



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, December 03, 2020
9:00 a.m.**

**NOTE: Teleconference
Community TV Zoom**

Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87181963718>

Dial-in: 1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 871 8196 3718

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Donna Lind (Alt)

Aurelio Gonzalez

Ed Bottorff

Bruce McPherson

John Leopold

Patrick Mulhearn (Alt)

Andy Schiffrin (Alt)

Greg Caput

Trina Coffman-Gomez

Derek Timm (Alt)

Sandy Brown

Scott Eades (Caltrans Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston

Luis Mendez

Fernanda Dias Pini

Rachel Moriconi

Krista Corwin

Yesenia Parra

Amy Naranjo

Grace Blakeslee

Ginger Dykaar

Sarah Christensen

Shannon Munz

Tracy New

Tommy Travers

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Oral communications.

Received public comment from:

Mark Mesiti-Miller

Sally Arnold, Board Chair Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Ben Vernazza

Keith Otto

Carey Pico

Johanna Lighthill

Barry Scott

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas.

A handout for item 19 and replacement pages for item 21 was posted to the RTC website.

CONSENT AGENDA

In response to public comment, Commissioners discussed the likelihood of losing federal grant money if the RTC were to make significant changes to the North Coast Rail Trail project at this point.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Gonzalez seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Brown, Coffman-Gomez, Caput, Leopold, McPherson, Bottorff, Gonzalez, and Commissioner Alternates Timm, Schiffrin, Mulhearn, and Lind voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Sally Arnold, Friends of the Rail and Trail

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the November 05, 2020 Regional Transportation Commission meeting.

5. Accepted draft minutes of the November 16, 2020 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting.

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items.

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

6. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend the North Coast Rail Trail Project Phase 1 and Phase 2 agreements with Central Federal Lands (CFL) for Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Funds (**Resolution 23-21**)
7. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend the agreements with the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (RCD) to increase grant funding to develop a Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) (**Resolution 24-21**)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

8. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
9. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues
10. Approved FY2020-21 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claim from the RTC for Administration, Planning, and Operations (**Resolution 25-21**)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

11. Approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Side Letter extensions
12. Approved calendar years 2017-2020 RTC salary schedules

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

13. Accepted monthly meeting schedule.
14. Accepted correspondence log.
15. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies -*none*
16. Accepted information items - *none*

REGULAR AGENDA

17. Commissioner reports

Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn extended his highest praise to RTC staff for securing grant funds from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and converting on the promise of the Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCIS). While the multi-modal project will provide some benefits to drivers, the real beneficiaries will be transit users, especially those from South County.

Chair McPherson emphasized the great teamwork of the RTC staff in obtaining the CTC funds.

18. Election of 2021 RTC Chair and Vice Chair

Chair McPherson announced that the recommendation of the subcommittee was to nominate Commissioner Gonzalez to the 2021 RTC Chair and Commissioner Brown to the 2021 RTC Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Coffman-Gomez made a motion and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to elect the nominees as recommended. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Gonzalez, Bottorff, McPherson, Leopold, Caput, Coffman-Gomez, Brown, and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn, Schiffrin, Timm, and Lind voting "aye."

19. Director's Report

Executive Director Guy Preston announced that the RTC and the City of Santa Cruz will host a virtual ribbon-cutting ceremony for Segment 7 Phase 1 of the Coastal Rail Trail on December 10 from 12:30-1:00 p.m. on Zoom. To participate in this online event, please go to <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/public-works/engineering/coastal-rail-trail>.

Mr. Preston also communicated that Caltrans recently completed the Project Initiation Documents (PID) for pedestrian and bicycle safety projects along Highway 9 and highway striping work throughout the San Lorenzo Valley. Members of the public can learn more about the planned improvements at a virtual townhall hosted by Supervisor McPherson's office on Wednesday, December 16th.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently awarded \$107.2 million to the RTC for the Watsonville to Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Project, which will fund improvements to Highway 1 and Soquel Drive. The overall grant award represents a combination of funds from the Solutions to Congested Corridor Program (SCCP) and the Local Partnership Program (LPP) and demonstrates the power of leveraging Measure D revenues to acquire additional funding for regional transportation projects.

The RTC and Caltrans have released the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Highway 1 Auxiliary Lane Project from State Park to Bay/Porter. Public comments will be accepted through January 11, 2021 and a virtual public hearing will be held on December 8, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Mr. Preston also gave an update on the status of federal stimulus legislation, a bipartisan effort which includes a potential \$45 billion in funds for transit, airlines, airports, buses, Amtrak, and the motorcoach industry.

