



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Minutes

**Thursday, December 8, 2016
9:00 a.m.**

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

1. Roll call

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

Members present:

Don Lane	Zach Friend
Ryan Coonerty	Bruce McPherson
Cynthia Chase	Randy Johnson
Dennis Norton	Greg Caput
John Leopold	Mike Rotkin (alt)
Norm Hagan (alt)	Aileen Loe (ex-officio)

Staff present:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Yesenia Parra	Jenn Eames
Grace Blakeslee	Amy Naranjo
Karena Pushnik	Kim Shultz
Cory Caletti	Rachel Moriconi
Ginger Dykaar	Daniel Nikuna

Commissioner Jimmy Dutra attended via teleconference pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(b)

Chair Lane moved Item 12 of the regular agenda to the beginning of the meeting and moved oral communications to follow Item 13.

12. Measure D – Transportation Improvement Program

Karena Pushnik, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report. Ms. Pushnik reported that Measure D passed with a super-majority of over 83,000 yes votes, making Santa Cruz County a transportation self-help county. The RTC will develop an Implementation Plan, which is to be updated every 5 years and will include public input. Funding allocations outlined in the Expenditure Plan include: neighborhood projects, highway corridors, transit for seniors and people with disabilities, active transportation, and the rail corridor. The 30-year Transportation Improvement Plan half-cent sales tax will go into effect on April 1, 2017, with the first funds anticipated to be received by summer.

Commissioners discussed: their appreciation for the voters, campaign committee, consultants, business councils, labor councils, RTC staff, Commissioners, jurisdictions and city council endorsements, fundraisers, and the many entities that supported Measure D; the impact on the community's quality of life with the success of Measure D; having a transportation package where people can see that their priorities are being met; the amount of money that was raised for the campaign; their excitement to get Santa Cruz County moving forward with transportation infrastructure improvements; how additional funding for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) will now help decrease additional service cuts and bus driver lay-offs; the need to improve South County's current transportation situation; Santa Cruz County becoming a self-help county; and the significance of people coming together in a collaborative effort to pass Measure D, despite their differences.

Rick Longinotti, said that he has mixed feelings about Measure D passing, but is glad for the funding allocated toward fixing roads and to the rail trail project. He stated that taxpayer's money should be spent responsibly and alternative transportation should be studied further before expanding the highway.

Jack Nelson, expressed his interest in an exit poll for voter feedback on Measure D and said that he hopes that funds will be used to get Santa Cruz County moving towards sustainable transportation.

Micah Posner, congratulated the Commission on the success of Measure D and expressed his appreciation for the support of the rail trail.

Veronica Elsea, said that she is very proud to support Measure D and noted that it is important to think about the significance of the measure passing and to shop locally.

David Date, expressed his frustration on the impact that traffic congestion has had on his family's quality of life. He noted that the pressing issue is the need for development in South County.

Becky Steinbruner, said that she hopes the Measure D oversight committee will ensure a transparent and inclusive process. She stated that land use changes along the rail corridor could combat dense communities and traffic congestion, and in order for the rail to be useful, rail services would need to extend outside the County.

Brett Garret, said that he is torn on Measure D because he disagrees with widening Highway 1 and noted that there is no mandate in the measure to widen the highway.

Ray Cancino, shared his appreciation for the volunteers' leadership and hard work, and said that the impact from the support for Measure D will make a huge difference to transportation options in the community.

Cary Pico, noted that the Pajaro Station was an expensive project and was not included in the Expenditure Plan because there was a lack of support to fund the station.

Barry Scott, stated that he supports the coastal rail trail and noted that Measure D funds were specifically allocated for a trail parallel to a rail.

Kirsten Listy, said that up to 20% of the community is biking as their primary mode of transportation and that there needs to be a unified engagement campaign for sustainable transportation to reduce green house gases.

