Minutes

Thursday, September 7, 2017
9:00 a.m.

County Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present:
Zach Friend
Norm Hagen
Ryan Coonerty
Bruce McPherson
John Leopold
Oscar Rios
Sandy Brown
Aileen Loe

Cynthia Chase
Greg Caput
Virginia Johnson
Randy Johnson
Jacques Bertrand
Ed Bottorff

Staff present:
George Dondero
Yesenia Parra
Amy Naranjo
Anais Schenk

Luis Mendez
Rachel Moriconi
Karena Pushnik
Cory Caletti

2. Oral communications

Mark Mesisti Miller, Board Chair of Friends of the Rail Trail (FORT) offered a rebuttal to Trail Now’s claims and requested the RTC subject their report to a technical peer review in order to refute the false statements made by Trail Now.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now, stated that Trail Now is a big force with 8,000 Facebook followers. He supports the Unified Corridor Study and thinks most
people are focused on getting the highway fixed. He stated if “we had opposed Measure D, it would have lost.”

**Alex Yasbeck**, Sierra Club Chapter, spoke in support of FORT and the request for the Peer Review. The Great Santa Cruz Trail Study study needs a peer review and asked that when decisions are made, please use scientific, rational information.

**Barry Scott**, Rio Del Mar resident and FORT Board Member, stated that Great Santa Cruz Trail Study cannot be taken seriously and it should either be tossed or peer reviewed due to many of its inaccurate claims.

**Laura Cutter**, resident of Santa Cruz, spoke in support of Greenway. She has safety concerns in particular through Capitola where her son was hit by a car on his bike ride to school. She supports using the trestle bridge for safe transportation for our children in lieu of a train.

**Janneke Strauss**, Bike Santa Cruz County, requested that the Great Santa Cruz Trail Study be peer reviewed and that it be a future item of discussion for upcoming RTC meetings.

**Gail McNulty**, Executive Director of Santa Cruz County Greenway, read a letter in support of Greenway’s plan to create a vibrant linear park that connects the corridors.

**Bud Colligan**, Board President of Santa Cruz County Greenway, distributed a document with 3,000 signatures of residents of Santa Cruz who are actively supporting Greenway. They also have recent endorsements by hospitals, 86% of the Santa Cruz Business Council Members, and ADA access supporters. He feels that the population does not want what the RTC is proposing.

**Ted Burke**, Santa Cruz Business Council, spoke to inform the RTC on the recent activity within the Santa Cruz Business Council.

**Monty Keonig**, Civinomics, stated that after poling his neighbourhood, he determined that building a train should never happen. It is not common sense but based on politics to build a train.

**Cynthia Manzo**, a Resident of Santa Cruz, recently relocated from Tahoe, spoke on behalf of Greenway, she believes the Greenway plan will offer a safe place for her husband, children and dog walk and have a safe place to ride their bikes to school and to work.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Handouts for item #20 were distributed
CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded the consent agenda. The motion passed with Commissioners Friend, Chase, Coonerty, Caput, McPherson, Johnson, Leopold, Rios Brown, Bottorff, and Hagen voting “aye” with Commissioner Bertrand abstaining from the August Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW) meeting minutes.

Commissioners directed staff to place the peer review of the Santa Cruz Great Trail report on a future agenda for a future meeting with an evaluation of cost for the peer review and what it would achieve.

MINUTES

4. Accepted draft minutes of the May 11, 2017 Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee meeting

5. Accepted draft minutes of the May 25, 2017 Interagency Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

6. Approved draft minutes of the June 1, 2017 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

7. Accepted draft minutes of the Special Meeting June 5, 2017 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting

8. Accepted draft minutes of the June 13, 2017 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting.

9. Approved draft minutes of the June 15, 2017 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting

10. Approved draft minutes of the August 17, 2017 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting

11. Accepted draft minutes of the August 17, 2017 Interagency Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

   No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

   No consent items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

12. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues for June, July and August
ADMINISTRATION ITEMS
13. Approved appointments to the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC)

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS
14. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
15. Accepted correspondence log
16. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
   a. Letter to the Santa Cruz County Public Works Department regarding the Aptos Village Project Bus Stop Replacement from the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC)
17. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues
18. There were no information items.

