

(article by Patti Jazanowski in The Comic News, April 2000)

## BROADWAY-BROMMER BIKE PATH THREATENS ARANA GULCH

By Patti Jazanowski

(reprinted from the Santa Cruz Comic News Green Press April  
2000)

The Broadway-Brommer bikepath is a wolf-in-sheep's-clothing,  
promising

to save the environment, yet delivering just the opposite. With  
the

narrow goal of connecting Broadway and Brommer, this transit  
corridor

threatens to cut a swath across the Greenbelt, removing trees,  
grading

land, and destroying sensitive habitat. In its wake it would leave

cement, asphalt and 2 huge bridges. The A1 Alignment features a 740-foot

long bridge: more than 1/10 of a mile! The bikepath would:

\* Clear-cut 2 separate 800 square-foot Coast Live Oak forests, removing

trees, bushes, and under-story, and destroying habitat for hawks, blue

herons, foxes and red-legged frogs.

\* Remove 20-21 trees. 6-7 are Heritage Trees - with diameters of 14

inches or more. Most are nearly as large: 20, 25, even 30 feet tall.

\* Further endanger the Santa Cruz Tarplant, which is on the Federal

Threatened Species list.

Over 80% of residents oppose this project, and want Arana Gulch to

remain a Greenbelt. The Sierra Club, California Native Plant Society,

The Friends of Arana Gulch, and Heritage Rose Society also oppose the

bikepath.

The Draft EIR was published last November. Public Works expected 100

comments, and was overwhelmed by 630. There were so many opposing

comments, that Public Works does not have funding to respond. The

message was unambiguous: "Alternative 3: No Action". Disregarding this

public response, the City Transportation Commission and Public Works

have asked the City Council to authorize an additional \$40,000

to

complete the EIR and continue the bikepath project. This money is beyond

the amount previously allocated for this phase, and beyond the \$360,000+

already spent on the project.

On April 3, the City Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously

against the additional \$40,000.

The California Coastal Commission has jurisdiction over this land, and

has stated repeatedly that it opposes the bikepath. Arana Gulch does not

have a Master Plan; they want one produced before pursuing projects that

would develop the land. They are concerned about the significant

environmental impact, and the omission of any alternative route that

avoids Arana Gulch.

Alternatives for an east-west cycling route are plentiful. One exciting

option is the Railroad Right-of-Way along Murray Street. Not only would

this route have far less environmental impact, it would be part of the

Monterey Bay Sanctuary Trail. The Santa Cruz County Regional

Transportation Commission recently marked the purchase of this land as

one of its top priorities.

Deborah Eddy, board member of the Open Space Alliance and a 'Friend of

Arana Gulch' said, "It's not the idea of the bicycle path that we

oppose. It's where they want to put it. Arana Gulch is a particularly

important piece of land to Santa Cruz because it has so many different

environmental communities: riparian woodlands, wetlands, and the rare

coastal terrace prairie. It's a microcosm of many of the environmental

aspects of Santa Cruz."

This is a critical time for Arana Gulch. If the City Council votes against the \$40,000, it would stop the bikepath. How can you help?

\* Call the City Council at 420-5017. Ask them to Vote No on the \$40,000

and preserve the Greenbelt.

\* Attend the City Council meeting on 5/9 and speak against the path.

This is critical!!! \* Talk to your friends, family, roommates, neighbors

and coworkers. Ask them to attend the meeting and speak out to save

Arana Gulch.

This is the only Greenbelt on the East Side of Santa Cruz. Keep Arana

Gulch a Greenbelt.