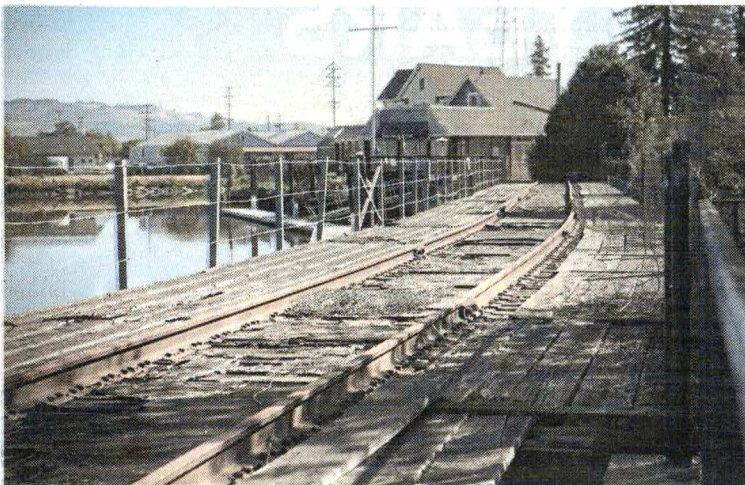


Repairing the trestle in downtown Petaluma has been declared an official city priority.

CRISSY PASCUAL — PETALUMA ARGUS-COURIER, FILE



Petaluma renews effort to restore downtown trestle

Promenade Now to hold kickoff event next week

By **Amelia Richardson**
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A new effort is underway to rehabilitate downtown Petaluma's crumbling railroad trestle, with "a dedicated group of local residents" introducing their plans and seeking input during a kickoff event next week.

Petaluma Trestle Promenade Now describes itself as "a grassroots effort focused on transforming Petaluma's deteriorating historic trestle into a vibrant and iconic riverfront promenade," the newly formed group said in a statement released Monday.

On Thursday, May 28, the group's steering committee will lead a gathering of locals interested in learning more and providing input on how Petaluma residents and leaders hope to revitalize the city's waterfront.

"The trestle is an iconic part of Petaluma's history and an essential element of our city's unique character," the committee said in its statement. "It has the potential to become a centerpiece of economic vibrancy

and public connection."

In an email to the Argus-Courier, steering committee member Elece Hempel indicated that the group has already been formulating its plan and working with the larger Petaluma community.

"We have been a very strong working group representing the Downtown Association, Chamber, Historical, Petaluma River, and engaged community members who have been active in other projects. The city of course is a partner in this project," she said.

Mayor Kevin McDonnell, who is also a steering committee member, will lead the kickoff meeting, which starts at 5:30 p.m. outside the River Front Cafe and is scheduled to last an hour. The cafe is located adjacent to the trestle at 224 B St. in downtown Petaluma.

Over the next several months, the group says, its members will "provide the sustained civic leadership required for our community and city to collaboratively dream, define, and complete" the trestle rehabilitation, taking a cue from other U.S. cities that have successfully revitalized their waterfronts such as Dubuque, Iowa and Water-town, Massachusetts. As part

of its strategy, the committee plans to retain a professional consultant to help facilitate a series of community meetings "designed to ensure the final vision is truly community-driven."

"Once that vision is established, the committee intends to work collaboratively with the city to pursue state and federal grant opportunities, philanthropic partnerships and other funding sources necessary to bring the project to life," the group said in its statement.

Built in 1922, the historic trestle was once part of the Petaluma and Santa Rosa Railroad, one of several local lines that carried passengers and goods such as eggs, apples and hay. Closed to trains for several decades, the trestle is now too dilapidated to safely support any weight and is fenced off from the public. A full renovation of the trestle has been estimated at around \$10 million.

Petaluma has seen multiple calls to action for the trestle to be restored, but none succeeded due to complications over funding, design, regulatory hurdles and even which agencies or entities own the trestle property.

For more go to trestle-promadenow.org.