



**Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission**

SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES

Thursday, April 6, 2017
9:00 a.m.

Immediately Preceding the Regular Meeting

County Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean St., 5th floor
Santa Cruz, CA

1. Roll call

Vice Chair Chase called the special meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Commissioners present:

Cynthia Chase	Randy Johnson
Greg Caput	John Leopold
Ryan Coonerty	Norm Hagen
Ed Bottorff	Jacques Bertrand
Sandy Brown	Gine Johnson (alternate)
Oscar Rios	Patrick Mulhearn (alternate)
Tim Gubbins (ex-officio)	

Staff present:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Jenn Eames	Yesenia Parra
Grace Blakeslee	Kim Shultz
Cory Caletti	Ginger Dykaar

2. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, reported that the "facts and circumstances" for this legal closed session is correspondence received from the Executive Director of Trail Now threatening litigation.

3. Public Comment

Pursuant to Government Code section 54954.3, public comment is limited to items described in this Agenda before or during consideration of that item.

Larry Freitas, said that he supports fixing the tracks to have a trolley provide an alternative form of transportation to get people out of their cars. He noted that it would be a grave mistake if Trail Now gets their way and the tracks are torn out.

Barry Scott, stated that Trail Now's efforts to mislead the public need to be addressed by the Commission because there is a duty to constituents to clarify information to help them understand the difference between facts and misinformation. He noted that he supports the RTC's application for FEMA funds.

Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 9:06 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

4. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-ANTICIPATED LITIGATION. Significant Exposure to Litigation to be considered for one case pursuant to Government Code 54956.9(d)(2)

OPEN SESSION

5. Report on closed session

Commissioners reconvened to open session at 9:35 a.m. and there was no closed session report.

6. Adjourn to the regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Commission

The special meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Eames, staff



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

MINUTES

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**County Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean St., 5th floor
Santa Cruz, CA**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m.

Commissioners present:

Cynthia Chase	Randy Johnson
Greg Caput	John Leopold
Ryan Coonerty	Norm Hagen
Ed Bottorff	Jacques Bertrand
Sandy Brown	Virginia Johnson (alternate)
Oscar Rios	Patrick Mulhearn (alternate)
Tim Gubbins (ex-officio)	

Staff present:

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

2. Oral communications

Gail McNulty, Great Santa Cruz Trail Group, thanked the Commission for their work to improve transit in Santa Cruz County and efforts to help keep motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians safe. Ms. McNulty stated that there are challenges with the north coast rail trail segment and requested that Item 17 of the consent agenda be moved to the regular agenda. She noted that the group's goal is to see the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line's value realized to its fullest potential.

Michael Sarka, Roaring Camp Railroad, said that he is in favor of retaining the tracks and adding a trail on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Mr. Sarka stated that utilization of the tracks would expand tourism and benefit the whole county. He noted that the stunning coastal views along the rail line up to Davenport would be a compelling attraction for both locals and tourists.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Handouts for Items 13, 17, 24, 27 and a revised recommendation for Item 27 were distributed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Johnson requested that future audit reports be placed on the regular agenda. Commissioner Bertrand concurred with the request. Commissioner Johnson requested that Item 13 be moved to the regular agenda. Item 13 was placed on the regular agenda as Item 22c. Gail McNulty requested that Item 17 be moved to the regular agenda. Item 17 was placed on the regular agenda as Item 22d.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Chase, Coonerty, Leopold, Caput, Brown, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, Johnson, Rios, and Commissioner Alternates Virginia Johnson and Mulhearn voting "aye".

MINUTES

4. Accepted draft minutes of the February 14, 2017 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting
5. Approved draft minutes of the March 2, 2017 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
6. Approved draft minutes of the March 2, 2017 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the March 9, 2017 Budget and Administration/ Personnel meeting
8. Accepted draft minutes of the March 23, 2017 Interagency Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

9. Accepted Federal Legislative Update memorandum from Capital Edge

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

10. Approved Section 5310 Grant Applications (**Resolution 25-17**)
11. Approved environmental documentation and funding allocation for engineering design activity for the Santa Cruz County Bicycle Route Signage Program (**Resolution 26-17**)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

12. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
13. Approve Out of State Travel to attend the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2017 Rail Conference

