

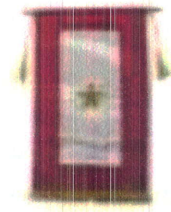
## EMBRACE CHANGE

Presentation to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
Intra-Agency Technical Advisory Committee  
October 22, 2020

By J. Ben Vernazza CPA (a resident of Aptos, CA since 1967)

I was born in 1934 during the Depression -- a 'new normal' relative to the 'Roaring '20s'. I have never forgotten December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. That Sunday afternoon all over San Francisco neighbors were in the streets and in front of houses listening to the radio on porches or in open windows -- It was the start of a new "new normal."

One family on our street had a son who had joined the Navy in early 1941. All the younger boys looked up to him. Two months after Pearl Harbor I was walking past his house and there was a red and white banner with a GOLD star in the window and the blinds were closed behind it. I ran home and asked my mother and she told me what that meant -- *Killed in Action*. To me THAT was the moment of 'the new normal'. Then 1943, there were two GOLD stars in that window - a reminder of the new 'new normal'.



Then, the war was over. Everything changed -- people were happy, their sons and daughters and brothers and sisters were coming home. The future looked bright -- it was the new 'new normal'. Life changed in so many ways just as I was about to enter junior high school.

My reason for all this history is because here we are again, in the middle a disruptive pandemic with a new 'new normal' which has interrupted and changed our lives in so many ways and will be replaced with another new 'new normal' when all the dust settles after a cure for the virus.

All of you are public servants with your own individual specialties and have worked extremely hard over the years making recommendations based on how, what, where, and how much on many transportation projects. Many of the final decisions by Supervisors, Commissioners and senior department heads have been made with confidence because of your efforts. Now, you must be careful and cautious in using your skills, including your imagination, concerning your recommendations, new or already in the pipeline. Some of them will not work out as previously planned because of new technology, changing working habits along with less commuting and shopping trips due to same day deliveries to your door.

I am here today because a growing number of citizens in mid- Santa Cruz County living near and using Segment 12 of the corridor have great concerns about the need and necessity of widening 2.7 miles and constructing two new bridges over Highway 1 at a cost of \$40,000,000 per mile.

it is very questionable whether widening at Segment 12 is needed under the new "new normal" of working from home and less shopping trips. It is also the tail end of the commute and widening from Soquel to State Park Drive should alleviate the need to widen 2.7 miles. There was an earlier alternative plan by CalTrans to keep the trestles by double decking and estimated to now cost about one-half or \$20,000,000 per mile (some 5 years ago the cost was estimated at some \$10,000,000 per mile).

**WE ASK YOU TO RECOMMEND TO THE SCCRTC COMMISSIONERS THAT THEY PUT OFF EXENDITURES OUTLINED IN SEGMENT 12 BUDGETS FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR AND UNTIL YOU ARE TOTALLY CONVINCED THERE IS NO REASON TO DELAY UNDER KNOWN AND RELIABLE TRENDS OF WHAT THE NEW 'NEW NORMAL' IS CREATING.**

## SECOND CONCERN THE UTILIZATION OF THE ENTIRE 32 MILE SANCTUARY FOR 'RAIL-TRAIL'

We favor 1996 Santa Cruz County Transportation Plan and their recommendation for *"A flexible bus transit based system that can be tailored to serve residential, employment, and educational travel, as well as serve seasonal park facilities and changing peak weekend tourist needs"*:

1-using the Corridor from Santa Cruz to Park Avenue as a "Busway and Bikeway" with the bus going on to Cabrillo and then on to the freeway to Watsonville (and Pajaro if needed).

2- The corridor from Park Avenue to Watsonville can then be used as originally planned when I was on the Bicycle Committee and attending The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Trail Committee during 2006-2010) – an actual Sanctuary Trail that could be accessed easily by most mid-county residents for biking or hiking especially after the MarVista Overpass completion by entering the trail with ease in Seacliff.

The Busway would provide a method of transportation between Santa Cruz and Capitola for not only residents, but tourists as well as smaller Care buses for the disabled. This is significant for Capitola because of its limited parking. And it would provide transportation to Cabrillo and UCSC from either end of the county. It would mean that one could easily go by bus, car, taxi/uber/lyft to Pajaro and transfer to an 'imagined' train to Gilroy to connect to an 'imagined' bullet train to San Francisco or L.A., or to some other train connection.

Utilizing the bike-hike trail over the trestles through the "Aptos Village" would encourage village residents to take the trail to the beach and those on the beach-side would have easy access to the village thereby taking a load off the already very busy village traffic. And, who wants a train going through the already very congested village thoroughfare anyway?

Just think how much of that train-trail \$1,000,000,000 could be saved for a better result! And remember, *The Sanctuary Trail* was meant to provide the calming benefits of a refuge, an oasis, a get-away to enjoy nature, the birds, the whales, the trees, and along the way the smell of strawberries and occasionally Brussels sprouts. Let us not lose that in this new 'new normal'.

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SUGGEST YOU RECONSIDER THE SEGMENT 12 IMPROVEMENTS NOW ESTIMATED AT SOME \$40,000,000 PER MILE FOR THE 2.7 MILES. SUGGEST SHELVE FOR A YEAR TO EVALUATE WHETHER THE WIDENING AND NEW BRIDGES WOULD OR WOULD NOT BE NEEDED UNDER THE NEW 'NEW NORMAL'

SUGGEST YOU CONSIDER THE 1996 CORRIDOR PLAN DESCRIBED ABOVE AND ELIMINATE THE TRAIN

## EMBRACE CHANGE

**"Some people don't like change, but you need to embrace change if the alternative is disaster."**

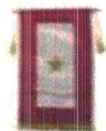
**. . . . Elon Musk**

### Possible Disaster

Widening to three lanes with one lane as a bus/2+ passengers, with lower peak hour traffic from less commuting, less local trips and added autonomous vehicle control could create an uninterrupted 17.7 miles that would take only 16 minutes from Watsonville to Santa Cruz at 65MPH.

