Minutes

Thursday, October 19, 2017

SCCRTC Conference Room
1523 Pacific Ave
Santa Cruz, CA

1. Introductions

Chair Friend called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present:
Jacques Bertrand  Sandy Brown
Randy Johnson  Oscar Rios
Ryan Coonety  Zach Friend
John Leopold  Bruce McPherson
Ed Bottorff  Norm Hagen

Staff present:
George Dondero
Luis Mendez
Yesenia Parra
Karena Pushnik
Anais Schenk
Grace Blakeslee
Cory Caletti

2. Oral communications

Robert Singleton- Santa Cruz Business Council, Executive Director clarified the votes taken to support the trail only option by the Business Council with 50 votes in favor, 3 votes against and 5 abstentions.

Michael Saint- Campaign for Sensible Transportation Stated that the urban state highway miles added since 1970 have added little in the way of service improvements. He added that autonomous vehicles would help, that it is time to make a decision between cars and mass transit and that auxiliary lanes only have a small initial relief effect.

Brett Garrett- Citizen of Santa Cruz, i feels that PRT and electric bicycles should be included in the UCS Study. A bike share is opening that will include
electric bikes, which can be used similar to a rapid transit system without harming the rail road by using the tracks as a support structure. **Ryan Samataro**-Encourages the Commission to walk on the tracks from Seabright to Simpkins and he supports rail banking and trail.

**Tom Haid**-Resident of Santa Cruz senior coop community, noted that the residents in his community voted unanimously in favor of the trail only due to insufficient room for train and trail. **David Giannini**- asked the Commission to please consider the rail banking and a wide trail with separate pedestrian path. He pointed out that Santa Cruz County is ranked one of the most dangerous places to ride a bicycle per capita while at the same time recognized as Gold Rated city among the League of American Bicyclists.

**Gail McNulty**-Greenway, Executive Director discussed the Greenway plan as a safer, more affordable trail that would require installation of county wide protected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and would be a connected network to provide relief to highway congestion. It is Greenway’s opinion that the installation of a train would not improve traffic on Highway 1. **Barry Scott**-Aptos resident attended the two UCS workshops where he noted that the voting showed more votes in favor of the rail plan than on any other scenarios. He said that tearing out the tracks would be to our future generations, a sin. He also stated that we need to grow our bike infrastructure and preserve the rail transit option.

**Claire Koenig**-Resident of Corralitos, supports the trail only option. She explained that in her case she would not take the train since driving is more effective for where she wants to go. However she does envision herself driving to Aptos, walking on the trail, taking her grandkids down there.

**Bruce Sawhill**-Friends of Rail and Trail, agrees with Barry Scott that most of the work for the rail corridor has been done and that this work was completed in 1875 with mules and shovels so engineering issues should not be insurmountable now.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

  No additions or deletions to the regular agenda

**CONSENT AGENDA**

  *There was no consent agenda*

**REGULAR AGENDA**

4. Visualizing Sustainable Transportation – Owl Viewer Available
Executive Director Dondero provided some background on the project and introduced Transportation Planner, Anais Schenk who provided a KION News broadcast announcing the Owl Viewers recently installed at Soquel Drive and Chanticleer. Transportation Planner Schenk noted that the Natural Bridges/Railroad crossing Owl Viewer opens this weekend. Two other locations will be available in the spring in Live Oak and in Watsonville.

Commissioners discussed length of time the Owlizers would be installed, location suggestions, participation from the public, clear instructions to the public, web version versus the physical owl, appreciation to staff for being creative on outreach methods and requested frequent updates.

Stanley Sokolow stated that his first impression as a member of the public was that the device presents blurry images and the text kept popping up with a questionnaire before he could see the scenarios and there was no narrative to explain the scenarios.

Brett Garrett stated that he is not sure that there was any advantage to the physical structure that he could not experience on a Smartphone application.

