



**Santa Cruz County Regional  
Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, May 4, 2017  
9:00 a.m.**

**Capitola City Council Chambers  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Commissioners present:

Zach Friend	Cynthia Chase
Ed Bottorff	Jacques Bertrand
Greg Caput	Bruce McPherson
Oscar Rios	Randy Johnson
Sandy Brown	John Olejnik (ex-officio)
Norm Hagen	

Staff present:

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

2. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 9:02 a.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

3. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-INITIATION OF LITIGATION (Paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code): One case

**OPEN SESSION**

4. Report on closed session

Commissioners reconvened to open session at 9:23 a.m. and there was no closed session report.

## 5. Oral communications

**Robert Stephens**, said that predicting the future is hard, but the rail corridor might hold the solution to the County's transportation needs. He stated that promises made in Measure D to study the best uses of the rail corridor need to be delivered and that the study should include a comparison of all viable options. Mr. Stephens noted that the community wants to have a trail in the rail corridor.

**Jack Nelson**, said that sea level is rising faster than forecasted. He stated that Commissioners should take into consideration the affects of green house gas emissions related to Highway 1 projects.

**Bob Morgan**, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, said that studies on environmental changes are frequently updated and that policies are unable to keep up. He noted that it is critical to consider electric vehicles and renewable energy sources for the rail corridor to get people moving in the County.

**Stanley Sokolow**, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, said that there will be a free forum on June 3<sup>rd</sup> in Santa Cruz and on June 17<sup>th</sup> in Watsonville to discuss the visions of transit on the rail corridor.

**Brian Peoples**, Trail Now, stated that not using the Coastal Corridor immediately is a hazard to the community and to ensure public safety the rail tracks should be removed and replaced with a gravel trail while studies for the Coastal Corridor continue. He noted that a trail will benefit the local economy and reduce congestion on Highway 1.

## 6. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

A handout for Items 15, 23, 28, and 29 and a replacement page for Item 28 were distributed.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Bertrand requested that the minutes from the last RTC meeting include his un-captured request for the RTC to provide a report on projected California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) costs.

Commissioner Bottorff moved and Commissioner Chase seconded the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed with Commissioners Friend, Chase, Bottorff, Bertrand, Caput, McPherson, Brown, Johnson, Hagen, and Rios voting "aye" with Commissioners Johnson and Caput voting "no" for Item 15 and Chair Friend abstaining from Items 8 and 9.

**Ray Cancino**, Community Bridges/Lift Line, thanked the Commission for their continued efforts to support paratransit services and for providing Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding to the Lift Line program.

### **MINUTES**

7. Accepted draft minutes of the March 15, 2017 Traffic Operations Systems Committee/Safe on 17 Task Force meeting
8. Approved draft minutes of the April 6, 2017 Special Meeting of the Regional Transportation Commission

9. Approved draft minutes of the April 6, 2017 Regional Transportation Commission meeting, with the noted inclusion of Commissioner Bertrand's request
10. Accepted draft minutes of the April 11, 2017 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting
11. Accepted draft minutes of the April 20, 2017 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

**POLICY ITEMS - None**

**PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

12. Approved designation of 2017 Proposition 1B Transit Security Funds for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) (**Resolution 30-17**)

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

13. Accepted status report ok Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
14. Approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 Transportation Development Act (TDA) claims for Volunteer Center, Community Bridges and Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) (**Resolutions 31-17, 32-17, and 33-17**)
15. Approved Measure D Public Outreach and Communication Consultant (**Resolution 34-17**)

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

16. Accepted staff recommendations for the appointments of a delegate and a representative to the California Association of Councils of Governments (CalCOG) and the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC)

