



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Minutes

**Thursday, June 2, 2016
9:00 a.m.**

**Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main St., Ste 450
Watsonville, CA**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m.

Members present:

Don Lane	Jimmy Dutra
Karina Cervantez	Bruce McPherson
Greg Caput	Randy Johnson
Cynthia Chase	John Leopold
Ryan Coonerty	Ed Bottorff
Dennis Norton	Patrick Mulhearn (alt)
Aileen Loe (ex-officio)	

Staff member:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Yesenia Parra	Jennifer Rodriguez
Grace Blakeslee	Rachel Moriconi
Kim Shultz	

2. Oral communications

Jack Nelson, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, noted that according to a community assessment project, over 5 million vehicle miles are traveled daily in Santa Cruz County, producing millions of pounds of CO₂ emissions. Mr. Nelson stated that the golden rule should be "leave the world on to others as you would like it left on to you".

Ray Cancino, Community Bridges, said that the Transportation Improvement Plan (TRIP) will provide an opportunity to invest in current and future paratransit needs. Mr. Cancino urged the Commission to consider increasing the Liftline allocation to help fund mobility access that would expand services to those most in need.

Rick Longinotti, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, stated that transportation modes have always impacted housing and currently inner cities are becoming more desirable because people do not want to be stuck in traffic. He said that as a result of increased housing costs, those with lower incomes are living in decentralized areas with limited transportation options. Mr. Longinotti noted that widening the highway will encourage commuting and an increase to housing costs in Watsonville.

Robert Morgan, said that leaders with forward thinking vision are needed to advocate for changes for sustainability. He distributed a flyer inviting all to a climate change presentation on June 14th at Cabrillo College.

Dana Bagshaw, stated that the public transit system needs more support to get people involved with taking the bus because transit is not just for the disadvantaged. She noted that she hopes the RTC will take the ballot measure seriously and provide the leadership that is needed.

Paul Elerick, congratulated Caltrans on the fishhook project completion. Mr. Elerick noted that an article on his philosophy of the proposed transportation sales tax measure is available in the current issue of the *Good Times*. He stated that he supports the addition of more auxiliary lanes because they work.

Joe Jordan, said that a streamlined online carpooling program should be available and utilized to increase the transportation options supply rather than increasing a demand for more pavement.

Ernestina Saldaña, said that CO₂ emissions and climate change are significantly impacting Santa Cruz County's redwood forests and overall environment. She stated that adding more lanes to the highway will increase cars and again increase the demand for even more lanes. Ms. Saldana noted that supporting public transit is just one part of the whole picture.

T.L., Santa Cruz County Office of Education, said that the environment is at risk due to climate change and Santa Cruz County should set an example for California and the nation. He stated that California has the 12th largest carbon footprint in the world, and with the growing population and climate crisis, alternative transportation is the only way to change that.

Lowell Hurst, City of Watsonville, said Watsonville residents are thankful for the work done to improve Highway 1, as it has made a difference to the quality of life for those who commute. He noted that we need take advantage of opportunities to accommodate the future. Mr. Hurst stated that both housing and jobs impact transportation and a balance approach is needed.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

A replacement page for Item 4 and a handout for Item 18 were distributed. There will be no closed session.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commission Coonerty seconded approval of the items listed under the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Caput, Leopold, Norton, Bottorff, Cervantez, Johnson, Chase, Dutra, and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "aye".

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the May 5, 2016 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
5. Approved draft minutes of the May 10, 2016 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting
6. Approved draft minutes of the May 19, 2016 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

No consent items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

7. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
8. Approved User Oriented Transit Planning Project – contract award
(Resolution 23-16)
9. Approved City of Santa Cruz Coastal Rail Trail project - survey work contract amendment **(Resolution 24-16)**

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

No consent items

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 the California Transportation Commission regarding the 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) from the RTC chair
 - b. Letter to Honorable Lois Wolk and Honorable Richard Bloom regarding support for a statewide budget increase for the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program from RTC staff
13. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues
14. Accepted information items
 - a. California Transportation Commission (CTC) May 18, 2016 News Release: "\$1.5 Billion Shortfall Forces Cuts in Statewide Transportation Program"

REGULAR AGENDA

15. Commissioner reports – oral reports

Commissioner Johnson thanked Paul Elerick for his moderate approach to the transportation issues in Santa Cruz County and noted that the Commission is looking for balanced and realistic solutions. He stated that it is important to remember that the future will include electric cars, which will emit less green house gases, but will still need a highway system.

