



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

MINUTES

Thursday
December 2, 2010
9:00 a.m.

Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean St
Santa Cruz CA 95060

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 am.

Members present:

Dene Bustichi	John Leopold
Neal Coonerty	Robin Musitelli (Alt)
Gustavo Gonzalez (Alt)	Kirby Nicol
Ron Graves	Antonio Rivas
Randy Johnson	Mark Stone
Don Lane	Marcela Tavantzis
Aileen Loe (ex officio)	

Staff present:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Gini Pineda	Yesenia Parra
Rachel Moriconi	Kim Shultz

2. Oral communications

Jack Nelson asked Commissioners to take note that 78% of Santa Cruz County voters voted against Proposition 23 which would have suspended AB 32, the "Global Warming Act of 2006".

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Executive Director George Dondero said that there is a replacement page for Item 23 and noted that the STARS *Pilot Project Application Manual* was distributed to Commissioners and that copies are available for the public.

CONSENT AGENDA (Leopold/Rivas – approved unanimously)

Commissioner Stone, referring to Item 14c, said that he hoped all local jurisdictions would provide comments on the *Federal Register Notice* regarding the Proposed Urban Area Criteria for the 2010 Census. He said that the current

proposal to make Salinas-Watsonville-Santa Cruz a single urban agglomeration is not in the best interests of these communities.

Commissioner Johnson said that comments were made to the Scotts Valley City Council and noted the negative effect this designation would have on transit. Commissioner Tavantzis said that the Watsonville City Council has sent their comments.

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the November 4, 2010 regular SCCRTC meeting
5. Accepted draft minutes of September 15, 2010 Safe on 17 Task Force meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the October 28, 2010 Sustainable Transportation & Access Rating System (STARS) Technical Advisory Committee meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of November 18, 2010 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) Meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

8. Accepted first quarter quarterly Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) work program progress report
9. Accepted American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) delivery report

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

10. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
11. Approved Fiscal Year (FY) 10-11 budget and work program amendment (Resolution 15-11)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

No consent items

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

12. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
13. Accepted correspondence log
14. Accepted letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies

- a. Letter from the Bicycle Committee to Caltrans regarding the Pacific Coast Bicycle Route realignment in the City of Santa Cruz
 - b. Letter from RTC to Monterey Bay Nursery regarding Highway 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes Landscaping Project
 - c. Letter from RTC to US Census Bureau regarding comments on *Federal Register Notice 8/24/10, Vol 75, No. 163* Proposed Urban Area Criteria for the 2010 Census
15. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues - None
 16. Accepted information items - None

REGULAR AGENDA

17. Commissioner reports-none
18. Director's report

Executive Director George Dondero said that Santa Cruz County received \$12.1million of ARRA funding and thanked staff and local jurisdictions for getting projects done within the required timeframes.

Mr. Dondero thanked Monterey Bay Nursery for their initiative and great job in providing the native coast trees for landscaping along the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project.

Mr. Dondero reported that CalCOG is being restructured and may no longer be sponsoring transportation bills. He noted that many members disagree with this idea.

Mr. Dondero and staff members made presentations to Leadership Santa Cruz County, the Business Council and Action Pajaro Valley and will be making presentations to the Committee on the Environment and the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce. He noted that Calera, a company that produces cement that sequesters carbon, will make a presentation to the Santa Cruz City Council on December 14.

Mr. Dondero reported that the tapings for the RTC's "Transportation Café" segments have been received very well and that the next Transportation Café topic will be on bike and pedestrian programs.

Mr. Dondero said that RTC staff and consultants met with the California Transportation Commission to discuss the allocation request for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and requested support at the Jan 19-20 CTC meeting. He added that Sierra Northern is developing plans for the recreational rail service and that their proposal will not interfere with Big Trees current service. They will bring their plans to the Commission and RTC committees before finalizing. Mr. Dondero said that Sierra Northern wants to establish a storage area for train cars in the Santa Cruz wye area.

