1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Members present:

Sandy Brown
Jacques Bertrand
Randy Johnson
Zach Friend
Greg Caput
Norm Hagen
Kelly McClendon

Oscar Rios
Cynthia Chase
John Leopold
Ed Bottorff
Bruce McPherson
Andy Schiffrin (alternate)

Staff present:

George Dondero
Luis Mendez
Yesenia Parra
Kim Shultz
Sarah Christensen
Anais Shenk
Cory Caletti
Fernanda Dias Pini

2. Oral Communications

Jack Nelson, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, discussed the need for sustainable transportation as the consequences of climate change need to be considered when making future decisions. Mr. Nelson urged the Commissioners to be cognizant of the future impact of their decisions.
Becky Steinbruner, resident of Aptos, urged the Commission to stop any further funding to improvements in the Aptos Village. Ms. Steinbruner noted that the October 5, 2017 Commission minutes did not reflect Commissioner Bertrand’s request for more information on ADA requirements as it relates to the Aptos village bust stop relocation. She said that the developer for the Aptos Village project is paying very little in transportation improvement fees.

Bud Collingan, Co-Chair of the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) and Board Member of Santa Cruz County Greenway (Greenway), submitted to the Commission the latest count of the Greenway petition, with 4,300 signatures. He also commented on the California Rail Plan communicating that $700 million to $1 billion over the next 30 years should not be invested to support occasional vacation interest to Los Angeles because there will be little commuter ridership.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, supported Measure D after the train was removed from the ballot language and the funds were shifted to METRO. Mr. Peoples expressed concern regarding the bonding ability of Measure D and asked for transparency if bonding was an issue.

Faina Segal, Young People in Santa Cruz County, thanked the Commission for the transportation improvements in the county, especially the green stripping in the Seabright neighborhood. She also expressed her support for the train and light rail.

Gail McNulty, Santa Cruz County Greenway, asked the RTC to: build separated paths for foot traffic and wheel traffic, to reallocate Measure D rail study and repair funds to a network of protected bicycle lanes connecting to major employers and popular destinations, and to modernize METRO.

Suzi Merriam Community Development Director for the City of Watsonville, voiced support for the rail and trail project for residents in Watsonville who commute to other parts in the county for their jobs. Ms. Merriam considers it short sighted to eliminate the rail option as a better long-term solution to congestion.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Add on pages for Item 19 and replacement pages for Item 6 were distributed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Becky Steinbruner, resident of Aptos, noted that at the October 10, 2017 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC), Ciro Aguirre of Santa Cruz METRO explained that the Aptos Village bus stop is being moved to provide parking for the businesses. Ms. Steinbruner said that moving the bus stop will not serve bus riders nor drivers. She asked the Commission to put a stop work order on the project, include her concerns voiced at the E&D TAC meeting in the minutes and investigate why sidewalks do not have to be ADA compliant.
Barry Scott, resident of Aptos, stated that two-thirds of voters voted for preserving the rail infrastructure and building the rail trail project as approved and which also had the support of three city councils and the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Scott stated that the money dedicated to the rail trail project should not be reallocated to a trail only option and he also pointed out that some signers of the Greenway petition were not made aware that the petition called for a removal of the train tracks.

Bud Colligan, MBEP Co-Chair and Greenway Board Member, stated that he negotiated with RTC Commissioners that Measure D funds would be used in accordance to the highest and best use of the corridor. He believes that there is no clear consensus from the public that a unified corridor is the highest and best option for the corridor. Mr. Colligan also stated that Greenway provides very clear explanations of their petition to signers and has made all their information transparent and open to the public. Brian Peoples, Trail Now, noted that Trail Now held a meeting with Commissioners Don Lane and Zach Friend who agreed on language that did not say that they were going to keep the rail tracks. Mr. Peoples reiterated his concern regarding the bonding ability of Measure D funds. Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded the consent agenda with the removal of Item 6. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Chase, Hagen, Johnson, Rios, McPherson, Leopold, Friend and Commissioner alternate Schiffrin voting ‘aye’.

