



Rail & Trail Candidate Questionnaire

November Election 2022

Local elected officials are appointed to serve on boards like the Metro and the RTC and can have an impact on countywide transportation decisions. Friends of the Rail & Trail is committed to discovering candidate positions and sharing them with the public so we can all make informed choices at the ballot box.

Responses by Filipe Hernandez, Candidate for Santa Cruz County
Supervisor, District 4

1

The Regional Transportation Commission owns the rail corridor. The RTC has unanimously affirmed its commitment to leave the railroad infrastructure in place, maintain freight rail service, and institute high capacity public transit service. The RTC has also selected electric passenger rail transit as the locally preferred alternative for transit on the corridor. Do you support these policies? Why or why not? How would this position be expressed in your work, should you be elected?

Yes, I support all of the above. We desperately need to add new forms of transportation and rail is the most efficient and cost effective way to expand existing service to create a network. We also should maintain the freight capability as this can get trucks off the roads but also serve our communities during natural disasters. My position on this is unequivocal and I intend to take a leadership role as a Supervisor and member of the SCCRTC. I will be that leader and encourage other commissioners to join me in delivering the rail and the trail without compromise.

2

Construction has begun on the trail next to the tracks, but some segments have faced opposition and resulting delays. What is your position on the multi-use trail planned for the rail corridor? How would this position be expressed in your work, should you be elected?

I have always supported the Coastal Rail Trail and we need to expedite construction without delay, by rejecting any kind of railbanking attempts or sacrificing rail uses. But the Coastal Rail Trail isn't enough; we need to improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the

county and reconsider how we dedicate all the pavement that we have and expand the number and quality of bike lanes, and build sidewalks where none exist and use traffic calming measure to make sure more people decide to walk or bike with confidence and assuredness of their safety.

3

Neighborhoods with **safe streets**, bike lanes, and sidewalks create room for us to move freely without our cars. What would you do to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists?

As Mayor, I implemented the Vision Zero plan in the City of Watsonville and it became an ordinance in 2018. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all bike and pedestrian traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all. The policy incorporates the 6 E's: Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation, Equity and Engagement. First and foremost, making bike and pedestrian infrastructure and safety a number one priority. As Supervisor, I will move forward a Vision Zero policy at the County, to ensure bike and pedestrian safety on our County and rural roads.

4

What did you think of the June 2022 **Measure D** vote? What was your position on this measure? How do you interpret the outcome of this vote?

- **The resounding defeat of Measure D told us that the community rejects the Trail Only approach and wants the rail line to be used as planned: for passenger service, with a trail.**
- **The 73% NO vote is consistent with prior public surveys in 2015 by the SCCRTC and by FORT's survey two years back and a TAMC (Monterey County) survey last year.**
- **The people have spoken, it's time to move at full speed toward making all repairs and improvements to the rail line to permit transit, while building the parallel Coastal Rail Trail.**

Find-out more about Filipe Hernandez at their website: [Felipe Hernandez for Santa Cruz County Supervisor \(voteforfelipe.com\)](http://voteforfelipe.com)