### WHO? UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WILL TAKE THE TRAIN?

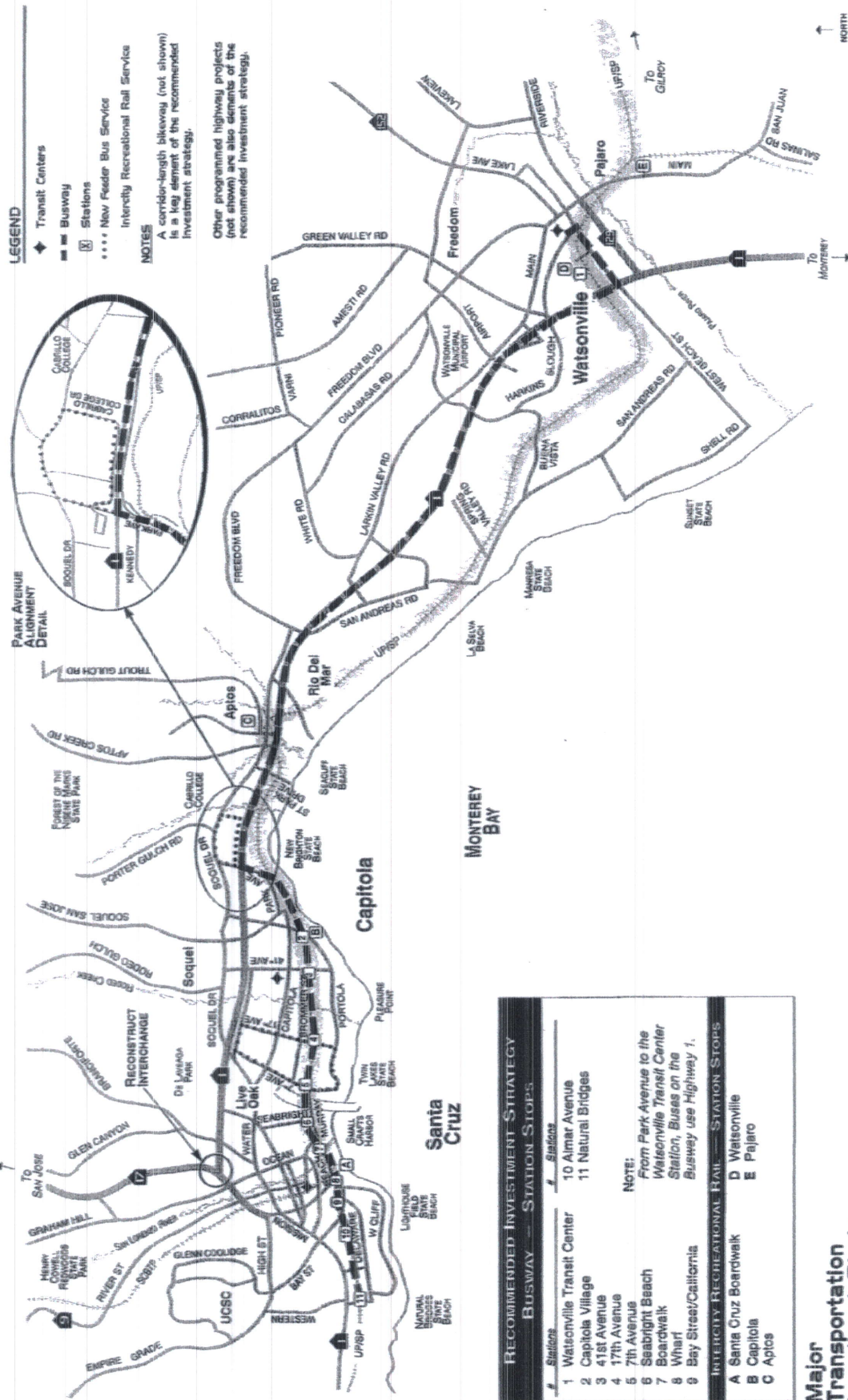
As fiduciaries you have the duty of care, duty of caution, and duty to use your skills wisely– Be Prudent.



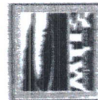


# RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT STRATEGY INTERCITY RECREATIONAL RAIL — BIKEWAY — BUSWAY

Watsonville Junction - Santa Cruz -  
University of California Santa Cruz Corridor



RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT STRATEGY BUSWAY — STATION STOPS	
Stations	Stations
1 Watsonville Transit Center	10 Almar Avenue
2 Capitola Village	11 Natural Bridges
3 41st Avenue	
4 17th Avenue	
5 7th Avenue	
6 Seabright Beach	
7 Boardwalk	
8 Wharf	
9 Bay Street/California	
<b>NOTE:</b> From Park Avenue to the Watsonville Transit Center Station, Buses on the Busway use Highway 1.	
INTERCITY RECREATIONAL RAIL — STATION STOPS	
A Santa Cruz Boardwalk	D Watsonville
B Capitola	E Pajaro
C Aptos	



Major  
Transportation  
Investment Study