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

17. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
18. Accepted correspondence log
19. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
  - a. Letter to the City of Scotts Valley Council Members regarding the proposed Mount Hermon Road/Scotts Valley Drive/Whispering Pines Drive intersection plans from the Bicycle Advisory Committee
  - b. Letter to the City of Santa Cruz Planning Department regarding bicycle access improvements as a result of the Sunset Inn reconstruction from the Bicycle Advisory Committee
  - c. Letter to the California Natural Resources Agency regarding support for the Swanton Boulevard Multiuse Path and Urban Greening project from the Bicycle Advisory Committee
  - d. Letter to Senator Anthony Canella regarding support for Senate Bill (SB) 477: Intercity rail corridors: extensions from RTC staff
20. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues

21. Accept information items – *None*

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

22. Commissioner reports on RTC related items – oral reports

There were no Commissioner reports.

23. Director's Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on: the Highway 9/San Lorenzo Valley (SLV) Transportation Corridor Plan Open House on May 31<sup>st</sup> from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Felton Community Hall; his attendance at a California Councils of Government (CALCOG) meeting and legislative discussions regarding transportation funding; the state transportation funding package Senate Bill 1 (SB1) approved by the California legislature on April 6<sup>th</sup>; and his attendance at the State Passenger Rail Summit in April.

24. Caltrans report

John Olejnik, Caltrans District 5, reported on: local road repairs with the "fix-it-first" plan outlined in SB1; a lane closure on Highway 129 for realignment work; advanced mitigation for the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing and a working partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife; safety campaigns to encourage safety around cone zones; and memorials for fallen Caltrans workers and contractors.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the public safety reminder and Caltrans' assistance during the storms to repair roads; appreciation for Santa Cruz County voters passing Measure D; the significance of SB1 funding for transit systems and for self-help counties; and the practicality of the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing at Laurel Curve.

25. Project Updates from City of Capitola Public Works – oral presentation

Steve Jesberg, City of Capitola Public Works, presented a PowerPoint presentation providing a summary of various transportation projects in Capitola. Mr. Jesberg reported on recently completed projects, projects that are currently planned, and a preliminary list of projects to be funded through Measure D. Projects in Capitola include: traffic calming measures, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, complete streets improvements, neighborhood pavement management, Highway 1 interchange green bike lanes, traffic signal coordination, and a citywide slurry seal.

Commissioners discussed: improvement measures taken for traffic calming projects and bike lane improvements completed on both sides of the bicentennial route on Park Avenue.

**Jack Nelson**, stated that green bike lanes send a cultural message that tell drivers that bicyclists have a right to be on the road too. He said that he appreciates the green bike lanes in Soquel Village and is looking forward to the installation of green bike lanes at the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue Highway 1 interchange.

**Janneka Strauss**, Bike Santa Cruz County, said that she appreciates the list of potential projects in Capitola that are to be funded with Measure D allocations. She requested that staff prioritize the green bike lanes project at the Bay and Park Avenues Highway 1 interchange and intersection improvements at Brommer, 41<sup>st</sup>, Capitola, and McGregor.

## 26. 2017 Unmet Paratransit and Transit Needs

Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner, presented the staff report. Ms. Blakeslee reported that the RTC regularly solicits input on transportation needs in Santa Cruz County to assess and prioritize the needs of transit dependent or disadvantaged persons.

Commissioners discussed: H1 high priority strategy specifications for safe travel paths; studies conducted to determine areas where there are high concentrations of seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income communities; the possibility of providing free bus passes or taxi vouchers to seniors to encourage use of safe and sufficient alternative transportation options; working with Capitola Mall's new owner to improve the transit center to better accommodate paratransit; having Wi-Fi on buses to expand transit ridership; Watsonville having the largest senior communities in the County and making sure to include those communities when researching unmet needs; and how Measure D funds would help address the wish list of unmet paratransit and transit needs.

Commissioner Bottorff moved and Commissioner Chase seconded the staff recommendations to:

1. Adopt the *2017 Unmet Paratransit and Transit Needs*, with revisions as needed; and
2. Consider unmet paratransit and transit needs as funding becomes available.

