



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Minutes

**Thursday, September 3, 2015
9:00 a.m.**

**County Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean Street, 5th floor
Santa Cruz, CA**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Members present:

Patrick Mulhearn
Don Lane
Virginia Johnson
Greg Caput
Ryan Coonerty
Dennis Norton

Randy Johnson
Jimmy Dutra
Karina Cervantez
Cynthia Chase
Ed Bottorff
Aileen Loe (ex-officio)

Staff present:

George Dondero
Yesenia Parra
Jennifer Rodriguez

Rachel Moriconi
Kim Shultz
Karena Pushnik

2. Oral communications

Brian Peoples, Aptos Rail Trail, said there will be an Aptos Rail-Trail neighborhood meeting on Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Rio Sands Hotel in Aptos and invited all.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

A handout for Item 16 was distributed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Norton moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, R. Johnson, Caput, Coonerty, Norton, Dutra, Chase, Cervantez, Bottorff, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting "aye."

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the August 6, 2015 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
5. Accepted draft minutes of the August 10, 2015 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the August 11, 2015 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the August 20, 2015 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

No consent items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

8. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

9. Approved a Request for Proposals for Transportation Development Act (TDA) Fiscal Years 2012-13 through 2014-15 Triennial Performance Audits

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

10. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
11. Accepted correspondence log
12. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. Letter to Santa Cruz Metro regarding Revisions to ParaCruz Customer guide from the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
 - b. Letter to Senator Jim Beall regarding support for SBx1-1 Transportation Funding from RTC staff
13. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues

14. Accepted information items

- a. President's Special Acknowledgement Award – Workers' Compensation Program from the Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA)

REGULAR AGENDA

15. Commissioner reports – None

Commissioner R. Johnson and Commissioner Dutra joined the meeting at 9:07 a.m.

16. Director's Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on his Community Leadership visit to Seattle, Washington and Victoria, British Columbia. He also read a letter, from the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce on the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study, and stated that the letter is notable for its understanding of the context in which the Rail Feasibility Study was conducted.

17. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe announced that Caltrans is offering a monetary award to members of the public for a contest to identify innovative ideas that would improve the transportation systems and prevent underage drinking. She also noted that the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning (STP) grant application period is open until the end of October.

Commissioner Dutra thanked Caltrans for the Watsonville projects.

Rachel Wooster, reporter at the Santa Cruz Mountain Bulletin, noted the community frustration related to the delayed Highway 9 construction project and the impacts to commuters. Ms. Wooster passed out a packet on her research for her article on the Highway 9 closure.

Aileen Loe thanked the community for their patience. She said that this has been a complicated project. She described the project and process to prevent sedimentation to the river. She also noted that Caltrans encountered delays due to complicated site conditions. In regards to the missed community meeting, it was a misunderstanding and Caltrans would be happy to attend a community meeting.

Chair Lane moved agenda item 18 to later on in the agenda to allow time for Congressman Farr to arrive.

19. Monterey County Rail Project Update – *Taken out of order ahead of Item 18*

Debby Hale, Executive Director at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), introduced Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner. Ms. Watson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Rail Extension to Monterey County and Coast Daylight projects. Information was provided on the projects' benefits, challenges, funding status, and timeline.

Commissioners discussed STIP funding impacts; fare recovery projections; the potential of this project to expand job opportunities in the San Jose area; and the ease of travel to San Francisco and eventually Los Angeles once this project is complete.

Chris Mann, Director at Granite Rock, said Granite Rock leases part of the right-of-way in Sand City and wanted to know whom to contact.

Brian Peoples, noted a current trend for the use of express buses like the ones being used by high-tech industry. He said travel by train would take longer.

Eric Child, Santa Cruz resident, asked if this project will add to or replace the current service from San Jose to Gilroy.

Lowell Hurst, Watsonville resident, said that train connection in South County opens up opportunities and that bus and train schedules need to work together.

The Commission moved agenda item 20 to later in the agenda to allow for extended time to discuss the agenda item after Congressman Farr arrives.

