MINUTES
Thursday, August 02, 2018
9:00 a.m.

Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, Suite 450
Watsonville, CA

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am

Members present:

Jacques Bertrand  Virginia Johnson (alt.)
Ed Bottorff    Randy Johnson
Sandy Brown    John Leopold
Greg Caput     Mike Rotkin
Trina Coffman-Gomez  Kelly McClendon (ex-officio)

Staff present:

George Dondero  Cory Caletti
Luis Mendez     Sarah Christensen
Yesenia Parra   Fernanda Dias Pini
Shannon Munz

2. Oral communications

Clay Kempf, Executive Director of the Seniors Council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, lauded the use of Measure D funds to provide transportation for seniors to attend classes that help address the challenges of loneliness in the senior population.

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, stated that the auxiliary lanes projects on Highway 1 will not solve the congestion problem; asked for the RTC to consider climate change issues; and to pursue solutions that move people away from single occupancy travel.

Lowell Hurst, Mayor of Watsonville, praised commuters who use transit and alternative modes of transportation.

Peter Stanger, Santa Cruz County resident, stated that bike lanes are needed on Beach Street and Freedom Boulevard and that more funding is needed to make biking safer in the county.
Gail McNulty, Greenway, wants to see efforts for achievable transportation solutions in the county; stated that Greenway supports continued freight operations in Watsonville; urges the commission to keep the door open for all transportation opportunities in the county; and stated that the studies being conducted should have measurable outcomes.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Replacement pages for Items 5, 12 and 14, add-on page for Item 12, and handouts for Items 20, 22, and 23.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Rotkin moved and Commissioner Bottorff seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Johnson, Leopold, Roktin, and Commissioner Alternate V. Johnson voting “aye.”

**MINUTES**

4. Accepted draft minutes of the June 11, 2018 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting

5. Approved draft minutes of the June 14, 2018 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

6. Accepted draft minutes of the June 12, 2018 Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee meeting

7. Accepted draft minutes of the June 21, 2018 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

**POLICY ITEMS**

8. Approved the revised Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Right-of-Way Leases, Licenses, Right of Entry and Encroachment Policy

**PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

No consent items

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

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

10. Accepted status report on Measure D projects, revenues and distribution

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

11. Approved rejection of claim from Diana Varcados
12. Approved Bicycle Advisory Committee membership appointments

13. Approved Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee membership appointments

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

14. Accepted monthly meeting schedule

15. Accepted correspondence log

16. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
   a. June 14, 2018 letter from Amelia Conlen, Chair of the Bicycle Advisory Committee to Steve Hammack, Interim Public Works Director, City of Scotts Valley regarding the Green Hills/Glen Canyon paving project
   
   b. July 2, 2018 letter from Veronica Elsea, Chair of the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to Lowell Hurst, City of Watsonville Mayor regarding the City of Watsonville’s Vision Zero Program and Pedestrian Safety Improvements
   
   c. July 13, 2018 letter from George Dondero, Executive Director to the California Department of Transportation Active Transportation Program (ATP) Grant Selection Committee supporting the City and County of Santa Cruz’s application for the Santa Cruz Rail Trail Segment 8 and 9 Construction Project
   
   d. July 19, 2018 letter from Veronica Elsea, Chair of the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to the California Department of Transportation Active Transportation Program (ATP) Grant Selection Committee supporting the City of Santa Cruz’s ATP application for the Westside Safe Routes to School and Gap Closure Project
   
   e. July 19, 2018 letter from Veronica Elsea, Chair of the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to the California Department of Transportation Active Transportation Program (ATP) Grant Selection Committee supporting the City and County of Santa Cruz’s application for the Santa Cruz Rail Trail Segment 8 and 9 Construction Project

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

18. Accepted information items
   a. Tony Barboza, “California hit its climate goal early – but its largest source of pollution keeps rising”, Los Angeles Times, June 22, 2018
REGULAR AGENDA

19. Commissioner reports – oral reports

Commissioner Bertrand reported that on July 26, 2018, the Capitola City Council unanimously directed the Capitola City Attorney’s office to prepare a lawsuit challenging the Greenway Initiative. The City of Capitola will be seeking a judicial declaration that the measure is legally invalid and an order directing that it not be placed on the November ballot.

Commissioner Coffman-Gomez reported that freight trains have started moving again in Watsonville and commented on the need to move stored freight cars which are impeding traffic view on Walker Street in Watsonville.

