



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

MINUTES

Thursday
February 3, 2011
9:00 a.m.

Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main St
Watsonville CA 95076

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 am.

Members present:

Dene Bustichi	Eduardo Montesino
Greg Caput	Kirby Nicol
Donald Hagen	Ellen Pirie
Randy Johnson	Lynn Robinson
Don Lane	Andy Schiffrin (Alt)
John Leopold	Mark Stone
Rich Krumholz (ex officio)	

Staff present:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Gini Pineda	Yesenia Parra
Tegan Speiser	Ginger Dykaar

2. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 am.

3. Oral communications - None

4. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Deputy Director Luis Mendez requested that the Commission consider adding an urgency item to the agenda pursuant to Government Code 54954.2(b)(2). The information necessary to consider the item became available the day before the meeting and funding for the project could be jeopardized if action is delayed. A 2/3 vote of the Commissioners is required to add the urgency item to the agenda. Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner

Leopold seconded to add the item. The motion passed unanimously and the item was designated as 19.1.

Executive Director George Dondero said that there were replacement pages for Item 16 and an add-on page for Item 18.

CONSENT AGENDA (Schiffrin/Leopold unanimous)

MINUTES

5. Approved draft minutes of the January 13, 2011 regular SCCRTC meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

6. Accepted second quarter quarterly Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) work program progress report

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

7. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
8. Accepted FY 2009-10 fiscal audit for the SCCRTC (enclosed separately for Commissioners)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

9. Approved 2011 RTC health insurance contribution amounts for active and retired RTC employees (Resolution 16-11)

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

10. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
11. Accepted correspondence log
12. Accepted letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. Letter from Regional Transportation Commission to Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) regarding pass through of federal funding
13. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues
14. Accepted information items

- a. Letter from US Census Bureau to Representative Sam Farr regarding decision to not merge the Watsonville, Salinas and Santa Cruz areas into one urban area delineation

REGULAR AGENDA

15. Commissioner reports – None
16. Director's report

George Dondero said that the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District has leased an office suite in the Watsonville City Hall building and has offered office space to the RTC. The RTC could use the space as a satellite office in order to have a stronger presence in south county especially given that the Pajaro Valley TMA has recently shut its doors. Commissioners were invited to view the potential office site.

17. Welcome new commissioners and committee appointments

The RTC welcomed four new Commissioners: Greg Caput representing Santa Cruz County's 4th Supervisorial District; Eduardo Montesino representing the City of Watsonville; and Lynn Robinson and Norm Hagen, representing the Santa Cruz Metro Transit District.

To ensure a quorum at the February 17, 2011 Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee meeting, Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded to appoint Greg Caput to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Stone said that another opening on the committee is available and asked that Commissioners wishing to serve, including current committee members, let him know. Reappointments and new appointments will be made at the March RTC meeting.

18. Caltrans report and consider action items

Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5, said that traffic detection devices and cameras are being installed on Highway 1 in south county. He said that construction of the Salinas Road interchange is proceeding and that a presentation on the project is planned to coincide when traffic will be detoured to the west of the construction. Mr. Krumholz said that furloughs for Caltrans employees will continue and added that significant reductions for project study reports are not good for long term planning. He said that if the gas tax swap is not reaffirmed, there will be severe impacts to delivering projects, including pavement projects. Mr. Krumholz said that he attended the California Transportation Commission (CTC) meeting on January 19 and congratulated

the Commission on receiving the funding allocation for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line acquisition.

George Dondero thanked Mr. Krumholz for his role in obtaining CTC approval.

Commissioner Stone thanked Mr. Krumholz and Caltrans Director Cindy McKim for the background work they did on the project. Commissioner Stone also thanked Commissioner Leopold and CTC Commissioner Tavaglione for last minute negotiations.

Commissioners thanked RTC staff, with special thanks to George Dondero and Luis Mendez, for their behind the scenes hard work necessary to present their arguments to both Caltrans and the CTC convincingly.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin noted that the team effort of Commissioners, community supporters, legislators and staff was critical and specifically acknowledged Senator Simitian and Assemblyman Monning for their assistance. George Dondero also acknowledged Assemblyman Luis Alejo.

19. Acquisition of Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (Branch Line)

Deputy Director Luis Mendez noted that the history of the project goes back to the passage of Proposition 116 in 1990 and recognized the help from past legislators including Congressman Sam Farr who was instrumental in keeping the project going with a federal earmark. He said that at this time \$250,000 was needed to supplement money negotiated from Union Pacific for closing costs and to conduct engineering work necessary to secure \$5.35 million in State Transportation Improvement Program funds programmed for construction later this year. After looking at various sources, staff recommends Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds. Using these funds will not impact any currently programmed projects. In addition, staff is asking that the Commission authorize staff to release a request for proposals (RFP) or qualifications for the engineering work.