Vice Chair Chase moved the item to the regular agenda as Item 22c

14. Approved amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 Budget and Work Program
(Resolution 27-17)
15. Accepted the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 Fiscal Audit reports

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

16. Approved the Bicycle Advisory Committee membership appointments
17. Approve resolution authorizing the Executive Director to submit claims for Public Assistance for storm damage repair to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Vice Chair Chase moved the item to the regular agenda as Item 22d

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

18. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
19. Accepted correspondence log
20. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. Letter to Claire Fliesler, City of Santa Cruz Transportation Planner, regarding requests for bike lanes along Mission Street/Highway 1 to be added to Santa Cruz's Active Transportation Plan project list from the RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee
21. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues
22. Accepted information items
 - a. Article published in the January/February 2017 issue of Urban Land magazine "Autonomous Vehicles: Hype and Potential" by Peter Calthorpe and Jerry Walters
 - b. News Release on March 29, 2017: "Governor Brown, Senate President pro Tempore and Assembly Speaker Announce Road Repair and Transportation Investment Package"

REGULAR AGENDA

- 22c. Approve Out of State Travel to attend the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2017 Rail Conference

Commissioner Johnson requested clarification about the necessity of attending the Rail Conference.

George Dondero, Executive Director, stated that the Commission will be discussing rail transit in the near future and that this particular Conference will provide an opportunity to obtain the most current information.

Commissioner Bottorff moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded the staff recommendation to approve out of state travel for the Executive Director to attend the 9th annual American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2017 Rail

Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Chase, Coonerty, Leopold, Caput, Brown, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, Johnson, Rios, and Commissioner Alternates Virginia Johnson and Mulhearn voting "aye".

22d. Public Assistance for Storm Damage Repair to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, stated that the RTC is applying for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds to repair almost \$1 million in storm damage on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line that include mud slides, washouts, and downed trees.

Commissioners discussed: the RTC's obligation to preserve the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; both private and public properties in Santa Cruz County are struggling to recover from a historic amount of storm damage; looking at other infrastructure emergency situations where FEMA requests could be made; the RTC assisting jurisdictions with their plans for road repairs with Measure D allocations; and utilizing Measure D funds to repair the rail line if FEMA funds are not received.

Gail McNulty, said that the recent storms have left Santa Cruz County with true emergencies and the damage on the rail line does not pose an immediate danger to the public. She stated that abandonment of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line should be considered so that the corridor could be transformed into an active transit solution. Ms. McNulty noted that Iowa Pacific should pay for the repairs needed to the rail line.

Barry Scott, stated that he supports the RTC's application for FEMA funds to repair damage on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line because repair costs will grow as the damage accumulates. He noted that staying the course with the current plan for a rail with trail will have less harmful environmental impacts than removing the tracks to build a trail.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Bottorff seconded the staff recommendation to adopt **(Resolution 28-17)** authorizing the Executive Director as the RTC agent for federal financial assistance for repair of storm damage to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, authorizing the Executive Director to submit claims and execute all necessary agreements for federal and other storm damage financial assistance and finding that repair of storm damage to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line serves a public purpose. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Chase, Coonerty, Leopold, Caput, Brown, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, Johnson, Rios, and Commissioner Alternates Virginia Johnson and Mulhearn voting "aye".

23. Commissioner reports – oral reports

Commissioner Leopold reported on: Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's (METRO) recent efforts in Washington, DC to lobby for transportation funding; and recent discussions had with a representative from the Trump Administration that gave a clear impression that roads, highways, and transit buses are not a priority under the current administration and that public-private partnerships (P3) were preferred for financing infrastructure investments.

24. Director's Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on: the Central Coast Coalition's recent annual trip to Sacramento for Legislative Day to lobby for transportation funding; and his and Chair Friend's attendance at the annual California Association of Councils of Government (CalCOG) Regional Leadership Forum.

25. Caltrans report

Tim Gubbins, District 5 Director, reported on: the status of Senate Bill (SB) 1; Caltrans now authorized to conduct National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental analysis; expenses from continued road repairs due to recent storm damage potentially reaching into the billions; Highway 152 and the lower part of Highway 9 being reopened; a partial closure on Highway 35; the importance of Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge for Highway 1 and California tourism; and Caltrans working with the community while the bridge is being rebuilt.

