1. Welcome and introductions
   George Dondero, RTC Executive Director welcomed the 14 people participating in person and 10 by phone. (The participant list is available online at: www.sccrtc.org/consult.html.) Director Dondero reported that the RTC is in the final stages of acquiring the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, with the purchase currently awaiting approval by the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB), and escrow anticipated to close soon thereafter. A Fact Sheet on the acquisition was available at the meeting and online at: http://www.sccrtc.org/pdf/2011/02/RAILFACTSHT02-2011.pdf.

2. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Project Overview
   Luis Mendez, RTC Deputy Director, gave an overview of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line infrastructure project to make improvements to line necessary to maintain freight rail service and expand recreational rail service. He noted that much of the rail line currently operates as excepted track, with only one mile at Class 1. He noted that with closure of the cement plant in Davenport two years ago, freight traffic is down 90%. Sierra Northern Railroad is the short line operator running freight service and working on a plan for recreation rail service between the City of Santa Cruz and Davenport. Passenger service may go into effect at some point, but is not planned for the near future. The selected engineering consultant would coordinate with the operator.

3. RFP Overview
   a. Highlights of the Scope of Work – Attachment A of RFP
      Mr. Mendez reported that the goal of this project is to rehabilitate structures on the rail line up to FRA Class 2 condition, make drainage improvements and bring the track to Class 1 to the extent allowed with $6 million of construction funding. The selected consultant for this contract will prepare final design necessary to solicit bids for construction, which includes rehabilitation of structures, tracks, and general rail infrastructure necessary in order to ensure the rail line is serviceable into the future. This includes some changes to jointed rail, drainage improvements, seismic retrofit for one structure at San Lorenzo River which also includes a public walkway. Most of the construction is necessary due to deferred maintenance and the first priority work is the structures rehabilitation. He noted that some permits may be required; however, in general, operating rail lines are not subject to the same permit requirements as roadway projects, but it will be up to the consultant to determine what permits will be needed to achieve final design and ready the project for construction. The RTC also is requesting that as part of the scope of work, the consultant provide an indication as to whether bicycle/pedestrian facilities could be cantilevered to existing structures.

   b. Information Available to Consultant: Mr. Mendez reported that the following documents are available to assist the consultant.
      - Track Inspection Report (online link in RFP)
      - Structural Assessment and Supplemental Structural Assessment (online link in RFP)
      - GIS Maps of the Rail ROW – available online at: <http://gis.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/gis/map_gallery/> and compact disk (CD) available from RTC upon request
      - Valuation maps: available on CD
      - As-built plans for concrete and steel structures over Pajaro River, San Lorenzo River, Leonard Gulch, and Capitola: available on CD
         - Additional as-built plans are being requested from Union Pacific; UP uses standard plans
for wooden structures

- Sierra bridge inspections (will be made available to the selected consultant)
- Inspection reports from Union Pacific post 2005/2006 and prior to Sierra taking over as operator: may be available, pending release by UP

Mr. Mendez shared samples of pages from the structural assessments to demonstrate that detailed information has already been collected, reducing the amount of work anticipated for this contract.

c. Requirements in the RFP: Contract subject to Federal and State requirements
Mr. Mendez emphasized that the RTC is seeking a consultant with experience working on rail line projects and familiar with state and federal requirements.

d. Budget: $300,000 budgeted for this contract
Mr. Mendez noted that questions have been received indicating that $300,000 may not be sufficient for the amount of work identified in the Scope of Services. He noted that the reason for this budgeted amount is the extensive amount of work that was previously done. He provided examples from the inspection and assessment reports which show the condition of each section of the line, by span of each structure. He noted culverts have already been analyzed; field reports were already completed; and for some individual structures over 80 pages of information is available. The reports also provide recommendations of what work needed and cost estimates for those improvements, including mobilization, construction management, etc. The $300,000 cost estimate for final design is based on conversation with consultants that prepared the inspection reports and others. He noted that $300,000 may be a low or a high estimate of the cost, but that consultants should reflect in their proposal what they think it will cost to do the work necessary to prepare final design. If the cost proposal of the highest ranking consultant is more than the funds available, the RTC will negotiate with that consultant.