Commissioner Pirie asked if the RFP could include an assessment of whether a trail component could be built on the existing structures being studied, since there is so much interest in putting a trail next to the line.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin observed that the environmental review for the project was only for the acquisition and asked for legal counsel to review the possibility of liability for looking into trail components without prior environmental review.

Commissioners discussed updating the timeline, noted that the RFP will be based on an existing study and would essentially be a bid document, and asked what types of projects could be affected by the exchange of funds.

Commissioner Stone said that although using the RSTPX funds may impact projects that come before the commission in the future, the \$400,000 reduction in costs negotiated with Union Pacific at the CTC meeting will result in a net gain in any STIP money allocated to the region.

Jack Nelson said he is happy about the historic purchase and the \$250,000 could not be spent on a better project.

Rosemary Sarka of Roaring Camp Railroad, congratulated the Commission saying that Roaring Camp supported the project from the beginning and that the acquisition offers tremendous potential for rail transportation.

Commission Alternate Andy Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Approve using Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Purchase project to help cover right-of-way acquisition costs such as closing costs and engineering costs for rail line improvements; and
2. Approve the attached resolution amending the Regional Transportation Improvement Program to program RSTPX funds to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Purchase project and amending the RTC FY10-11 Budget to reflect these funds; and
3. Authorize staff to release a request for proposals or request for qualifications for engineering work necessary to request the funds for structures and other improvements to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

Commissioner Pirie asked to add that subject to clearance from RTC counsel, assessment of potential trail components be added to the scope of the RFP and Commission Alternate Schiffrin added that a timeline be prepared for the next RTC meeting.

With approval from the maker and the second, the motion (Resolution 17-11) passed unanimously.

20. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) planning funds

George Dondero said that the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee recommended supporting the letter that he sent to the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) regarding a proposal to decrease planning funds to the RTC that would in turn increase AMBAG's share. These funds are used to meet federal transportation planning requirements.

Commissioner Pirie moved and Commission Alternate Schiffrin seconded to approve the committee's recommendations.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin said that the B&A Committee also recommended that Commissioners talk to their local jurisdictions and to their respective representatives on the AMBAG Board to ask for their support.

The motion passed unanimously.

19.1 Monterey Bay 511 Traveler Information System Feasibility Analysis and Implementation Plan Consultant Agreement

Senior Planner Tegan Speiser gave an overview of the 511 system, describing how it works in different areas and the benefits of the system which include increased traveler satisfaction with travel options and services.

Ms. Speiser said that staff released a request for proposals for a feasibility analysis for the Monterey Bay area that includes an implementation plan in the event that the study showed a 511 system to be feasible. The study is being funded with planning grant funds awarded by Caltrans to the RTC and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) which are collaborating on the project.

After evaluation by a committee consisting of staff from the RTC, TAMC, Caltrans and technical advisors from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Sacramento Council of Governments, the ICx Transportation Group was recommended.

Commissioners discussed timelines, contract cost, public participation, the impacts of smart phones and GPS systems and the requirement that the Commission review the feasibility study before proceeding with the implementation plan.

Ms. Speiser noted that the plan for service is for Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties but that the study will look at the ability to coordinate with surrounding areas. She said that the payment structure was broken down by task, so that if it were beneficial to adopt a model that didn't require building a system from scratch, there would be the ability to reduce the scope of tasks.

Commissioner Bustichi said that there seemed to be a redundancy of technologies and that the private sector does a good job of providing similar services. Ms. Speiser said that there were many technologies available, that all avenues of data collection would be explored and that currently there is not a centralized site where data from all technologies are accessible in real time.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded to approve the evaluation committee for the 511 Plan proposals and staff recommendations that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission approve a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a consultant agreement with The ICx Transportation

Group to prepare a Monterey Bay Area 511 Feasibility Analysis and Implementation Plan.

The motion (Resolution 18-11) passed with Commissioners Nicol, Bustichi and Caput voting "no".

21. Adjourn to special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

The Commission adjourned to the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies meeting at 10:46 am.

22. Reconvene to regular RTC meeting

The Commission reconvened to the regular meeting at 11:22 am.

23. Next meetings

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 am.

The Transportation Policy Workshop scheduled for Thursday, February 17, 2011 at the RTC office, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA is **cancelled**.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean St., Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Jack Nelson
Rosemary Sarka, Roaring Camp
Dan Heron, Caltrans