Anais Schenk added that this is a pilot project that fixes and updates have been developed that will be implemented to improve the user experience for these and upcoming Owl viewers.

5. Highway 17 Access Management Plan Update

CalTrans District 5 Transportation Planner Kelly McClendon presented a video which explains the proposed plan for Highway 17. He thanked Supervisors Leopold and McPherson and SCCRTC Executive Director Dondero for participating in the plan and participating in the steering committee. He stated that the full plan is available online at http://www.ca-hwy17amp.org/

Commissioners thanked Mr. McClendon and Joe Erwin for the workshops. Commissioner noted that this is a long range plan that will address public safety for all residents.

Executive Dondero thanked Caltrans for their participation early on in the project which ensured that the public understood the needs and plans.

6. Request to Conduct a Peer Review of the Great Santa Cruz Trail 2016 Report

Executive Director Dondero presented the staff report and said that staff has no recommendation.
Stanley Sokolow stated that the peer review is perhaps a protection against a law suit that will come against RTC by Greenway if the RTC opposes their position.

Barry Scott, resident of Rio Del Mar, noted that his review of the Great Santa Cruz Trail report had many errors and is concerned that it would be used to influence public opinion.

William Menchine stated that leaving the railroad in the corridor diminishes the capacity for any bike pedestrian transportation in the corridor.

David Giannini encourages the RTC to have a 3rd party review RTC reports and the Great Santa Cruz Trail report to ensure fairness and openness.

Gail McNulty - Read a statement from the Greenway Board communicating support for a peer review as long as a communicated list of conditions can be met and if these cannot be implemented due to budget, independent management of the contract, or lack of scope, then they oppose any peer review unless both the MBSST and RTFS are also peer reviewed.

Bruce Sawhill stated that the report in question is being presented as factual yet contains many suspect statements. The public deserves to know if the points made in the Great Santa Cruz Trail report are correct. This is a private study for a private interest to sway public process.

Janneke Strauss of Bike Santa Cruz County is concerned about the Great Santa Cruz Trail report being used in a public process. Bike Santa Cruz County asked that the Commission either Peer Review the Santa Cruz Trail report or remove it from the UCS as source material.

Robert Singleton serving as the Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Business Council would prefer that the Unified Corridor Study be completed as fast as possible and not to have a delay due to a peer review.

Monty Koenig who represents Greenway’s outreach stated that Greenway does not currently use the Nelson Nygard study numbers in their outreach. If we are going to peer review any study we should peer review the Unified Corridor Investment Study.

Commissioners discussed that it is unusual to have a privately funded study as part of a public process, the cost of a peer review and what would be gained, and based on the evaluation of the study it is in essence public comment and carries the same weight as public comment. The Commissioners agreed that the real interest is in getting the Unified Corridor Study done as soon as possible. Also discussed was that a true Peer Review involves an expert in the specific field and is a complex, time intensive and costly scientific process.

Commissioner Bertrand moved and Commissioner McPherson seconded to not conduct a peer review and to move forward with the Unified Corridor...
Investment Study The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Johnson, McPherson, Rios, Coonerty, Friend, Leopold, Bottorff, and Hagen voting ‘aye’.

Meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main St., Ste. 400, Watsonville, CA.

The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, November 16, 2015 at 9:00 am at the Regional Transportation Commission Offices.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra
Administrative Services Officer

Attendees:

Erich Friedrich AMBAG
Michael Saint Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Janneke Strauss Bike Santa Cruz County
Stanley Sokolow Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Bruce Sawhill Friends of Rail Trail
Tom Haid Villa Santa Cruz
Brett Garrett Santa Cruz Resident
David Giannini Santa Cruz Resident
Claire Koenig Corralitos Resident
Ryan Sarnataro Live Oak, Santa Cruz County Resident
Barry Scott Rio Del Mar Resident
Robert Singleton Santa Cruz Business Council
Gail McNulty Greenway