



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission
Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC)**

DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, August 4, 2011

2:00 p.m.

(Special Date/Start Time)

SCCRTC Conference Room
1523 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA

ITAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Angela Aitken, Santa Cruz METRO

Taylor Bateman, City of Scotts Valley Planning

Tove Beatty, Santa Cruz METRO

Russell Chen, County Planning Proxy

Dan Herron, Caltrans District 5

Maria Esther Rodriguez, City of Watsonville Public Works and Community Development Proxy

Bhupendra Patel, AMBAG

Chris Schneiter, City of Santa Cruz Public Works and Community Development Proxy

Steve Wiesner, County Public Works

Majid Yamin, City of Scotts Valley Public Works

STAFF PRESENT

George Dondero

Luis Mendez

Rachel Moriconi

Kim Shultz

1. Call to Order – Chair Chris Schneiter called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.
2. Introductions – Self introductions were made
3. Oral communications – Rachel Moriconi thanked the committee for adjusting their schedules to move the August ITAC meeting date so that their input could be provided at RTC's Transportation Policy Workshop.
4. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas – None.

CONSENT AGENDA (Rodriguez/Wiesner) approved unanimously

5. Approved minutes of the March 17, 2011 ITAC meeting.

REGULAR AGENDA

6. Highway 1 Tiered Environmental Document

Action taken: The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) unanimously approved (Yamin/Rodriguez) the staff recommendation to recommend that the RTC approve development of a combined tiered environmental document that will provide

program level documentation for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project (Tier 1) and project level documentation for the 41st Avenue/Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Chanticleer Bike/Pedestrian Crossing Project (Tier 2).

Kim Shultz provided an overview of the proposal to transform the Highway 1 HOV Lane environmental document to a tiered environmental document. In response to questions from Chris Schneider, Mr. Shultz stated that in order to meet the schedule for delivering a two-tiered environmental document, work needs to start immediately. Based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules, the RTC needs to show it is making a good faith effort to complete the environmental document and initiate right-of-way acquisition by fall 2013. He noted that FHWA is now participating in project development team meetings. He confirmed that cost estimates for the Highway 1 41st Avenue/Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Chanticleer Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge (Tier 2) include design, right-of-way, construction, construction management, and contingencies.

Mr. Schneider asked if there was a risk of opponents of the Tier 2 project arguing segmentation and filing a lawsuit against the project. Kim Shultz responded that a legal challenge is possible, but the principle argument against the project related to segmentation would be better addressed through the tiered environmental document, providing information on cumulative impacts of the entire HOV lanes project (Tier 1).

Mr. Schneider also questioned how critical the bicycle/pedestrian bridge and Sustainable Transportation Analysis Rating System (STARS) application are in light of the large number of other needs in the region and limited funding that would be left for those other projects if the Tier 2 project and STARS are fully funded. Executive Director George Dondero and Mr. Shultz responded that while the project could proceed without the STARS analysis, it would be a loss given the RTC's commitment to sustainability and direction to staff to implement STARS. Staff will be bringing a breakout of the cost of STARS to the RTC. Mr. Schneider stated that APWA is also developing a sustainability analysis for transportation projects which may be less costly than STARS.

Mr. Shultz noted that the bicycle/pedestrian bridge at Chanticleer could be broken out of the Tier 2 project, but that bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including this bridge, have always been part of the Highway 1 HOV lanes project; inclusion of this facility could help reduce non-motorized travel through the interchanges and provide safer bicycle/pedestrian access in the area. Mr. Schneider suggested that less costly bicycle and pedestrian improvements could be made in the area to improve access for bikes and pedestrians and stated that he did not know if the Chanticleer Bridge is the highest priority bicycle/pedestrian improvement for the area.

Majid Yamin, City of Scotts Valley Public Works, requested clarification regarding changes at the federal level that resulted in the need for a two tiered environmental document. Kim Shultz responded that FHWA has made new determinations that future sales tax revenues cannot be assumed in California given the 2/3 vote requirement and that FHWA's 10-year rule, requires initiation of right-of-way or construction phases within 10-years of federal authorization of preliminary engineering work.

