Opinion

Letters

Dear Editor

There are those who advocate bus rapid transit and oppose light rail and vice-versa. I submit that neither option represents the best long-range alternative for Marina. Many of us would prefer our city to become a "destination" rather than living on as a bedroom community for the benefit of others.

We know this state is going to begin construction on this so-called "bullet train" – so let's abandon our poor judgment regarding some sort of ridiculous commuter thing between Castroville and Monterey and get on with a plan to tie our rail line in with the bullet train – say at Gilroy – and set up a decent train station (my suggestion is at the end of Imjim Parkway on the ocean side of Highway 1) with ample commuter parking, a restaurant and an area for buses and taxis – you know, something that will generate tourism, employment and income to the entire peninsula! I hasten to add that our city has plans for two hotels near this area, which would benefit from this approach.

BUT… the citizens of Marina will not be happy with the noise and the fact a rail system will impede traffic to a couple of major streets within the city and a tunnel through town is too expensive to discuss; however, a trench to lower the tracks so that the noise will be muffled would also allow overpass construction for major streets and un-interrupted road use.

BUT… construction of a railway station and a massive trench – not too mention the required upgrade of the entire rail system – involves $ - millions (maybe $ - billions); so who is going to pay for this? TAMC wants to develop their railroad investment by obtaining federal funds – but even so, 20 % matching funds are also required by local participants – so on a $100 – million grant, we would be looking at $20 – million to hold up our end (or at least a percentage of this if others joined in on the deal); and …$1000 – million probably is no enough. The solution, of course, is to tap into the $ - billions already allocated for the bullet train with the help of our local Congressman Sam Farr.

In any event, if this city is to become a "destination" instead of a bedroom community, it must begin to think in a manner which promotes some sort of realization of this vision and in regard to potential funding offered for economic "stimulation"., it would appear now is that time.

Very truly yours,
Virgil M. Piper

Exercise Your First Amendment Rights. Write Letters

McCall In Marina

by Council Member Dave McCall

Train or light rail

Back in December of 1996 the City of Marina wrote it's first letter to TAMC (Transportation Agency of Monterey County) objecting to the proposed rail system they planned to operate. TAMC at that time, planned to use a large diesel locomotive with passenger cars to start daily operation between San Francisco and Monterey.

Marina objected and requested a CEQA environmental review regarding noise, pollution, rail right of way, landscaping, programs for concerned citizens and noise insulation on nearby homes.

In 1998 the Marina City Council expressed additional concerns and requested mitigation for the issues listed above and general safety issues. Marina City Council also requested consideration of grade separation, noise barriers, special public hearings, and bus alternatives.

More letters followed in 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2006. The letters from the Marina City Council stated that TAMC was not responsive to Marina's concerns. Council letters addressed opposition to heavy rail and preferred light rail or bus alternatives. TAMC never did partner with Marina and try to resolve the issues that the City Council raised.

The Army used the railroad to move tanks and trucks in and out of Fort Ord.

Our small town is now growing into a young city and with it comes the responsibility. We can no longer afford to have a train running through the middle of town. At the time the railroad was built, it followed Highway 1, which was Del Monte Blvd. Marina grew around the railroad tracks with its light use. Should the railroad become heavily used, changing from its normal in-frequent use, it would interfere and impact many citizens' lives.

TAMC now owns a 100-foot wide strip of land where the railroad tracks lie. Within their right of way, they have plans to install several large water and utility lines. Marina would never see its two-sided business dream develop on Del Monte Blvd.

I still believe that we must keep Reservation Rd. and Del Monte Blvd. traffic flowing without interruptions. Slowing down, re-routing or cutting off the flow of traffic will hurt business and stop our downtown revitalization.

Light or heavy rail will impact the lives of those that live nearby. It will also impede traffic in our downtown area, may slow the growth of our downtown development, and may endanger the lives of our children crossing the tracks.

*Monterey does not want the train running past its "window to the bay".
*Monterey and Pacific Grove turned their tacks into recreational trails.
*TAMC's goal is to run the train from silicone valley to Seaside.
*The tourist train will not reduce traffic on our freeway.
*A light rail, if installed, would run between Seaside and Castroville.
*TAMC stated that light rail ridership would go up 4500. Where will they park?
*Marina will pay more taxes for the train than Monterey.
*TAMC has not resolved Marina's concerns.

In 2009, the Marina City Council voted 3 to 2, to go with the TAMC rail plan. Whatever we decide to do as a city, we should do it together. We should consider if our decision fits within the long-term plan of the city and our vision. We must learn to always work towards a common goal, a common vision. I would like to work with you,

Dave on page B4

Business Matters

by Nancy Amadeo

Masterson Graphics is a local home-based business focused on organizations who are looking for small quantities and quick turn around. Mike and Lenore Masterson provide creative and original artwork for magnets, buttons, signs, posters, invitations, greeting cards logos, and letter heads all produced in-house. They also produce camera ready art work that can be taken to any print shop you choose.

With the political campaign season close at hand you will see their work on lapels everywhere. Buttons and magnets are a specialty at Masterson Graphics with special pricing for political buttons and there is no price penalty for small orders. Bring in your design or let them do it for you at no extra charge. Orders of less than 250 have a 24 hour turn around. Call 883-3968 for information on using buttons or magnets for your sports teams, PTA/PTSA, or similar organizations fundraising efforts.

Lenore Masterson has been in the art and illustration business for 35 years and has been located in Marina since 1993. Her original art is sold out of her home and at art shows throughout Northern and Central California. She is also an illustrator for a series of children's books "The Adventures of Bebe and Poppy". The books are available by calling Masterson Graphics.

You may not know Lenore and Mike but you know their work in the community and how we have all benefited from their selfless service. Both are long time Lions Club members sitting on the board in various capacities since shortly after arriving in Marina. Both are also on the board of Marina Youth Arts. Lenore, aka "The Library Lady", was instrumental in making our beautiful new library a reality as President of the Marina Larger Library Committee. She has sat on other committees and boards throughout the City including the International Festival of the Winds, the Marina Air Faire, and the Friends of the Library to name a few. She also sits on the Recreation and Cultural Services Commission and the Senior Advisory Board.

From one family business to another our newest business, Roger Food and Liquors, is in the Marina Village Shopping Center. Yes, it is under new ownership with a whole new look and feel and a focus on customer service and community. The Sahi Family owns three food and liquor stores in Watsonville and have been waiting for the opportunity to buy this well located store in Marina for 4 years. During the permitting process they worked closely and cooperatively with the city staff and police department to ensure their business would make a good fit for our City addressing every concern. Paul Sahi's primary goal is to provide great customer service in a safe environment. To that end they carry a full price range of liquors, beers, and wines and will even try to fill special orders for customers if they do not carry what you are looking for. They also carry a full line of snack foods, sport and juice drinks. This is a bright, well lit space, conveniently laid out with easy access through both doors. The store is a reflection of the man who owns it--welcoming and friendly.

At their other stores they have built a reputation of community involvement and trust and Paul says that tradition will continue in Marina. They have developed a positive relationship with

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