



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission Transportation Policy Workshop

MINUTES

**Thursday, June 16, 2016
9:00 a.m.**

City of Santa Cruz Council Chambers
809 Center Street
Santa Cruz, CA

1. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m.

Members present:

Don Lane	Jimmy Dutra
John Leopold	Dennis Norton
Randy Johnson	Greg Caput
Cynthia Chase	Bruce McPherson
Ed Bottorff	Ryan Coonerty
Karina Cervantez	

Staff present:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Yesenia Parra	Jenn Rodriguez
Karena Pushnik	Rachel Moriconi
Ginger Dykaar	Kim Shultz

2. Oral communications

Elise Casby, Santa Cruz Bus Riders Association, stated it is important to have relevant information about the current climate change issues before making policy decisions.

Dan Stevenson, said that he currently does not support the proposed sales tax measure and noted that he would like the Commission to commit to prioritizing Santa Cruz METRO over the rail and the highway and public transportation should receive the majority of funding.

Jack Nelson, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, read quotes from Pope Francis regarding climate change, and noted that it is unfortunate that people in politics stop thinking when they get caught up in slogans and get locked into positions.

Nancy Faulstich, Watsonville Climate Action Network, said that she has ideas for employer sponsored carpooling for agricultural strawberry pickers specifically.

Ernestina Saldaña, stated that the United States Federal Highway Administration reported that a yearly average of 80K pounds of carbon dioxide is emitted from every vehicle.

Dana Bagshaw, said that today is National Dump the Pump Day. Ms. Bagshaw stated that electric cars do not stop traffic congestion and utilizing electric buses would cause less road damage than cars. She noted that she is excited about the sales tax initiative to support Metro ridership.

Jason Wozniak, stated that economic solutions can be found to fund public transportation if democratic participation is allowed. Mr. Wozniak said that funding cuts to Metro will put jobs at risk, threaten the environment, and take away transportation options for those most in need.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Additional materials were distributed for Item 6.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Caput moved and Commissioner McPherson 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, and Dutra voting "aye".

4. Approved sponsorship for Ecology Action's (EA) Youth Bike & Walk Safety Education Program
5. Accepted information item: Caltrans Transportation Planning Grant Award Notification for: Santa Cruz County Unified Corridor Investment Study –Phase II SR9/San Lorenzo Valley Complete Streets Corridor Transportation Plan

Commissioner McPherson noted that the Caltrans Transportation Planning Grant received for the State Route 9/San Lorenzo Valley Complete Streets Corridor Transportation Plan is an important achievement.

REGULAR AGENDA

6. **9:30 Public Hearing:** Consideration of Ordinance 2016-01 enacting a transportation tax subject to voter approval, and consideration of resolution requesting the County Board of Supervisors call a special election on the measure and consolidate it with the November 2016 General Election

George Dondero, Executive Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining a summary of the Transportation Ballot Measure summary. He reported that local funding strategies have been investigated with the Transportation Improvement Plan (TRIP) to address community transportation priorities and to maintain the infrastructure needs in Santa Cruz County.

Kurt Bellow, consultant from FM3, reported that over 600 telephone interviews of likely voters in Santa Cruz County were conducted and 68% of those polled, with the hypothetical ordinance language tested, said that they would support the measure. 76% to 72% said that improving safety for children walking and biking near schools, improving traffic flow on Highway 1, repairing potholes, and maintaining senior and disabled transit services is at least very important.

Commissioners discussed: the impact of the questions used on the polling results; the consistency of the polling results; the need to advocate for support of the sales tax measure; the percentages of people polled in each jurisdiction; and the percentage of Spanish only speakers polled.

Chair Lane opened the Public Hearing at 9:59 a.m.

Gary Milburn, Bike Santa Cruz County, stated that sustainability is a necessity, funding is needed for public transportation. Mr. Milburn said that widening Highway 1 would encourage increased dependence on private vehicles, and electric vehicles will not be enough to reduce green house gases.

Micah Posner, City of Santa Cruz Council Member, said that expanding automobile use has caused global warming; and that the TRIP is balanced, but further discussions on alternative transportation options in Santa Cruz County are needed to reach consensus in the community.

Stanley Sokolow, stated that he supports the proposed sales tax measure because many deteriorated streets need to be fixed, and that he is in favor of a train with a bicycle car. He noted that since another sales tax is expiring this year, Santa Cruz County's sales tax would only increase by ¼ cent for transportation.

Carey Pico, stated that money will be wasted with the allocations in the proposed sales tax measure, with a majority of funds being wasted for rail projects.