Mr. Schneider noted that in concept he supports the RTC developing a two-tiered environmental document in order to address FHWA concerns and that 41st-Soquel Auxiliary Lanes are the logical next project for Highway 1.

7. 2012 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Preliminary Proposals

Actions Taken:

1. The ITAC approved a motion (Yamin/Schneider) to recommend that the RTC

indicate its intent to program State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds to the 41st Avenue-Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes project, on a vote of 6 (Herron, Rodriguez (2), Schneider (2), Yamin), with 2 opposed (Chen, Wiesner) and 4 abstentions (Aitken, Bateman, Beatty, Patel).

2. The ITAC approved a motion (Wiesner/Schneider) to recommend that the RTC issue a call for projects for \$2.5 million in FY11/12 Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds, rather than designate funds for RTC projects, with a vote of 7 (Chen, Rodriguez (2), Patel, Schneider (2), Wiesner, Yamin), with 4 abstentions (Aitken, Bateman, Beatty, Herron). *This action was taken in contrast to the staff recommendation that the RTC indicate its intent to program RSTP funds to the tiered highway environmental review documents, STARS analysis of the HOV Lanes project, and other RTC projects.*
3. The ITAC approved a motion (Wiesner/Schneider) to continue the discussion on whether to redirect funds from the Mar Vista Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge to the 41st Avenue-Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes/Chanticleer Bike/Ped Bridge or other projects, on a vote of 7 (Chen, Rodriguez (2), Patel, Schneider (2), Wiesner, Yamin), with 1 opposed (Herron) and 3 abstentions (Aitken, Bateman, Beatty). *This action was taken in place of the staff recommendation that the RTC indicate its intent to redirect \$7.5 million from the Mar Vista Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge to the 41st Ave-Soquel Auxiliary Lanes/Chanticleer Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge project.*

After receiving information from Rachel Moriconi on available funds, priority projects, and preliminary recommendations for development of the 2012 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), ITAC members provided the following input:

Chris Schneider questioned if other non-RSTP funds might be available to fund design and construction of rail projects and he expressed concern that funding the 41st Avenue/Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Chanticleer Bike/Pedestrian Crossing Project would leave almost no funds for other projects. He suggested that more of an emphasis should be placed on local jurisdictions' very important projects. He also requested clarification that Planning, Programming and Monitoring was for RTC staff; which staff confirmed is true.

Steve Wiesner reported that the County of Santa Cruz has extensive storm damage and that the county's average pavement condition index is under 50 (poor), which makes it difficult to vote for RSTP funds to be used for the state highway, especially when compounded by the loss of Redevelopment Agency (RDA) funding for road repairs. He stated that local streets and roads carry more vehicles than highways.

Rachel Moriconi and Director Dondero responded that the RTC and staff recognize the importance of local projects and that if the region wants to maintain the existing system, as well as make other improvements, there needs to be additional funding. Director Dondero stated that staff is looking at options for generating revenues, in part to backfill reduced funding for local streets and roads with a more stable revenue source. These include a ballot measure for 2014 and opting back into becoming a Congestion Management Agency and then seek 2/3 voter support for a vehicle registration fee of up to \$10. He noted that if the Tier 2 project moves forward, but there are no new revenues generated, it might be the last major improvement done on the highway for many years.

Santa Cruz Metro staff reported that they would be abstaining from voting on any recommendations for the 2012 RTIP or raising revenues through a ballot measure.

Majid Yamin stated that there is a need for funding for local road projects and expressed concern that large projects continually need additional funds, but that City of Scotts Valley residents use Highway 1, it needs to be widened, and the Highway 1 41st Avenue/Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes is a good project. Director Dondero noted that a 5% cost overrun on a large project is more significant than on smaller projects.

In response to a question on what would happen if the RTC does not approve funds for the 41st Avenue/Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes project, George Dondero stated that the RTC could decide to fund just one portion of the project or would have to pay back to FHWA the \$5.5 million in federal funds that have been used on environmental review of the HOV Lanes, which would likely come out of future RSTP shares.