To allow for additional Commissioner comments and questions on the item, Chair Friend asked whether anyone would move to rescind the motion on the floor. Commissioner Bottorff moved to rescind the motion. The motion to rescind the previous motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Friend, Bottorff, Caput, Bertrand, Chase, McPherson, Brown, Johnson, Hagen, and Rios voting "aye".

After further discussion, Commissioner Bottorff moved and Commissioner Bertrand seconded the staff recommendations to:

1. Adopt the *2017 Unmet Paratransit and Transit Needs*, with revisions from Commissioner Bertrand to include free bus passes to seniors and a renovation of the Capitola Mall transit center; and
2. Consider unmet paratransit and transit needs as funding becomes available.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Friend, Bottorff, Caput, Bertrand, Chase, McPherson, Brown, Johnson, Hagen, and Rios voting "aye".

## 27. Highway 1 Corridor Tiered Environmental Document – Status Report

Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report and provided a schedule of milestone activities and noted that the Final Tiered Environmental Document is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2018.

Commissioners discussed: the urgent need to improve mobility in Santa Cruz County and commute time for Watsonville residents; the importance of following through on promises made to voters in Measure D to help alleviate highway traffic congestion; collaboration with Caltrans to pursue time saving options to expedite the environmental review process; the lack of practical solutions to alleviate highway traffic because of society's love of their cars and the need to become more creative with alternative transportation options; concerns with timeline delays and the subsequent lack of confidence in construction estimates; action needed to address the community's expectation for timely traffic congestion relief after voting to pass Measure D; and the delays to the Mar Vista Bridge project having a significant impact on the community's faith in the process of the system and ability to deliver projects.

**Brian Peoples**, stated that Trail Now supports widening Highway 1 and that utilization of large transit vehicles on Highway 1 is needed to help ease inundated surface streets. Mr. Peoples noted that infrastructure should be designed by engineers rather than public opinions and environmental groups.

**Jack Nelson**, said that the completed auxiliary lanes still have traffic congestion and contradicts the assumption that lives will get better if Highway 1 is widened. He stated that induced travel should be included in the revised Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and noted that decisions should be made with science based evidence.

**Stanley Sokolow**, said that the quickest way to provide traffic relief is to utilize an alternative travel option on the Coastal Corridor instead of widening the highway. He noted that any traffic congestion relief from widening Highway 1 will be short lived.

**Bob Morgan**, stated that he is thankful for the thoughtful EIR process and is interested in the estimated construction timeline and the effects that both climate change and construction will have on surrounding habitats. He noted that widening Highway 1 will not fix the congestion issue.

**Gail McNulty**, said that the idea of putting all efforts into the rail corridor may be unwise. She noted that trail or bus rapid transit (BRT) alternative transportation options will help with Highway 1 congestion relief.

Commissioner Bertrand moved and Commissioner Brown seconded the staff recommendation to receive information on the status of the Draft Tiered Environmental Document, including the milestone schedule, for the Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Friend, Chase, Bottorff, Bertrand, Caput, McPherson, Brown, Johnson, Hagen, and Rios voting "aye".

28. Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) – Draft Goals, Criteria, Performance Measures and Projects for Scenario Analysis

Ginger Dykaar and Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planners, presented the staff report providing a summary of the two-step analysis process and public outreach.

Commissioners discussed: scenario options listed in the rail corridor category and the implicit impacts those options will have on the parallel corridors; having a trail only option included in the considered scenarios; the benefits of using a triple bottom line approach as the study progresses; consideration of economic impacts to both the populous and the RTC when calculating the costs of transportation options; concern with the option of crowding out; how options should include looking at the future of how the County will move forward and the cost on the community; the importance of considering the community's economic vitality; being cautious when making decisions to move forward with individual projects; expanding the project's limits to include Freedom Boulevard to Watsonville; decisions made to contain the cost of the study; and corridor safety concerns for bicyclists.

Commissioners Bottorff, Johnson, and Caput left the meeting.