Bob Morgan, stated that he does not favor widening the highway and he would love to use the rail and trail. Mr. Morgan said that Metro bus stations could be supported by incorporating the use of company shuttles at popular bus stations, and transportation infrastructures should be designed for people in the neighborhoods, not for cars.

Becky Steinbruner, stated that the polling should be compartmentalized so voters could choose where they want the funds to be allocated, and she is unsure if she supports the proposed sales tax measure anymore. Ms. Steinbruner noted that a citizen oversight committee and public disclosure on use of the money is needed to gain the confidence of voters.

Steven Shnaar, said that he supports the proposed sales tax measure, strongly opposes widening Highway 1, and hopes the measure is amended for broad community support. He noted that improvements should not be designed around single occupancy vehicles.

Roland Saher, said that powerful climate change will come soon and we have to get into public transportation. Mr. Saher stated that highway widening is not the answer to reduce traffic congestion and public transportation should be used instead.

Stacy Falls, stated that global warming and climate change is affecting the ecosystem and environmental policy should be based on good science. She said that she would support the sales tax measure if the funds were allocated to public transportation rather than the highway.

Drew Glover, Project Pollinate, stated that sustainable and accessible public transportation is important to reduce our carbon footprint and to alleviate traffic congestion. He noted that we can't build our way out of traffic congestion.

Faz, stated that he is thankful for the public transportation in Santa Cruz County, is opposed to widening Highway 1, growth does not always mean progress, and will support the proposed sales tax measure if the Metro infrastructure is fixed.

Naima Sudjian, Cabrillo College student, stated that many people aren't biking because of the unsafe road conditions and that we need to switch gears toward a more sustainable way of transportation and encourage alternatives to driving by allocating funds to safe bike routes.

Cabrillo College Student (Did not state his name), said that Europe shows more care for the environment with sustainable transportation and having the rail line will help future generations to deal with the effects of climate change. He noted that his parents moved out of the Santa Cruz area because of traffic congestion.

Susan Cavalieri, stated that she is opposed to widening Highway 1 because it will increase green house gas emissions and there are no technologies to remove carbon or to cool the earth. She noted that we can no longer live a 21st century lifestyle.

Jack Nelson, said that he doesn't want to see the proposed tax measure fail, but doesn't want to be required to accept widening Highway 1 to get the other benefits of the tax measure. Mr. Nelson distributed a letter to the Commission.

Peter Scott, distributed song lyrics and a letter that summarized his comments and thoughts on widening Highway 1.

Piet Canin, Ecology Action, stated that he supports the TRIP as a balanced compromise that will keep the current levels needed for the Active Transportation Plan allocations. Mr. Canin said that getting people around Santa Cruz County safely is important and the rail line is a great instrument.

Paul Elerick, said that he uses Highway 1 everyday and auxiliary lanes are a portion of the roadway, supplementary to movement, and are not the same as widening the highway. He noted that he supports the proposed sales tax measure and matching funds will be gained if we become a self help community.

Lupe, stated that a very small amount of Spanish speakers were polled, widening Highway 1 will not benefit Watsonville, bike lanes within the community should be added instead, and the community needs to stay in contact with one another.

Eric Richter, stated that he supports the TRIP and is disappointed about misinformation being circulated, as environmental impact is a complex issue. He noted that the Coastal Rail Trail will solve the problem for safer alternative transportation and cars are not the issue with climate change.

Terry Corwin, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, stated that the rail trail will be a transformative way for people to get around, and Caltrans will soon approve funds for the design work for the wildlife tunnel at Laurel Curve.

Susan Sanford, said that the proposed sales tax measure has many good proponents, but more money should be allocated toward public transportation.

Ernestina Saldaña, Commission on Disabilities, read a letter regarding her recommendations for the TRIP to maximize allocation funding for mobility access and public transit.

Nancy Faulstich, stated that the safety of kids is top priority, global warming is risking everyone's health and safety, and education is needed to preserve public transportation and to seize the opportunity to set things right.

Mauricio Rivera said it is important to listen to the community for the proposed sales tax measure to pass because the logical conclusion is to have allocations toward Metro prioritized above widening Highway 1.

Elise Casby, said that she is not convinced that the telephone polling was fair, and additional discussions are needed before placing the ballot measure. She stated that Metro should be allocated 30% of funds from the proposed sales tax measure.

Dan Stevenson, said that there is a perception that funding can only happen through the sales tax measure and there is an immediate issue with the lack of Metro funding. He noted that education is needed to get people to do the right thing and vote.