20. Director’s Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, announced that Progressive Rail filed with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and will be operating in the county as of August 16, 2018.

Mr. Dondero reported that the RTC sent a comment letter to the Capitola City Council that is consistent with the Council’s view regarding the citizen ballot initiative.

He also stated that the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) of the North Coast Rail Trail Project is expected to be released in early August and includes a 45-day public review period; a news release will be sent out and public meeting dates will be published.

Mr. Dondero also reported that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) will conduct a groundbreaking ceremony at the site of a soon to be new train station, which will accommodate the extension of commuter rail service from San Jose into Salinas.

Mr. Dondero welcomed Benjamin Wolfe as the new RTC Senior Accountant.

21. Caltrans report

Kelly McClendon, Caltrans District 5 Senior Transportation Planner, presented the District Director’s report and reported on Caltrans’ projects in Santa Cruz County.
Mr. McClendon announced Caltrans’ Local Partnership Formulaic program cycle 2 call for programs, which is administered by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and partially funded by Senate Bill (SB) 1.

He discussed the Low Carbon Transit Program, which targets disadvantaged and low income communities, with the purpose to reduce greenhouse gases emission and improvising transportation sustainability. He also noted that Santa Cruz METRO was awarded a grant for the Watsonville ZERO program. He announced the Watsonville safety and pedestrian improvement project designed to improve pedestrian mobility on Beach and Merchant Streets, scheduled for construction in late 2019.

Commissioners discussed: Cooperation with Caltrans and projects in Santa Cruz County; different crossing improvement projects in Watsonville; debris removal and vegetation control on Highways 1 and 17; Caltrans hazard reporting website, https://csr.dot.ca.gov/; and safety projects on Main Street.

Stanley Sokolow, City of Santa Cruz resident, discussed the dangers posed by debris on Highway 1 to cyclists and the need for maintenance on Highway 1.

Peter Stanger, Santa Cruz County resident, stated that the Pacific Coast Bike Route has unsafe bike lanes for cyclists to get onto Soquel Drive.

Steve Trujillo, City of Watsonville resident, asked that pedestrian and cyclist safety be addressed on East Lake Avenue.

Nancy Bilicich, Watsonville City Council, stated that it could potentially be dangerous to put a crosswalk on Highway 152 and asked if there are other options for pedestrian crossing in that area.

22. The Evolution of SMART – Guest Speaker Farhad Mansourian, General Manager, Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit

George Dondero, Executive Director, introduced Farhad Mansourian, General Manager of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART), and Debora Fudge, Chair of the SMART Board of Directors and Mayor of the town of Windsor, California.

Ms. Fudge provided a brief history and background for transportation planning in Marin-Sonoma Counties. Mr. Mansourian presented an interactive presentation on the Evolution of SMART.

Commissioners discussed: Rail and trail component of SMART; demographics of SMART users; cost per mile for SMART construction; SMART operating costs; local and state funding sources; service partnership with neighboring counties; congestion relief resulting from SMART operation; lessons learned in public outreach; transparency in project development and operations;
relationship between freight and passenger services; economic impacts as a result of SMART operations; fare revenue; and quiet zones.

Stanley Sokolow, Santa Cruz County resident, commented on the lower costs of public transit when compared to personal transportation.

Nancy Bilicich, Watsonville City Council, stated that the presentation gave her hope for transportation solutions for the region.

Greg Becker, La Selva Beach resident, asked how SMART reacted to the LPG tank cars adjacent to its tracks and if Senate Bill (SB) 1029 will mitigate this issue.

Manu Koenig, City of Santa Cruz resident, asked if it is possible to have a rail project without passing a ¼ cent sales tax and if the state would provide Senate Bill (SB) 1 funds without a sales tax. Mr. Koenig also asked about the cost and the capacity of a single train set, and the maximum capacity of the entire system.

Steve Trujillo, City of Watsonville resident, stated that a rail system similar to SMART is needed in the region.

Mark Mesiti-Miller, Friends of the Rail Trail, asked what is the average trip length (miles-traveled) that a rider travels on SMART; whether SMART has met or exceeded its goals for ridership and revenue; what are the three most common complaints that SMART receives; and if there are other ways to fund train systems other than sales taxes.

Robert Stevens, Aptos resident, asked how many people ride the train on average.

