

Our Heater is Hooked Up!

Thanks to the generosity of several People Power members, we have reinstalled the heater from our old office, without tapping into any funds we raise from membership fees.

Alex Bosinger, a union plumber moved the gas line during his time off—thank you Alex.

Tom and Connie Wilson, owners of Geo H. Wilson Plumbing, donated money to install a vent and do the final hookup.

Tom and Connie have been generous with the Hub for years.

Thank you Wilsons!

(Yes, the staff are mindful that the heater burns fossil fuel and are still wearing our hats and sweaters!)

People Power members can receive discounts from the following business members:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Another Bike Shop | Freewheelin' Farm |
| The Bike Church | The Bicycle Trip |
| Lisa Hochstein—Graphic Design | Family Cycling |
| Terra Nova | The Spokesman |
| Network Mortgage | Leatherwise |
| Gary Redenbacher, atty | The Ugly Mug |
| Finding Harmony—Rick Longinotti | PedX |

PEOPLE POWER T-SHIRT



- Black on Green t-shirts available in adult sizes
- 100% preshrunk organic cotton, made in the USA

\$18 (or less, if you wear it to the March 11th Coastal Commission meeting—see Arana Gulch story on Page 1)

(Add \$3 for home delivery by PedX in the Santa Cruz area.)

Call 425-0665 to reserve yours.

PEOPLE POWER! UPDATE

SANTA CRUZ CYCLING NEWS

ISSUE 63

WINTER 2010

The Home Stretch for Arana Gulch

— Charlie Dixon

It has been 16 years since the City of Santa Cruz purchased what is now the Arana Gulch greenbelt park and 15 years since the city started its public process to decide whether and where to build a bike/pedestrian/handicapped-accessible trail connecting Broadway and Brommer. At last, that process will come to a conclusion on the morning of March 11th, when the project faces final approval or disapproval by the California Coastal Commission.

The Coastal Commission meeting will be held on March 11th in Santa Cruz, in the Board of Supervisors chambers. The public is invited to attend and speak. After hearing public comment, Commissioners will decide the project's fate in a public vote.

It has been an outrageously long march to get to this point. From 1995 to 2003 the city considered public input, drew up a wide range of options for a trail route (including options both in and outside the greenbelt), and did a full EIR on trail options. Their conclusion was that a route through the Arana Gulch greenbelt was the only viable option for connecting Broadway and Brommer. Opponents objected that the city had jumped the gun by consider-



Come to the March 11th public meeting of the California Coastal Commission and show your support for the Arana Gulch Path by wearing your "Coastal Access @ Arana Gulch" t-shirt. (See ad on back page, or call 425-0665 to get your shirt.)

ing the trail without deciding on a Master Plan for the greenbelt. So the city went back and did a second full EIR process, this time proposing a comprehensive Master Plan for Arana Gulch, which included many improvements in addition to the trails.

(continued on page 4)

Rail Purchase Agreement Headed to Sacramento

— Bruce Sawhill, chair, Friends of the Rail Trail

Although the Union Pacific Santa Cruz Branch Line runs for 32 miles along flat and mostly straight track along the coast between Davenport and Watsonville, the story of its acquisition is turning out to have more steep grades and sharp turns than a mountain railroad in a mining town.

The story starts almost 20 years ago, when California voters approved Proposition 116, authorizing a \$2 billion bond for passenger and commuter rail projects throughout the state. The proposition passed in all districts of Santa Cruz County, with Santa Cruz County's share of this money totalling about \$11 million. These funds could be applied to purchase the Davenport to Watsonville rail corridor.