Commissioner McPherson shared his appreciation to Caltrans for the safety improvements to the fishhook and for hosting the press conference yesterday. He stated that auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 provide a safety feature and convenience to motorists and if 20% of commuters carpooled, the traffic and pollution situation would immensely improve.

Chair Lane noted that he and Commissioner Chase carpooled today in an all-electric vehicle. He stated that the change is happening and being manifested right here in the Commission.

Commissioner Caput said that improvements need to be made to Highways 129 and 156 because many people commute on those roads to go to work. He stated that widening Highway 1 will bring more cars and a sales tax measure will discourage people in Watsonville from buying locally.

Commissioner Dutra said that South County is a diverse and educated community that deserves equal access to the opportunities that are outside of Watsonville. He stated that it is important to look into the future and provide the future generations the means to access education and jobs.

16. Director's Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on: the fishhook improvement project completion and Caltrans' press release; the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County committing \$700K to Phase 2 for the north coast rail trail project; last week's RTC Open House for the 5-mile north coast rail trail project and the availability of the preliminary design drawings online; stakeholder meetings and outreach efforts for the Transportation Improvement Plan (TRIP); and Cruz511 providing public access to a program to assist with finding options for commuting.

Commissioners discussed the width of the trails on the north coast rail trail segment and accommodation for farm vehicles.

17. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5 Deputy Director, reported on: the dangers that Caltrans workers are exposed to while working on highway projects; community workshops for the Access Management Plan (AMP) for Highway 17 in Scotts Valley, Happy Valley, and Loma Prieta Elementary School; and public review being available until July 6th for input on the California Sustainable Action Freight Plan.

Commissioners discussed: Watsonville project completion timelines and appreciation to Caltrans for the unique experience at the fishhook completion event.

18. Draft ordinance for potential ballot measure

George Dondero, Executive Director, presented the staff report. He noted that the ½ cent sales tax measure proposed for the November 2016 ballot will address the significant backlog of transportation system needs in Santa Cruz County. Mr. Dondero introduced Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner, to provide information on the details of the ordinance. Ms. Moriconi reported that the ordinance is the "full text" of the ballot measure and will be included in the voter guide with the goal to be transparent with the community.

Commissioners discussed: language transparency in the ordinance; administrative costs and expenses associated with project budgets; the importance of mentioning the rail in the ordinance and complying with the maximum word count; the oversight committee having the final vote on the distribution of costs and resources; the concept of the oversight committee being independent from the agency; a 7-year ¼ cent tax alternative for local roads; the frequency of disbursements to Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District; the need to become a self-help county to be competitive for grants; the importance of having an efficient and reliable bus system; compromising to set a good precedence in the community; the differing opinions and outlooks of what's good for the environment; the effect of the economy on people wanting to drive cars; making sure South County residents have access to educational opportunities; Santa Cruz County being a community that does a good

job in addressing climate change; the benefits of community discussions on the transportation issues with the presentation of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TRIP); induced traffic studied by Caltrans; how roads are needed to support a robust bus system; the impact of auxiliary lanes on traffic congestion; and polling on the TRIP taking place next week.

Rick Longinotti, stated that conflicts over the transparency of information included in the ordinance about Highway 1 are potentially the easiest to solve. Mr. Longinotti said that a joint, fact-finding committee should be established to ensure honest representation of the ballot measure.

Jack Neslon, stated that further explanation on the flow of funds and bucket allocations is needed in the ordinance. Mr. Nelson noted that he questions the fairness of the claim that Highway 1 traffic will be eased by the sales tax measure.

Dan Stevenson, inquired about the allocation of funds to Santa Cruz Metro.

Dana Bagshaw, stated that widening Highway 1 will not reduce green house gas emissions and funds from the sales tax measure need to go to Metro to benefit the community as a whole. Ms. Bagshaw noted that it is important to have a broader vision than just using Metro for mobility access.