Pat Maylow, said that we are in a difficult position due to climate change and options for transportation alternatives, and as much money as possible should be allocated to Metro to take care of the people that are most in need.

Mark Dettle, City of Santa Cruz Public Works, stated that there is not enough state or federal monies for transportation infrastructure, the legislature hasn't addressed the funding needs, Santa Cruz County roads are some of the worst in the state, and local neighborhoods are impacted by highway congestion. Mr. Dettle said that the proposed sales tax measure will start us in the right direction to qualify for further funding and addresses current and long term transportation needs.

Veronica Elsea, said that we need to act now to support the TRIP to fix potholes and to fund public transit. She noted how she tried to put herself in other people's shoes to understand their needs when considering her support for the proposed sales tax measure.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, stated that many factors go into transportation planning, especially in a tourist community and he recognizes the efforts of the RTC to put together a balanced plan. He noted that Trail Now's primary message is to progressively move toward utilizing the rail corridor now.

Caterina Shrek, stated that the TRIP is carefully balanced and broadly supports sustainable transportation options, and she supports the proposed sales tax measure to provide funds for Metro and to improve local roads. She noted that the measure will make Santa Cruz County more competitive for state and federal funds to invest in current and future transportation needs.

Robert Singleton, stated that he supports the TRIP because as a balanced approach, the plan is a compromise with the best chances of passing and will benefit the community. He said that auxiliary lanes are a practical solution and being a self-help county will leverage outside funds

Ray Cancino, Community Bridges/LiftLine, stated that he supports the allocation of 20% toward mobility access to address the demands of the growing senior population, and the proposed sales tax measure will help to fill the Metro deficit.

Bruce Sawhill, Friends of the Rail and Trail, said that he supports the TRIP and supports funding to study the option of having the rail. Mr. Sawhill noted that kids walking and biking to school has significantly decreased and that the corridor is invaluable and will influence land use decisions in the future.

Deb Molina, said that a study should be done on having a trail without a rail because the majority of locals do not know that a train is being considered to run in Santa Cruz County and many would prefer a trail over the rail.

Bill Tysseling, Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, said that the TRIP has been difficult to balance and requires compromise and holding out on the idea that there is a perfect solution won't have a happy ending. Mr. Tysseling stated that we can't pass anything alone and everyone has a want, and we must accommodate more people coming to Santa Cruz County.

Community member (did not state their name), stated that the TRIP is a plan in which everyone has a vested interest to become a self-help county to improve the quality of transportation for the community and future generations. He noted that public input should be allowed for decision making on the best use of the corridor.

Rick Longinotti, said that there should be another meeting to go over the poll results because there is a great opportunity this year to pass a measure, and he will oppose any measure that includes highway widening.

Murray Fontes, City of Watsonville Public Works, thanked the RTC for their collaborative efforts. He said the TRIP is a balanced approach and the proposed sales tax initiative will provide the resources needed because the biggest bucket will let cities use the funds as they see fit. Mr. Fontes stated that Watsonville has limited resources and the populous has changed so much that it can no longer accommodate the capacities.

Bud Colligan, Live Oak resident, stated that the TRIP balances the interest groups, giving the proposed sales tax measure the highest chance of passing, and smaller projects should continue to be considered for the future. He noted that regular commuters are suffering everyday on the highway, and bike transportation can greatly reduce car use.

Alex Clifford, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, stated that he supports the proposed sales tax initiative. Mr. Clifford noted that the future of Metro services needs to be considered because Metro services as a whole are necessary and there is a struggle to pay for the current services provided.

Celia Scott, said that she likes to think of the community as progressive when it comes to transportation and another meeting should be held for community discussion. She noted that the proposed sales tax measure does not have consensus and she is opposed to widening Highway 1.

Bruce Van Allen, stated that he cannot support the proposed sales tax measure because widening Highway 1 will not work to alleviate traffic congestion and Metro service cuts will hurt the community, which will cause pain for everyone.

John Presley, Santa Cruz County Public Works, stated that he supports the proposed sales tax measure because it is balanced and offers Santa Cruz County the ability to be competitive with other self-help communities. He noted that there is a need to advocate for more infrastructure grants and resources.

Mark Mesiti-Miller, stated that he supports the TRIP and the tracks should be saved with a trail built next to it. He said that our community is growing, congestion is getting worse, and we can't be short sighted because the rail corridor is the last corridor that can link the highly congested community.

Barbara Childs, stated that the measure does not have a chance of passing and she will not vote for the proposed sales tax measure with highway widening. She said that this is our opportunity to simply do the courageous thing and that there is strong environmental consciousness in the community.

Jean Brocklebank, said that she is worried about the destruction of the environment and wants the auxiliary lanes removed and Metro's allocation doubled. She stated that the county is over its head with infrastructures that it can't maintain and Santa Cruz County needs to become self-help and take care of what we already have.

Eduardo Montesino, stated that those in favor of supporting Metro should not oppose widening Highway 1 because the highway is needed to entice people to ride the bus and there needs to be a compromise because nobody rides buses that are stuck in traffic. . Mr. Montesino said that to maintain the quality of life for residents of South County the highway is needed for better transportation.

Rob Gaskill, Rio Del Mar resident, stated that at election time fewer voters will be in support of the proposed sales tax measure than what the poll results show. He noted that the idea of trains running through the community is unacceptable and he will not vote for the measure.

Bill Malone, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, stated that widening Highway 1 will not work and there are other ways to alleviate traffic congestion. Mr. Malone said that he won't do anything to harm the environment and will vote "no" on the proposed sales tax measure if there are allocations for auxiliary lanes.

Resident of Rio Del Mar, said that we need to get single drivers out of their cars and consider carpooling, and widening the highway is a deal breaker for her.

Ron Swenson, stated that the 30-year plan in the proposed sales tax measure to become a self-help county will bring in matching funds. Mr. Swenson said that he has been developing solar powered electricity and he could get a match with private money to bring solar powered electricity to the community.

Joe Jordan, said that the poll questions were vague and people don't want more pavement, but rather want more traffic congestion relief. He stated that heavily subsidizing electric bikes will transform the traffic flow problem without widening Highway 1.

Paul Franklin, stated that congestion taxation conversations need to be had, adapting and changing things accordingly needs to be properly discussed, and he strongly encourages the funding for a follow-up poll on the sales tax measure after the elections.

Chair Lane closed the Public Hearing at 11:56 a.m. and called for a meeting break.

The meeting reconvened at 12:09 p.m.

Chair Lane distributed a revised proposal to the Transportation Improvement Plan (TRIP) expenditure plan that would: add 1% more to Paratransit, add 1% more to Metro services, take 2% from the rail corridor allocation, and clarify the process of evaluating the best use of the rail corridor. He said that the Commission recognizes the particular importance of addressing the needs of those that are dependent on public transit. Chair Lane noted that the language change explicitly calls out that there is flexibility within the rail corridor and that he doesn't see the RTC allocating funds or taking the lead for the Watsonville Pajaro Junction Rail Station.

Commissioner discussed a variety of topics associated with this item including: appreciation for the community input; ongoing community engagement for over a decade regarding transportation funding; the poll reflecting community discussions and showing that the majority in Santa Cruz County support the proposed sales tax measure; the Commission's efforts to ensure transparency; finding a balanced approach in the TRIP; the TRIP providing opportunities for alternative transportation to address climate change and sustainability; Santa Cruz METRO's existing dedicated sales tax; investing in transportation needs according to community demographics; the need to repair local roads and to ensure the rail trail gets completed; traffic being routed away from the highway and onto city streets compromising the safety of the neighborhoods; planning for the future of transportation with electric and self driving vehicles and bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes; disappointment that the Pajaro Station was eliminated from the expenditure plan; understanding the diverse needs of others; the importance of keeping all options open; the challenge of reaching a compromise;

becoming a self-help county; recognizing the transportation equity issues; Highway 1 widening to relieve traffic congestion and increase bus ridership; hurting the most vulnerable by voting against the sales tax measure due to opposition to Highway 1 auxiliary lanes; how taking out even one bucket from the expenditure plan will ensure the measure to fail; the majority of the projects in the TRIP benefiting the community as a whole; and the percentage of voters polled in each jurisdiction.

Chair Lane read a letter from Commissioner Friend, who was absent, expressing his support for the proposed sales tax measure and that the TRIP meets a balanced set of interests and recognizes the needs of the community.

Chair Lane said that he appreciates the Commission's hard work and honors the passion of the public that spoke today.