4. Selection Process
   a. Evaluation criteria: Mr. Mendez reviewed the selection criteria to be used, as listed on pages 7-8 of the RFP and stated that the RTC wants to hire verifiable good people with appropriate experience and skills who will do good quality work at a competitive price.
   b. Schedule and milestones
      - Requests for Clarification or Exceptions Due: Wednesday, July 20
      - Proposals Due: July 28, 4:00 p.m.– 4 hard copies, 1 reproducible original, and 1 electronic copy
      - Interviews: August 3, August 5, August 8 or August 9, if necessary
      - Final ranking of consultants: August 10, 2011
      - Notice to Proceed (NTP): September 2011
      - Complete project plans, specifications & estimates: by August 2012
        He noted that the timeline to complete the work August 2012 due to an interest in making improvements to the line as quickly as possible and to meet deadlines for securing funds for construction.

5. Questions
   Q1: For bridge work, would the selected consultant be expected to do more of an in-kind replacement of members that were identified as in need of replacement or deficient, and that the consultant would not be doing load ratings and structural analysis to make the bridge work for current code? Or is the consultant expected to bring up the structures to current code? The code has changed since the bridges were originally built and there may be load issues with breaking and acceleration.
   A1: Mr. Mendez responded that load rating analysis was done as part of the structure assessments, confirmed that seismic analysis was not done and could not remember whether longitudinal force analysis was done. The reports identify members that need to be replaced in order to handle the load of the freight being carried at that time. This question will be further addressed in the question and answer list, which will be posted on the RTC website.
Q2: Does purchase of the rail line have to close escrow before start of the design work?
A2: No delay in start of the work is anticipated, as the RTC anticipates closing escrow prior to issuing the Notice to Proceed. No state or federal laws prohibit initiation of the design phase in advance of ownership of the rail line. The RTC cannot start construction until ownership of the line. Sierra Northern would be cooperative in working with the design consultant to move forward in advance of closing escrow.

Q3: Does the EIR for recreational rail service between Capitola and Aptos apply to this project?
A3: No, that EIR was for recreational rail service, was never completed, and is no longer being pursued. It is our understanding that work identified for this project is rehabilitation and thus excluded from environmental review and a notice of exemption has been filed.

Q4: Are consultants that did prior work excluded from submitting responses to this RFP?
A4: No one is excluded.

Q5: Will a list of those who RSVP’d for this pre-proposal meeting be available?
A5: The list of participants will be available on the RTC website.

Q5: Have geotechnical investigations been done in the last 30 years?
A5: The RTC does not know since the rail line is owned by Union Pacific and was previously owned by Southern Pacific.

Q6: Will the consultant need to list every person imaginable that may work on this contract?
A6: No, just the key personnel, not everyone needs to be listed.

Q7: How many rounds of review are anticipated? For highways reviews are done at several points and the number of reviews and who is approving impacts the cost and schedule. Who will need to approve the plans (cities, Union Pacific, Caltrans)? There seems to be flexibility in the number of submittals, such as preliminary, prefinal, and final. It is possible that peer review by one person is sufficient.
A7: The RTC anticipates that consultants will assist in identifying the review process. The operator and RTC will be involved. The extent of Caltrans involvement is unknown. They would likely be involved for work on structures over highways. Local jurisdictions may also review sections that cross their roadways. RTC plans to hire a construction management firm that will also review work done by the design consultant. RTC does not have experience doing capital projects on a rail line, so we will work together with the consultant to determine the best process, which is why it is very important to hire a consultant that is familiar with this type of work and knows what is necessary, what permits, what agencies to consult with, that freight rail lines are not subject to the same requirements as highway or light rail systems. We want to make the funds go as far as possible and ensure we are meeting necessary requirements and have sound infrastructure. Bridges are the highest priority.

Cliff Walters, Sierra Northern, suggested that the goal is to make the funding available go as far as possible, thus to eliminate anything that is not necessary. Focus on just what is needed to make the structures sound, provide some expanded passenger service in the future. Sierra will work to accommodate the consultant to do their work.

Expanded answers to these and additional questions received will be posted online at: www.sccrtc.org/consult.html.

6. Adjournment – 11:01 a.m.