Ernestina Saldaña, said that there is a misrepresentation of the sales tax measure. Ms. Saldaña noted that workers and students can also utilize the transit system.

Robert Morgan, said expanding the highway will increase green house gases and we cannot project the future use of electric vehicles.

Joe Jordan, stated that electric bicycles should be used to get people off of the freeway. Mr. Jordan noted that by utilizing creative and innovative means, traffic congestion can be reduced and create a better driving experience for all.

Lowell Hurst; stated that being a self-help County is the whole point of the sales tax measure. Mr. Hurst noted that the TRIP won't meet all of the expectations, but it is a step in the right direction.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Dutra seconded the staff recommendations to:

1. Provide input on the draft Ordinance for the potential ballot measure asking voters to approve a one-half cent sales tax to maintain local streets and roads, build safe and accessible walking and bicycle paths, maintain transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities, improve traffic flow and safety on Highway 1, and preserve and maintain the rail corridor;
2. Receive an update on public outreach; and
3. Direct staff to schedule a public hearing on June 16, 2016 for the RTC to consider adoption of the final ballot language, final expenditure plan and ordinance for the measure.

The motion passed with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Leopold, Norton, Bottorff, Cervantez, Johnson, Chase, Dutra, and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "aye" and Commissioner Caput voting "no".

19. Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 Work Program

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, presented the staff report. Mr. Mendez noted that the FY 2016-17 Work Program addresses state-mandated responsibilities and RTC priorities and has been reviewed by Caltrans.

Commissioners discussed: changes in the budget template to show expenditure changes year to year; salaries and benefits of staff and program managers under projects; accountability and the metrics on how projects are gauged as being successful; effectiveness of funded projects and analyzing how the funds are spent; having the work plan separate from the success of the sales tax measure; dependence on federal and state funding and diminishing resources; not shortcutting obligations to transportation; and the budget being well suited for performance budgeting.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Norton seconded the staff recommendation to approve the draft final fiscal year (FY) 2016-17 RTC Work Program. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Caput, Leopold, Norton, Bottorff, Cervantez, Johnson, Chase, Dutra, and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "aye".

Commissioner Johnson left the meeting.

20. Highway 1/Mar Vista Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing: Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans

Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report. Mr. Shultz noted that the Highway 1 overcrossing will provide a safe link to Mar Vista Elementary, Cabrillo College, commercial areas, and to the beach.

Commissioners discussed: the length of time needed to approve environmental studies; improvements made to Highway 1 being big ticket items; how the overcrossing will provide kids an alternative to having to be driven to school; meeting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) standards; and the importance of supporting the TRIP to secure full funding for the overcrossing.

Paul Elerick, encouraged the Commission to keep up the good work and said that he thinks the bridge will offer alternatives for kids to get to school.

Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded the staff recommendations to:

1. Adopt **(Resolution 25-16)** authorizing the Executive Director to sign the Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans for the Project Approval and Environmental Documentation phase of the Highway 1 Mar Vista Bicycle/Pedestrian Overcrossing Project; and,
2. Authorize staff to prepare and release a Request for Proposals to secure consultant services to complete the Project Approval and Environmental Documentation phase of the Highway 1 Mar Vista Bicycle/Pedestrian Overcrossing Project.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Caput, Leopold, Norton, Bottorff, Cervantez, Chase, Dutra, and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "aye".

21. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

CLOSED SESSION

22. 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
23. 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

OPEN SESSION

24. Report on closed session

No report

25. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 4, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Scotts Valley City Council Chambers, 1 Civic Center Drive, Scotts Valley, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, June 16, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Santa Cruz Council Chambers, 809 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA.

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Rodriguez

Attendees:

Dan Stevenson

Dana Bagshaw

Ernestina Saldaña

Heather Adamson

Jack Nelson

Joe Jordan

Kirk Ance

Lowell Hurst

M. Yolanda Fernandez

Murray Fontes

Paul Elerick

Ray Cancino

Rick Longinotti

Robert Morgan

Susan Cavalieri

Alex Clifford

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Campaign for Sensible Transportation

Community Bridges/Lifeline
City of Watsonville

City of Watsonville

Community Bridges/Lifeline
Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Campaign for Sensible Transportation

Santa Cruz Metropolitan