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June 27, 2025

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Request for Clarification on Rail and Trail Project Impacts in Capitola

Dear Chair Montesino and Commissioners,

On behalf of the City of Capitola, we respectfully request clarification on several elements of the Rail and Trail Project that may directly impact public safety, private property, and the overall well-being of our community. These questions are particularly important to ensure equity across Capitola neighborhoods, especially for residents of Castle Mobile Home Estates at 1099 38th Avenue.

Castle Mobile Home Estates is a 108-space affordable housing community, home to many seniors, fixed-income households, and families. Since its acquisition by the nonprofit Millennium Housing Corporation in 2011—with financial support from the City—the City has remained committed to preserving the long-term affordability, livability, and stability of this park. The success of that commitment depends in part on how infrastructure projects like the Rail and Trail are designed and implemented.

Over the past several years, Capitola residents have voiced significant concerns. In response, the City Council seeks specific information to help:

- Can the RTC consider a phased approach to resolving encroachments , potentially allowing some issues to be resolved upon transfer of title for the coach
- Provide accurate and transparent updates to the public
- Identify and address potential safety risks
- Respectfully request compliance with City's municipal codes and Measure L
- Plan effectively for long-term impacts
- Uphold equity across all affected neighborhoods

We respectfully request the RTC's response to the following:

Property Impacts & Detours

- Will the Rail and Trail require a detour at 41st Avenue onto City of Capitola property and will a detour be required at 47th Avenue?
- Will the route shift onto City property between 47th Avenue and the area between Cliff Drive and Prospect Avenue?
- Will the current design between Monterey Avenue and Grove Lane impact the 26 properties on Escalona Drive adjacent to the RTC corridor?



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- Is the RTC proposing any wayfinding signage or markings within Capitola but outside the RTC corridor?
- Are there any other corridor constraints within Capitola that could require a detour of trail or rail infrastructure onto City property?

Clearances & Corridor Conditions:

- What is the minimum required clearance for both freight and passenger rail in the Rail and Trail design?
- What is the existing clearance between the corridor and Capitola Beach Villas?
- What is the existing clearance between the corridor and Castle Mobile Home Estates?

Future Design Considerations with the anticipated implementation of Zero-Emission Passenger Rail Transit (ZEPRT):

- What design modifications or additional right-of-way would be needed at Park Avenue?
- Is it true that the trail segment between Monterey Avenue and Grove Lane would be removed to make room for a ZEPRT passing lane?
- Who currently holds maintenance responsibility for the rail corridor within Capitola city limits?

We recognize that some of the answers to these questions may be the subject of settlement negotiations, and therefore not available at this time. Regardless, we feel it is important to raise these questions to help demonstrate our shared commitment to our residents.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important questions. The City of Capitola looks forward to your response and to continued collaboration in ensuring that this regional project moves forward with safety, transparency, and fairness at its core.

Sincerely,

Joe Clarke, Mayor, City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Gerry Jensen, Council Member, City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee