1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

Members present:

Jacques Bertrand, Aileen Loe
Ed Bottorff, Randy Johnson
Sandy Brown, Virginia Johnson (alternate)
Greg Caput, Bruce McPherson
Cynthia Chase, Patrick Mulhearn (alternate)
Ryan Coonerty, Lowell Hurst (alternate)
Tony Gregorio (alternate), Mike Rotkin
John Leopold

Staff present:

George Dondero, Rachel Moriconi
Luis Pavel Mendez, Shannon Munz
Yesenia Parra, Fernanda Dias Pini

2. Oral communications

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation (CFST). CFST supports most RTC projects funded by Measure D revenues and is still strongly opposed to the auxiliary lane project. CFST also noted that SB1 provides funds for road maintenance no expansion and has moved us to more sustainable transportation options. CFST recommends moving funds from the auxiliary lane projects to mass transit to increase METRO ridership, and to focus more on possible uses for the rail corridor.
**Gail McNulty**, Santa Cruz County resident, Ms. McNulty stated that a train is unaffordable considering the current financial challenges faced by the county and its residents and that it will not alleviate traffic congestion.

**Marilyn Garret**, Santa Cruz County resident, discussed the need for greater funding for social services, including promoting public transportation and safe technology.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Handouts for Items 16 and 22.

*Commissioner McPherson left and was replaced by Commissioner Alternate Virginia Johnson.*

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Gail McNulty**, Santa Cruz County resident, asked the RTC to consider creating protected bicycle lanes when deliberating bicycle infrastructure and improvements on Highway 9, and for the RTC to not allocate any Measure D funds to rail repairs at this time.

**Mark Mesiti-Miller**, Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT), stated that he is impressed with Progressive Rail’s business plan, encouraged the RTC to continue negotiations with them, and spoke on news that Mountain Propane located in Felton has proposed a propane distribution facility that is being built in Watsonville.

Commissioner Rotkin moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Chase, Coonerty, Johnson, Leopold, and Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting “aye.”

**MINUTES**

4. Accepted draft minutes of the January 18, 2018 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

5. Approved draft minutes of the February 1, 2018 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

**POLICY ITEMS**

*No policy items*
PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

6. Approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 Cap-and-Trade – Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) (**Resolution 15-18**)  

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

7. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues  
8. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues and distribution

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

*No administration items*

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

9. Accepted monthly meeting schedule  
10. Accepted correspondence log  
11. Accepted letters from RTC Commissioners and staff to other agencies  
   a. Letter to Maura Twomey, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, regarding support for Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant for the Sustainable Transportation Measures Plan  
12. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues - *none*  
13. Accepted information items  

REGULAR AGENDA

14. Commissioner reports – oral reports  

Chair Leopold reported that study sessions that would discuss transportation topics such as: transit and housing relationship; rail-to-trail and rail banking; future of transportation financing and fares, equity and planning decisions, integrated planning transportation systems, future transportation trends, and first and last mile programs would be scheduled for future Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW) meetings. Chair Leopold also reported on a Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce trip on May 11, 2018 to the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail
Transit (SMART) which Commissioners were invited to join and plans to also visit trails.

15. Appointment of Commissioners to Budget and Administration/ Personnel (B&A/P) Committee – oral report

(John Leopold, RTC Chair)

Chair Leopold recommended the reappointment of Commissioners Friend, Coonerty, McPherson, and himself, and the appointment of Commissioner Bertrand to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee.

Commissioner Rotkin moved and Commissioner Brown seconded the motion to appoint Commissioners Friend, Coonerty, McPherson, Leopold and Bertrand to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Chase, Coonerty, Johnson, Leopold, Roktin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting “aye”.

16. Director’s report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on: study by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association on the key economic impacts of Senate Bill (SB) 1; the February 20, 2018 Self-Help Counties Coalition (SHCC) meeting in Sacramento; 2018 Gubernatorial elections and its impacts on high-level positions within the state government and transportation agencies; current effort to repeal SB1; that members of the SHCC voted unanimously to provide $50,000 towards the ARTBA study; support of Proposition 69 (June 2018 ballot).

Mr. Dondero asked the Commission to pass Resolution 16-18 that acknowledged and celebrated RTC’s Fiscal Officer, Nzuzi (Daniel) Nikuna’s 25 years of service to the Commission and the Santa Cruz County community. Mr. Dondero also introduced Shannon Munz, RTC’s new Communications Specialist.

Mr. Dondero announced his retirement at the end of 2018.

Commissioner Rotkin moved and Commissioner Chase seconded the motion to pass Resolution 16-18 appreciating the services of Nzuzi (Daniel) Nikuna as Fiscal Officer of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission for the past 25 years. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Chase, Coonerty, Johnson, Leopold, and Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting “aye”.
17. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5 Deputy Director, reported on: changes in Caltrans leadership; semi-annual State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) funded programs in Santa Cruz County; and the February 27, 2018 letter from District 5 Director, Tim Gubbins, addressing comments and questions raised during prior RTC meetings.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for Caltrans; crosswalks on Main Street in Watsonville; the Highway 129 and Lakeview intersection roundabout project; Board of Equalization’s decision to not increase the gas-tax and its effect on scheduled projects and Caltrans activities.

18. Senate Bill (SB) 1 Updates and Positions

Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner, gave an update on the current status of SB1: the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 and the efforts to repeal it. She also discussed how SB1 has provided transportation funding for the local jurisdictions and included a list of projects which have been funded by it. Ms. Moriconi recommended that the RTC take an official position in support of Proposition 69, the California Transportation Taxes and Fees Lockbox and Appropriations Limit Exemption Amendment, which ensures SB1 revenues are not diverted for other uses by the state, and an official position opposing efforts to repeal SB1.

Commissioners discussed: Coordination with local jurisdictions to ensure their support for SB1 and Prop. 69; League of Cities and California State Association of Counties support for SB1 and Prop. 69; appreciation for additional resources received as a result of SB1; appreciation for Caltrans’ focus on highways surrounding Watsonville; appreciated staff and Caltrans for their service in ensuring safe roads.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Rotkin seconded staff recommendation to:

Support Resolution 17-18 adopting the following positions:

a) Support Proposition 69, the California Transportation Taxes and Fees Lockbox and Appropriations Limit Exemption Amendment, on the Statewide June 2018 ballot; and
b) Oppose efforts to repeal the “Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017” (Senate Bill 1), including the “California Voter Approval for Gas and Vehicle Taxes Initiative” (#17-0033).

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Chase, Coonerty, Johnson, Leopold, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting “aye”.
19. State Funding Updates

Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner, updated the Commission on the 2018 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other state funding programs. The 2018 RTIP included the RTC’s proposal for Santa Cruz County’s share of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Commissioners discussed: Grant for Highway 152 and the importance of transportation infrastructure resources.

20. Early Mitigation for Transportation Improvements in Santa Cruz County – MOU Approval

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on the recommendation to authorize the Executive Director to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local, state, and federal agencies responsible for coordinating watershed-based resource conservation with early mitigation planning for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County. The MOU is intended to bring interested agencies to discuss mitigation efforts early in the planning process, establish a framework for coordinated mitigation planning, and position all interested parties to take advantage of cost-effective mitigation strategies in a timely manner.

Chris Coburn, Executive Director of the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, also addressed the Commission on the importance of this MOU in creating a unique opportunity to protect and enhance regional natural resources while mitigating the environmental impacts of transportation projects.

Commissioners acknowledged the accomplishment to coordinate cooperation between so many agencies; the opportunity to restore Scott’s Creek; thanked all parties involved for their efforts; use of sediment removed from Parajo River; off-site evaluation of ecosystems and ensuring the most sustainable processes are followed; and how this is a time-saving effort when considering the usual lengthy mitigation process.

Marilyn Garret, Santa Cruz County resident, spoke on the need to restore and protect the region’s natural resources and asked if pesticides are still being utilized along roads for weed abatement.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Chase seconded the motion to authorize the Executive Director to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local, state, and federal agencies responsible for coordinating watershed-based resource conservation with early mitigation planning for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Chase, Coonerty, Johnson, Leopold, and Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting “aye”.
21. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

Deputy Director Luis Mendez reviewed the item to be discussed in closed session.