4. Approved revised minutes of the September 7, 2017 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

5. Accepted draft minutes of the September 7, 2017 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies meeting

6. Approve draft minutes of the October 5, 2017 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

7. Accepted draft minutes of the October 10, 2017 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

8. Accepted draft minutes of the October 12, 2017 Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee meeting

9. Approved draft minutes of the October 19, 2017 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting

POLICY ITEMS
None

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS
None
BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS
10. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
11. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues and distribution

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS
None

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS
12. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
13. Accepted correspondence log
14. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
   a. Letter to the Director of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency Director, Giang Nguyen, regarding support of the City of Watsonville’s proposal called “Watsonville Complete Streets to School Planning Grant” to Caltrans
   b. Letter to the Chair of County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors, John Leopold, regarding Route 71 Inbound Bus Stop Relocation – Aptos Village Project
15. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues
16. Accepted information items
   a. Letter dated September 19, 2017 from the President of the Special District Risk Management Authority, Jean Bracy, regarding the President’s Special Acknowledgement Award – Worker’s Compensation Program

REGULAR AGENDA
17. Commissioner reports on RTC related items – oral reports

Commissioner Friend requested a motion to adopt a resolution NO.06-18 honoring retiring Senior Transportation Planner Kim Shultz. Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner McPherson seconded to approve the resolution. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Friend, Chase, Rios, Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Hagen, Johnson, Leopold, McPherson and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting ‘aye’. (Resolution)
18. Appoint nominating committee for 2018 RTC Chair and Vice Chair

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, presented the staff report.

Chair Friend appointed Commissioners McPherson and Commissioner Chase for the 2018 RTC Chair and Vice Chair nominating committee.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin motioned and Commissioner Hagen seconded to approve the appointment of Commissioners McPherson and Commissioner Chase to the RTC Chair and Vice Chair nominating committee. Motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Friend, Chase, Leopold, Caput, McPherson, Brown, Rios, Johnson, Bertrand, Bottorff, Hagen, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffri voting ‘aye’.

19. Director’s report – oral report

Executive Director George Dondero presented his report. He noted that the Phase 1 of the Visualizing Sustainable Transportation Project is well underway with both Owl viewers live on the Westside and on Soquel Ave. Director Dondero also gave an update on the Unified Corridor Investment Study; he discussed the 2018 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP); attendance to the Self-Help Counties Coalition annual conference in San Francisco; Director Dondero also introduced two new RTC staff members: Sarah Christensen, Senior Transportation Engineer, and Fernanda Dias Pini, Administrative Assistant.

Commissioners discussed Senate Bill (SB) 1: The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 and how it provides essential funding for road infrastructure and maintenance.

Becky Steinbruner, resident of Aptos, reported accessibility and parking issues at both owl locations. She also noted that the owls images are not necessarily representative of future development and the survey window pops up too often blocking the views provided. She believes that the pocket owl is a good technology to use but a bit premature and seems like an expensive method to survey the public.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, agreed with Ms. Steinbruner’s comments about the pocket owl. He is especially concerned with the image of a train on the Westside that appears to show that there would be a train going from Natural Bridges to Davenport. He considered the image to be misleading to the public and that the survey process in the pocket owl was not very good which led to errors in the survey.

Gail McNulty, Greenway, stated that she tried the mobile version of the pocket owl and came across a question which she could not answer and suggested that the RTC staff update it. Ms. McNulty commented that Greenway feels that the bus and trail only versions of the Unified Corridor Study (UCS)
have not been fairly considered as the best alternatives for the project as all the workshops and reports regarding the project are skewed towards the train and rail option. She wants to ensure that the public has the opportunity to understand the variety of options and be able to comment in a relatively simple way.

20. Caltrans report and consider action items

**Kelly McClendon**, CalTrans District 5 Chief Regional Planning, presented a report on: Factsheet on Highway 1 Storm Damage Repair project; announced that the league of American Bicyclists ranked California as the third most bike friendly state in the nation; he attributed SB 1 as directly responsible for creating greater infrastructure for cyclists and increasing sustainable training program funding from $10 million to $35 million.

Mr. McClendon also reported on the California Transportation Commission’s (CTC) recent adoption of 90 state-wide Fix It First projects, including local projects on Highway 9, Highway 152, and on Highway 129.

Commissioners discussed: satisfaction with local road improvements, greater attention to pedestrian safety and access, bicycle access over the Corralitos Creek Bridge, and overall greater integration of bike lanes.