Dana Bagshaw, expressed her appreciation to the Commission for including the community in transportation issues because transportation is an important need. She said that although she opposed Measure D, she is grateful for the opportunity to communicate.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Alternate Rotkin moved and Commissioner McPherson seconded the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Friend, Coonerty, Caput, McPherson, Chase, Dutra, Leopold, Johnson, Norton and Commissioner Alternates Hagan and Rotkin voting "aye", with Commissioner Friend abstaining from the approval for the draft minutes of the November 3, 2016 Regional Transportation Commission meeting.

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the November 3, 2016 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

No consent items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

5. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
6. Approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 State Transit Assistance (STA) Claim for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) (**Resolution 11-17**)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

No consent items

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

7. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
8. Accepted correspondence log
9. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies - none
10. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues
11. Accepted information items – none

REGULAR AGENDA

13. Options for use of the rail corridor

George Dondero, Executive Director, presented the staff report. Mr. Dondero reported on three possible uses for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line rail corridor: rail with trail, trail only, and bus rapid transit (BRT); and included legal considerations, cost estimates, and an estimated timeline for each option. He noted that the RTC is currently working on two projects that include analysis of the rail corridor: the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) and the Sustainable Prioritization Plan.

Commissioner Friend proposed a possible motion to establish an ad-hoc committee to discuss the options on the use of the rail corridor. The ad-hoc committee would be comprised of community groups with differing opinions, to advise and to provide legitimacy for greater community involvement that represent different views.

Commissioners discussed: that the information provided by staff was to help understand the legal elements and costs of the options; the rail corridor being an underused asset; the need to collect additional information before forming an ad-hoc committee; the UCS timeline and projected June 2018 completion; a timeline for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for all rail corridor options; appreciation to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County for matching funds for the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail (MBSST); the importance of sending a clear message to potential funders about plans with the rail corridor; forming a committee to discuss the future of transportation infrastructures that will be impacted by technological advancements and driverless car use; how there was no mandate in Measure D to have a rail service, but rather a commitment to research and preserve the option to have a rail; the success of the community's involvement in working together to pass Measure D; connecting Watsonville with the rest of the County with passenger rail service; traffic impacts on Highway 1 if the rail line is unavailable for freight use; how the rail line was not purchased to be abandoned and the expense to replace the tracks if they were removed; the cancelled Suntan Special train service; the importance of the community and stakeholder groups finding a consensus; and making informed decisions before administering policies.

Lowell Hurst, stated that he supports the rail trail and said that because there have already been many discussions about the rail corridor, plans for the trail should move forward sooner not later. He noted that the Coast Starlight Train Service goes through Pajaro Train Station.

Stanley Sokolow, said that a BRT feasibility study comparable to the passenger rail study should be conducted because BRT is safe to have adjacent to a trail and is cost efficient.

Commissioner Friend left the meeting and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn joined the meeting.

David Date, expressed his unhappiness with the Polar Express and the need for maintenance of the tracks. He stated that communities need relief now and the tracks should be removed and alternatives be considered instead.

Brian Peoples, stated that there is a transportation crisis and the rail corridor is a key asset that should be utilized temporarily until a decision on a permanent efficient use has been determined. He noted that Trail Now supports having an ad-hoc committee.

Lee Otter, expressed his support for the RTC to proceed with the course of actions outlined in Measure D.

Paul Schoellhamer, said that the RTC should not re-evaluate the use of the rail corridor, but should stay on course with the rail trail plans. He stated that keeping the tracks is a matter of economic security for the community and options should be preserved for unforeseen future needs.

Tawn Kennedy, said that the rail trail should be built as quickly as possible. He stated that the rail option would bring opportunities to all areas of the County and that a trail only option would disconnect South County.

Peter Scott, stated that he supports forming an ad-hoc committee and that plans for the trail should continue moving forward. He noted that the tracks should not be removed because it would limit future options.

Steven Slade, said that the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County committed \$5.8 million in matching funds toward the rail trail master plan and that there is an expectation for the RTC to be a reliable partner and proceed forward with the current policy and MBSST plans. He stated that Measure D funds should be used to build a trail alongside the tracks.