In order for the county to buy the rail line, however, the owners had to be willing to sell. In the last two years, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) has negotiated with Union Pacific on terms and conditions for purchase. Under the focused leadership of Deputy Director Luis Mendez, the RTC succeeded in negotiating the price downward from \$19 million to

\$14 million. In the same way that the selling price of a house is negotiated downwards when an appraisal reveals needed maintenance (such as roof or plumbing repair), the rail line appraisal found that work was necessary on the old trestles and other railroad hardware. The balance of the money for the purchase, maintenance, and repair (beyond the Prop 116 funds—about \$10 million), comes from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is funded through revenue from the Transportation Investment Fund, which in turn is funded mostly by motor vehicle licensing fees and fuel taxes.

On February 18 of this year, the RTC voted to submit the application for Proposition 116 funds to the state for purchase of the rail line. This near-unanimous decision was a positive ending to a long and sometimes rancorous debate within the RTC and amongst the County Supervisors. The Proposition 116 money is technically "our" money, having been paid for by our taxes and fees, and under normal circumstances, the disbursement would proceed without a

(continued on page 7)

People Power! UPDATE is published by People Power. Our goal is to educate people and politicians about the advantages of a transportation system less dependent on the automobile. A special thanks to all our volunteers.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

I am a new member. I am renewing my membership.

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me.

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\$100 **Velourinary** includes t-shirt (tax deductible—call to arrange.)

\$50 **Hub Spoke** includes t-shirt

\$40 **Family or Household**

\$30 **Individual**

\$20 **Underemployed** (Work exchange available. Call to arrange.)

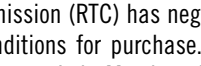
Join **People Power** to make Santa Cruz a better place to ride and walk. Membership includes: subscription to our quarterly newsletter, email Action Alerts, and volunteer opportunities.

Make checks payable to **People Power** and mail to:

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Connecting the Dots: Transportation and Affordable Housing

— Rick Longinotti

“Drive till you qualify” is the realtor’s advice to first-time homebuyers. It summarizes the situation on the Central Coast: housing near job centers is costlier than housing on the outskirts. And is why vehicle miles traveled has risen faster than the population.

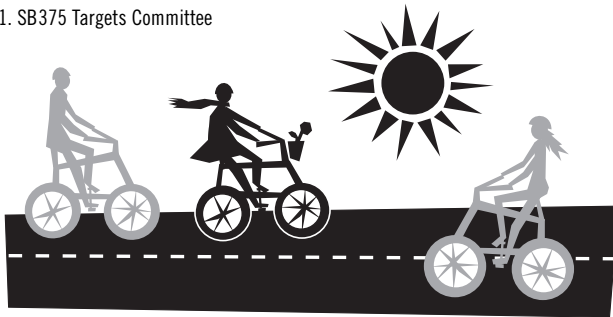
California’s SB375 is meant to address the jobs/housing geographical divide. The new law says that communities won’t get state transportation funds unless they engage in planning to reduce greenhouse gases. The Regional Targets Advisory Committee for SB 375, set up to create regional targets for SB375, acknowledges that new housing built near job centers needs to be affordable to the people who work at those jobs.

Social equity policies and practices that have the potential to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (such as provision of appropriately located affordable housing that matches well with local wage levels) must be elevated on the list of Best Management Practices...¹

Transition Santa Cruz has sponsored a series of workshops called *Housing Within Reach, of Our Pocketbooks; of Our Workplaces, Schools, & Stores*. Several speakers from the series, including Santa Cruz housing developer, John Swift, have emphasized car-lite housing development. In areas with good transit and amenities nearby, minimum parking restrictions are reduced, and parking is un-bundled from the cost of housing. Tenants or owners can opt to pay for parking separately. According to non-profit developer, Jeff Oberdorfer, each parking space in a multi-family building can cost \$50,000. Making parking pay for itself reduces both car ownership and housing prices.

