



**Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission
Transportation Policy Workshop**

MINUTES

**Thursday, November 19, 2015
9:00 a.m.**

**Veterans Memorial Building
846 Front Street
Santa Cruz, CA**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.:

Members present:

Don Lane	John Leopold
Bruce McPherson	Dennis Norton
Greg Caput	Randy Johnson
Zach Friend	Ed Bottorff
Cynthia Chase	Andy Schiffrin (alt.)
Lowell Hurst (alt.)	Mike Rotkin (alt.)
Aileen Loe	Virginia Johnson (alt.)
Tony Gregorio (alt.)	

2. Oral communications

Jack Nelson, Co-chair for Campaign for Sensible Transportation, said that carbon dioxide is an invisible gas that will destroy civilization and transportation plans need to take invisible challenges into consideration.

Rick Nolthenius, said that the CO₂ levels in the atmosphere are rising affecting the equilibrium, and causing sea levels to rise. He urged the Commission to think about the future and move toward sustainability and less carbon intense projects.

Mitch Lachman, said that the issue with climate change comes from too many cars driving between developments that require parking. He stated that widening the highway will not relieve traffic, and there needs to be a plan to get rid of onsite parking and move into mass transit and carpooling.

Carey Pico, said a Citizens Advisory Committee should be established to ensure open and honest information concerning projects is communicated to the public.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

A replacement page for Item 5 and handouts for Items 6 were distributed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, said the Commission should accept the claim from Brenda Sherriffs because of the dangerous design of the roundabout located near the wharf. He said that the roundabout is a liability to taxpayers.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Norton, Johnson, Caput, Leopold, McPherson, Friend, Chase, Bottorff, and Commissioner Alternates Rotkin, Schiffrin, and Hurst voting "aye".

4. Approved Consultant Selection for FY2013-FY2015 Triennial Performance Audit
5. Approved rejection of amendments to claim from Brenda Sherriffs

REGULAR AGENDA

6. November 2016 Transportation Ballot Measure – Expenditure Plan Development

George Dondero, Executive Director, presented his staff report. The proposed ½ cent ballot measure would have a 30 year sunset. The five project categories for the expenditure plan are: neighborhood projects, highway corridors, mobility access, rail corridor, and coastal rail trail. Mr. Dondero noted that consultant assistance, with an estimated cost of \$120,000, would be needed for public outreach and for a poll of likely voters for the November 2016 election.

Commissioners discussed outreach costs for consulting and polls; whether the initial polling reflected the current Draft Expenditure Plan; and public polling for the preferred amount of sales tax and notification of a sunset clause.

Chair Lane opened the floor for public comments with a time limit of 1 hour.

Pauline Seales, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network, said knowing that the earth is going to die is overwhelming and the RTC needs to be more innovative with transportation plans to address the CO₂ issue.

Bryan Largay, commended the Commission on the development of the Draft Expenditure Plan and said the coastal corridor projects will be beneficial to the community. Mr. Largay said the community along Highway 9 would be more likely to support the proposed sales tax measure if the Commission allocated a proportionate amount of funds to San Lorenzo Valley transportation projects.

Mark Mesiti-Miller, stated that the Draft Expenditure Plan is well balanced and a great achievement in moving forward to be a self help county. He said the future of transportation efficiency needs a multi-modal model and suggested to extend the sales tax measure sunset clause from 30 years to 40 years.

Terry Corwin, CEO of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, said she recognizes the importance of being a self help county to compete for state and federal transportation funding and noted that the Land Trust has committed over \$7 million in matching funds to implement the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Plan. Ms. Corwin gave information on Caltrans having preliminary plans for a wildlife tunnel around land secured by the Land Trust at Laurel Curve and stated that the Draft Expenditure Plan supports "all creatures access" and the common good to make Santa Cruz County better.

Mitch Lachman, said that we ultimately need to get cars off the road. He said neither funding mass transit nor funding the widening of the highway will relieve congestion in the long run.

Rick Longinotti: said that the latest technical information from the Highway 1 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should be included in the Draft Expenditure Plan as it indicates that more auxiliary lanes do not relieve congestion. He stated that the commute is getting worse with the auxiliary lanes and the No Build Plan would be more efficient.