**Stanley Sokolow**, said that he appreciates the expansion of the study area to include Freedom Blvd to Watsonville and noted that the study should also include metrics to study the impact on the demand for parking.

**Jack Nelson**, stated that alternative transportation options compared in the UCS may prove to be more successful at reducing traffic than widening the highway. He said that the UCS could assist with reaching California's goal to reduce green house gas emissions by 40% by 2040 and that the pain and suffering from people stuck in traffic does not compare to the effects of climate change.

**Piet Canin**, Ecology Action, said that he hopes investments are made to improve bike commuting and connectivity of the different corridors. Mr. Canin noted that 3 out of 4 bike projects rated in the survey are included in the UCS and he hopes that efforts will be made to ensure a transparent and comprehensive process.

**Janneka Strauss**, stated that protected bike lanes will ensure safety for bicyclist and will encourage bike use. Ms. Strauss said that Bike Santa Cruz County recognizes the potential of the passenger rail to reach other areas and is eager to see the results of the UCS that will provide alternative transportation options to improve mobility in the County.

**Brian Peoples**, stated that having the project limit go to Davenport will put a constraint on planning for the north coast segment of the Rail Trail and the project limit should extend to Watsonville via Freedom Blvd instead. Mr. Peoples said that consideration should be given to a gravel trail in place of the tracks and suggested using the term Coastal Corridor instead of Rail Corridor.

**Paula Bartholomew**, said that widening Highway 1 will increase traffic congestion and the pollution created will impact the community.

**Gail McNulty**, stated that the community considers access to safe alternative transportation a high priority. She told of the event "Making Silicon Valley America's Biking Capital, Lessons from the Dutch" in Sunnyvale on May 8<sup>th</sup> and encouraged a representative from the RTC to attend.

**Mark Mesiti-Miller**, said that he is delighted for the UCS and is looking forward to the triple bottom line approach that will deliver the best uses for the three corridors. He stated that the Commission should be cautious in considering public

input from recent surveys and that future solicited input needs to be more representative. Mr. Mesiti-Miller noted that land use planning for development around the corridors is needed to make transit work.

Commissioner Brown moved and Commissioner Hagen seconded the staff recommendations and directed staff to report back on the cost differences associated with including Freedom Boulevard to Watsonville:

1. Approve the UCS goals, Step 1 criteria, Step 2 performance measures;
2. Approve the projects to be considered in the scenario analysis; and
3. Adopt (**Resolution 35-17**) authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into an agreement for professional consulting services with Kimly-Horn to perform the scenario analysis and prepare the Unified Corridor Investment Study.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Friend, Brown, Hagen, Bertrand, McPherson, Chase and Rios voting "aye".

#### 29. Measure D: Draft Regional Five-Year Programs of Projects

Karena Pushnik, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report. She stated that Measure D requires that the implementation plan be updated at least every five years following a public hearing.

Commissioners discussed: the importance of communicating with the public about transportation projects needed and what is being prioritized; the possibility of having conduit under the rail corridor and making it a requirement to have it installed during construction; the Capitola trestle included in the rail bridge analysis and the schedule for the process; and the consulting process to be independent from the rail line.

**Stanley Sokolow**, said that he is concerned with expenditures for analysis of the rail bridges when the UCS has yet to determine the use of the corridor. He suggested that bus rapid transit (BRT) be utilized instead with San Lorenzo River trestle becoming a pedestrian bridge only. Mr. Sokolow noted that making bridges safer is justified, but that it would be premature to repair the tracks before usage has been decided.

**Dan Medeiros**, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, reported that the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing had just been given the green light for the planning and engineering process and noted his hopes that the agreement will be a model for other projects in the state. He said that the current timeline for the project to be shovel-ready is 2020 and requested that the RTC work with the Land Trust to possibly revise the timeline to begin construction sooner.