The final meeting of the series (at 7 P.M. on March 11, at the United Methodist Church, 250 California St., Santa Cruz) is a Community Conversation, led by David Foster. We will formulate an action plan drawing on ideas from the series. For more information on this and other projects of Transition Santa Cruz, visit www.transitionsc.org or call 425-7581. ■

1. SB375 Targets Committee



An extension of the river levee under Highway 1 will provide car-free access to the Tannery Arts Center, Harvey West, and the homeless shelter. It will allow cyclists heading into the San Lorenzo Valley to avoid the Highway 1 and 9 intersection. Thanks to the city Redevelopment Agency and Public Works, who have kept the project on track despite many challenges. Come appreciate their work at a ribbon cutting ceremony in April (exact date will be posted when available on peoplepowersc.org.)

Don’t Cut Transit Funding!

In his effort to reduce the state budget deficit, Governor Schwarzenegger is proposing to eliminate the sales tax on gasoline and to replace it by an increase in the per-gallon excise tax. Doing so would not raise any additional monies but would allow the state to use sales tax money currently set aside for public transit (via Propositions 42 and 1B) for other purposes.

As a consequence, state support for local public transit would be eliminated. Our own Transit District’s budget would be reduced by nearly 20%, resulting in significant service cuts. This move would prevent the District from upgrading its bus fleet to be in compliance with AB 32’s mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In short, if approved, this proposal would put a \$6.5 million hole in our Transit District’s annual budget. Every transit district in the state would suffer.

Please contact Governor Schwarzenegger and tell him: **Do NOT zero out the sales tax on gasoline.** A simple phone call will do: The Governor’s office phone is (916) 445-2841.

If you have time, also call Bill Monning to thank him for his good work on this issue. His local number is (831) 425-1503. ■

Rail Trail Purchase *(continued from page 1)*

hitch, once all legal due diligence has been accomplished (as is now the case). These are extraordinary times, however, and the state’s ability to come up with the money is now in doubt.



In addition to the State’s financial woes, the situation is further complicated by the permanent closure of the Cemex plant in Davenport. Cemex has been the primary freight account on the rail line in recent years, bringing in revenue to Union Pacific and paying for track maintenance. *(See sidebar on right.)*

Over the next couple of months we will see whether or not the state delivers on its obligations with regard to Prop 116 funds. Provided they do, the long acquisition story will end and we will move on to a more interesting story—one that we will write together about how this valuable corridor will become a model of recycling old assets for new purposes. That story will include highlights such as a bike and pedestrian path along the rail line, efficient freight service to supplant inefficient trucking, dinner trains for the enjoyment of locals and tourists alike, and perhaps even a quiet and efficient electric tram linking key destinations in the County.

To stay up-to-date on developments with the rail line purchase, go to peoplepowersc.org or to the Friends of the Rail Trail web site, santacruzrail.org. ■

Thanks to Gabriella Cafe and the Saturn Cafe

With active support of Gabriella Cafe and the Saturn Cafe, January was a good time to have some great local grub and raise money for the Campaign for Sensible Transportation’s lawsuit against Caltran to stop highway widening. Caltran asserts that widening Highway 1 in stages will not induce additional traffic, nor will it have significant impact on the environment.

The amazing five-course dinner at Gabriella Cafe raised \$1795, with owner Paul Coching generously donating 70% of the dinner proceeds to the Campaign’s efforts. Several local businesses, including Albert’s Organics, Route 1 Farms, and Live Earth Farms, also did their part by donating food for the occasion. Some very generous donors provided local wine and People Power’s all-volunteer wait staff included Stephanie, Elaina, Joya, Brighton and Jessica. Thank you Gabriella Cafe for continuing to be so committed to a sensible transportation system even in these tough economic times.

WELCOME SIERRA NORTHERN RAILROAD!

The recent closure of the Cemex Plant in Davenport could have completely derailed efforts to finalize the county’s purchase of the rail corridor from Union Pacific if it weren’t for some quick thinking by the staff of the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission and the courage of Sierra Northern Railroad.

Federal law states that when a working railroad line is sold, accommodations must be made for existing freight contracts. When the largest freight contractor, Cemex, officially closed their doors, most railroads that had been interested in running the freight bowed out of the commitment. Enter Sierra Northern, a small Northern California railroad that currently runs several tourist and freight lines, including the famous Skunk Trains between Willits and Fort Bragg.