Carey Pico, said the costs presented are misleading and noted that the State of California projected a lower cost to build the Pajaro station. He stated that the upgrade of the train tracks to class 2 is not justified.

Amelia Conlen, Bike Santa Cruz County, urged the Commission to continue to fund the trail so it is completed within the 30 year time span of the measure. Ms. Conlen noted that Santa Cruz is now a Gold Level Bicycle Friendly Community, and said traffic could be positively impacted by investing in other areas of the county to make riding bikes a viable transportation option. She asked the Commission to consider setting aside funds specifically for bike, pedestrian, and safe routes to school projects.

Micah Posner, said he appreciated the work done for the Highway 1 EIR and emphasized the need for a public poll. He stated that the Draft Expenditure Plan would improve all transportation needs, but widening the highway would not substantially relieve congestion.

Commissioner McPherson left the meeting at 9:54 a.m. and was replaced with Commissioner Alternate Virginia Johnson.

Eva Brunner, said she would support the proposed sales tax increase if the funds go to alternative transportation rather than widening the highway. Ms. Brunner expressed the need for alternative transportation options in getting around the county, including San Lorenzo Valley, and getting cars off of the road.

Bruce Sawhill, Friends of the Rail and Trail, thanked the veterans for making it possible to be free to disagree. Mr. Sawhill stated that the rail and trail are complimentary and should be co-engineered to lessen disruptions. He said that federal and state funding is possible, but trails will require higher funds from local sources because they are not yet classified by government as mass transit. He noted that the state's priorities are changing to focus on reducing green house gases and fixing pot holes should be a priority locally.

Casey Beyer, said the Draft Expenditure Plan is not perfect, but addresses the needs of the community. He stated that doing nothing at all is not the answer and instead of the community isolating itself into one specific bucket, the November 2016 ballot should be used as a tool to take a stand for the good of all.

Piet Canin, Ecology Action, commended the Commission on the Draft Expenditure Plan. Mr. Canin said there needs to be a focus on sustainable and active transportation because Santa Cruz has barriers for biking and walking. He asked the Commission to consider a significant allocation of funds to building the majority of the trail, safety training for 5th graders, improvements to safe routes to school, bike and pedestrian projects and that options be kept open for the rail trail corridor.

Bill Malone, suggested a polling question and said he is in favor of spending money on transportation, but opposed to spending money on widening the freeway. Mr. Malone noted that the Campaign for Sustainable Transportation's (CFST) alternate expenditure plan, congestion relief, global warming, and politics have been discussed with Commissioners.

Steve Tedesco, thanked the Commission for being reasonable and moving forward to put more money into the system. He said he supports the proposed sales tax because the system clearly needs more funding and reasonable plans.

Brian Peoples, said utilizing the corridor with rubber wheels works. Mr. Peoples said new vehicle technology is going to make the highways and roadways more efficient and suggested that a toll road option be added to Highway 1 projects to bring in revenues to fund transportation projects. He stated the Commission has a great opportunity to make the plan a success.

North County citizen, said he's not sure of the value in widening the highway, but would rather have funds spent to fill pot holes to make the surface roads safer for cyclists. He stated that Caltrans should be responsible for acquiring the funds to widen the highway.

Ron Pomerantz, Executive Board Member of the Sierra Club, read a letter, that was included as a handout to Item 6, concerning: the Highway 1 Draft EIR, green house gases, the CFST's Sustainable Transportation Expenditure Plan, and the Sierra Club's support in passing a measure with alternative sustainability transportation options.

Christy Kirven, stated that people would be more likely to take an efficient train rather than the bus. She proposed putting both the CFST's plan and RTC's plan on the ballot to let the community decide which it prefers.

Dean Ludholm, said that widening the highway will not work and congestion could be relieved by providing more affordable housing developments near places of employment.

Santa Cruz Citizen, said that instead of having a sales tax increase that would fund widening the highway, we should utilize the publically acceptable, already installed, and efficient, train tracks as the cheapest alternative.