Commissioner Norton moved and Chair Lane seconded to:

1. Adopt a revised Expenditure Plan, to serve as Exhibit A of the proposed ordinance, contingent on final approval of the expenditure plan by the County of Santa Cruz and a majority of the cities in the county, representing a majority of the incorporated population of the county, with the following modifications: decrease the Rail Corridor allocation by 2% to a total of 8%, eliminating funding for the Watsonville Pajaro Junction Rail Station and clarifying that if the RTC determines that the best use of the corridor is an option other than rail transit, funds may be utilized for other transportation improvements along and near the corridor; and increase the transit service allocations by 2%, thus bringing Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's allocation up to 16% and Community Bridges Lift Line's allocation up to 4%;; and
2. Adopt Ordinance No. 2016-01, enacting a retail transactions and use tax, subject to adoption by the electorate, to be administered by the state Board of Equalization, which includes the following ballot measure text:
Safety, Pothole Repair, Traffic Relief, Transit Improvement Measure. In order to: improve children's safety around schools; repair potholes; repave streets; improve traffic flow on Highway 1; maintain senior/disabled transit; reduce global warming pollution by providing transportation options like sidewalks, buses, bike lanes, trails; preserve rail options; shall Santa Cruz County voters adopt an ordinance establishing a half-cent sales tax for 30 years, raising approximately \$17 million annually, requiring citizen oversight, independent audits, and funds spent locally?; and
3. Adopt **Resolution 26-16** requesting that the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors call a special election for voter approval of Ordinance No. 2016-01 by placing a measure on the November 8, 2016 ballot.

Commissioners requested to vote separately on the Expenditure Plan. The motion approving the Expenditure Plan passed with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Leopold, Norton, Bottorff, Cervantez, Chase, and Dutra voting "aye" and Commissioners Caput and Johnson voting "no".

The motion approving the Ordinance and Resolution passed by a roll call vote with Commissioners Coonerty, Cervantez, Bottorff, Chase, Leopold, Lane, Dutra, McPherson, and Norton voting "aye" and Commissioners Johnson and Caput voting "no".

7. Roadmap for community decision-making process on possible rail transit

Chair Lane presented the staff report.

Bruce Sawhill, said that having a clear process of decision making is part of a democracy.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commission Dutra seconded approval to direct staff to prepare a draft "roadmap" to define how the RTC will engage key stakeholders and the community at-large over the next 3 to 5 years as a decision is being made on whether or not to pursue implementation of rail transit service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, and bring that draft for consideration by the full commission at a meeting in August. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Caput, Leopold, Norton, Bottorff, Cervantez, Johnson, Chase, and Dutra voting "aye".

8. Next meetings

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 4, 2016 at 9:00 am at the Scotts Valley City Council Chambers, 1 Civic Center Dr., Scotts Valley, CA

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, August 18, 2016 at 9:00 am at the RTC Office, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Rodriguez, Staff

Attendees:

Aaron Lemas

Alex Clifford

B Korb

Becky Steinbruner

Benjamin Ketohan

Bruce Sawhill

Brian Peoples

Barbara Childs

Bill Malone

Bill Tysseling

Carey Pico

Carl Arnett

Caterina Shrek

Dan Stevenson

Donna Thompson

Deb Molina

Drew S. Glover

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

Friends of the Rail and Trail

Trail Now

Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

Project Pollinate

Elias Salo	
Elise Casby	Santa Cruz Bus Rider's Association
Ernestina Saldana	
Eric Richter	
Eduardo Montesino	
Gene Burk	
Gary Milburn	Bike Santa Cruz County
Heather Adamson	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Jack Nelson	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Jason Wozniak	
Joe Downie	
Jean Brocklebank	
John P. O'Reilly	
John Presleigh	Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works
Lisa Ortiz	
Lorenzo Barranco	
Manuel Zavala	
Marcela Tavautzis	Santa Cruz County Department of Public Works
Mark Dettle	
Mark Mesiti-Miller	
Mary Flodin	350.org
Michael Gasser	Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Michael Smith	
Micah Posner	City of Santa Cruz
Miles Reiter	
Murray Fontes	City of Watsonville Department of Public Works
Mauricio Riviera	
Naima Sudjian	Cabrillo College student
Nancy Faulstich	Watsonville Climate Action Network
Nick Kambic	
Pam Stearns	
Paul Elerick	
Paul Schoelhamer	
Pat Maylow	
Peter Scott	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Piet Canin	Ecology Action
Raymond Cancino	Community Bridges
Rob Gaskill	
Robert Morgan	
Roland Saher	
Robert Singleton	
Stacy Falls	
Stanley M. Sokolow	
Steve Schnaar	
Susan Cavalieri	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Susan Sanford	
Terry Corwin	Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Tim Brattan	
Tim Liebenthal	
Tom Batley	