

People Power Questionnaire: CYNTHIA MATHEWS

1A. I support the Rail Trail. It is an ambitious, long term vision with complex issues including acquisition, repair and maintenance costs, shared use, legal issues, and governance, to name a few. Cost, timing and sources of funding are still a matter of discussion at this point. The important thing is that this is a rare opportunity and it will take time; we must have sustained commitment and a realistic plan for success.

1B. I support passenger service between Santa Cruz and Pajaro. The type and frequency will have to depend on detailed feasibility studies. A limited visitor-oriented service may be a good starting point; commuter service requires a threshold of users and clear destinations in order to be sustainable over time. Future studies will refine these questions.

2A. I do not support plans to widen Highway 1 between Santa Cruz and Watsonville. It would create even more pressure for growth in South County. After a very long and disruptive construction period, it might reduce congestion for a while, but history would suggest that over time new development pressures would bring us back to current conditions.

2B. I am skeptical about the long term benefits of this project, but understand that environmental review – anticipated to be a 2 year process -- has not even begun. The tradeoff in more limited projects like this is that safety improvements on a specific freeway link can actually relieve the pressure on neighborhood streets. Overall, I have not supported Highway 1 widening.

3. Yes. The current plan is a carefully crafted approach that takes many factors into consideration, including making the path user-friendly, minimizing or mitigating environmental impact, and consideration of Port District circumstances. Many cyclists have described their harrowing Soquel Avenue stories, and I have been clear on my position that we need several good east-west routes. The Arana trail will be safe and appealing for recreational and commuter cyclists alike. (And when we get the rail trail that will be yet another good addition – but it's still a long ways off, and the need is now.)

4. I actively support the ballot measures to require University mitigation of projected impacts before growth can occur. Recent talks with University representatives indicate that they are much more willing than previously to talk about creative and aggressive measures to reduce campus-related car trips and congestion. I would continue to press for investment in meaningful policies and programs, not just more studies.

5. Bicycle boulevards, like other traffic calming strategies, need to be evaluated in the overall circulation and neighborhood context. I have always been supportive of neighborhood planning for safe streets. In my own neighborhood, I was actively involved in the pioneering Livable Streets project in downtown Santa Cruz during the period of roughly 1976-1980. As for the specifics mentioned in this question, it is premature to commit without a good deal of study. I would certainly consider it.

6. Every aspect of the Tannery project is complex, involving a number of permitting agencies, approvals, and funding sources. I have been consistently supportive of this link as an efficient,

user-friendly connection to the Tannery for cyclists – whether local or visitors. The staff is very committed to this project as well, and any apparent delays reflect the complexity of the project – not lack of will.

Here's the update: On the bicycle path under the bridge, the Redevelopment Agency is taking the lead. Cal Trans is also involved because its their structure we're going under. A concept plan has been developed, and RDA is heading up the environmental review. This will be very thorough because there are listed and endangered species in the vicinity. This work is being funded with RDA money; there is funding in the Public Works budget in the next fiscal year for construction. The delays have to do with environmental review and funding.

According to the city's public works department, the bike-pedestrian bridge over the river is fully funded and construction should begin next year.

7. Yes, I have done this in the past and will continue to do so. Factors like street width and conditions and localized demand have to be considered. One area where the city facilitated this was on the Eastside where the Redevelopment Agency purchased and improved off-street parking as part of reducing on-street parking. The fact that there was a net gain of parking made the plan acceptable to Soquel Avenue merchants and businesses. Today they are generally very pleased with it, and are eager to pursue further traffic calming/beautification efforts. Bay Street is another case where parking has been eliminated on one side of the street to allow for bike lanes. Each case depends on the specific street configuration and circulation patterns.

8. Over the years I have supported countless bicycle facility improvements, including bike parking requirements for new construction, the Beach Street bike lanes, protecting access on the trestle bridge, the Soquel bike lanes, High St. contraflow lane, new bicycle parking options downtown, etc. I have regularly attended and supported bike-to-work activities, which offer appealing encouragement for the non-hardcore cyclist. I am extremely supportive and have been involved in safe streets to school and working with the bicycle-pedestrian coordinator. As a member, and later chair, of the Mission Street Task force, I worked hard to understand and resolve issues raised by cyclists. During the Coast Hotel discussions, I took the initiative to engage cycling advocates in meetings with city staff and the hotel owners, to modify the street and circulation for improved bike access and safety.

Rather than settle on one specific issue I would champion, I would offer my commitment to be open minded about issues brought forward by cycling advocates, and to support meaningful policies and improvements that will promote alternatives to single occupancy car travel.

9. I believe there will continue to be a change in social norms about transportation, in all kinds of variations – from walking and cycling to carpools/vanpools, bus rapid transit, shuttles, sources of power, land use (live-work developments, new urbanism,) and solutions we haven't even thought of. It will be partly driven by necessity and partly by changing attitudes. A combination of education and regulation can make a huge difference in a fairly short period of time: witness the changes in public attitudes about smoking, seat belt use, drunk driving, and unprotected sex. These have all been the focus of exceedingly successful public health campaigns that save lives

by changing behavior. I believe that a similar combination of education, incentives and resources can change transportation behavior.

There will always be some role for single vehicles – almost certainly differently powered than they are now. As fossil fuels rise in price, the market will respond with electric, hybrid and other powered options, as is already happening.

The City of Santa Cruz has taken a very pro-active position on all matters of conservation and climate protection, and I will continue to support actions that make the City a leader in this regard. We are a member of the ICLEI (International Conference for Local Environmental Initiatives) and have made steady progress toward higher levels of climate protection policies. For a sample of the broad range of City initiatives for conservation and climate protect, please see the attached.

10. I walk whenever reasonably feasible, actively initiate carpooling whenever feasible, and drive when needed for longer trips or errands involving a lot of stuff. Many years ago my husband and I expressly chose to live downtown in order to be within walking distance of schools (when our kids were little), stores, services and cultural activities.

FINAL COMMENTS

Just so you understand that support for bicycle projects does come at a political cost, I share this excerpt from a note that I recently received in response to a campaign mailing:

“You and the city council recent approved the Arana Gulch Master Plan that would despoil the critical habitat of an endangered species. You cannot call yourself a conservationist if you approve of such action. **I intend to speak out against your re-election.**”

I ask you to consider that I have thoughtfully supported bicycle and alternative transportation improvements throughout the city over a period of many years. I have also worked productively with the Bicycle Industry Coalition, local bicycle clubs, and cycling events. I hope I will gain your endorsement.

Yes on Measure H! Our City streets are in a progressive state of decay due to deferred maintenance, which only gets more expensive with each passing year. We need Measure H to fund a long term program of improvement and maintenance for streets and sidewalks throughout the city, which will make them safer for all users, including cyclists. I urge People Power to endorse and campaign for Measure H.

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