

**AGENDA:** March 3, 2011

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)  
**FROM:** George Dondero, Executive Director  
**RE:** Director's Report

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**For Information Only**

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**Community Pedestrian Safety Workshop** – will be held Saturday, March 26, 10 am – 2 pm in the cafeteria at Mintie White Elementary school, 515 Palm Avenue in Watsonville. This free workshop will help you learn how to make walking a safer and more pleasant experience in your community. Free lunch and childcare will be provided. The workshop will be held in Spanish and English. Please RSVP by March 18 to: Sarah Harmon, 831-454-5418.

**Plug-in Prius** – Toyota Corporation recently delivered a new Plug-in Prius to the RTC to test drive for thirty days. The vehicle has extra batteries enabling it to go 13 miles in full electric mode, before the gas engine is needed. Toyota is collecting data on user satisfaction with the new vehicle before it goes to mass market.

**Transportation Policy Workshop** – At our next meeting on **March 17** RTC consultants Steven Schnaidt and John Arriaga and RTC staff will provide updates on legislation and the state budget. The budget committee in both the Senate and the Assembly approved the proposed gas tax swap, meaning that it will not come up before the Conference Committee. But the issue of whether the Swap will get two-thirds support in the Assembly remains. In a Joint Transportation Funding Hearing yesterday, transportation coalition members made a strong case for supporting the swap.

**Transportation Café #3** – On February 28 I interviewed RTC Chair Mark Stone and Deputy Director Luis Mendez for the taping of the third episode of RTC's Transportation Café program, which is aired quarterly on Community TV. It is also available anytime on their website. The focus of this program is the completion of the purchase, near term and potential long term next steps for use of the line. CTV says the editing should be completed by early next week, so check their website then.

**Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project** - Since the California Transportation Commission (CTC) approval of the funding allocation for the purchase of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, RTC staff and consultants have been proceeding with the necessary steps to complete the purchase and the status is as follows:

- Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) – RTC staff and consultants have produced the necessary amendment to the PSA as required consistent with the funding decision of the CTC. Union Pacific (UP) has provided its comments on the amendment and it should be finalized and executed soon.
- Big Trees and Pacific Railway Right of First Refusal – Because the terms and conditions of the purchase have changed slightly due to the CTC funding decision, the amended PSA must be provided to Big Trees with a request to waive their right of first refusal. It is anticipated that Big Trees will waive their right of first refusal as was done previously.
- Surface Transportation Board (STB) Filings – Once the amendment to the PSA has been executed; UP, RTC and Sierra Northern Railway may file with the STB for approval of the purchase. UP and RTC will request that the STB ruling be done under their expedited process which could result in an approval in as fast 30 days.
- Funding Agreement – Caltrans prepared the funding agreement quickly and it has been signed by both Caltrans District 5 and RTC. It has been sent to Caltrans Headquarters for signature by the Caltrans Accounting Division. RTC staff anticipates receiving a copy of the fully executed funding agreement very soon. The fact that the funding agreement was prepared by Caltrans means that the funds to complete the purchase are available for immediate use.
- Insurance – RTC consultants and staff are working with the corresponding insurance companies to obtain the hazardous materials and general liability insurance policies to purchase them through the escrow process and ensure that RTC's insurance coverage begins on the day that escrow closes.

Currently escrow is estimated to close on April 29, 2011 but this assumes that STB approval will be obtained through the STB's expedited process.

RTC staff and consultants are maintaining communication with the County Environmental Health Department and the Regional Water Resources Board as they work with UP and Granite Construction to address contamination on the rail line next to the Granite Construction facility in Watsonville. Some additional work needs to be done to fully delineate the extent of contamination before any clean up.

Sierra Northern Railroad continues to plan for excursion passenger rail service between Santa Cruz and Davenport. Representatives of Mendocino Rail, Sierra Northern's passenger division, have been in Santa Cruz County speaking with

appropriate individuals to gather information, lay the groundwork and develop a plan to submit to the RTC.

**Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project  
Estimated Timeline to Close Escrow**

<b>Done</b>	<b>Date (Estimate)</b>	<b>Tasks and Subtasks</b>
✓		I. Secure funding allocation from CTC
✓	01/19/2011	a. Obtain CTC approval
✓	02/03/2011	b. RTC Programs \$250,000 in other funds for project
		II. Amend Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) per CTC decision
✓	02/06/2011	a. RTC consultants and staff produce amendment and submit to UP
✓	03/01/2011	b. UP review and comment
	03/11/2011	c. Finalize amendment
	03/18/2011	d. Execute amendment
		III. Clear Big Trees Right of First Refusal
	03/23/2011	a. UP provides amended PSA to Big Trees & request to waive right of first refusal
	04/2011	b. Big Trees waives right of first refusal or lets 60-day timeline run out
		IV. Establish funding agreement and obtain funds
✓	2/9/2011	a. Prepare, review and finalize agreement – Caltrans and RTC
✓	2/14/2011	b. Caltrans D5 and RTC execute agreement
	3/2011	c. Caltrans HQ accounting approves agreement and prepares funds for use
	4/2011	d. Invoice for funds under expedited process
	4/2011	e. Receive funds and send wire transfer to escrow account
		V. Obtain Surface Transportation Board (STB) approval
	3/3/2011	a. RTC consultants prepare draft RTC's STB filing
	3/9/2011	b. RTC consultants and staff finalize RTC's STB filing
	3/18/2011	c. RTC's STB filing submitted with amended PSA - expedited process requested
	3/2011	d. UP prepares UP's STB filing

	3/18/2011	e. UP's STB filing submitted with amended PSA – expedited process requested
	3/11	f. Sierra prepares Sierra's STB filing
	3/2011	g. Sierra's STB filing submitted after RTC's and UP's filing
	4/2011	h. STB issues ruling of approval through expedited process <sup>1</sup>
		VI. Secure necessary insurance policies
	03/2011	a. Obtain updated premium quotes for pollution, liability and title insurance
	04/2011	b. Deposit funds for policy purchase in escrow account
	04/28/2011	c. Purchase policies upon closing
		VII. Close escrow
	04/2011	a. Deposit all closing costs funds in escrow account
	04/2011	b. Sign all necessary documents
	04/29/2011	c. Close escrow
	04/29/2011	d. Ensure that documents needed recording are recorded
	05/2011	e. Receive recorded documents

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> Task V.h. assumes that STB approves application through expedited process; if STB goes through regular process, ruling may not be issued until mid May to mid June



**FREE**

# Community Pedestrian Safety Workshop

**Saturday, March 26, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Cafeteria, Mintie White Elementary, 515 Palm Ave.**

**Watsonville CA 95076**

- Do you walk in your community?
- Are you concerned that drivers may not stop for you or your children?
- Do you want to learn how to make walking safe and accessible in your town?
- Then this **FREE** workshop is for you. . .

The purpose of the Community Pedestrian Safety Workshop is to improve safety and create a more pleasant walking experience in your community. This workshop is for community members, seniors, people with disabilities, parents, teachers, and pedestrian safety advocates that want to develop strategies to promote a safer walking environment. Representatives of the Departments of Public Works and Utilities, and Police will also be invited to attend.

By the end of the workshop, you will have a basic understanding of how to work with a group of community residents to set pedestrian safety priorities and build toward a "next steps" education awareness plan to promote safe walking in your community. The workshop features:

- Presentations by experts
- Interactive sessions to explore pedestrian safety
- Group discussions
- Evaluation of streets and sidewalks in Watsonville for pedestrian use
- Understanding of how "universal design" benefits everyone
- Best techniques to ensure pedestrian safety
- How to motivate residents to participate in their community safety
- Evaluation of streets, sidewalks and crosswalks in areas that are dangerous for pedestrians
- Identification of priorities in Watsonville and other areas

Free lunch and childcare. The workshop will be held in Spanish and English.

**RSVP by Friday, March 18:**

Sarah Harmon, (831) 454-5418, [SCBPWG@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:SCBPWG@co.santa-cruz.ca.us)



# GRATIS

## Taller de Seguridad Peatonal para la Comunidad Watsonville

**Sábado, 26 de Marzo, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**  
**Cafeteria, Mintie White Elementary, 515 Palm Ave.**  
**Watsonville CA 95076**

- ¿Sale a caminar en su comunidad?
- ¿Le preocupa que los conductores no vayan a cederle el paso a usted y a sus hijos?
- ¿Le gustaría aprender de qué manera el caminar puede ser más seguro y accesible?
- Entonces este taller GRATIS es para usted...

El propósito del Taller de Seguridad Peatonal para la Comunidad es mejorar la seguridad y hacer más placentera la experiencia de caminar en su comunidad. Este taller está dirigido a miembros de la comunidad, personas mayores, personas discapacitadas, padres, maestros y promotores de seguridad peatonal que quieran desarrollar estrategias para promover un ambiente más seguro para caminar. También hemos invitado a representantes del Departamento de Obras y Servicios Públicos y de la Policía.