Bob Caletti, stated that there is no need for further committees and deliberations, and the RTC should move forward with the current plans. He said that there is a golden opportunity to provide better quality of life in Santa Cruz County with the rail property ownership that can reduce gridlock, provide transportation options, and reduce emissions.

Ryan Whitelaw, stated that there is an opportunity to do something special and every option should be vetted.

Bruce Sawhill, said that he supports staying the course with the rail with trail plan and stated that further studies are needed because the rail is a golden asset.

Mark Messiti-Miller, stated that the community voted for the rail with trail with Measure D and the RTC should stay the course of the Expenditure Plan. He noted that an EIR and the Unified Corridor Investment Study should be completed before an ad-hoc committee is established.

Janneka Strauss, said that she supports the rail with trail plan and is concerned that further studies may jeopardize the progress of the coastal rail trail. She stated that she is interested in multi-modal transportation to benefit the community and those without cars.

Glen Schaller, stated that he supports the rail with trail options and is proud of the Monterey Bay County Labor Council's efforts to support transportation measures.

Brett Garret, said that public transportation is a priority and bus rapid transit (BRT) should be considered while keeping the course with the plans for a rail with trail.

Becky Steinbruner, said that she supports the rail trail option and moving forward with building a trail now, but alternative transportation should still be considered to keep the door open for future technologies. She noted that having a steam train would bring in tourist dollars because people love steam engines.

Kem Akol, stated that infrastructure is tied to development and options should be kept available for the future. He said that Santa Cruz County should move forward with expediting the development of the trail.

Eric McRew, said that an ad-hoc committee is not needed and he supports the plans for a rail with trail. He stated that the lack of connectivity in the County is a transportation crisis that needs to be addressed now, and noted that transportation is critical to economic development.

Ron Goodman, said that he supports having an ad-hoc committee and appreciates the communication and discussions had concerning options for the best use of the rail corridor. He stated that although there are trade-offs, he supports rail transportation and wants to see a good bike path built with the trail.

Jack Nelson, stated that the EIR process and the data it produces is supported by science, and that he regards the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process well because it considers alternatives.

Micah Posner, said that a train would be good for the community and is unique compared to BRT and other alternatives. He noted that more development along the rail line is needed.

Mark Clee, congratulated the Commission on the success of Measure D and expressed his concern with widening Highway 1. He stated that there should be a continued study of the rail corridor options and an ad-hoc committee should be established.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded the staff recommendation to accept the staff report with the added direction that staff release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the options for the rail corridor as soon as possible and to provide a future status update. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Dutra, Leopold, McPherson, Johnson, Caput, Chase, Norton, Coonerty, and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn, Hagan, and Rotkin voting "aye".

2. Oral communications

Lowell Hurst, reported that it took him an hour to drive from Watsonville to Santa Cruz this morning.

Commissioner Dutra left the meeting and Commissioner Alternate Hurst joined the meeting.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Additional pages for Items 12 and 13, a replacement page for Item 12, and a handout for Item 17 were distributed.

14. Commissioner reports – oral reports

Commissioner Leopold congratulated Cory Caletti for earning Bike Santa Cruz County's Lifetime Achievement Award.

15. Appreciation of departing Commissioners for their service – oral presentation

Chair Lane presented certificates of appreciation to departing Commissioners Cervantez and Norton and thanked them for their years of dedication serving on the board of the RTC. Commissioner Norton expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to represent the City of Capitola and for the support received from the Commission.

Commissioner Coonerty thanked departing Chair Lane for his service representing the City of Santa Cruz and presented him with a certificate of appreciation. Chair Lane expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Commission and said that he is proud to have been part of the collaboration effort to provide transportation options in the community.

Commissioner Johnson left the meeting.