**Jack Nelson**, said that Measure D was promoted as environmentally friendly and hopes that funds will be used towards alternative transportation. Mr. Nelson stated that a commuter benefit program or offering incentives for using alternatives to single user vehicles could help alleviate traffic congestion on Highway 1. He noted that the San Lorenzo River trestle is currently being utilized by bicyclists and pedestrians and is excited about future updates.



**Chris Schneider**, City of Santa Cruz Public Works, stated that the proposals in the Measure D 5-year plans are consistent with the City of Santa Cruz's proposal that will be presented to the City Council on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. He noted that Measure D is a great source of funding.

**Janneka Strauss**, said that Bike Santa Cruz County appreciates the opportunity for the County to become a self-help county and supports the plans for construction on any segment of the Rail Trail, especially those that could be built prior to the completion of the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS). She noted that cyclists in the County want to see the trail built as soon as possible.

**Piet Canin**, said that he hopes for fast delivery of projects that will encourage alternative transportation. Mr. Canin stated that he hopes that funds are used to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety with the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) being at the center of the improvements. He invited the Commission to a trail mixer on May 7<sup>th</sup> that will bring the community in to discuss the different options for use of the corridor and the positive progress of the project.

**Mark Mesiti-Miller**, stated that maintenance of the active Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line is a good investment that will save lots of money in the long run. He said that project line items should match up with the language that voters approved in Measure D and noted that he is looking forward to getting the Rail Trail project underway.

**Gail McNulty**, said that consideration should be given to the community members who did not vote for Measure D, but that are still impacted by the sales tax and who also may not be fully aware of the MBSST project. She stated that having a trail next to a rail is not equivalent to the trail that could be built if the tracks are removed and noted that improving biking infrastructure can transform cities.

Commissioner Chase moved and Commissioner Rios seconded the staff recommendation to schedule a public hearing for the June 1, 2017 RTC meeting to consider public input and approve final regional five-year plans. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Friend, Chase, Bertrand, McPherson, Brown, Hagen, and Rios voting "aye".

### 30. Measure D: Community Bridges/Lift Line Five-Year Plan

Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planner, presented the staff report. Ray Cancino, Director of Community Bridges, reported on outreach efforts and training offered for the additional drivers needed to support the expansion of services. Kirk Ance, Program Manager, provided information on the proposed five-year plan that includes: expansion of service days, hours, and options to provide up to 3,800 additional rides per year.

Commissioners discussed: how the funding percentage increase for Measure D allocations to Community Bridges was a good decision; the need for additional staff to expand services and Community Bridges doing a commendable job by changing their business plan and providing job training to the community; the possibility of facilitating a better lease agreement with Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) to store more vehicles; requirements for providing services to seniors and low-income individuals; and appreciation for outreach and

services provided to Spanish speaking communities, senior centers, and Watsonville residents.

Commissioner Chase moved and Commissioner McPherson seconded the staff recommendation to schedule a public hearing for the June 1, 2017 RTC meeting to consider public input and approve final Community Bridges/Lift Line five-year plans. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Friend, Chase, Bertrand, McPherson, Brown, Hagen, and Rios voting "aye".

31. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 1, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main St. Ste 450, Watsonville, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

The meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenn Eames, Staff

Attendees:

Ray Cancino	Community Bridges/Lift Line
Gail McNulty	Great Santa Cruz Trail Group
Brian Peoples	Trail Now
Stephen Svele	Rincon Consultants
Kate Gibson	Harns and Associates
Stanley Sokolow	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Mark Mesiti-Miller	Community Member
Jack Nelson	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Robert Morgan	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Chris Schnieter	City of Santa Cruz
Alex Clifford	Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District
Erich Friedrich	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Janneka Strauss	Bike Santa Cruz County
Piet Canin	Ecology Action
Kirk Ance	Community Bridges/Lift Line
Paula Bartholomew	Community Member
Ilan Zur	Community Member
Dan Medeiros	Land Trust of Santa Cruz County