



**Santa Cruz County Regional  
Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, March 7, 2019**

**County Board of Supervisors  
701 Ocean St.  
Santa Cruz CA 95060**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Members present:

Jacques Bertrand  
Ed Bottorff  
Sandy Brown  
Ryan Coonerty  
Jack Dilles (alt.)  
Aurelio Gonzalez  
Tony Gregorio (alt.)

Lowell Hurst (alt.)  
Randy Johnson  
Virginia Johnson (alt.)  
John Leopold  
Bruce McPherson  
Patrick Mulhearn (alt.)  
Aileen Loe (Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston  
Luis Mendez  
Yesenia Parra  
Sarah Christensen  
Grace Blakeslee

Cory Caletti  
Rachel Moriconi  
Shannon Munz  
Fernanda Dias Pini

1a. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

T. Brooke Miller, Legal Counsel, reviewed items to be discussed in closed session.

Commissioners adjourned to closed session at 9:07 a.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

1b. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION.

Initiation of litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4):  
One Case

- 1c. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION  
Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)

### **OPEN SESSION**

Commissioners reconvened to open session at 9:15 a.m.

- 1d. Report on closed session

T. Brooke Miller, Legal Counsel, reported that litigation was authorized by unanimous vote and further information as required by Government Code Section 54957.1 will be provided as appropriate.

2. Oral communications

*Chair Bottorff moved item to the regular agenda after Items 23 and 8.*

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Replacement pages for Item 8 and Handouts for Items 20, 23, and 24.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Chair Bottorff moved Item 8 to the regular agenda after Item 23.*

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Bertrand seconded the amended consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Coonerty, Gonzalez, Johnson, Leopold, McPherson, and Commissioner Alternates Gregorio, Hurst, and Mulhearn voted "aye."

### **MINUTES**

4. Accepted draft minutes of the December 8, 2018 Bicycle Advisory Committee minutes
5. Accepted draft minutes of the January 22, 2019 Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Coordination Committee meeting
6. Approved draft minutes of the February 7, 2019 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the February 12, 2019 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

**POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items*

**PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

8. Approve Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 Cap and Trade – Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) **(Resolution 17-19)**

*Item moved to the regular agenda after Item 23.*

9. Approved Regional Transportation Improvement Program Amendments **(Resolution 18-19)**

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

10. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
11. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues and distribution
12. Approved Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee member nominations
13. Approved Amendments to the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget and Work Program **(Resolution 19-19)**

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

*No administration items*

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

14. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
15. Accepted correspondence log
16. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies – *none*
17. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues – *none*
18. Accepted information items
  - a. January 28, 2019 letter from Aileen Loe, Caltrans Deputy District 5 Director of Planning and Local Assistance, to Guy Preston, RTC

Executive Director, providing an update of the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) for District 5

b. Glenwood Preserve Trail System Map

**REGULAR AGENDA**

19. Commissioner Reports – oral reports

*Chair Bottorff moved item to follow Item 2.*

20. Director's Report – oral report

*Chair Bottorff moved item to follow Item 19.*

21. Caltrans Report

*Chair Bottorff moved item to follow Item 20.*

22. Budget and Administration/ Personnel Committee Nominations

*Chair Bottorff moved item to follow Item 21.*

23. **9:30 a.m. PUBLIC HEARING** – Consideration of certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Proposed North Coast Rail Trail Project and Selection of the "Proposed Project" (Coastal Side) as the Preferred Alternative

Cory Caletti, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report.

*Commissioner Johnson left and was replaced by Commissioner Alternate Dilles.*

Commissioners discussed: whether the North Coast segment could proceed on its own without being connected with the remainder of the trail system, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST); proposed project timelines; impacts to funding; California Transportation Commission (CTC) funding; whether the certification of Final Environmental Impact Report preordains particular project outcomes; federal grant funding; and that the project will provide infrastructure improvements in the North Coast that will support its increasing population, provide bicycle facilities, and improve safety for all.

Jim Moose, Special Legal Counsel, stated that in respect with the larger trail system part of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST), the proposed project has independent utility and logical termini, and that the action to continue freight service on the rail right of way was a separate action from this project.

Chair Bottorff opened the Public hearing at 10:32 a.m.

**Robert Rodoni**, North Coast Farmers, stated that the crossings along the trail are critical to the operations of farms in the North Coast and asked that the RTC continue to work with the farmers to reach consensus.

**Brian Peoples**, Trail Now, stated that the Farmer's Plan allows for greater pedestrian access and addresses farmers concerns. He also stated that the staff recommendation will not meet the proposed deadlines. Mr. Peoples asked that the RTC work with the North Coast farmers and local property owners to reach a consensus on the project.

**David Van Brink**, Santa Cruz City, remarked that the claims made on the Sierra Club's March 5, 2019 comment letter are not supported by facts.