Unlike larger national railroads that specialize in short-haul freight only, Sierra sees an opportunity presented by the Davenport to Watsonville line to not only drum up new freight business, but also to eventually run tourist trains up the North Coast. It is an essential step on the way to the county’s purchase of the rail line. One of the owners of Sierra has roots, and a home, in Santa Cruz, another is a long distance bike tourist. The company has publicly stated its commitment to a rail trail and views it as part of a comprehensive business plan.

WIDENING

1

WON’T WORK

A more casual but similarly well-attended event at the Saturn Cafe raised \$360 for the cause, as Saturn’s owners donated 20% of the day’s proceeds from diners who mentioned People Power and the Campaign’s lawsuit.

At dinner time, the restaurant was filled with People Power members (ranging in age from 4 to 64), all enjoying the great vegetarian food and building community while challenging Caltrans’s absurd statements regarding highway widening.

Thank you Saturn!

And thanks also to all of our friends and members who showed up, making the two events both fun and successful. ■

UPCOMING CLASSES AT THE BIKE CHURCH**All events are free (donations accepted)**

Classes provide opportunities for hands-on learning in a supportive environment. No prior experience necessary! For more information about classes or volunteering, send email to bikechurch@santacruzhub.org.

INTRO TO BIKES, MAINTENANCE, AND THE BIKE CHURCH**Facilitator:** Bike Church mechanics**Saturdays:** March 20, April 17, May 15. **Time:** 11AM-2PM.

This class is a practical overview of the bicycle and covers basic bike anatomy and function with an emphasis on safety. Includes hands-on fix-it time and introduction to our shop for newcomers.

BUILD A BIKE WHEEL**Facilitator:** Eleanor**Sundays:** March 14, April 11, May 9. **Time:** noon-3PM.

A hub + a rim + some spokes = a bicycle wheel! The process will be covered step-by-step. Buy the materials (\$20-\$30) and keep your wheel, or build a wheel to donate to the Bike Church.

KID'S DAY AT THE BIKE CHURCH**Facilitator:** Bike Church mechanics**Saturdays:** March 6, April 3, May 1. **Time:** 11AM-2PM

A time for youth to take over our shop and learn about bikes and tools. Parents or other adult companions welcome. We also offer free bikes to kids who need them. Ask a mechanic for details.

WOMEN/TRANSGENDER BIKE WORKSHOP**Facilitators:** Ann, Eleanor, Emilyn, and/or B**Sundays:** March 7 & 21, April 4 & 18, May 2 & 16.**Time:** noon-3PM.

Bicycle maintenance has traditionally been a male-dominated area. Our goal is to help individuals gain knowledge and confidence working on their bikes and cycling. We provide safe space for women and other gender minorities to work on their bikes and learn new skills. Facilitated by women/queer mechanics.

VOLUNTEER AND SHOP TIME**Facilitators:** Erik and Bike Church Mechanics**Wednesdays:** March 10 & 24, April 14 & 28, May 12 & 26.**Time:** 7:30PM - 9:30PM. **Please be on time.**

Get involved with the Bike Church! Mechanics introduce potential volunteers to the the shop and to shared values (patience, listening and communication skills, willingness to learn and teach.) Emphasis on our commitment to maintaining a safe space for people of all genders, ethnicities, and classes. Current volunteers will have time to work on their bikes and socialize.

**703 Pacific Avenue (entrance on Spruce Street)
425-BIKE <http://bikechurch.santacruzhub.org>**

BIKE WEEK 2010**SAVE THE DATES: MAY 9 - 16****GREASE YOUR CHAINS
AND SPREAD THE WORD!**

Connect on Facebook:
Bike2Work Santa Cruz

For more information:
www.bike2work.com

Questions: Contact Nick Mucha with
Ecology Action: nmucha@ecoact.org.