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

   Commissioner Leopold reported that as the RTC representative to the Coast Rail Coordinating Council he attended the regular meeting in Marin County and was able to ride the Smart Train before it was made open to the Public and found it interesting to hear what hurdles there were before being able to open for service. Commissioner Leopold thought it was good information and suggested to the RTC’s Executive Director to really look at the issues of rail, trail, and funding and to take the next 2.5 years to take a deep dive into these different aspects in order to make a balanced presentation.

20. Director’s Report – oral report

   George Dondero gave an update on the Mar Vista Bike and Pedestrian Over Crossing. Staff and design consultants have held several meetings with residents and stake holders to look at some of the elements of aesthetics, cost efficiency, design measures as well as to enhance accessibility, safety and minimize impacts to parking. He noted that the Notice of Preparation for the Environmental Impact Report for the north segment of the rail trail is scheduled to be released next week; the City of Santa Cruz is accepting poems to be set in cement on the rail trail with a deadline of October 1st.

   He also reported that on August 24-26, RTC’s Executive Director and Deputy Director Luis Mendez joined 60 other community members; elected officials and business owners for a three-day, two-night tour of Bay Area cities with the intent to listen and learn about how these cities have re-invested in their infrastructure to build community and to understand success stories in building
affordable housing and the supporting role played by a robust public transportation system in these areas. This tour was sponsored by Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Leopold noted the change of dates for the upcoming Unified Corridor Study workshops.

21. Caltrans Report

Aileen Loe, District 5 Deputy Director, offered congratulations to Metro for receiving funding of over $200,000 for the purchase of a battery electric bus as one part of the allocation of funding to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Caltrans will be performing a variety of Fix It First projects, a large scale improvement list of projects to improve infrastructure.

Commissioners discussed Caltrans projects in the south county

22. Visualizing Sustainable Transportation

George Dondero welcomed a new planner to the RTC team, Anais Schenk. Anais Schenk presented her report on the Visualizing Sustainable Transportation Project a project funded by a Caltrans grant for Sustainable Communities that focuses on engaging the community and the plan to use Owl viewers in different locations in Santa Cruz County as a means to engage and survey the public.

Commissioners discussed if there will be disclaimers stating that Owl viewer images are not necessarily a definite, decided plan. Also discussed was how the locations for the viewers are determined, the coordination within the cities and if they will be wheelchair accessible or available to people of different heights.

Planner Schenk noted that the viewers will be in position for 6 weeks and will be operational 24/7 and will include short term and long term visual examples.

Brian Peoples, Trail Now offered concerns about misinformation to the general public from the viewers.

Becky Steinbruner, Aptos Resident appreciated the viewers and noted the lack of cars shown in the example and had concerns as to their accessibility to people of different heights as well as the handicapped. She hoped that the viewers will remain within the county to be used in different sites after this project.

Gail McNulty, Greenway, gave praise as well as concerns if the viewers might present a slanted view of the future.

Executive Director Dondero responded to some of the Commissioner’s and Public Comments that these are to help the public see possibilities presented
by the RTC, to aid public involvement and while he is not sure about the viewers’ accessibility he pointed out that the views will also be available via software as a mobile app. As a pilot project it was not originally intended to be part of the Unified Corridor study but it just happened to come into play at the same time.

Commissioner Rios and McPherson left the meeting. Commissioner Alternate Virginia Johnson stepped in for Commissioner McPherson.

23. 2018 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Call for Projects

Senior Transportation Planner, Rachel Moriconi, presented her report and the action item to approve the Call for Projects reiterating that the RTC is responsible for selecting projects to receive certain state and federal funding sources. New for this year is SB1 which includes new funding that will go out by formula, including supplemental funds, and the local partnership program. The State Transportation Improvement Program has estimated 17 million dollars until 2023 available for projects. The RTC’s proposal for STIP Funds is due to CTC by December 15th, 2017.