Commissioners discussed: a request to have a temporary signal light on Highway 152 during the County Fair to reduce traffic congestion; the rebuild designs for Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge and how a temporary bridge on Highway 1 would not be adequate; recommended State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects; the importance of incorporating a signalized cross walk on Highway 1 into plans for the trail parking lot in Davenport to ensure pedestrian safety; opponents of SB1 and writing a letter to Assembly Member Anna Caballero to request her support for transportation funding; appreciation for Caltrans' work with repairing priority roads; and planning for resources and options during emergencies to help with the flow on Highway 17.

26. Financially Constrained Project List for 2040 Transportation Plans

Ginger Dykaar, Transportation Planner, presented the staff report and provided the draft financially constrained project list and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee's (E&DTAC) recommended revisions to the 2040 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Goals, Policies, and Targets. Ms. Dykaar reported that the RTC is working with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) to develop the RTP and Metropolitan Transportation Plan-Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP-SCS), with a projected final approval in June 2018.

Commissioners discussed: the practicality of the extended auto plaza drive over Soquel Creek to Bay Avenue project in Capitola; and expediting the project timeline for a connected trail at Pajaro Valley High School.

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

1. Approve the project list identifying financially constrained projects for inclusion in the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) Metropolitan Transportation Plan-Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP-SCS), and evaluation in the program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR); and

2. Approve a revision to the 2040 RTP Goals, Policies and Targets

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Chase, Coonerty, Leopold, Caput, Brown, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, Johnson, Rios, and Commissioner Alternates Virginia Johnson and Mulhearn voting "aye".

27. North coast rail trail segment of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network

Cory Caletti, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report and reported on recent activities and right-of-way concerns due to the alignment of the tracks. She indicated that Measure D commitments to study different rail corridor usage scenarios were considered in the three alignment design options identified to be studied for the north coast rail trail project. Ms. Caletti provided the Commission with a revised staff recommendation to address the deadline to obligate funds for construction by 2020 or risk losing federal funds.

Vince Auriemma with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Central Federal Lands (CFL) Department (participating by telephone), provided details on the survey work conducted and a synopsis on the three options for the trail's development: Option 1: a trail on the coastal side of the tracks, as has been designed in the Master Plan; Option 2: a trail-only scenario utilizing the track footbed and removing the tracks; and Option 3: a trail on the inland side of the tracks.

Commissioners discussed: the MBSST providing an extraordinary opportunity to create a continuous trail up the north coast; how an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) of all three options will provide the necessary information needed to reach a decision in time for the deadline and offer an opportunity for public comments; the north coast rail trail segments having a big impact on the City of Santa Cruz; excitement on having a project that promotes active transportation in the community; potential opposition from lands impacted and communication efforts with farmers and state park tenants; the differences in costs, anticipated completion dates, complications, regulatory obligations, and trail width designs associated with each option; funding at risk and moving ahead quickly to meet obligations for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant; appreciation to community and federal partners; the RTC honoring the County's environmental mission; and the continued support for the rail trail's extension to Watsonville.

Commissioner Rios left the meeting.

Barry Scott, supports staff recommendations and Option 1 to keep the trail on the coastal side of the track and noted that all design options will have challenges. Mr. Scott stated that there is a level of public trust that needs to be honored and the RTC should stay faithful to the process and preserve the option of future rail transit.

Mark Mesiti-Miller, Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT), stated that the group prefers Option 1 because it preserves funding and future rail options, offers the widest trail path and the best car free access to north coast resources, and supports a full environmental analysis. He noted that the return of Proposition 116 funds and a buyout for Iowa Pacific's agreement should be factored into the costs for Option 2.

Janneka Strauss, Bike Santa Cruz County, stated that it is in the best interest of the community to conduct an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the north coast rail trail segment as soon as possible to ensure that acquired grants are utilized and uphold Measure D's commitment to study options for the best use of the rail corridor.

Miles Rider, South County farmer, said that the discovery of the right-of-way location was a surprise, but the impacts to surrounding lands were less surprising. He stated that the trade-offs in Option 2 associated with the removal of the tracks to put a trail in its footprint are refreshing. Mr. Rider noted that tracks on the north coast would only be used for train excursions and not passenger rail.

Paul Shoelhammer, said that the north coast provides extraordinarily beautiful views for much of the rail line that would draw in tourists and locals alike. He noted that the rail line does eventually go down in a deep ditch and putting a trail down where the tracks are would create an expensive recreational ditch. Mr. Shoelhammer stated that he supports Option 1 to have a trail on the coastal side of the tracks.

