

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Thursday
October 2, 2008
9:00 a.m.

Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA

1. Roll Call

Members Present:

Jan Beautz	Randy Johnson
Emily Reilly	Mark Stone
Kirby Nicol	Dale Skillicorn
Gustavo Gonzalez	Pat Spence
Marcela Tavantzis	Antonio Rivas
Ellen Pirie	Rich Krumholz (ex officio)

Member Absent:

Neal Coonerty

Staff Present:

George Dondero	Karena Pushnik
Luis Mendez	Rachel Moriconi
Yesenia Parra	Kim Shultz
Gini Pineda	Grace Blakeslee
Daniel Nikuna	

2. Oral Communications

Jack Nelson proposed that the Commission incorporate the principle of sustainability in transportation planning.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Executive Director George Dondero said that there were add-on pages for Items 14, 19, 20, and 21. He said that there were replacement pages for Items 22 and 23. He noted the new agenda format.

Commissioner Pirie asked that a letter from Bill Comfort regarding high speed rail be put on the next agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA (Pirie/Rivas) Approved Unanimously

MINUTES

4. Approved minutes of the September 4, 2008 regular SCCRTC meeting (Commission Alternate Gonzalez abstained)
5. Accepted draft minutes of the September 8, 2008 Bicycle Committee meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the September 11, 2008 Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

7. Accepted recommendation regarding support for the Safe Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act (Proposition 1A) on the November 2008 ballot (Resolution 04-09)

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

No consent items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

8. Accepted quarterly status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
9. Accepted FY07-08 SCCRTC internal annual financial reports (enclosed separately for commissioners only)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

10. Accepted commission meeting schedule for 2009

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

11. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
12. Accepted correspondence log
13. Accept letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. Letter to Todd Sexaur at the County of Santa Cruz regarding comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Atkinson Lane Specific Plan from RTC staff
14. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues
15. Accepted information items

- a. Press release from the American Council of engineering Companies: 'Self-Help' Counties Are More Effective in Getting Transportation Projects Delivered, Study Finds
 - b. Assemblymember John Laird press release: Mission Street Safety Task Force Issues First Report
16. Adjourned to a special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) at 9:01 am.
 17. The RTC reconvened to the regular meeting at 9:14 am.

REGULAR AGENDA

18. Commissioner reports – None
19. Director's report

Executive Director George Dondero reported on the activities of the Speakers Bureau, community outreach efforts, Rideshare Week and Bike to Work Day. He announced that Sam Mendez joined the RTC staff as an intern and that the agency will undergo the annual fiscal audit at the end of October.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Pirie regarding hiring a public relation's firm, Mr. Dondero said that staff believed that it would be useful to have professional consultation to coordinate ongoing outreach, public relations and the website redesign. Ms. Pirie asked that the Request for Qualifications be brought to the next meeting.

20. Caltrans report and consider action items

Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5, said that the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project is scheduled for Friday, November 7th at 1pm at the Branciforte Avenue overcrossing. He said that signs are being replaced on Highways 1 and 17 and that Caltrans recently received approval to order new signage for Mission St. In response to Commissioner comments, he said that he would provide more detailed information at a future meeting regarding the improvements along Highway 17 near the Glenwood Cutoff.

21. State Budget and Legislation Update

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi said that the state budget was approved on September 23rd, fully funding Proposition 42 and providing for \$4.7 billion in appropriations for Proposition 1b projects. She said that the California Transportation Commission is no longer planning to reprogram the 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Ms. Moriconi said that the final budget diverted millions in transit funds into the general fund. She provided a graph showing where the funds were diverted and how the budget diverges

from state law. Ms. Moriconi reviewed bills that the governor signed into law, including SB 375 and the governor's signing statement regarding that bill. She said that staff will be moving forward to develop the draft legislative agenda for 2009.

Commissioners discussed their participation in developing the 2009 legislative agenda.

SCCRTC consultant Kirk Trost commented on SB 375, saying that it provides incentives in line with CEQA requirements and that it found the right balance between environmentalists and developers.

22. Proposed Amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 08-09 Budget and Work Program

Deputy Director Luis Mendez gave the staff report saying that the proposed budget is balanced but does not achieve the Commission's goals for reserve funds because Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues did not reach projections. He said that allocations to TDA recipients can still be made. Mr. Mendez noted additional sources of revenue that will help fund some RTC programs. He reviewed the work program and noted that there may be some additional funds for Commute Solutions and other existing projects by accessing old CMAQ apportionments.

Commissioners discussed using some TDA reserves to balance the budget and whether the goal of 8% reserves was too high. It was noted that the recommendation to use TDA reserve funds was to meet commitments already made. Commissioners asked that a discussion regarding TDA reserves be put on a future agenda.

Commissioner Rivas moved and Commissioner Beautz seconded to approve the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee and staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Adopt a resolution approving the proposed amendments to the FY08-09 Budget and Work Program; and
2. Direct staff to pursue additional Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funds for the Commute Solutions program.

The motion (Resolution 06-09) passed unanimously.

23. Hwy 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project- draft environmental document and public meeting

Senior Planner Kim Shultz said that October 13th is the target date to release the draft environmental document. He said that a public hearing is scheduled for October 29th from 5-8pm at the Board of Supervisors Chambers. Comments on the document will be due to Caltrans on Friday, November 14th. Mr. Shultz

said that next steps are the final approval of the environmental document, right of way authorization and final engineering design.

Jack Nelson referred to a letter he submitted to the Commission which states that a full Environmental Impact Report, as opposed to an initial study, should be required for the Auxiliary Lanes Project. He also asked the Commission to ask Caltrans to extend the review period beyond 30 days.

24. Review of items to be discussed in Closed Session

Mr. Dondero said that there would be a closed session to discuss acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The RTC adjourned to a closed session at 10:15 am.

CLOSED SESSION

25. Conference with Real Property Negotiator for acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Property: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line from Watsonville Junction to Davenport

Agency Negotiator: Kirk Trost, Miller Owen & Trost

Negotiation Parties: SCCRTC, Union Pacific

Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

OPEN SESSION

The RTC reconvened in open session at 11:10 am.

26. Report on closed session – N/A

27. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project

Deputy Director Luis Mendez gave the staff report. He referred to Attachment 3 which provided responses to questions raised at the August 21st TPW meeting. Mr. Mendez reviewed the timeline and list of due diligence items.

Bill Comfort asked when the business plan will be released to the public. He said that he is requesting plenty of time for the public to review it.

Mr. Mendez said that the plan is scheduled to be ready by January 2009 but that some information may still be confidential due to negotiations with Union Pacific. He said that the Commission's stated commitment is to release the plan with as much information as possible.

Mr. Comfort asked if the RTC will be able to control what kinds of materials are shipped along the rail line and if a policy could be developed that trumped the Surface Transportation Board policies.

Jack Nelson thanked the Commission for moving to acquire the rail corridor.

28. Adjourn/Next Meetings

The meeting adjourned at 11:19 am.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street., 4th Floor, Watsonville, CA

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Bill Comfort
Jack Nelson
Cliff Walters
Alan Lambert
Rahn Garcia
Kirk Trost
Tim Eklund
Tom Egan

Sierra Railroad
Sierra Railroad
RTC Legal Counsel
RTC Negotiations Consultant
RTC Freight Railroad Consultant
RTC Freight Railroad Consultant