This program is brought to you by Ecology Action of Santa Cruz www.ecoact.org

**Aptos Village Plan (Hot off the Press!)**

On February 23rd, the Board of Supervisors voted to rezone the area of Aptos Village to allow for more mixed use development and attempt to create a pedestrian-oriented core for Aptos.

The plan does not yet entirely address bicycle transportation, but some good ideas are included, and the type of land use approved is likely to be good news for bikes and pedestrians as the process moves forward. The village plan would: 1) retain current bike lanes on Soquel, 2) include sharrows directing cyclists to take the lane on three streets with very slow traffic and wide sidewalks, and 3) stipulate mandatory bike parking.

Planning staff also insured that a place for a passenger rail station is part of the plan and were directed by Supervisor Leopold to coordinate the plan with the rail trail, which will run right through the town.

Congratulations to Supervisor Ellen Pirie, who has worked hard for years with county staff to get the plan this far. Two-wheeled thanks go to People Power members David Casterson, and Peter Stanger, and to the Transportation Commission's Bicycle Committee who worked to make the plan better for cyclists. ■

Green Ways to School

Superman is a bike advocate, at least at Cypress high school. In an exciting new project, Green Ways to School collaborated with Cypress High School in Santa Cruz to create a two-week curriculum of sustainable transportation education. Participating students analyzed bike and car transportation information and worked the concepts into educational puppet shows to perform for classrooms at Del Mar Elementary School.

Students in Ms. Rankin's 9th grade English class made puppets from recycled materials they brought from home, and used the finished puppets in a show that was the culmination of the Green Ways to School unit in their class. In the show, Superman biked past a young boy's house as the boy asked "Superman, shouldn't you be flying around saving the world?" Superman replied "Riding a bike is way more fun than flying, and I AM saving the world, just by riding a bike!" The two then rode off together, rescuing a crowd stuck in a traffic jam by giving them bikes and sweeping away cars. Superman explained: if fewer people drove cars, there would be more public space and freedom to move, and that "people would be happier and less stressed!"

In addition to the puppet shows, English classes of all grade levels got involved in the campaign to support the Arana Gulch Master Plan. After the Green Ways to School presentations, students learned to write formal letters and share their thoughts with the Coastal Commission. This project sparked some lively classroom debates pro and con, resulting in almost all students in favor of the proposed multi-use path.



Puppets and high school students share the benefits of biking with elementary school students (with help from Green Ways to School).



In the last two years People Power's youth bicycle movement has been growing as Green Ways to School expands its reach. In one example, Pacific Collegiate High School adopted People Power as its student council charity this fall, and raised \$600 to support the movement.

Young people are becoming a big part of the bike movement, both because they care about the future, and because so many of them use bikes for transportation! It's been exciting to include their voices in the movement to make a more equitable, healthy, and sensible transportation model for Santa Cruz. ■

Board Members Needed for the Hub

Elections for the Hub's Board of Directors will be held the evening of Wednesday, March 10. The Hub is the CRITICAL non-profit part of our community and includes the Bike Church and various tax-exempt People Power-related programs such as Green Ways to School and our high school internship program. (People Power is not eligible for tax-exempt status due to our lobbying and political advocacy). The Hub also manages the building site as a community center focused on human-powered transportation.

Serving on the Hub board is a two year commitment to attend one evening meeting every 2 to 3 months.

If you are interested in being on the Board, please contact Steve ASAP at 425-0667 or sschnaar@riseup.net. ■



Arana Gulch

(continued from page 1)

Since the initial proposal, the path has been repeatedly scaled down. A second large bridge has been taken out and the trail has been rerouted onto an existing dirt trail, avoiding any known habitat of the endangered tarplant. Semi-permeable concrete will be used to address erosion concerns, and the one remaining bridge will not have any supports in the riparian zone.

Despite these concessions and revisions to the design, opponents sued the city. Every judge that heard their case completely rejected their allegations and the State Supreme Court rejected their petition. All that lawsuit business wasted three-and-a-half years and way too much money.