Mr. Schneider stated that he does not recommend funding the Chanticleer Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge, but suggested making funds from the Mar Vista Bridge available to other projects. Mr. Wiesner responded that he could not take a position on funding the Chanticleer bridge over the Mar Vista bridge at this meeting and suggested taking more time to evaluate options, which might include redirecting funds from Mar Vista to other regional and local needs.

Angela Aitken noted that the list of priority projects is not in priority order. Committee members suggested additional projects be added to the list, suggested the list note which projects are already fully funded, and delete projects that are almost done. Committee members agreed to submit any other changes to the priority project list to Rachel Moriconi by noon on Monday August 8.

8. Status of ongoing transportation projects, programs, studies and planning documents - Verbal updates from project sponsors

County of Santa Cruz – Russell Chen and Steve Wiesner reported that the East Cliff Parkway, Graham Hill Road safety project, and Highland Way storm damage projects are under construction. Several pavement management and storm damage repair projects are scheduled to begin over the next month, including on Bear Creek Road at PM 5.05 and East Zayante Road.

City of Watsonville – Maria Rodriguez reported that the Freedom Blvd. rehabilitation project, including bicycle lanes, is scheduled for construction this month.

City of Santa Cruz – Chris Schneider reported that the roundabout at Depot Park and the West Cliff Drive rehabilitation projects are nearly complete. He reported that the City may seek a grant for the Mission Street extension project.

SC Metro – Tove Beatty reported that Metro will be receiving new buses soon, funded by a federal State of Good Repair grant, and they have applied for a second round of funding to replace additional diesel buses with CNG vehicles. She noted that the AB2766 and STIC/5307-funded second CNG tank project is going out to bid. Planning studies on Watsonville area transit service and countywide ridership are underway. The Bus Stop Improvement project is under construction and will modify 107 bus stops and Metro Center. She noted that Metro anticipates that Congress will first extend SAFETEA-LU, the federal surface transportation act, followed by a short term act, rather than a long term bill. She asked other entities to contact her if they might be interested in partnering on future federal grant opportunities, which might include a fourth TIGER grant cycle.

9. Update on the AMBAG Regional Travel Demand Model (RTDM) Peer Review and Model Improvement Plan

Bhupendra Patel, AMBAG reported that the peer review of the Model Improvement Plan includes recommendations for short, mid and long term improvements to the model. Work done by Caltrans maybe used to build the activity based model. Data is being collected for the State Household Travel Survey (HTS) and AMBAG will also be kicking off the Origin and Destination study soon. AMBAG will be seeking input from local agencies on an ongoing basis as improvements are made to the model.

Tove Beatty left the meeting.

10. Central Coast Intelligent Transportation System (CCITS) Architecture Update

Bhupendra Patel reminded members that a Central Coast Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) regional architecture plan exists and that federally-funded ITS projects must be included in architecture updates. He noted that training is being held on maintaining a regional ITS architecture plan and after September AMBAG will provide information to local agencies on how to input their ITS project information in the web-based program.

11. Project Initiation Documents for Highway Projects Update

Rachel Moriconi reported that due to reduced state funding for Project Initiation Document (PID) development and oversight at Caltrans, local agencies will be required to reimburse Caltrans for Caltrans' oversight of locally-produced PIDs. She recommended that ITAC members identify projects on the state highway system that they intend to pursue for inclusion in the Caltrans 3-Year PID Strategic Plan. ITAC members identified the following projects:

Project	Sponsor	Year for PID
SCR-1-San Lorenzo Bridge Widening	Santa Cruz	In process
SCR-152/Main St/Freedom Blvd (Roundabout)	Watsonville	FY11/12-12/13; Fact Sheet underway
SCR-09 Bicycle lanes and sidewalks near Felton	County	FY14/15
SCR-01/Mission St/ Bay St Intersection - modify signal, bus stop and turn-lanes.	Santa Cruz	FY14/15
SCR-01 Mission/Chestnut/King St Intersection improvements	Santa Cruz	FY14/15

12. Legislative Update

ITAC members received a written report on state and federal legislative activities.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The next ITAC meeting is scheduled for **September 22, 2011 at 1:30 PM** in the SCCRTC Conference Room, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Minutes prepared by: Rachel Moriconi

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