21. Highway 1 Project – Status Report – *Taken out of order ahead of Item 20*

Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner, presented his staff report. Mr. Shultz informed that the Tiered Environmental Document for the Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program is currently being reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the expected public release is late October with an already extended comment period of 60 days to review.

Commissioners discussed extending the comment period.

Brian Peoples, discussed the need for cradle to grave Hwy 1 projects like the HOV lanes; metering lights, and temporary auxiliary lanes.

Jack Nelson, Co-Chair Campaign for Sensible Transportation, noted that going through the entire document would require additional time and an extended comment period is needed.

Paul Elerick, asked for clarification on the Mar Vista and Chanticleer overpasses.

Commissioner V. Johnson motioned and Commissioner Coonerty seconded to direct staff to request that Caltrans extend the public comment review period for the Tiered Environmental Document for the Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, Caput, Norton, Bottorff, R. Johnson, Chase, Cervantez, Dutra, Mulhearn, and V. Johnson voting "aye."

22. State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Update – *Taken out of order ahead of Items 20 and 18*

Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner, presented her staff report on state legislative activities and bills that have affected STIP funding. Ms. Moriconi provided information on how the lack of funds will delay transportation projects in Santa Cruz County. She stated that the RTC will continue working with project sponsors on timelines and if needed, the Commission will re-evaluate the priorities of projects later this year.

Commissioners discussed already programmed projects that may be delayed; the process of establishing project priorities; completion of projects that have been stagnant; the gas tax swap; general obligation bonds; STIP program rules and accessing funds; and expressed overall frustration with the unreliability of state transportation funding and the need for more stable local revenues.

Lowell Hurst, stated that with fuel taxes decreased, the improvement of fuel efficiency vehicles, and alternative fuels, there will be a decrease in funding for transportation projects.

18. Report from Washington – *Taken out of order after Item 22*

Congressman Sam Farr reported on federal legislative issues and the repercussions of opposing tax increases. He said that there is currently a deficit in transportation funding and that relying on federal funds for transportation improvement plans would make the future of transportation planning unreliable. Congressman Farr noted that local governments are going to have to manage themselves and seize their own opportunities to make investments. He stated that if we continue to use assets that are here and with clever thinking and planning, we can expand local businesses and provide new job opportunities. Congressman Farr thanked RTC staff and Commissioners for their leadership on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Master Plan. He noted the importance of access to the coastline and the benefits of the rail trail.

The Commission presented Congressman Farr with an American Planning Association Award in recognition of his significant role in contributing to the MBSST Master Plan.

Commissioners thanked Congressman Farr for championing the way for projects the commission has been working on through the years.

Alex Clifford, CEO at Santa Cruz Metro, thanked Congressman Farr for his understanding of the challenges of state of good repair and complications of transit rider benefit, and on being an advocate for transportation funding.

Piet Canin, Ecology Action, thanked Congressman Farr on his vision of connecting cities and getting funds earmarked.

Amelia Conlen, Director, Bike Santa Cruz County, thanked Congressman Farr for his leadership and said that the rail trail will have the biggest impact on non-cyclists.

Dave Wright, Aptos resident, thanked Congressman Farr and commended the RTC for their inclusiveness and work on the rail trail.

Brian Peoples, thanked Congressman Farr for his work and said the rail trail is not wide enough to accommodate both rail and trail.

Micah Posner, Santa Cruz City Council, thanked Congressman Farr on being a visionary for the rail trail and his rare leadership.

20. Public Input on the Draft Passenger Rail Study – *Taken out of order after Item 22*

Karena Pushnik, Senior Transportation Planner presented a PowerPoint presentation with a summary of survey responses, comments received, and public engagement outreach efforts. Ms. Pushnik stated that the RTC will take into consideration the input received by members of the public. Feedback to the consultants includes: clarification of information on: hybrid scenarios to include Watsonville; range of sample rail service concerning costs and ridership; train speeds in neighborhoods; technology options; cost and funding methodology; ridership forecasting; train horns and quiet zones; local jurisdictions economic development plans; gate crossing times; access to stations and parking; and densification for edits in the final report. The report is expected to be ready for public review by the end of this year.