Commissioners discussed if priority would be given to projects that the public can see happening, as well as maintenance of sidewalks.

**Alex Clifford**, CEO of Santa Cruz Metro, asked that when the RTC approves Item 23 that the State Transit Assistance (STA) funds not be included in the call for projects. Instead that should be referred to a committee to meet with Santa Cruz Metro staff and discuss how the money will be allocated.

**Becky Steinbruner**, resident of Aptos, thanked the Commission for the presentation of this process and expressed her concern that this funding could be used for projects that should be funded by developers, as in the case of the Aptos Village Project. She urged the RTC not to pay for any further funding of this project. She also stated that the bus station there has been relocated for no good reason except to benefit the developers and states that it is now questionable if this new bus stop is ADA compliant.

Commissioner Botorff made a motion to accept the staff recommendation without the STA funds and to direct RTC staff to meet with Santa Cruz Metro staff to work out some reasonable arrangement for STA funds and if that is not successful to develop an ad hoc committee to work out this funding. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bertrand

Commissioners Bertrand and Botorff volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee. If needed the ad hoc committee will meet before the next RTC meeting.

Deputy Director Luis Mendez stated that in the past, according to RTC staff understanding of state law, only SC Metro could qualify for STA funds. Now as a result of a state wide discussion over the past couple of years associated
with new law on STA, it has been clarified that other service providers may also qualify. Over the years RTC has been asked for funding from providers of these other services.

The motion was carried unanimously with Commissioners Friend, Chase, Coonerty, Caput, V. Johnson, R. Johnson, Leopold, Bertrand, Brown, Bottorff, Hagen voting “aye”.

24. Highway 1 Corridor Tiered Environmental Document-Status Report
Senior Transportation Planner, Kim Shultz presented his report to the Commission

Commissioner Johnson asked Aileen Loe, Caltrans Representative about studies on induced traffic. Loe replied that this is a complicated issue with no simple answers, suggesting that if the RTC wanted more information on this, that perhaps something could be put on an upcoming agenda. There were also questions on expediting this project. Planner Shultz stated that efforts to expedite the project are being made and that Caltrans recognizes that a significant portion of Measure D is for state highway projects, and they want to be a good provider of these projects. Also discussed was how much the future of transportation is informing our planning process so that the highway is equipped for the next century of transportation.

Rick Longinotti, from the Campaign for Sensible Transportation, called into question the legality of only considering three options in the EIR. Longinotti stated that unless other options are studied this is not a legal document. The other question raised by the comments in the EIR was that it concluded that it would have negligible improvement. Longinotti called into question spending money on a project that isn’t going to achieve the goals that have been set out for it, and if the alternatives are not also considered then there is no legally defensible document

Michael Saint, with The Campaign for Sensible Transportation, stated that aux lanes are not the answer to a sustainable transportation system. After spending 150 million dollars the work done will be obsolete in 3-5 years. He also referred to study from the US Department of Transportation from 2010 titled “Efficient Use of Highway Capacity Summary: A Report to Congress” which showed that more lanes for cars does not reduce congestion. He offered a handout with the website address of the study to the commissioners. 

Becky Steinbruner, resident of Aptos, said she would like to see a possibility of a monorail on Highway 1 which would allow people to see something going faster as well as bus on shoulder. She pointed out that Metro is stuck in the same traffic as cars, and since the bus is less convenient than taking a car, we have to overcome its inconvenience by making it faster. There are some members of the community who cannot take advantage of public transportation and there does need to be relief on Highway 1 for those people.

25. Adjourn to special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
The Regional Transportation Commission meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m. to the SAFE Meeting.

26. The RTC Reconvened at 11:32 a.m. to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission meeting and adjourned immediately at 11:33 a.m.

27. Next meetings

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Staff

**Attendees**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Saint</td>
<td>Sensible Transportation</td>
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<td>Barry Scott</td>
<td>Rio Del Mar Resident and FORT Board Member</td>
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<td>Erich Friedrich</td>
<td>MBAG</td>
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<td>Alex Yasbek</td>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
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<td>Becky Steinbruner</td>
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