1. Roll call

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

Members present:

Jacques Bertrand  
Sandy Brown  
Randy Johnson  
Trina Coffman-Gomez  
Greg Caput  
Patrick Mulhearn (alternate)  
Andy Schiffrin (alternate)

John Leopold  
Virginia Johnson (alternate)  
Ed Bottorff  
Mike Rotkin  
Alieen Loe (Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

George Dondero  
Luis Pavel Mendez  
Yesenia Parra  
Grace Blakeslee  
Cory Caletti

Sarah Christensen  
Ginger Dykaar  
Fernanda Dias Pini  
Shannon Munz

Chair Leopold asked for a minute of silence to remember Live Oak resident and long-time member of the RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee, Kem Akol, who passed away on March 26, 2018.

2. Oral communications

Jack Carroll, Santa Cruz County resident, stated the importance of analyzing the impact rail service would have on traffic congestion on Highway 1 and that the Unified Corridor Study (UCS) should include the potential effects of rail in the region’s traffic issues.
**Becky Steinbruner**, Aptos resident, discussed a recent Public Records Request she submitted to the RTC asking for the Right-of-Entry Agreement between the RTC and the Aptos Village contractor and was disappointed at the amount of time it takes the RTC to provide requested documents. Ms. Steinbruner stated that there could be legal action from the owners of the Bay View Hotel, and also commented on the lack of public notice for the work being done.

**Diana Paniagua**, Watsonville High School student, shared that she became aware of the potential benefits of rail for county residents by working with Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT) as part of her senior-year project, and stated that the rail would provide local teenagers greater access to transportation and accessibility to other parts of the region. Ms. Paniagua asked Commissioners to consider the rail’s benefits to the region’s youth when making a decision on the rail corridor.

**Michael Saint**, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, discussed the need for greater coalescence between environmental, economic, and political needs to ensure that sustainable development goals are pursued.

**Gail McNulty**, Greenway, stated that community members have doubts about Progressive Rail (PR) as the rail operator; that county residents need transportation solutions now; and that Measure D was passed with a promise to create transportation changes now.

**Matthew Zehniter**, Santa Cruz County resident, has concerns about the proximity of the train and loading locations to residences in Capitola and Pleasure Point, and stated that the Greenway trail proposal has great potential.

**Barry Scott**, Aptos resident, stated that the goal of rail transit and alternative modes of transportation is to give residents a choice in transportation and mentioned that Caltrans’ 2018 State Rail Plan includes shifting mode share from highways to railways.

**Kathy Marino**, Santa Cruz County resident, thanked the RTC for diligently exploring the best way to utilize the rail trail, urged that the rail corridor be preserved, and stated that a rail and trail is feasible and that taxpayer money would be wasted if the tracks were removed.

**Jeremy**, Santa Cruz County resident, noted that traffic congestion is a common concern amongst county residents and encouraged the Commission to think about using the corridor as a trail in the immediate present while making the upgrades and repairs necessary to leave the rail corridor as an option for the future.

**Brett Garrett**, Santa Cruz County resident, stated that Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) would meet the requests of the transit and trail side of the community,
and encouraged Commissioners to look at Clearwater, Florida, as an example of a PRT project where Beach Trans is hoping to build a privately-funded PRT.

Corinna McFarland, Live Oak Resident, stated that she supports rail banking and using the corridor for bicycles and new forms of transit, such as IBM’s Olli.

Garry Linstrom, Aptos Resident, supports a rail and trail and proposed that the RTC consider monorail, electric rail, or a gondola-style of transportation system to address freight needs but to also minimize the train noise pollution in residential areas.

Tom Hagle, Live Oak resident, stated that residents of his community would like to see smaller buses that would service residential areas, especially the elderly. Mr. Hagle asked the Commission to make the corridor a safe alternative to the congested streets, where children could use a wide trail to get to and from school.

Manu Koenig, Santa Cruz, stated that the City of Santa Cruz’s trail project is not a complete trail because it does not use the entire right-of-way. Mr. Koenig stated that the current highway system can be fixed by implementing toll lanes and programs that encourage carpooling, and based on his survey of Watsonville residents, they would not use the train to commute because they need their vehicles.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Replacement page for Item 13 and additional pages for Item 26.

CONSENT AGENDA

Becky Steinbruner, Aptos resident, stated that the March 1, 2018 RTC meeting minutes did not capture her comment correctly and requested that they be corrected noting her comment to state, that she had concerns about what type of freight Progressive Rail might bring into the county considering their project in the Midwest has to do with fracking supplies.

Eduardo Montesino, Santa Cruz METRO, reported that the Santa Cruz Metropolitan District (METRO) currently goes above and beyond the criteria outlined in the Senate Bill 1236 regarding entry-level commercial driver training.

Commissioner Rotkin moved and Commissioner Alternate Shiffrin seconded the motion to accept the consent agenda with a change to the March 1, 2018 RTC meeting minutes to correct Ms. Becky Steinbruner comments. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Johnson, Leopold, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates V. Johnson, Mulhearn, and Schiffrin voting “aye.”
MINUTES

4. Accepted draft minutes of the February 13, 2018 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee

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

6. Accepted draft minutes of the March 8, 2018 Budget, Administration and Personnel Committee special meeting

7. Approved draft minutes of the March 15, 2018 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

No project and planning items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

8. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues

9. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues and distribution

10. Approved amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 Budget & Work Program and the Measure D 5-year Program of Projects for the Rail Corridor (Resolution 18-18)

11. Approved resolution for Vegetation Control and Drainage Maintenance for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Right-of-Way (Resolution 19-18)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

12. Approved Bicycle Advisory Committee membership appointments

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

13. Accepted monthly meeting schedule

14. Accepted correspondence log

15. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
a. February 26, 2018 letter from RTC staff to California State Senator William Monning regarding RTC’s support for Senate Bill 1236 – Entry-Level Commercial Driver Training

16. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues

17. Accepted information items

   a. Joe Mathews, “Losing my children to California’s overcrowded train”, The Bakersfield Californian, February 22, 2018
   b. Glen Martin, “A train going nowhere: how we can get U.S. infrastructure on track?”, California Magazine, February 22, 2018
   c. Ezra Klein, “America’s 3 infrastructure problems”, Vox.com, February 22, 2018

REGULAR AGENDA

18. Commissioner reports – oral reports

   Commissioner Bottorff discussed the trip that he and Executive Director George Dondero took to Lakeview, Minnesota between March 18th – 21st, 2018 to meet, interview, and evaluate Progressive Rail (PR) and to review their effectiveness in performance. Commissioner Bottorff and Executive Director Dondero did a concise evaluation of PR’s operations by seeing all assets of its business, including meetings with: PR’s banker, the mayor of Lakeview, WI, clients, customers, and with economic development staff of different counties. The trip allowed Commissioner Bottorff and Executive Director Dondero to gain insight into what PR would be like as a potential operator in Santa Cruz County and into its impact on the communities it serves. Commissioner Bottorff stated that while he and Mr. Dondero did not meet with anyone who opposed PR, Lakeview’s Mayor shared with them some of the concerns that had been brought up by community members.

   Commissioner Johnson stated that it would have been useful for the RTC representatives to have met with community members who oppose PR while on their trip to discuss some of the adverse affects that PR has had on their community and to obtain a first-hand account of potential issues brought on by PR.

19. Director’s report – oral report

   George Dondero, Executive Director, reported on the progress of the Unified Corridor Study (UCS), he noted that the consultant has hired a sub-consultant, Strategic Economics Group, to work on the economic element of this project, by gathering information on existing and potential future economic activity within the project area. The information collected will be used to determine potential relative economic benefits associated with the transportation projects
in various different scenarios that are being evaluated in Step 2 of the Scenario Analysis.

Executive Director Dondero also stated that he and Commissioner Bottorff gained insight into Progressive Rail (PR) during their trip by observing PR’s impacts on its community, that PR is a dynamic company that delivers what it promises, and that PR invests in the communities that it serves, including helping local businesses flourish.

20. Caltrans report

Aileen Loe, Caltrans Deputy District 5 Director, reported that Caltrans places a special spotlight on safety during April by honoring the 188 Caltrans workers who were killed on the job. On April 26, 2018, a memorial service will be held on the west steps of the Capitol and District 5 will hold similar memorials in its office. Deputy Director Loe stated that safety is Caltrans’ top priority and that it is always looking for innovations and equipments to improve worker safety but that Caltrans asks and relies on system users to take special care when driving through work zones or in the proximity of maintenance workers.

Deputy Director Loe also reported that Caltrans is getting ready and working hard on the commitments and investments funded by Senate Bill (SB) 1.

Commissioners discussed: The status and timeline for the Highway 129/Carlton Road Intersection Improvement and the Highway 152/Americans with Disability Act (ADA) projects; funding availability for safe routes to school projects; and timeline for funding decisions.

Becky Steinbruner, Aptos resident, discussed the Aptos Creek bridge on Soquel Drive and Spreckels Drive and the need to address the cracks and place load limits on this 90-year old bridge. Ms. Steinbruner stated that truck traffic has increased over the bridge and urged Caltrans to make safety recommendations to the County. She also inquired about the safety aspects of the State Park Drive and Highway 1 interchange, stating that it is a hazardous crossing, and that a center turn lane on the State Park exit would improve safety for Seacliff residents.

21. On-Call Engineering Services for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Corridor

Sarah Christensen, Senior Transportation Engineer, presented the staff report requesting approval of a list of on-call engineering firms for civil engineering, structural engineering and inspections, and construction management to assist with the various needs within the Santa Cruz Branch Line right-of-way, and also requesting authorization of contracts with listed engineering firms for a total of up to $500,000 for inspections, analysis, and recommendation of work for bridges, culverts, and other infrastructure.

Commissioners discussed: Consulting services offered by Rail Pros; whether
funds should be allocated to maintaining and repairing the rail corridor before the Unified Corridor Study (UCS) is completed; study of the trestles and state of infrastructure; Capitola trestle inspection timeline and the inspector; whether the previous inspections addressed the foundations in the creek; Measure D funding of UCS and Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) repairs and maintenance; communicating the inspection schedule to the Capitola Mayor and City Council when available; Progressive Rail’s inspections and engineering reports of bridges; RTC’s repairs and maintenance goals and the timeline to accomplish these goals; need for a robust engineering report to know what repairs are needed; the timeframe, as a Commission, to get these repairs done to get the line to at least a Class 1 level; the timeline for the inspections, calculations, design, and the suggestions for the engineers; compliance with Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirements.

**Gail McNulty**, Greenway, stated that the more time, money, and energy that goes into repairing the rail road infrastructure, the less likely that a non-rail option will be considered. Ms. McNulty asked the Commissioners to wait until the UCS is completed before making a decision. She also asked that RRM consulting be removed from the list of on-call consultants and discontinued from further consideration by the RTC for future projects.

**Barry Scott**, Aptos resident, stated that the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line is an active rail line, with freight customers, and that it is the RTC’s responsibility to take care of this asset.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve:

1. The list of on-call engineering firms for civil engineering, structural engineering and inspections, and construction management to assist with the various needs within the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way; and
2. The resolution (20-18) authorizing contracts with on-call engineering consultants on the approved list for a total of up to $500,000 for inspections, analysis, and recommendation of for work bridges, culverts, and other infrastructure.

The motion passed with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Leopold, McPherson, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates V. Johnson, Mulhearn, and Schiffrin voting “aye” and Commissioner Johnson voting “nay.”

*Commissioner Johnson left the meeting.*

22. Final Draft 2040 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Ginger Dykaar, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the Final Draft 2040
Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) which describes the existing transportation system, forecasts the amount of funding anticipated for transportation projects over the next 22 years, identifies transportation programs and projects to address the region’s needs, and includes a performance analysis for how well the plan advances RTC goals.

Commissioners discussed: That this document is still a draft and changes can still be made; that the document has been updated to reflect how much Senate Bill 1 funding is attributed to projects; questioned how much funding would be lost if SB1 were repealed; commended RTC staff on their work and the thoroughness of this document; improvements made to the RTP since 2014 that had a greater focus on sustainability, laid the groundwork for Measure D, and will impact the county’s transportation infrastructure; the RTP provides insight into the region’s transportation; and that it is a product of multiagency cooperation and staff knowledge, and it will be a useful tool to gauge the county’s transportation goals and achievements.

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, asked Commissioners to focus on mass transit options, that will increase efficiency, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and decrease traffic congestion.