Piet Canin, Ecology Action, commended staff for moving forward with the rail trail project and noted his preference for Option 1 to have a trail on the coastal side of the tracks.

Sheila Brannon, California State Parks, thanked the RTC and Central Federal Lands (CFL) for getting CA State Parks involved in the project early on. She said that CA State Parks supports the concept of a trail and will continue to facilitate outreach to farmers, but will need funding to assist in the ongoing planning effort.

Gail McNulty, stated that the Great Santa Cruz Trail Group supports conducting an accelerated limited scope economic and environmental study of the north coast rail trail segment to determine if removal of that tracks is the most viable option and asked that the option of putting in an impervious surface over the tracks to mitigate environmental impacts be included in the study. She noted that she is looking forward to utilizing a trail in the north coast as an alternative transportation option.

Commissioner Coonerty moved the revised staff recommendations and included an amendment for economic analysis to be conducted in parallel with the environmental process. Commissioner Leopold seconded the amendment and revised staff recommendations to:

1. Accept an update on the north coast rail trail project implementation;
2. Direct staff to expeditiously conduct a procurement process and return to the RTC for award of a contract for an environmental consultant to conduct an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to analyze trail project alignment options on the north coast in order to provide the information necessary for the RTC to select a preferred alignment, and to utilize the EIR to meet Measure D commitments; and
3. Direct staff to return with a task list and funding needs as part of the Measure D 5-year plan in order to deliver the project in time to obligate funds for construction by 2020 and not lose federal or other funding.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Chase, Coonerty, Leopold, Caput, Brown, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, Johnson, and Commissioner Alternates Virginia Johnson and Mulhearn voting "aye".

28. Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 proposed budget

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, presented the staff report. Mr. Mendez reported that the proposed FY 2017-18 budget includes Measure D funds and allows the RTC to meet its state and federal responsibilities while advancing community priorities for transportation in Santa Cruz County.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for Ecology Action hosting Bike to Work; the use of electric bikes increasing ridership numbers; budget impacts with additional personnel and projected growth of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS); effectiveness of the Cruz511 and Bike to Work programs; having sufficient funds to deliver Highway 1 projects; the efficiency of Park and Ride lots and utilizing left over funds to provide more options; safety concerns for the Capitola Trestle; and jurisdictions' 5-year plans for projects to be funded with Measure D allocations.

Commissioner Caput left the meeting.

Piet Canin, stated that Ecology Action hosts Bike to Work twice a year in Santa Cruz County and within the past decade have seen a 65% increase in participation. Mr. Canin noted that Ecology Action tracks data through various outreach efforts to follow up with novice riders to encourage alternative transportation.

Dena Loijos, Health Services Agency, said that the Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds received from the RTC are used to leverage partnerships and other grants. She noted that out of 58 counties, Santa Cruz County still ranks #1 for bicycle fatalities. Ms. Loijos invited the Commission to a Vision Zero Community Forum on June 29th from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the Simpkins Center.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Chase seconded the staff recommendation to adopt **(Resolution 29-17)** approving the proposed FY 2017-18 RTC budget. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Chase, Coonerty, Leopold, Brown, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, Johnson, and Commissioner Alternates Virginia Johnson and Mulhearn voting "aye".

29. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 4, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Capitola City Council Chambers, 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Eames, Staff

Attendees:

Arnold Leff	Health Services Agency
Barry Scott	Community Member
Chris Schneiter	City of Santa Cruz
Dena Loijos	Health Services Agency
Diana Adamic	Community Member
Gail McNulty	Great Santa Cruz Trail Group
Heather Adamson	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Janneka Strauss	Bike Santa Cruz County
John Chamberlain	AECOM
John Schapp	Community Member
Kate Guberson	Harris
Larry Freitas	Community Member
Mark Mesiti-Miller	Friends of the Rail Trail
Michael Sarka	Roaring Camp Railroads
Miles Reiter	Santa Cruz County Farmer
Pat Malo	Green Trade
Paul Shoelhammer	Community Member
Piet Canin	Ecology Action
Rusty Santee	Central Home Supply
Sheila Brannon	California State Parks
Steve Salike	Community Member
Theresia Regerson	Health Services Agency