Commissioners discussed the distinction of rail and public transit; how the survey questions were determined; the naming of the study to reflect its nature; people using cars versus using public transportation; implications of costs and financial feasibility; competing modalities; additional information needed for infrastructure investments; short term and long term investments; utilization of the study and successful community engagement; all around

community in favor of the trail; the value of the rail to the tourist industry; and matching rigor and additional information on destination for all projects.

Dave Wright, said that he supports the rail and trail for environmental purposes and to alleviate the economic cost of living in this county. Mr. Wright stated that the study is consistent with feasibility information from past projects, Santa Cruz has the density, and the corridor is wide enough.

Micah Posner, complimented staff on the responses received and stated that in the long term ridership numbers would go up because the community is more likely to try new things and the stations would have a profound positive effect on land use.

Bruce Sawhill, Co-Chair, Friends of the Rail and Trail, commended the study and stated that it would take extensive funds to recreate the resources we already have from scratch. Mr. Sawhill said the rail line is valuable and needs to be used.

Miles Reiter, Chairman, Driscolls, said the right of way has limits and advocates for the trail to be priority because it will be the most utilized and more beneficial than a rail with trail.

Brian Peoples, said the unreliability of funding, the widening of the highway will be more cost effective. Mr. Peoples stated that heavy vehicles don't belong close to homes and supports factual reasoning.

Jack Nelson, shared a story on his Los Angeles highway driving experience and commented about the impact on neighbors with the increase in vehicles on the highway if widened. Mr. Nelson stated he supports the more efficient rail.

Christy Marten, Santa Cruz business owner, noted the need for more elements to be added to the Executive Summary to reflect the community feedback and stated that she feels the rail will change the tone of the town.

Bill Malone, said he is in favor of the rail and thinks the tracks are an irreplaceable asset. Mr. Malone stated that only if you give people alternatives, can they take it.

Mark Mesiti-Miller, Civil Engineer, expressed his excitement for a reliable alternative transportation service and said that much can be learned from listening to the critics. Mr. Mesiti-Miller quoted Roslyn Carter on leadership.

Paul Elerick, said he supports work on the feasibility study and the rail, and that TAMC's projects are a good start.

Bud Colligan, CEO of South Swell Ventures, stated that he read all of the comments and concluded that the majority is opposed to the rail. Mr. Colligan noted the need for clarification on the speed of the trains and wait times at stations.

Chris Mann, stated that future studies should have random samples and surveys to make adequate reports that can be utilized to make decisions

Lowell Hurst, stated that we need to keep moving forward and getting information out to the public because the rail is feasible.

23. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 11:49 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

24. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-EXISTING LITIGATION. (Paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code) Santa Cruz Superior Court Case No. CV182123
25. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-ANTICIPATED LITIGATION. Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code: one case
26. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-ANTICIPATED LITIGATION. Initiation of litigation pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code: one case

OPEN SESSION

27. Report on closed session

No report

28. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

A Commissioner retreat has been scheduled in lieu of the regularly scheduled September 17, 2015 Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW). The retreat is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. and will be held at the Pajaro Dunes at 500 Sandpiper Lane, Watsonville, CA.

The meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Rodriguez, Staff

Attendees:

Alex Clifford	Santa Cruz METRO
Amelia Conlen	Bike Santa Cruz County
Barry Scott	Rio Del Mar Resident
Bill Malone	
Brian Peoples	Aptos Rail Trail
Bruce Sawhill	Friends of the Rail Trail
Bud Colligan	South Swell Ventures
Carl Arnett	
Chris Mann	Granite Rock
Christine Watson	Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Christy Marten	Santa Cruz business owner
Daniel Kosteale	
Debbie Hale	Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Eric Child	Santa Cruz resident
Heather Adamson	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Jack Nelson	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
James Swofford	
Kate Roberts	
Lowell Hurst	City of Watsonville
Mark Mesiti-Miller	
Micah Posner	Santa Cruz City Council
Miles Reiter	Driscolls, Inc.
Paul Elerick	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Peter Detlefs	County Administrators Office
Piet Canin	Ecology Action
Rachel Wooster	Santa Cruz Mountain Bulletin
Will Menchine	