



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 Sean Maxwell, Candidate for Santa Cruz City Council District 6

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?

I strongly support maintaining and improving our freight rail infrastructure and developing clean, electric passenger rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch Line. We must take action NOW to proactively address our climate crisis and investing in sustainable, alternative transportation systems must be our top priority. I will advocate strongly for opening up our rail corridor for active transportation, building out segments of the rail-trail, and prioritizing environmental review, preliminary design and engineering, and a robust business plan to guide the public process for implementing the RTC's preferred alternative reflected in the Transit Corridors Alternatives Analysis. It has been frustrating to see these plans delayed by a narrow but well-funded constituency, but heartening that the commission has finally agreed to move forward and I want to support these efforts however possible.

Specifically, I will urge City and RTC staff and commissioners to identify and apply for all available funding to support Active Transportation and rail, including federal rail infrastructure and state rail network funds. These

investments will provide sustainable public transit and active transportation alternatives to single occupancy vehicles, which will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and relieving congestion on HWY 1 and our transportation corridors. As a council member, I would support the City's ongoing efforts to secure funding and plan for rail trail buildout and advocate for City representatives to the RTC who will be unwavering in their support for the rail and trail.

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 fully support the multi-use trail alongside the tracks. While I recognize that some segments will be more challenging than others due to physical constraints and potential legal claims, I believe that these challenges can be overcome with political will and a commitment to identifying and securing funding sources for critical infrastructure. Both the City and the RTC have demonstrated success in seeking state and federal funds (competitive grants, earmarks), particularly for Active Transportation, and I want to see our public agencies continue in this direction.

I am pleased that the City and RTC have made progress on opening up Segment 7, the first phase of which runs through my Westside District (D6). I will push for completion of the multi-use trail from Wilder Ranch to Davenport as quickly as possible. I also believe we need elected officials who will work proactively to deliver rail-trail projects and be unwavering in their commitment to electric passenger rail. This requires exercising

independent judgment (rather than serving as a rubber stamp for staff recommendations) and engaging with diverse voices in our community.

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?

I believe the City should move aggressively to advance the goals of Vision Zero, which I see as an important framework for safe, sustainable, and equitable multi-modal transportation systems. As a Planning Commissioner, I have supported recommendations that will make it easier for people to safely move around our community on foot and bicycle and, as a Council Member, I be a strong advocate for implementing policy and planning recommendations to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce injuries, in collaboration with the Transportation and Public Works Commission and community partners.

In particular, I will work to: address crosswalk safety, particularly along the Mission Street corridor; promote safe routes to schools and slow streets programming; prioritize protected bike lanes, sharrows, signage, and other measures to improve bike safety; and support educational campaigns like the ones offered in the schools my children attend (through a partnership between Ecology Action, the school district, and other groups).

I am committed to listening to the community and making decisions that I believe are in the public interest and will actively work to engage and problem-solve with the community around neighborhood traffic safety concerns

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?

I opposed the 2022 Measure D initiative and was thrilled by its resounding defeat. I believe it clearly demonstrated that voters overwhelmingly (and consistently across all Supervisors' districts) support maintaining the tracks for future rail service. They are just not willing to foreclose the possibility of developing sustainable public transit alternatives, and that message needs to be taken seriously. The result was also heartening because it demonstrated that people-powered organizing can defeat narrow moneyed interests! The fact that the previously split RTC recently voted unanimously to move forward with environmental review and preliminary engineering on TCAA preferred alternative suggests that commissioners heard the voters loudly and clearly. Let's build on this momentum!

Thank you,

--Sean Maxwell

Find-out more about Sean Maxwell at their website:
<https://www.maxwellforcitycouncil.com>