Gail McNulty, Greenway, discussed how funding for transportation projects remain an issue despite the recent infusion of funding and stated that it is imperative for the RTC to focus on realistic, achievable solutions to the region’s transportation issues.

Barry Scott, Aptos resident, stated that Measure D funds were described in the last TPW meeting as a way to leverage funds to rebuild or modify the Capitola crossing bridge trestle and integrate a bicycle and pedestrian path, and that the Caltrans State Rail Fund is designated to provide substantial funding to rail projects in the state.

Commissioner Alternate Schifferin moved and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to review and accept the final draft 2040 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan. Motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Leopold, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates V. Johnson, Mulhearn, and Schriffin voting “aye.”

23. Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 proposed budget

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, presented the proposed FY 2018-19 budget and work program for the RTC which includes oversight of the Highway 1 projects, continuation of on-going RTC projects and programs, and implementation of Measure D funds. Mr. Mendez noted that the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee reviewed and recommend approval of this proposed budget.
Commissioners discussed: the total figure for the operating reserves and reserve policy; importance to have reserves when considering unpredictable inclement weather; funding for the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO).

**Gail McNulty**, Greenway, asked Commissioners to focus on short-term, achievable projects because the economic future is uncertain.

Commissioner Roktin moved and Commissioner Coffman-Gomez seconded the motion to:

1. Adopt the resolution (21-18) approving the proposed FY 2018-19 RTC budget;
2. Direct staff to initiate a study of RTC reserves; and
3. Direct staff to request information from Caltrans on how to improve congestion data for Highway 17.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Leopold, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates V. Johnson, Mulhearn, and Schiffin voting “aye.”

24. Review items to be discussed in closed session

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

**Gail McNulty**, Greenway, discussed Progressive Rail’s attempt to close a public road in Eagle Point, WI., and the community’s concern about the impact that road closure will have on local traffic and emergency vehicle routes. Ms. McNulty asked Commissioners to end negotiations with Progressive Rail.

**Mark Lee**, District 5 resident, expressed support for Gail McNulty’s comments.

**Barry Scott**, Aptos resident, asked the public to trust the RTC’s staff’s professional expertise on this matter and that the rail provides potential for modern, clean, electric transit.

**Kathy Marino**, Santa Cruz County resident, thanked the Commission for surveying the community served by Progressive Rail and for looking at facts related to the rail corridor.

**Michael Kay**, Santa Cruz County resident, opposes Progressive Rail and rail in general. Mr. Kay stated that the corridor would be better utilized as a trail with active transportation; that the corridor is too narrow for both rail and trail and past tourist trains were unsuccessful.

*Commissioner Caput left and was replaced by Commissioner Alternate Gregorio.*
Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 11:10 a.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

25. **CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATIONS** pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6

   Commission Negotiators: George Dondero, Yesenia Parra, Lozano Smith Attorneys at Law
   Bargaining Unites: RTC Association of Middle Management (RAMM) and Community of RTC Employees (CORE)

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 Pavel Mendez
   Negotiating Parties: SCCRTC and Progressive Rail
   Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

**OPEN SESSION**

The Commission reconvened in public session at 12:45 p.m.

27. Report on closed session

   *Nothing reported*

28. Next meetings

   The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 2018 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 19, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Scotts Valley Council Chambers, One Civic Drive, Scotts Valley, CA.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fernanda Dias Pini, Staff
Attendees:

Heather Adamson  Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
Nadene Thorne  Santa Cruz County Resident
M.T. Ragspaie  Santa Cruz County Resident
Mark Mesiti-Miller  Friends of the Rail and Trail
Mike Kaye  Santa Cruz County Resident
Lee Otter  Santa Cruz County Resident
Glenn Saltz  Santa Cruz County Resident
Diana Paniagua  Friends of the Rail and Trail
Gilberto Marinez  Friends of the Rail and Trail
Catherine Marino  Friends of the Rail and Trail
Michael Saint  Campaign for Sustainable Transportation
Jack Carroll  Santa Cruz County Resident
Thomas Hiltner  Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District
Matt Zehniter  Greenway
Tom Haid  Greenway
Corina McFarlane  Santa Cruz County Resident
Paul Elerick  Santa Cruz County Resident