But with the lawsuit shot down, things are moving forward once again, and fast! Back in November, after hearing from

many citizens (including a lot of People Power members), the County Board of Supervisors voted to support the project and to apply with the city for Coastal Commission approval. The Santa Cruz Port District did the same. It is this application that the Coastal Commission will rule on at its March meeting.

So it all comes down to one Coastal Commission meeting. We need you to attend if you possibly can. If you haven't already written to the Coastal Commission, do so right away. (See below for the address and ideas for what to include in your letter.)

We need to show that there is popular support for better access to and through Arana Gulch, and for transportation facilities that encourage biking and walking, and access for those with limited mobility.

Urge your friends to write the Commission and come to the Commission meeting on March 11! ■

Tips for Writing the Coastal Commission In Support Of The Arana Gulch Master Plan and Multi-Use Trails

Help make the Arana Gulch Master Plan and the Broadway–Brommer connection a reality by writing a letter to the Coastal Commission. Letters need to be received by March 5th.

- Your letter should start something like this:

Dear Coastal Commissioners:

Please vote for the Arana Gulch Master Plan. In particular, please approve the Broadway–Brommer bridge and bike path.

- Then just add one to three sentences with your reasons. Keep it positive and keep it short. (Shorter letters have a better chance of being read completely.)
- Be sure to include your printed name, signature, address and date. Mail your letter to:

Dan Carl District Manager
California Coastal Commission
 725 Front Street, Suite 300, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Here are some reasons you might want to include. Putting them in your own words is good. Handwritten letters are fine and show that we are broad-based.

- I would use the bridge and path to get from my house to (your destination).
- The new path is safe, direct and convenient.
- The new path will convince the hesitant general public to get out of their cars and onto their bikes, leading to less use of fossil fuels and decreased carbon emissions.
- The Broadway–Brommer connection offers an alternative to the Yacht Harbor Bridge and Soquel Avenue routes. These routes are unpleasant, out of the way, and intimidating to less experienced cyclists.
- The Broadway-Brommer Bike Path, is an important link for bicycle safety in Santa Cruz County.

Planning Expert Speaks Out for the Path

— Linda Wilshusen

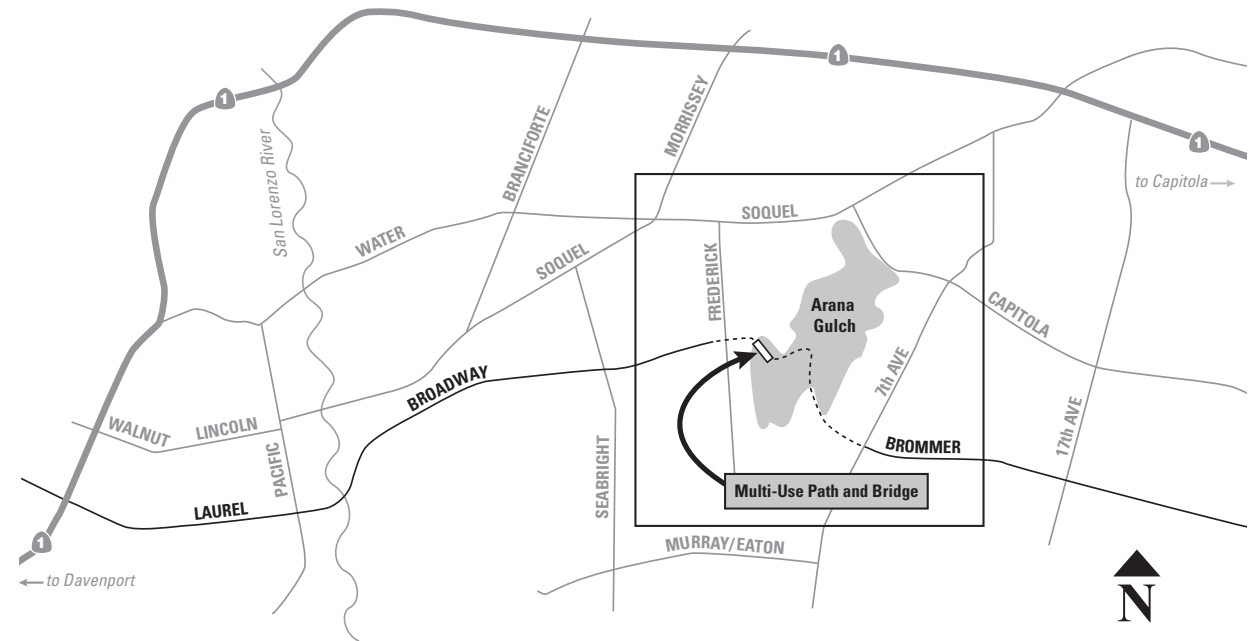
For many long-time residents of Santa Cruz and Live Oak, having an easy-to-use pathway connecting our communities goes beyond common sense—it's one of those things that, once completed, we will look back and say "why didn't we do this 20 years ago?"