**Peter Stanger**, community member, inquired about including a bike lane as part of the Caltrans bridge project in Corralitos. Mr. Stanger believes it would make sense to create a bike lane and at the same time an ADA project that adheres to Caltrans safety guidelines.

**Janneke Strause**, Bike Santa Cruz County, expressed appreciation of the American League of Bicyclists’ ranking for California as it shows that there is a high demand for people to bike safely and a need to ensure safety.

**Gail McNulty**, Greenway, pointed out that there are more cyclists in this region than in other places, which results in more bicycle collisions than in an average community. Ms. McNulty asked the RTC to create a true and protected cyclist and pedestrian safety infrastructure, including a physical structure between the bicyclists and cars.

21. 2018 California State Rail Plan

Executive Director Dondero presented a staff report on the 2018 California State Rail Plan (Rail Plan) which is consistent with the state’s policies on climate change and reduction of green gas emissions and provides a framework to plan and implement California’s rail network for the next 20 years and beyond. Executive Director Dondero also expounded on how this bold plan prioritizes state investment in an efficient, effective passenger and freight rail system. The plan includes service throughout Monterey Bay with
connections to the state’s rail network at Pajaro (Watsonville Junction) and Castroville.

Kyle Gradinger, Acting Chief of Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation (Division), presented an overview of the Division’s role. Mr. Gradinger described the Rail Plan as a blueprint of what the Division will be undertaking within the next decades and which will be an important strategy that the Division will be pursuing to provide for the state’s mobility needs.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the Rail Plan; how experiences with integrated modes of transportation abroad were convenient, accessible, and beneficial for commuter; the environmental benefits of the Rail Plan; and concerns based on historical projects, like the Bullet Train project.

Debbie Hale, Executive Director for the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), reported that TAMC is working on different kinds of rail services and they are very encouraged with the medium to long term plans of the State Rail Plan. TAMC would love to see light rail service and would like the RTC to join TAMC in supporting this plan. Ms. Hale encouraged support for SB1.

Jack Nelson, Campaign for Sensible Transportation (CST), stated his belief that the Rail Plan would curtail traffic and CO2 emissions in the area.

Bruce Sawhill, Board of the Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT), expressed his belief that the Rail Plan is a bold step towards envisioning a sustainable future - not just environmentally but also financially. Mr. Sawhill believes that rail is efficient and simple and it is important to remember when considering highway projects that there is the hidden bring-your-own-vehicle cost, which is a big cost for people of modest means. People in the area stand to gain tremendously as they would have easier access to jobs, education, and recreation.

Cliff Walters, Roaring Camp Rail Road and the Santa Cruz Big Trees and Pacific Railway, stated his support of the Rail Plan. Mr. Walters asked the Commission to consider the fate of used tires, and how the rail does not create the same cost to the environment while providing a unique transportation option to curtail traffic.

Barry Scott, FORT, expressed his excitement for the rail trail project and his belief that the rail option is cheaper than previously construed. Mr. Scott stated that rail services coming to Pajaro and other parts of the county will be beneficial for county students and residents and will alleviate traffic congestion. An investment on rail will have a greater impact on traffic congestion than building highway infrastructure.

Dan Stevenson, Santa Cruz County resident, driver for the Santa Cruz County Metro, is concerned that the Rail Plan implies that buses and trains
would be equal partners in alleviating congestion. Mr. Stevenson stated that bus services have continuously suffered budget cuts. Measure D is an example of how current policy ignores local transit financing, along with measures from the state and the federal government. Mr. Stevenson stated that despite requests from the Santa Cruz Metro, the RTC did not look into more funding for Metro while discussing Measure D and instead chose to focus on feasibility studies for the rail, which showed a disposition to fund future infrastructure instead of choosing to focus on projects that would save current mass transit and cut costs today.

**Brian Peoples**, Trail Now, stated that Measure D had allocated $14 million for a station in Monterey, but Measure X provided no funding on rail. Mr. Peoples believes that there is a misconception that the County of Monterey is actively working on rail, despite that Measure X failed. Mr. Peoples stated that residents whose homes are not far from the proposed rail tracks will not allow new tracks to be constructed near their homes. He expressed that the RTC continues to support rail projects despite the fact that the community does not want rail going through their neighborhoods.

