



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, January 14, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

**NOTE: Teleconference
Community TV Zoom**

Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88044629112>

Dial-in: 1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 880 4462 9112

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Aurelio Gonzalez

Sandy Brown

Lowell Hurst (Alt)

Donna Lind (Alt)

Jacques Bertrand

Bruce McPherson

Manu Koenig

Andy Schiffrin (Alt)

Randy Johnson

Greg Caput

Mike Rotkin

Patrick Mulhearn (Alt)

Virginia Johnson (Alt)

Scott Eades (Caltrans Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston

Luis Mendez

Jason Thompson

Rachel Moriconi

Krista Corwin

Yesenia Parra

Brianna Goodman

Ginger Dykaar

Sarah Christensen

Shannon Munz

Tracy New

Tommy Travers

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Oral communications.

Received public comment from:

Ben Vernazza

Michael Saint

Barry Scott

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas.

A replacement agenda, replacement page for item 19, handout for item 25, handout for item 27, and a staff report for item 28 were posted to the website.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner McPherson made a motion and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda with the following modification: for item 10, the word "approve" amended to "accept." The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, R. Johnson, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Schiffrin, Mulhearn, and Lind voting Aye.

Received public comment from:

Craig Chatterton

Michael Saint

Keith Otto

MINUTES

4. Accepted draft minutes of the October 22, 2020 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting.
5. Accepted draft minutes of the September 16, 2020 Traffic Operations System Committee/Safe on 17 Task Force meeting.
6. Accepted draft minutes of the November 07, 2020 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting.
7. Approved draft minutes of the December 02, 2020 Regional Transportation Commission meeting.
8. Accepted draft minutes of the December 14, 2020 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting.

9. Accepted draft minutes of the December 17, 2020 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

POLICY ITEMS

10. Accepted 2021 State and Federal Legislative Programs.

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

11. Approved Highway 1 41st Avenue to Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project Construction Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans (**Resolution 28-21**)
12. Approved Construction Contract Award for FEMA Debris Removal along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Corridor (**Resolution 29-21**)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

13. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
14. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues
15. Approved authorizing the executive director to negotiate a new office lease with Sheldon Wiseman Commercial Real Estate and enter into a lease agreement if desired terms are reached.
16. Approved authorizing the executive director to enter into a contract with Iversen Design for RTC website upgrade and redesign.
17. Approved determination of railroad bridge ties and other material as surplus and authorize staff to sell the materials at a fair market price.

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

18. Approved appointment of District 2 voting member nomination to the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

19. Accepted monthly meeting schedule.
20. Accepted correspondence log.
21. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. December 4, 2020 letter from SCCRTC to the California Coastal Commission

22. Accepted information items – *none*

REGULAR AGENDA

23. Update on City of Santa Cruz Transportation Project from City of Santa Cruz Public Works Staff.

Assistant Director of Public Works and City Engineer from the City of Santa Cruz Chris Schneider delivered an update on transportation projects within the City of Santa Cruz.

Highway 1/Highway 9 intersection improvements: Construction scheduled to begin in April funded by STIP Exchange, the City's traffic impact fee program, and the gas tax.

Rail Trail: Phase 1, Segment 7 of the rail trail is now open to the public with striping and landscaping still to come. Phase 2 of the design is nearly complete with grant applications pending. The City is working closely with County Public Works on Segments 8 & 9 of the rail trail, and recently awarded a contract to RRM Design Group for complete design and environmental review.

Bike and pedestrian safety projects: Pacific Avenue improvements project is out to bid; paving and striping projects on River Street and Water Street; crossing improvement projects completed through Safe Routes to School and the Hazard Safety Improvement Program.

Assistant Director Schneider responded to Commissioners' questions about anticipated cost and funding secured for additional segments of the rail trail and additional details of planned Highway 9 improvements.

24. Commissioner reports – *none*.

25. Director's Report

Executive Director Guy Preston referred the Commission to his written report and announced that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) released its Short Line Railroad Improvement Program recommendation which included a \$285,000 grant to the RTC to rehabilitate the Pajaro River Railroad bridge, which will allow for the continuance of direct freight service into Watsonville.

26. Caltrans Report

Deputy District 5 Director Scott Eades announced the February 12, 2021 deadline for the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program and highlighted Caltrans' upcoming webinar offerings for public works contractors.

27. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study – Final Draft Report and Locally Preferred Alternative

Sr. Transportation Planner Ginger Dykaar delivered the staff report.

HDR Consultants Steve Decker, Alan Wang, Shannon Simonds, and Ms. Dykaar responded to Commissioner questions pertaining to: examples of high-speed trains; analysis of post-COVID ridership levels; lack of analysis of state-wide rail ridership; cost estimate methodology; electric train cost decreases; the process of updating the state rail plan; weighting of triple-bottom line as an analytical tool; assessment of likelihood of passing bond measure; state funding priorities; evolution of priorities for state funding decisions; analysis of Major Transportation Investment Study (MTIS) rail transit conclusions; development of business plan with selection of technology and station locations.

The public hearing opened at 10:47 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Mark Johannessen
Brad Read
Keith Otto
Ben Vernazza
Craig Chatterton
Bud Colligan
Bruce Sawhill
Sally Arnold
Jack Carroll
Rod Diridon, Sr.
Dianne Dryer
Matt Farrell
Robert Singleton
Nancy Faulstich
Kerry McDonald
Gina Cole

Micah Posner
Mark Mesiti-Miller
Tina Andreatta
Jim Jensen
Brian Peoples
Brett Garrett
Ryan Sarnataro
Joseph Haenlein
Barry Scott
Faina Segal
Buzz Anderson
Jim Weller
Saladin Sale
Jessica Evans
Kyle Kelley
Jeremiah Daniels
Jonah Paten
Michael Wool
Johanna Lighthill
Enda Brennan

The public hearing closed at 12:02 p.m.

Commissioners discussed: usefulness of studies; focus on fiscal responsibility and Measure D promises; necessity of bond measure to fund rail and political likelihood of passage; long-term transit use of the corridor; triple-bottom line assessment; appreciation for public participation; imperiled coastal environment; state/federal funding is far in the future; road diet as a strategy; viability of funding rail operations; insufficient analysis of railbanking/wide multi-use trail; future circumstances are still unknown; current question is whether preserve ROW for future rail service; lessons from SMART train; freight service in South County; equity/economic wellbeing for citizens of Watsonville.

Commissioner Alternate Hurst made a motion to accept the TCAA report. The motion was not seconded.

Commissioners discussed: freight and passenger rail service benefits South County and essential to getting state/federal funding; rail makes possible connections to Monterey, Gilroy, etc.; whole family transportation.

Commissioner Rotkin made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion. The motion carried with Commissioners Bertrand and Brown voting "no," and Commissioners R. Johnson, Koenig, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Schiffrin, Mulhearn, V. Johnson, and Lind voting "aye."

Commissioners discussed: democratic process imperative to move forward; prioritizing the long-term focus of the project over cost projections; Brown Act considerations allowing the opportunity for all interested members of the public to speak without hearing testimony repeated.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion to continue the discussion at next month's RTC meeting and to direct staff to provide an analysis of the Brown Act considerations relevant to this item (e.g. to answer the question "Can the Commission at its next meeting decide that people who spoke at this meeting cannot speak at the next meeting?"). Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion. The motion carried with Commissioner Alternate Lowell Hurst voting "no," and Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, R. Johnson, Caput, Koenig, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Mulhearn, G. Johnson, and Lind voting "aye."

28. Contract award for vegetation control along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, delivered the staff report and responded to Commissioner's questions regarding notification of vegetation control work.

Received public comment from:

Tom & Susan Haight
Barry Scott
Brian Peoples
Jack Brown
Rebecca Downing

Responding to questions, Deputy Director Mendez provided additional details about standards of practice and type of herbicide spraying intended to reduce risk of public exposure to toxic chemicals.

Commissioners discussed: utilizing mowing and community volunteers to clear brush; controversy of spraying herbicide within the County.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion to continue the item to the next meeting and request the county's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) committee to review the contract and provide their recommendations and for staff to return with a more well-developed public notification proposal. Commissioner Bertrand seconded the motion.

Commissioners discussed the RTC developing its own IPM plan; the urgency of the need for controlling vegetation on the corridor; challenges of delay;

possibility of using the non-hazardous chemicals and delaying action on the hazardous chemicals.

The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, R. Johnson, Caput, Koenig, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Schiffrin, Mulhearn, V. Johnson, and Lind voting "aye."

29. Report of items to be discussed closed session.

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas advised that there would be no report-out of discussions occurring in closed session.

The regular meeting adjourned at 1:34 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting entered into closed session at 1:40 p.m.

30. 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

OPEN SESSION

The closed session ended at 2:51 pm. There was no reportable action from the closed session.

31. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 04, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. by teleconference.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. by teleconference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yesenia Parra
Administrative Services Officer

Attendees:

831-336-5907

831-406-7780

831-462-4884

831-818-3660

Albi Romero

Alex Clifford

Ames

Amyr

Andy

Anne Easley

Annikaplan

Barry Scott

BB

Ben Vernazza

Benjamin Gonzalez Cueto

Bennet Williamson

Bill Martin

Bill Phillips

Bobfi

Brad Kava

Brad Read

Bud Colligan

Candace Elliott

Carla Malvini

Cary Bellaflor

Casey Beyer

Chloe Mietzel

Colleen Lunsford

Cory Caletti

Craig Chatterton

David Lieby

Deborah Culmer

Donna Hall (FORT)

Doug Hahn

Dustin Roth

Elena Longsworth

Enda Brennan

Eric Patterson

Evin Knight

FORT - <3 Rail@ Kristin Bradham

FORT - Allison

FORT - Bruce Sawhill

FORT - Charlie Vaske

FORT - Chris Weir

FORT - Faina Segal

FORT - Janie

FORT - Joel in Soquel

FORT - Sally Arnold

FORT Dianne Dryer

FORT Jim Weller

FORT Joseph Haenlein

FORT Mark Mesiti-Miller

FORT Steve Lustgarden

FORT - Golden Love

FORT - Jessica Evans

FORT - Robert Arko

FORT - Saladin Sale

Gina Cole -BSCC

Greg Becker

Gustavo Alfaro

Harold Mancusi-Ungaro

Heather Adamson, AMBAG

Heidi Owens

Howard Cohen

Isaac

Jack Brown

Jack Carroll

Jacque Van Metre

Jason Thompson

Jeanette

Jennifer Harris-Anderson

Jenny Heth

Jeremiah Daniels (FORT)

Jessie Bristow

Jilly S.
Joe Martinez
Johanna Lighthill
John Corgiat
Jon
Jonah Paten
Juan
Justin Burks
Justin Tucker
Kaya Brown
Keith Otto
Kendra Baker
Kerry McDonald
Kirk Ance
Kyle Gradinger
Kyle Kelley
Larry Detloff
LD Freitas
Lee S.
Linda Koval
Linda Wilshusin
Mark Johannessen
Mary Hesketh
Matt Farrell
Matt Marquez
Mavericks-time
Melissa Hartman
MH
Michael Laznibat
Michael Pisano
Michael Wool
Miguel
Mike Sherrod
Monte Atherton
Morgan Miller
Nadene Thorne
Nancy Faulstich
Nancy Y
Neal Woods
Neo Moreno
Patrick Mottram
Patrick Riley
Paula Bradley
Phil Boutelle
RAIL David Van Brink
RAIL Tane Tachyon (she/her)

RAIL – Doug
RAIL Feri Lieby
RAIL – Yes, Lani Faulkner
Rebecca Downing
Rebecca Rockom
Rob Tidmore
Robert Singleton
Rod Diridon, Sr.
Rosemary Sarka
RRM Design Group
Ryan Sarnataro
Sandy/Santa Cruz
Stanley Sokolow
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Stephen@santacruzlocal.org
Steve Walker
Steve Weisner
Tamela Harkins
Tammy
Tarah (Caltrans HQ)
Tara Gasta
Theodore
Tim Brattan
Timothy Randazzo
Tina
Tommy Travers
Trician Comings
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Andres Rebolgar
Anthony
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Aura
Brett Garrett
Brian (Trail Now)

Consuelo
Diego Inocencio
Dimitri Martinez
Donna Hall (FORT)
Dulce Ramirez-Rivera
Estepan
Gabriel Sanchez-Zavala
Giselle Gomez-Vega
Jimmy Medrano
Joe Martinez
Juan
Justin Tucker
Kailia
Kaya Brown
Luis Rocha
Maggie f
Neo Moreno
ProRailTrail Lani