 16, 2018. The RTC also lists fourteen other presentations as opportunities for public input, but unfortunately, "public input" is limited to two minute sound bites ignored by the RTC. "The bottom line is that the RTC hasn't talked to everyday people — Greenway has. The message from voters is resoundingly clear, voters will not pay for a billion dollar train boondoggle," said Koenig.

The passage of Measure L on November 6, where voters favored the use of the Capitola Trestle for bikes and pedestrians, confirms that Greenway is correct about voter preference. “Elections provide statistically representative data about the will of the voters,” said Koenig. Greenway invites our County Supervisors to put the issue to a county-wide vote in 2020.

The RTC has also ignored its own public opinion data in moving forward with proposed passenger and freight rail. In an online survey of 1,596 residents, the largest public survey the RTC has conducted for the Unified Corridors Study (UCS), 54% of respondents opposed rail transit and 63% opposed freight rail in north county (UCS Draft Step 1 Analysis – Public Workshop and Survey Input October-November 2017). “Why is our public transportation agency spending thousands of dollars to collect this data only to ignore it?” Koenig asks.

Figure 6: Rail Right-of-Way



Data from the UCS Draft Step 1 Analysis – Public Workshop and Survey Input, Oct.-Nov. 2017

The RTC’s Unified Corridors Study (UCS) makes no reference to the need for a new tax to support passenger rail service despite the fact that BART, SMART, and other California rail projects have all required matching local funds. Measure D, the county’s 2016 self-help transportation funding measure, prohibits use of funds for building or operating a passenger train. “They’re avoiding the most important question,” Koenig said, “will the voters pay for it?”

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Santa Cruz County Greenway is a 501(c)4 non-profit advocacy organization whose mission is “to create a spectacular Greenway as the backbone of an active transportation and transit network.”