It was at least 20 years ago that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) first supported the Arana Gulch Pedestrian and Bicycle Path, known then as the Broadway–Brommer Bike Path. What has changed in the past 20 years is that we now know just how rapidly climate change is occurring, how critical it is to drastically reduce transportation emissions, and how damaging it can be to our health to drive everywhere. We also know that offering alternatives to driving is key to changing our habits.

What hasn't changed in the past 20 years is our knowledge that *the kind of transportation infrastructure we provide determines what people will use*. Ergo, a bicycle and pedestrian path will encourage people to bike and walk. Biking and walking are good for our families and communities, good for our health, good for reducing traffic on our roads, and good for our Earth's future. I can't wait to greet you on the new Arana Gulch path—20 years is long enough! ■

Linda Wilshusen was director of the Regional Transportation Commission for two decades. She currently is chair of Live Oak Neighbors.

BROADWAY–BROMMER MULTI-USE PATH



Want a bike path? Speak Up.

Thursday, March 11th, 9A.M., at the front steps of the County Building, 901 Ocean Street

As we've seen over and over again, People Power is powerful due to the care and ACTION of its members. Over the years we've used our passion and commitment to push for bike lanes and paths where no one thought they would be achieved. Now it is time to wrap up a 20-year struggle for a multi-use path connecting Broadway and Brommer Streets, via Arana Gulch. The fact that the California Coastal Commission is having a rare meeting in Santa Cruz means that they want to hear what our community thinks about the issue. So let's tell them.

The current proposal for Broadway Brommer provides a single bridge and a multi-use path that will give people access to the Arana Gulch greenbelt without a car. More importantly, it will provide access to Santa Cruz and Live Oak without a car. Approval from the Coastal Commission is the final hurdle to getting this important transportation link built.

Some people, particularly those who live next to the open space, oppose the path. They will be at the Coastal Commission meeting speaking against the path. After having lost their law-

suit and subsequent appeals, this is their last chance to stop the path. If we want this path, we have to show up in numbers and express our different priorities. Below is an outline of the morning's schedule. Times are approximate. If you can't attend all events or would like more information, call People Power at 425-0665 or the Coastal Commission at (831) 427-4863.

Thursday, March 11th, starting at 9A.M.
(Meet in front of the County Building.)

- 9A.M. — Join us for bagels and pick up a green "Coastal Access/Arana Gulch" t-shirt to show your support. (\$ donation requested for t-shirt).
- 9:30A.M. — Group bike ride to tour Arana Gulch with the Coastal Commissioners.
- 1P.M. (APPROXIMATE TIME) — Coastal Commission hearing at 701 Ocean Street. Wear your shirt and speak at the public hearing.

To get your t-shirt in advance, stop by the People Power office. Call 425-0665 first to arrange a time. ■