Gail McNulty, Greenway, inquired about the SMART train ridership demographics, and how would a similar rail system create opportunity and freedom for those who need it most in Santa Cruz County.

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, asked Mr. Mansourian’s opinion as to whether it is better for the transportation agency to be the freight rail operator or to contract an operator.

Peter Stanger, Santa Cruz County resident, questioned whether workers would rather pay a smaller fee to use METRO buses or a higher fee to ride a train.

Lowell Hurst, City of Watsonville Mayor, stated that he witnessed how the SMART rail system improved mobility for many seniors and disabled citizens.
Felipe Hernandez, Watsonville City Council, commented on the need for transportation between North and South County and stated that public transit will lead to fewer cars on the roads.

23. Implementing Trail and Transit Corridors: Creating Community Connections, not Conflicts – Guest Speaker Kurt Triplett, City Manager, City of Kirkland, Washington

George Dondero, Executive Director, introduced Kurt Triplett, City Manager of the City of Kirkland, Washington.

Mr. Triplett gave an interactive presentation on the Interim Trail in the Cross Kirkland Corridor.

Commissioners discussed: Trail and rail implementation; discussed alternative future modes of transit on trails; community outreach; project impact on residents; trail corridor as a transit alternative; City of Kirkland plans for transit implementation along its trail corridor; challenges of mitigating divergent opinions within a community; and funding from private industry.

Stanley Sokolow, City of Santa Cruz resident, stated that if the RTC followed the plan to have at least 10 feet wide trails, we could be as successful as Kirkland. Mr. Sokolow also stated that a fixed-rail elevated transit solution should have been studied as part of the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS).

Peter Stanger, Santa Cruz County resident, appreciated the presentations and stated that the county needs transit solutions.

Brett Garrett, Santa Cruz County resident, stated that he supports personal rapid transit; that the UCS should have explored more scenarios, including fixed guideway transit which could partially answer the issue of fare box recovery.

Robert Stevens, Aptos resident, commented that a trail is inexpensive; can be implemented quickly; and can work with buses. He also stated that rail banking is the solution that will allow for all options for the corridor to remain open.

Silvia Morales, City of Watsonville resident, stated that she supports the possibility of a trail connecting the county and that it would provide a solution for her children to commute to and from school.

Felipe Hernandez, City of Watsonville Council Member, asked if the City of Kirkland would do anything differently if given a chance to redo its corridor project; if a 10-16 foot wide trail is safe for daily use; and how many cars would be taken off the highway by using the trail.
**Gail McNulty**, Greenway, asked for future speaker events to be held in the evening; and stated that it is important to consider innovations in transportation technology.

24. Review items to be discussed in closed session

   No comments given.

   Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 12:52 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

25. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION Government Code section 54956.9(d)(1)

   Name of case: Santa Cruz County Greenway vs. Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

**OPEN SESSION**

Commissioners reconvened in open session at 1:30 p.m.

26. Report on closed session

   No report.

27. Next meetings

   The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 16, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Watsonville, CA.

   The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fernanda Dias Pini, staff
Attendees:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ally Arnold</td>
<td>Sierra Club</td>
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<td>David Casterson</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Howard Cohen</td>
<td>Saint Paul and Pacific</td>
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<td>John Collins</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Danielle Dorrian</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Candice Elliott</td>
<td>SC DTA</td>
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<td>Murray Fontes</td>
<td>City of Watsonville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gina Gallino Cole</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Tim Ghormley</td>
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<td>Pam Gleetsman</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Aurelio Gonzales</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Tami Grove</td>
<td>California Coastal Commission</td>
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<td>Peter Haworth</td>
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<td>Felipe Hernandez</td>
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<td>Peggy Kenny</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Roy Lave</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Kirsten Liske</td>
<td>Ecology Action</td>
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<td>Linda Locklin</td>
<td>California Coastal Commission</td>
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<td>Will Menchine</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Mark Mesiti-Miller</td>
<td>Friends of the Rail and Trail</td>
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<td>Kate Minott</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Lee Otter</td>
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<td>Gary V. Plomp</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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<td>Michael Saint</td>
<td>Campaign for Sustainable Transportation</td>
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<td>Jenny Sarmiento</td>
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<td>Janie Soito</td>
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<td>Stanley Sokolow</td>
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<td>Nadene Thorne</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Van Brink</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graciela Vega</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County resident</td>
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