19. Appreciation of departing commissioners for their service

Commissioner Johnson said that the RTC has been fortunate to have had great representation from the south county area. He spoke about the contributions of outgoing Commissioners Rivas, Campos and Tavantzis noting that Commissioner Rivas was instrumental in bringing Safe Routes to School funding to Watsonville; that Commissioner Campos was a major factor in making the rail line purchase successful; and that Commissioner Tavantzis always looked for ways to save the Commission money.

20. Election of 2011 RTC chair and vice-chair

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Bustichi seconded to nominate Commissioner Stone as 2011 RTC Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Stone continued the meeting as Chair. He thanked Commissioner Johnson for his leadership role and said that he brought a regional perspective to the Commission.

Commissioner Bustichi moved and Commissioner Rivas seconded to nominate Commissioner Nicol as vice-chair. The motion passed unanimously.

21. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5, reported that the state had a productive bond sale, although she did not know how much funding will be directed to transportation.

Ms. Loe said that this year's state budget reduced Caltrans' Project Initiation Documents program about 25% forcing costs for oversight onto local jurisdictions.

Ms. Loe acknowledged Dave Murray who is retiring after 34 years, saying that he helped build partnerships in the AMBAG region.

Commissioner Nicol noted that the original cost estimate for the Highway 1/Salinas Rd interchange was \$18 million and is now listed at \$12 million. Ms. Loe will clarify the reason for the cost reduction. Commissioner Bustichi asked how Caltrans estimates construction costs. Ms. Loe said that rapid cost fluctuations had been challenging but that Caltrans was working to bring unit costs into alignment with the current economic environment.

22. Presentation from Santa Cruz County Public Works

County of Santa Cruz Assistant Public Works Director Steve Wiesener made a PowerPoint presentation on projects that have been recently completed, presently under construction, or planned for the future.

Most of the completed projects were sealing or resurfacing projects including projects on Freedom Blvd, Glen Canyon Rd, Holohan Rd, Jamison Creek, Mt Hermon Rd, Bear Creek Rd and Empire Grade. The majority of these projects used ARRA funds in addition to funding from other sources.

Projects under construction include major improvements at Green Valley / Holohan /Airport Blvd.

Future projects under development include a left turn lane, drainage and shoulder work project on Graham Hill Rd at Roaring Camp planned for summer/fall 2011; Calabasas Rd improvements planned for summer 2011; a pedestrian safety/ sidewalk project on Green Valley Rd set for fall 2012; and a left turn lane at Bradley Elementary School on Corralitos Rd.

Mr. Wiesener said that using ARRA funding for road repair made RSTPX funding available for other projects. He said that the future needs of the county include safety improvements, storm damage repair, bike/pedestrian improvements, bridge/culvert repair, and signal operation improvements. He said that being a self-help county would greatly improve the county's ability to maintain and improve the transportation infrastructure.

Commissioner Bustichi asked that the area along Glen Canyon Rd which the county uses to contain debris be cleaned up and only used when necessary.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Rivas, County Public Works Director John Presleigh said that the current law does not allow the county to initiate a sales tax measure at this time because other local jurisdictions have passed sales tax measures. He said that laws need to be changed and he is working with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the County CAO to help move legislative changes forward.

23. Status report on Sustainable Transportation Access Rating System (STARS)

Executive Director George Dondero said that the *STARS Pilot Project Application Manual* represents eleven months of collaboration between the RTC's STARS Technical Advisory Committee, the Sustainable Transportation Council and RTC staff. The manual includes twelve credits developed for potential application to the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project. The RTC will consider next steps in applying STARS credits to the HOV Lanes project which would allow it to be designated a STARS Certified Pilot Project.

Commissioners questioned whether recommendations to use local contractors would limit the number of contractors available to bid and if the manual language could be simplified so that the architect or engineer of record for the project could verify goals without undue reliance on consultants.

Mr. Dondero said that it would be good to vet the contracting aspect with the Sustainable Transportation Council to ensure the project is not tied up in consulting, but that construction is just one piece of being a STARS certified

project. He clarified that the Commission is not deciding today to submit for certification and that comments on the manual will be accepted anytime.

Bill Malone said he likes the STARS approach to look at alternatives to a proposed project and to consider access to transportation modes as a goal. He said that the EIR process seems to always support the proposed project and asked the Commission to be skeptical, consider the rail line as an alternative to highway widening and to use Vehicle Miles Travelled as a number when comparing alternatives.