Al final del taller, los participantes tendrán un conocimiento básico sobre como trabajar con un grupo de residentes de la comunidad para establecer prioridades para mejorar la seguridad peatonal y desarrollar un plan educativo de los "siguientes pasos" necesarios para promover el caminar de manera segura en la comunidad. El taller incluye:

- Presentaciones por expertos
- Sesiones interactivas para explorar la seguridad peatonal
- Discusiones en grupo
- Evaluación de las calles y banquetas para uso peatonal en Watsonville
- Las mejores técnicas para lograr la seguridad de los peatones
- Cómo motivar a los residentes para que participen en la seguridad de su comunidad
- Evaluación de las calles, banquetas y cruces en áreas que son peligrosas para los peatones
- Identificación de prioridades en Watsonville y otras áreas.

El almuerzo y cuidado de niños serán gratis. El taller se dará en Inglés y Español.

**Reserve a más tardar el Viernes, 18 de Marzo con:**  
Sarah Harmon, (831) 454-5418, [SCBPWG@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:SCBPWG@co.santa-cruz.ca.us)



**From:** Aldo Giacchino [<mailto:agsantacruz@sbcglobal.net>]

**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2011 4:16 PM

**To:** [info@scrtc.org](mailto:info@scrtc.org)

**Cc:** RTC Exec Dir; Supervisor Neal Coonerty

**Subject:** March 3 Consent Agenda Item #10; Resolution item a.1, Broadway-Brommer funds.

Re: Consent Agenda Item #10; Amendments to the RTIP;  
Resolution Item a. 1., Broadway-Brommer project

With the recently announced funding by the CTC for the acquisition of the Branch Rail Line right-of-way, it would appear that the proposed Broadway-Brommer Project is redundant and duplicative of the new Scenic Trail that can be built alongside the rail right-of-way. **Therefore I urge you to remove the Broadway-Brommer Project from the RTIP instead of sitting on the project funds for another two years, as recommended by the City of Santa Cruz.**

The midcounty portion of the rail right-of-way passes over the harbor at the Murray Street Bridge, just a few hundred feet away from the Arana Gulch nature preserve and adjacent to the vehicular Murray Street Bridge. The rebuilding of the Murray Street Bridge (with new bike lanes) is about to start this year and will be completed years ahead of the forever-delayed project through Arana Gulch. The RTC has allocated \$2.43 million for the Arana Gulch Project in recognition that it is essentially a transportation project. With the acquisition of the rail line it is obvious that two bikeways, (one through Arana Gulch and one along the rail right of way), will be redundant and extremely wasteful of construction funds that will become harder and harder to come by in the future.

The Arana Gulch bikeway presents many problems: it would adversely impact an environmentally sensitive area, is very expensive (several million dollars for just one mile of bikeway), and would have very limited utility in that it would connect Brommer Street with Broadway--a street that is not very biker friendly. Broadway becomes a narrow, heavily trafficked street between Branciforte and the San Lorenzo River. This narrow segment (about half of Broadway's total length) has substandard bicycle lanes, has a steep grade, parking and lots of driveways on both sides, and a lot of automobile traffic.

By comparison, the midcounty segment of the trail along the rail line would be part of a thirty miles route, would be much safer (no conflict with auto traffic), and its construction could be speeded up by redirecting to the rail trail the \$2.43 millions in transportation funds that are now allocated to the Arana Gulch bikeway. If this were done, a continuous bikeway through midcounty could start to become a reality in the immediate future.

We are facing bleak times for public projects: libraries, parks, swimming pools and other public facilities are being closed, bus service is being cut, street improvements and other transportation projects are being set aside, maybe forever. It would be irresponsible to build two bike paths so close to each other, particularly when the Broadway-Brommer path presents so many problems.

The time to make a start on this new East-West connection is now. Who knows whether there will ever be new funding sources? Given the state of our public finances and the State's plans to

recapture unspent funds from local entities, funds to make a start on the rail trail may not come again for a long, long time. Thank you.

Aldo Giacchino  
1005 Pelton Avenue, Santa Cruz. CA 95060

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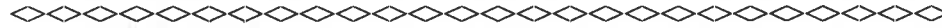
3/1/11

We received your comments regarding the Arana Gulch project.

Considering the public interest in the project, staff will recommend that the Commission pull the item from the consent agenda and place it on the regular agenda.

The Chair will determine whether to place the item on the regular agenda at the beginning of the meeting during Item 3 "Additions or deletions to the regular or consent agenda".

Thank you for your comments.



*Gini Pineda*

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