**Gillian Greensite**, Sierra Club, appreciated that some of the Sierra Club's concerns were addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) but stated that there are still concerns regarding the California Red Legged Frog; tree removal; closing of crossings and pesticide use. She noted that they are asking for a 3:1 mitigation for habitat loss and tree removal.

**Sheila Brannen**, California State Parks Santa Cruz District, commented on the California State Park's on-going partnership with the RTC and its collaboration in designing the project, which will bring beneficial recreation facilities to the area. Ms. Brannen supports the staff recommendation.

**Val Cole**, Santa Cruz County resident, stated that the change.org petition he created in support of the staff recommendation had obtained 456 signatures as of 9 a.m. this morning. Mr. Cole stated that this trail will provide safe recreation options on the North Coast.

**Barry Scott**, Aptos resident, supports the proposed plan and future use of the tracks for passenger rail service. Mr. Scott asked for the proposed plan to be approved and for the trail to be built soon.

**Tina Andreatta**, Aptos resident, supports the rail line, asked for the proposed project to be approved, and for expeditious construction of the trail. Ms. Andreatta also asked that the rail line be repaired so that it can be used as soon as possible.

**Sally Arnold**, Friends of the Rail and Trail, noted that there is overwhelming community support for the proposed plan and urged for it to be approved. Ms. Arnold stated that the proposed plan presents the safest, most economical, sustainable, and efficient option for the community.

**Erica Stanojevic**, Sierra Club, stated that the proposed project mitigation for impact to the California Red-Legged Frog and mature trees alongside the

tracks does not seem adequate and requested a 3:1 mitigation for habitat loss and tree removal.

**Janneke Straus**, Bike Santa Cruz County, stated that the proposed project has the most expedient construction timeline, is the safest, most environmentally sustainable, and has the best design. Ms. Straus asked for the proposed project to be approved.

**Marty Demare**, North Coast resident, urged for the Final EIR not to be certified and that parking along the trail be reexamined prior to the certification of an EIR. Mr. Demare stated that shoulder parking along Highway 1 is not safe or sustainable, and that it could set a dangerous precedent.

**Ian**, Felton resident, stated that the rail tracks, the trail, and the railroad provide many benefits to the community.

**Stephen Slade**, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, urged for approval of the staff recommendation, certification of the Final EIR, selection of the proposed project, and for the RTC to move forward to get this project built.

**Mark Mesiti-Miller**, Friends of the Rail and Trail, stated that the north coast farmers are an asset to the community, that they raised important concerns, but that those concerns do not present an impediment to certifying the Final EIR. Mr. Mesiti-Miller asked for the proposed project to be approved and the Final EIR to be certified.

**Ryan Sarnataro**, Live Oak resident, supports the staff recommendation because it will protect cyclists. Mr. Sarnataro asked that this segment not be used as a template for the remaining segments of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) as every section of the trail will have its unique needs and requirements.

Public Hearing was closed at 10:55 a.m.

Commissioner comments: thanked the entire project team for their work and dedication on this project; that the vision for this project represents collaboration and partnership between federal, state, government agencies, local organizations, and private citizens; timeline for the RTC board to obtain feedback on effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures; feasibility of closing the Laguna Crossing; required monitoring timeline to achieve a successful mitigation outcome; and that the proposed project will improve safety and infrastructure for cyclists along Highway 1.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Leopold seconded the staff recommendation to adopt a **resolution (20-19)** to:

- a. Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report for the North Coast Rail Trail as being compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
- b. Select the "Proposed Project" (Coastal Side) as the preferred alternative; adopt the CEQA Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program with errata to address minor changes.

The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Coonerty, Gonzalez, Leopold, McPherson, and Commissioner Alternates Dilles, Gregorio, Hurst, and Mulhearn voting "aye."

8. Approve Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 Cap and Trade – Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP)

Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the staff report noting specifically the changes in fund allocation for this year.

**Ray Cancino**, Community Bridges, thanked Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) for their partnership and stated that the funding allocated to Community Bridges will allow it to acquire new electric buses to facilitate transportation of all county residents and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Kirk Ace**, Community Bridges Lift Line, thanked the RTC and METRO for continued support and collaboration. Mr. Ace spoke on the several LCTOP-funded Community Bridges/Lift Line projects that will improve transportation options throughout the county and the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Commissioner comments: lauded inter-agency collaboration in using these funds to achieve cleaner transportation options in the county and reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and addressing the needs of the elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged communities.

Commissioner McPherson moved and Commissioner Gonzalez seconded the staff recommendation to adopt **resolution (17-18)** designating the RTC's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 share of Low Carbon transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds (\$511,315) to Santa Cruz METRO and Community Bridges Lift Line projects, and authorize staff to sign and execute any agreements necessary to distribute LCTOP funds to Santa Cruz METRO and Community Bridges Lift Line.