**Peter Stranger**, Santa Cruz County Resident, affirmed his belief for greater bike accessibility and voiced his concern that there are few bike paths and safe bike corridors in southern Santa Cruz County, building bike lanes is a cheap alternative to building rail.

**Faina Segal**, Young People in Santa Cruz County, expressed her enthusiasm for the Rail Plan.

**Gail McNulty**, Santa Cruz County Greenway, urged the Commission to think carefully about what makes fiscal sense when encouraging more people to commute by bicycles and not creating physical barriers between vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. Ms. McNulty encouraged the Commission to look further into the bus system as a cheaper and more effective alternative to rail.

Commissioners discussed: positive and effective rail experiences abroad; excitement for the Rail Plan; RTC commitment to bringing passenger rail service between Pajaro and Santa Cruz; and personal reliance on public transportation as the primary mode of transport.

22. **Highway 1 Corridor Tiered Environmental Document – Selection of the Preferred Project Alternatives**

Highway 1 Corridor Project Development Team (PDT) members, Kim Shultz, RTC Senior Transportation Planner, and consultants Parag Mehta and Laura Prickett reported on the updated technical studies for the Highway 1 Tiered Environmental document. In review of the project’s purpose and need, and comparison of key performance measures the PDT identified the HOV Lane project as the preferred long range vision for the corridor and construction of
the auxiliary lanes between 41st Ave and Soquel Drive and Chanticleer Bike/Pedestrian Overcrossing as the next Highway 1 improvement project.

Commissioners discussed: concern with the costs of the selected project alternatives and questioned the decision to opt for a potentially more expensive alternative; expressed concern that the report did not follow correct procedure as mandated by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), resulting in an inappropriate time for the commission to make a decision on this matter; apprehension that the public process was not honored when this report was created and the commission cannot make a decision without first seeing public comments on the matter.

Executive Director Dondero noted that the Tier 1 document is a planning document and will not result in building the project. It was created to give the Commission the greatest amount of flexibility and freedom in the future. Currently, there is no funding for building the HOV lanes and there is no commitment to funding when supporting this recommendation.

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, expressed concern that the RTC should not be able to make a decision on an alternative option without holding a public workshop and taking public opinion into consideration. Mr. Saint believes that the Highway 1 Corridor Tiered Document project alternatives lacked vision from the RTC as it supports alternatives that will create more congestion. He suggested no recommendation for the alternatives and no Commission vote on the topic.

Jack Nelson, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, asked for more thorough consideration of projects before reaching a decision as a previous report from RTC staff stated that there was no feasible funding scenario for the HOV lanes project. Mr. Nelson agreed with comments from Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin regarding CEQA and expressed that the report does not comprehensively consider alternatives as mandated by CEQA. Mr. Nelson noted that it is well known within transportation literature that induced travel destroys the supposed benefits of widening highways. These studies should be considered before accepting HOV lanes as preferred alternatives.

Barry Scott, FORT, stated that it is imperative for the Commission to understand that decisions made today will impact and be paid by future generations and he hopes the Commission considers future consequences when making choices.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, said that the County is in a transportation crisis which is due to the RTC’s inaction in creating auxiliary lanes as a result of continued focus on train. Mr. Peoples asked that the Commission be cognizant of developments in vehicle technology and to make decisions considering future modes of transportation and not dated technologies such as the rail. SB 1 can provide funding for transportation solutions, such as greater investment
on buses. Mr. Peoples believes that the RTC should invest more on the Santa Cruz County Metro and the highway corridor.

**Ashley Winn**, community member, said that the RTC is not representative of all Santa Cruz County residents and that commissioners should not vote based on ideology but rather on solutions to the current transportation crisis. Mr. Winn stated that the crisis we are in today is a result of south county residents not being equally represented at the RTC and that north county residents are against widening Highway 1.

**Bruce Sawhill**, FORT, expressed that transportation challenges are complex and a systems approach is the only way to make substantial progress. Mr. Sawhill asked the Commission to be apprehensive of those who are proponents of breaking up pieces of the UCS for special out of order considerations as Mr. Sawhill believes that such attempts are not democratic nor follow due process.