Aldo Giachino, used an analogy comparing the sales tax to a sour blended cocktail. He said the widening of the highway could sink the whole thing and should be removed from the proposal.

Barry Scott, CoastalRail.org, said that transportation is largely an energy matter and the addiction of driving cars needs to be broken. Mr. Scott noted that California used to be the lowest per capita energy user in the nation and that rail transportation is a proven sustainable technology that uses significantly less energy than cars.

Brett Garrett, said he supports a tax increase for sustainable transportation options and encourages solutions to get out of cars and alternatives to widening the highway.

Jack Nelson, noted CFST has a positive proposal for a sales tax measure that is available on their website. Mr. Nelson said he believes the Commission hasn't had time to absorb the information in the Highway 1 EIR and he is shocked with the green house gas data in the Air Quality Study Report.

Chair Lane closed the public comment period for this item at: 10:26 a.m.

With the assistance of facilitator Gary Merrill the Commissioner's discussed the Draft Expenditure Plan broken down as follows: 30% to neighborhood projects, 25% to highway corridors, 15% to mobility access, 15% to the rail corridor, and 15% to the sanctuary scenic trail.

Commissioners discussed: the percentage for Santa Cruz Metro; letters from Santa Cruz Metro Chair Dene Bustichi and Commissioner Dutra; striking a balance acceptable to voters; becoming a self-help county to move all transportation projects forward and leverage other funds; various efforts of Commissioners to reduce green house gases and improve sustainability; a sunset clause and a poll for the preferred time span; ensuring public confidence; an oversight committee; an imbalance of housing and jobs; alternative transportation; political feasibility of the measure; concern over interest groups killing the measure, resulting in lost funding; the importance of enough funding to complete proposed projects; and focusing on the overall needs across the county to find a balance for long term benefits.

Commissioner Caput left the meeting at 11:26 a.m. and was replaced by Commissioner Alternate Gregorio.

Mr. Merrill took a non-binding straw poll to determine if the Commissioners were in agreement with the 5 project categories and the allocation amounts. The voting was done on a 1-5 scale with 5 being the highest. Mr. Merrill emphasized that this was a non-binding straw poll with the formal voting to be done at the December 3, 2015 RTC meeting. 6 Commissioners voted with a 5, 3 Commissioners voted 4, 2 Commissioners voted 2, and 1 abstained.

Commissioner Alternate Rotkin moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded to approve the release of an RFQ or RFP for public outreach assistance, and for a poll of likely voters in the November 216 election. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Norton, Johnson, Leopold, Friend, Chase, Bottorff, and Commissioner Alternates Rotkin, Schiffrin, Gregorio, Johnson and Hurst voting "aye".

7. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

The meeting adjourned at: 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Rodriguez, Staff

Attendees:

Aldo Giachino	
Amelia Conlen	Bike Santa Cruz County
Barry Scott	CoastalRail.org
Bill Malone	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Brett Garrett	
Brian Peoples	Trail Now
Bruce Sawhill	Friends of the Rail Trail
Bryan Largay	
Carey Pico	Trail Now
Casey Beyer	Santa Cruz County Bicycle Club
Chris Schneiter	City of Santa Cruz Public Works
Christy Kirven	
Claire Fliesler	City of Santa Cruz
Connie Gib Wilson	
Daniel Zaragoza	Santa Cruz Metro
Dean Lundholm	
Deborah Calloway	
Dianna Adamic	
Doug Engfer	
Eric Child	
Eva Brunner	
Grace Voss	Santa Cruz County Cycling Club
Heather Adamson	Associates of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Jack Nelson	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
John Brissenden	
Kate Keesler	
Mark Mesiti-Miller	
Mary Odegard	

Micah Posner
Michael Gasser
Mitch Lachman
Paul Elerick
Pauline Seales
Peter Scott
Piet Canin
Rick Longinotti
Rick Nolthenius
Ron Pomerantz
Sean Hebard
Steve Tedesco
Terry Corwin
Tom Duncanson
Will Menchine

City of Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Coastal Coalition
Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Ecology Action

Sierra Club
Carpenters Local 505

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County