The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Coonerty, Gonzalez, Leopold, McPherson, and Commissioner Alternates Dilles, Gregorio, Hurst, and Mulhearn voting "aye."

2. Oral Communications

**Gillian Greensite**, Santa Cruz County resident, spoke on the need for more easily readable and readily available bus schedules. She recommends an alert system similar to the one used in Australia.

**Ryan Sarnataro**, Live Oak resident, stated that a train option on the right of way is infeasible and unpopular, and that funding is available to build greenways.

**Michael Saint**, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation, urged for the RTC not to pursue the auxiliary lane project. Mr. Saint expressed that this project is an outdated form of transportation planning, it adds on to the issues that have led to the current climate crisis, it will not enhance the region's transportation system, and that it is not a long-term solution to the county's transportation problems.

19. Commissioner reports – oral report

*None*

20. Director's report – oral report

Guy Preston, Executive Director, reported on: Tracy New, incoming RTC Director of Finance and Budget; thanked Daniel Nikuna and Mary Jo Walker for their assistance during the recruitment of the Director of Finance and Budget; Legislative Program for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding; Measure D Revenue Projections; consideration of the Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration for Phase II of Segment 7 of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail and Coastal Rail Trail; an anticipated Cooperative Funding Agreement between the RTC and Caltrans for the preliminary engineering and environmental document for the next two sets of Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes on Bay Avenue/Porter Street to State Park Drive; Congratulated Luis Mendez, Deputy Director for his 25 years of service to the RTC, presenting him with a resolution.

Commissioner comments: appreciation for Mr. Mendez's work and dedication to the RTC.

**Brian Peoples**, Trail Now, commented that rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail line is not viable, does not have public support, and would damage historic trestles.

21. Caltrans report

Aileen Loe, District 5 Deputy Director, reported on: an upcoming outreach event for California strategic safety plan; positive impact of Senate Bill (SB) 1 funding for the state highway system and local road infrastructure; and Caltrans projects underway in Santa Cruz County.



Commissioner Comments: thanked Caltrans for their focus on South County.

*Commissioner Coonerty left the meeting.*

22. Budget and Administration/ Personnel Committee Nominations

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, presented the staff report.

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

*Commissioner McPherson left the meeting and was replaced by Commissioner Alternate V. Johnson.*

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Bertrand seconded a motion to concur with the Chair's nominations and appointments to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Bottorff, Brown, Gonzalez, Leopold, and Commissioner Alternates Dilles, Gregorio, Hurst, V. Johnson, and Mulhearn voting "aye."

24. Santa Cruz County Public Works Update – Oral Report

Matt Machado, Santa Cruz County Public Works Director and Deputy CAO, presented an update on the County of Santa Cruz's effort to operationalize its strategic plan with a focus on reliable transportation.

Commissioner comments: thanked the County for the focus on South County and that South County commuters are ready for traffic relief.

25. Review of items to be discussed in closed session.

Close session was not needed.

**CLOSED SESSION**

26. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – EXISTING LITIGATION pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1) for Santa Cruz Superior Court Case No. 18CV02101

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

Property: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Agency Negotiator: Guy Preston and Luis Mendez

Negotiating Parties: Regional Transportation Commission and the Hall Family Trust  
 Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

**OPEN SESSION**

28. Report on closed session

None.

29. Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main St., Ste. 450, Watsonville, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Fernanda Dias Pini, Staff

Attendees:

Barry Scott	Coastal Rail Santa Cruz
Ben Blom	BLM
Brian Peoples	Trail Now
Cathy Marino	Santa Cruz County Resident
Chris Schneider	City of Santa Cruz
Corina McFarlane	Santa Cruz County Resident
David Van Brink	Santa Cruz County Resident
Daryl Jordan	City of Scotts Valley
Erica Stanojevic	Sierra Club
Gillian Greensite	Sierra Club
Heather Adamson	AMBAG
James Sandoval	SMART Local 0023
Janneke Straus	Bike Santa Cruz County
Jessie Bristow	Swenson
Kirk Ance	Community Bridges/ Lift Line/ CTSA
Lee Otter	California Coastal Commission

Mark Mesiti-Miller	FORT
Marty Demare	Santa Cruz County Resident
Michael Saint	Campaign for Sustainable Transportation
Nina Donna	Santa Cruz County Resident
Ray Cancino	Community Bridges
Robert Rodoni	Farming North Coast
Ryan Sarnataro	Santa Cruz County Resident
Sally Arnold	Friends of the Rail and Trail
Sheila Brannen	California State Parks
Scott Marquez	METRO
Tina Andreatta	Santa Cruz County Resident
Val Cole	Santa Cruz County Resident
Virginia Wright	Santa Cruz County Resident
Wondimu Mengistu	METRO