**Chair Friend** clarified that there has been many years of public process associated with the Highway 1 environmental document and the community asked for Highway 1 widening with a two-thirds majority through Measure D. Chair Friend stated that the Commission needs to see it through as it has been long overdue and asked Brooke Miller, RTC Counsel, to respond to the legal questions raised regarding CEQA procedures.

**Brooke Miller**, RTC Counsel, clarified that the action being considered by the RTC is an extra step outside of CEQA and it does not commit the RTC or the Commissioners to selecting an alternative or making any funding or project commitments. The RTC is being asked to make a motion to support the PDT’s selection of project alternatives for the final tiered Environmental Impact Reports (EIR). Approval of the recommendation provides direction to the PDT to finalize the EIR.

**Kim Shultz**, RTC Senior Transportation Planner, noted that CalTrans is the lead CEQA agency who will make the decisions associated with the final environmental documents. The PDT simply makes the recommendation. Mr. Shultz expressed that a vote today will send a message that the RTC is supportive of the PDT recommendation and looking forward to completing the environmental documents as quickly as possible.

Commissioner McPherson motioned and Commissioner Bottorff seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to support the decision of the Project Development Team in selecting the HOV Lane Alternative as the preferred Tier I project alternative and the Build Alternative as the preferred Tier II alternative in the Tiered Environmental Document for the Highway 1 Corridor Investment Program.

The motion passed with 9 ‘ayes’ and 3 ‘nays’. Commissioners McPherson, Rios, Friend, Chase, Caput, Johnson, Bottorff, Bertrand, and Hagen voted ‘aye’, and
Commissioners Leopold, Brown, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voted ‘nay’.

23. Amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 Budget and Work Program

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, presented the staff report.

Commissioner Leopold motioned and Commissioner Rios seconded to approve the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee (B&A/P) and staff recommendation to adopt a resolution to: (Resolution 07-18)

1. Approving the proposed amended fiscal year (FY) 2017-18 Budget and Work Program (Exhibit A to Attachment 1); and

2. Exchanging federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for state Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds as shown on page 17 of Exhibit A to Attachment 1.

Motion passed unanimously with Commissioners McPherson, Rios, Friend, Caput, Bottorff, Bertrand, Hagen, Leopold, Johnson, Chase, Brown, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting ‘aye’.

24. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

Chair friend announced that agency negotiators are George Dondero and Luis Mendez, negotiations will concern the rail line at various locations along the property and persons with whom its negotiators may negotiate are owners of the properties adjacent to the rail line at those locations.

CLOSED SESSION

25. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-ANTICIPATED LITIGATION. Consider initiating litigation for one case pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9 (d)(4)

26. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8

- Property: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
- Agency Negotiator: George Dondero and Luis Mendez
- Negotiating Parties: SCCRTC, Steve Williams and Steve Douglas
- Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

27. Report on closed session- no report from closed session
24. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers on 701 Ocean Street, 5th floor, Santa Cruz, CA

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fernanda Dias Pini, Staff

Attendees:
Faina Segal  Young People in Santa Cruz County
Cliff Walters  Roaring Camp and the Santa Cruz Big Trees and Pacific Railroad
Jack Nelson  Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Mike Saint  Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Barry Scott  FORT
Brian Peoples  Trail Now
Gail McNulty  Santa Cruz County Greenway
Julian Mandjaro  Watsonville Cyclocy
Mussey Fontes  Watsonville resident
Maria Esther Rodriguez  Watsonville Public Works and Utilities
Kyle Gradinger  Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transit
Heather Adamson  AMBAG
Becky Steinbruner  Santa Cruz County resident
Stanley Sokolow  Santa Cruz County resident
Dan Stevenson  Santa Cruz County resident, Greenway
Laura Prickett  Horizon Water and Environment
Peter Stanger  Santa Cruz County resident
Brooke Miller  SCCRTC Counsel
Bruce Sawhill  FORT
Ashley Winn  Santa Cruz County resident
Jannke Strause  Bike Santa Cruz
Suzi Merriam  City of Watsonville Community Development Director
Debbie Hale  Executive Director of the TAMC
Bud Collingan  Monterey Bay Economic Partnership and Santa Cruz County Greenway