Lastly, Mr. Preston announced that the terms of three members of the Commission will end with this December meeting of the RTC. Commissioner Trina Coffman-Gomez, Commissioner Ed Bottorff, and Commissioner John Leopold were honored and presented with certificates of appreciation for their years of public service with the RTC.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the dedication, integrity, and contributions of the three outgoing members of the RTC.

Received public comment from:
Brian Peoples

20. Caltrans Report

Deputy Director Scott Eades congratulated RTC staff on the grant award from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and highlighted the San Luis Obispo 46 Corridor and the 156 Castroville Boulevard interchange in Monterey County projects which were awarded funding as well.

Caltrans is seeking volunteers to participate in a 6-month study on a road user charge program to research possible funding sources as gas tax revenues diminish. Participants are eligible to receive \$100 in incentives. Learn more at CARoadcharge.com.

As the COVID-19 health emergency continues across the state, Caltrans is still issuing temporary permits to businesses to operate within the state highway right-of-way.

Mr. Eades announced intermittent ramp closures on Highway 1 from 9am-3pm through the end of the year for striping projects.

Commissioners discussed the importance of the Highway 1 projects; SB1 revenue concerns; appreciation for Measure D voters; near-completion of crosswalk near Watsonville High School; funding for Highway 152/Holohan/College Road projects.

21. Highway 1 41stAvenue to Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project Amendment to the contract with the County of Santa Cruz for Right of Way, and Agreement with County Parks & Recreation for Environmental Mitigation

Sr. Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen delivered the staff report. In response to Commissioners' questions, Ms. Christensen provided more information about the possibility of cost savings through volunteerism.

Received public comment from:

Ben Vernazza

Brian Peoples

Commissioner Coffman-Gomez made a motion and Commissioner Bottorff seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation (as amended by the replacement pages for item 21) to:

1. Authorize an amendment to the contract with the County of Santa Cruz for right of way for the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project between 41st Avenue to Soquel Drive interchanges which includes a new bicycle/pedestrian overcrossing at Chanticleer Avenue.
2. Authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the County of Santa Cruz for off-side mitigation plantings and riparian habitat at Anna Jean Cummings County Park.
3. Authorize an amendment to the Measure D 5-Year Program of Projects for Highway Corridors.

Commissioners discussed the cooperative efforts between the RTC and SC Metro to deliver this project. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Brown, Coffman-Gomez, Caput, McPherson, Leopold, Bottorff, Gonzalez, and Commissioner Alternates Timm, Schiffrin, Mulhearn, and Lind voting "aye."

Open session ended at 10:50 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting entered into closed session at 11:00 a.m.

24. Public Employee Performance Evaluation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957)

Position: Executive Director

25. Conference with Real Property Negotiators

(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8)

Properties: Santa Cruz County Branch Railway (Tracts I and II)

Negotiating Parties: SCCRTC, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, LLC, a subsidiary of Progressive Rail Incorporated and potential interested parties

Agency Negotiators: Guy Preston, Luis Mendez and Steve Mattas
Under Negotiations: Terms of License Agreement

26. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4))

Initiation of Litigation: One case

OPEN SESSION

The meeting reconvened in open session at 12:20 p.m.

RTC Counsel Steven Mattas reported the action from items 24 and 26. There was no reportable action for item 25.

In regard to item 24, the Executive Director's evaluation was completed, and the Commission's evaluation met the requirements under section 3.3. of the Executive Director's contract for the Executive Director to receive the step C increase. That vote by the Commission was 11-0 to complete the evaluation and to recognize the entitlement of the step C increase that is provided for in his contract.

In regard to item 26, the Commission voted 10-0 to authorize the initiation of litigation related to the drainage damage repair near Milepost 4.87 on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Commissioner Leopold did not vote on that item.

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

22. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. by teleconference.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. by teleconference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yesenia Parra
Administrative Services Officer

Attendees:

Keith Otto
Carey Pico
Johanna Lighthill
Alex Clifford
Barry Scott
Ben Vernazza
Brian (Trail Now)
Cory Caletti
David van Brink
Mark Mesiti-Miller (on Donna Murphy's computer)
Gina Cole
Jeanette
Kirk Ance
Lowell Hurst
Mark Johannessen
Michael Pisano
Michael Saint
Nadene Thorne
Paul H.
Sally Arnold, Friends of the Rail & Trail
Stephen Baxter
William Phillipps