Jack Nelson agreed that access is an important concept and asked the Commission to consider electronic access, adding that transportation demand management may lessen the need for more lanes on Highway 1.

Commissioner Graves said that he did not want to accept the manual prior to reading it. He moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded to approve modified staff recommendations to:

1. ~~Accept~~ Receive the STARS *Pilot Project Application Manual* with the 12 credits selected by the RTC-approved Technical Advisory Committee;
2. Direct staff to provide the *Pilot Project Application Manual* with the 12 STARS credits to the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project Development Team for analysis of applying the credits to the project; and
3. Direct staff to return to the RTC with an analysis of implications of applying the 12 STARS credits to the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project for RTC consideration.

The motion passed unanimously.

24. Update on the Monterey Bay Area Regional Blueprint plan and SB375 implementation

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) Executive Director John Doughty gave a presentation regarding the draft *2035 Monterey Bay Regional Blueprint: Envisioning the Monterey Bay Area*. This document describes how communities in the Monterey Bay Area might grow in a more sustainable fashion over the next 25 years. Challenges include accommodating an aging population and lagging job growth. One of the biggest issues is where people work relative to their housing. Public input indicates support for infill development, preservation of agricultural land, alternative transportation methods and mixed use development that includes cultural and recreational areas. The Blueprint document lays the foundation for the Senate Bill 375 mandating Sustainable Communities Strategies to achieve regional greenhouse gas emissions targets.

Comments on the draft document will be accepted until December 15, 2010. The Blueprint document can be viewed at:

www.ambag.org/programs/blueprint/blueprint/index.html.

Commissioners discussed the relationship between the Blueprint and regional housing allocation, developing employment clusters where transportation infrastructure already exists and state mandated housing allocations. It was

noted that AMBAG does not support the new urban designation as described in the *Federal Register Notice*.

Commissioner Tavantzis asked to see job distribution data for communities in addition to Salinas.

Jack Nelson said that a study in the East Bay showed that life satisfaction for employed people went down as commutes got longer.

25. Draft 2011 state and federal legislative programs and legislative update

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi gave an update on the key legislative issues related to transportation in 2011 including continued challenges for transportation funding and a significant level of uncertainty regarding Proposition 26 passed by voters in November. The 2011 Legislative Programs focus on preserving and increasing funding for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County, development of the new federal transportation act, the FY2011 appropriations bills, and climate change legislation.

Commissioner Lane moved and Commissioner Rivas seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission adopt the 2011 State and Federal Legislative Programs.

The motion passed unanimously.

26. State 1 Corridor System Management Plan (CSMP)

Executive Director George Dondero said that staff is not asking the Commission to accept the report today.

Dave Murray, Caltrans District 5, said that the draft report was intended to monitor and improve the conditions of the corridor. He said that boundaries of the study went from Highway 68 to King St and includes Highway 183. He acknowledged that the corridor is too long to be truly analyzed without additional real time data collection and that they were unable to use the micro simulation model to analyze different scenarios for the corridor. Mr. Murray said that future plans would be designed for smaller segments of the corridor.

Commissioners discussed the usefulness of the data used for the modeling.

Comments on the draft plan may be submitted to adam_fukushima@dot.ca.gov.

Once the document is finalized, Caltrans would like the RTC to accept the document as part of its regional transportation planning process early next year and authorize the Executive Director to sign it as accepted by the RTC.

27. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

The closed session was tabled until the January meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

- 28. Annual Performance Review for Executive Director pursuant to Government Code 54957

OPEN SESSION

- 29. Report on closed session
- 30. Adjourn to special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
 - a. No agenda items this month
- 31. Next Meetings

The meeting adjourned at 11:24am.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 13, 2011** at 9:00 a.m. at the Santa Cruz City Council Chambers, 809 Center Street., Santa Cruz, CA

There are no Transportation Policy Workshops scheduled for December 2010 or January 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Les White
Steve Wiesener
Jack Sohriakoff
John Presleigh
Bill Malone
Jack Nelson

SCMTD
County Public Works
County Public Works
County Public Works