Gail McNulty, Santa Cruz County resident, thanked Commissioners Bertrand, McPherson, and Johnson for voting “nay” on Item 20 of the January 18, 2018 RTC meeting, Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Replacement Operator, and stated that the Unified Corridor Study (UCS) should be completed before any decision can be made regarding the rail corridor. Discussed progressive rail business practices in other parts of the country and its ties to the oil and gas industry.

Ryan Sanataro, Santa Cruz County resident, asked the RTC to negotiate a contract that would not limit its future options on how to best use the rail corridor and which would allow the RTC to adopt the recommendations provided by the UCS.

Commissioner Caput left and was replaced by Commissioner Alternate Gregorio.

Becky Steinbruner, Aptos resident, supports a rail option that would benefit and offer alternative transportation solutions to county residents, but wonders about the impact of increased freight services in the region expressed concern about what type of freight customers Progressive Rail might bring into the county considering their project in the Midwest has to do with fracking supplies. Ms. Steinbruner stated that there is a need to address storm damage on the rail corridor, that the RTC should decide on a rail operator cautiously, and that she would like to see trail construction started soon.

Barbara Roettger, Santa Cruz City Resident, stated that the Commission should wait for the UCS to be completed before making a decision on a rail operator, that the RTC should choose to bank the rails and questioned whether there would be enough funds to run the train.

Drew Glover, Santa Cruz City resident, is apprehensive of potential uses of freight train in the county and asked the RTC to ensure that a rail operator would not transport oil or noxious gases through the region. Mr. Glover suggested additional public information sessions that are not during typical work hours and that are broadcast to the community to ensure maximum public involvement. He also asked the Commission to wait for the completion of the UCS before negotiating a contract with a rail operator.

Bill Cook, Santa Cruz City resident, expressed that abandonment of the rail tracks is the only solution that will provide complete control of the corridor to county residents and that the Commission should not consider the rail option.

Mark Mesiti-Miller, Santa Cruz City resident, noted that according to the
California Coastal Commission, rail is more efficient and sustainable than trucks in moving freight, that a tourist train would add to the region’s economic growth, and that the RTC is currently obligated to provide a rail operator and some form of passenger service on the corridor.

**Nancy Connelly**, City of Santa Cruz resident, asked the commission to slow down the selection of a rail operator since it is currently a divisive issue in the community, to wait until the UCS is completed before reaching a decision, and to be transparent and to communicate as much as possible with the community at large.

**Marilyn Garret**, Santa Cruz County resident, asked the Commission to take the time to examine all the documentation provided, to ensure that the rail operator does not bring fracking or toxic gases to the region, and to protect the county’s natural resources.

**Diana Atamac**, Santa Cruz resident, stated that she does not oppose bringing rail service to the county but that not all tracks may be appropriate for both, freight and passenger, services. Ms. Atamac asked the Commission for clarification of how the tracks would be utilized by the rail operator and asked the Commission to take more time to consider all the implications before signing a contract with a rail operator.

**Jackie Nunez**, Santa Cruz County resident, asked the RTC to take the need to protect regional shores seriously and to slow down the negotiation process with the rail operator, to take a moment to look at all documentation, and to be as transparent as possible.

Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 10:41 a.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

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

Property: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
Agency Negotiator: George Dondero and Luis Pavel Mendez
Negotiating Parties: SCCRTC and Progressive Rail
Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

**OPEN SESSION**

The Commission reconvened in public session at 11:13 a.m.

24. Report on closed session

*Nothing reported*
25. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 5, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 15, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fernanda Dias Pini, Staff

Attendees:

Diana Atamac Greenway
Heather Adamson AMBAG
Chris Coburn RCDSCC
Nancy Connelly Save Our Shores
Bill Cook City of Santa Cruz Resident
Chris Corona City on a Hill Press
Marty Demane Greenway
Panagas DPateras Santa Cruz County Resident
Marilyn Garret Santa Cruz County Resident
Drew Glover Santa Cruz County Resident
Comsa McFarlane Santa Cruz County Resident
Gail McNulty Greenway
Mark Mesiti-Miller FORT
Jackie Nunez Greenway
Barbara Roettger Greenway
Ryan Sarnataro Santa Cruz County Resident
Janet Singer Santa Cruz County Resident
Michael Saint Campaign for Sustainable Transportation
Michael Singer Santa Cruz County Resident
Becky Steinbruner Santa Cruz County Resident
Nadene Thorne Santa Cruz County Resident