16. Election of 2017 RTC chair and vice-chair

Commissioner Leopold reported that the appointing committee nominated Commissioner Zach Friend as Chair and Commissioner Cynthia Chase as Vice Chair. The nomination passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Leopold, McPherson, Caput, Chase, Norton, Coonerty, and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn, Hagan, Lowell, and Rotkin voting "aye"

17. Director's Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on: the Highway 9 Complete Streets Corridor Plan Request for Proposals (RFP) being issued with proposals due on January 17, 2017, and a contract to be awarded to the selected firm in February 2017; the San Lorenzo River Bridge Trestle Walkway widening project being partially funded by a grant; the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Active Transportation Program (ATP) awarded to the Rail Trail segments 8 and 9 in the amount of \$3.166 million; and an update on the seasonal Polar Express excursion train.

Commissioners discussed: correspondence with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Iowa Pacific regarding the Polar Express operation.

18. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5 Deputy Director, reported on: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) report that there is a 2.5% increase in driving; the 2016 Zero Emissions Plan; and the installation of fast charging stations for electric vehicles.

Commissioners discussed their interest of the locations for the fast charging stations.

19. Unified Corridor Investment Study – Public Participation Plan and Project Update

Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner, presented the staff report. The Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) will identify multimodal transportation investments on three parallel transportation corridors in Santa Cruz County: Highway 1, Soquel Avenue/Drive, and the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Ms. Blakeslee noted that there will be a public workshop on January 12, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Simpkins Swim Center.

Commissioners discussed: costs associated with the services offered by MetroQuest; the traffic congestion on Highway 1; and the need to clarify the areas studied versus the actual areas impacted.

Jack Nelson, asked about the areas that are to be included in the study.

Stanley Sokolow, said that he is concerned that the map of the areas to be studied do not include Watsonville.

Commissioner Norton moved and Commissioner Alternate Rotkin seconded the staff recommendation to adopt **(Resolution 12-17)** authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with MetroQuest for services required to provide interactive survey tools for the purposes of soliciting public input on the Unified Corridor Investment Study. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Lane, Coonerty, McPherson, Leopold, Chase, Norton, Caput, and Commissioner Alternates Hagan, Hurst, Mulhearn, and Rotkin voting "aye".

20. Adjourn to a special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

The meeting of the Regional Transportation Commission was adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

21. Reconvene to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission meeting

The meeting reconvened at 12:18 p.m.

22. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

Commissioners said there will be no closed session report and therefore the meeting will not reconvene afterwards. The meeting was adjourned to closed session at 12:19 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

23. Public Employee Performance Review: Executive Director pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b)

24. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-EXISTING LITIGATION. (Paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code) Santa Clara Superior Court Case No. 16CV293441

OPEN SESSION

25. Report on closed session

There was no closed session report

26. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Santa Cruz Council Chambers, 809 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Eames, Staff

Attendees:

Barry Scott	Coastal Rail Santa Cruz
Stanley Sokolow	
Eric Child	
Stephen Slade	Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Dana Bagshaw	
Neil Weldhauer	
Will Mayall	
Lowell Hurst	City of Watsonville
Erich Friedrich	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Rosemary Sarka	Roaring Camp
Lee Otter	California Coastal Commission
Jack Nelson	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Tawn Kennedy	Bike Santa Cruz County
Janneke Strause	Bike Santa Cruz County
Glen Schaller	Monterey Bay County Labor Council
Brett Garrett	
Peter Scott	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Micah Posner	
David Date	
Nate Goodman	
Bob Caletti	
Rick Longinotti	
Veronica Elsea	
Cary Pico	
Brian Peoples	Trail Now
Kem Akol	
Eric McRew	

Ray Cancino Volunteer Center/LiftLine
Kirsten Listy Ecology Action
Paul Schoellhamer
Ryan Whitelaw Trail Now
Becky Steinbruner
Bruce Sawhill Friends of the Rail Trail
Mark Messiti-Miller
Ron Goodman
Mark Clee

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