



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission**

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**Draft MINUTES**

**Thursday, February 04, 2021  
9:00 a.m.**

**NOTE: Teleconference  
Community TV Zoom**

**Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82527850112>**

**Dial-in: 1 669 900 6833**

**Webinar ID: 825 2785 0112**

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Aurelio Gonzalez

Sandy Brown

Donna Meyers (Alt)

Patrick Mulhearn (Alt)

Jacques Bertrand

Eduardo Montesino

Manu Koenig

Bruce McPherson

Andy Schiffrin (Alt)

Randy Johnson

Greg Caput

Mike Rotkin

Virginia Johnson (Alt)

Tim Gubbins (Caltrans Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston

Luis Mendez

Fernanda Dias Pini

Rachel Moriconi

Krista Corwin

Yesenia Parra

Brianna Goodman

Ginger Dykaar

Amy Naranjo

Shannon Munz

Tommy Travers

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Oral communications.

Received public comment from:

Carey Pico  
David Date  
Barry Scott  
Charlie Wilcox

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas.

A replacement agenda, a handout for item 16, and handouts for item 19.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Rotkin made a motion and Commissioner Bertrand seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, R. Johnson, Montesino, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Mulhearn, and Meyers voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples  
Sally Arnold  
David Van Brink  
Bud Colligan  
Bill Cook

**MINUTES**

4. Approved draft minutes of the January 14, 2021 Regional Transportation Commission meeting.
5. Accepted draft minutes of the January 21, 2021 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

**POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items.*

**PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

6. Approved three new committee member appointments to the Measure D Tax Oversight Committee representing Districts 1, 4, & 5 and re-appointments representing Districts 2 & 3 to a second two-year term.

7. Approved authorizing the executive director to enter into an agreement with DBI Services for vegetation control along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail corridor that includes spraying only of herbicides that are not hazardous under the criteria of the Federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard 29 CFR 1910.1200 (**Resolution 30-21**)

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

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

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

10. Accepted information on "What is railbanking."

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

11. Accepted monthly meeting schedule.
12. Accepted correspondence log.
13. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
  - a. January 14, 2021 Letter from Amelia Conlen, Chair of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, to Tim Gubbins, Caltrans District 5 Director
14. Accepted information items.
  - a. January 27, 2021 Letter from Sarkes Khachek, Chair of the Central Coast Coalition, to David Kim, Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency

**REGULAR AGENDA**

15. Commissioner reports

Commissioner Koenig requested that staff place an item on the March RTC agenda to "consider direction to prepare a delivery plan for a wide multi-use trail in the middle of the corridor, including use of all existing trestles and bridges."

Commissioner Bertrand seconded Commissioner Koenig's request.

Commissioner McPherson departed the meeting.

Commissioner Rotkin made a motion not to formally request Commissioner Koenig's item in March but to leave it up to staff to figure out when to bring back various options around the use of the corridor. Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn seconded the motion and the motion carried with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Montesino, Caput, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Mulhearn, V. Johnson, and Meyers voting "aye," and Commissioners Johnson and Koenig voting "no."

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin requested that once staff has appropriately agendized the above-referenced item, that it return with a full report on the Unified Corridor Investment study, including the study's scope, findings, and the actions the Commission took with regards to that study for Commissioner review.

Commissioner Bertrand thanked the public for providing their input and encouraged members of the public to share information with the Commission before the meeting, as the public comment period during the meeting is limited to 2-3 minutes.

#### 16. Director's Report

Executive Director Guy Preston provided an update on the revenue forecast of Measure D and TDA funds and explained the probable impact of the Wayfair decision on tax revenue from online sales. Director Preston also provided a funding and timeline update on the Pajaro River Railroad Bridge Rehabilitation Project: an allocation of construction funds from the Short Line Railroad Improvement Program is expected in the fall and a contract award is expected in March 2022.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Director Preston confirmed that the bridge rehabilitation project is in coordination with the county's plans to raise the elevation of the Pajaro River levee.

In response to a Commissioner's question, RTC Counsel Steven Mattas provided clarification regarding Roaring Camp's common-carrier status.

Received public comment from:  
Brian Peoples

#### 17. Caltrans Report

District 5 Director Tim Gubbins delivered the Santa Cruz County Project Updates. Director Gubbins also reported on Caltrans' efforts to address storm damage and the impacts of wildfires throughout the district and improve evacuation channels, highlighting the collapse of both lanes of Highway 1 near MP 30 (Rat Creek) in Monterey County due to the Dolan fire. There is no estimated time of re-opening at present, but contractors are currently working on solutions.

In response to Commissioner requests, Director Gubbins will provide more information on the coordinated efforts between the City and County of Santa Cruz and Caltrans to resolve encampments of unhoused individuals on Caltrans property near the intersection of Highway 1 and 9, in advance of anticipated construction. In addition, Director Gubbins will direct his staff to schedule a meeting with Commissioners McPherson, Meyers, Brown, and Coonerty to discuss the issue in-depth for a full report-out in March.

Received public comment from:  
Brian Peoples  
Tom Haid

18. Committee Appointments: Budget and Administration/Personnel; California Association of Councils of Government (CALCOG); Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC)

Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra delivered the staff report. There was no discussion and no action on the item.

19. Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study – Final Draft Report and Locally Preferred Alternative (Continued from January 14, 2021 meeting)

Chair Gonzalez communicated that only those who had not already provided public comment on this item at the public hearing on January 14, 2021 would be able to provide public comment on the item at this meeting.

Sr. Transportation Planner Ginger Dykaar delivered a continuation of the staff report that was presented to the Commission at the January 14, 2021 meeting.

In response to Commissioners' questions, Ms. Dykaar, Director Preston, and HDR Consultant Steve Decker provided information regarding: collection of stakeholder input to develop a business plan; source of cost-estimate data to develop a business plan; differential cost estimates between light rail system and commuter rail system; differences between the Unified Corridor

Study and the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis (cost-estimate data, analysis scope and methods); ridership analysis; impact on METRO ridership; study area is from the Westside of Santa Cruz to Pajaro Valley station; features of the proposed electric technology; consideration of freight; percentage of railroad ties needing to be replaced; business plan development; balancing technical depth with simplified clarity in the presentation of the business plan will be essential to help the public make their decision; business plan can be a living document as more information is ascertained; impacts on ridership if chosen vehicle were TIG/m light rail; considerations for the timing of a public-private partnership; vehicle selection would take place after environmental phase; highlighted table in appendix B which provides examples of technology used elsewhere to aid in comparing demographics with Santa Cruz County.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation Chief Kyle Gradinger shared knowledge of international and state investment in and application of hydrogen fuel cell technology for rail vehicles.

Ms. Dykaar provided more information regarding stakeholder engagement and communicated that the business plan would lay out a timeline for completion of an environmental impact report.

Received public comment from:

Doug Schenk  
Deb Molina  
Nick Adams  
Rebecca Downing  
Benjamin Levine  
Deborah Culmer  
Lee Silvergate  
Daniel Harper  
Judy Gittelsohn  
Rebecca Rockom  
Dan Dion  
Dave Riggs  
Veronica Elsea  
Emily Trexel  
Nick Masatti  
Lawrence Kaplan  
Don Lauritson  
Tom Haid  
David Van Brink  
Elaine Rohlfes  
Gray Jameson  
Jack Brown

Lani Faulkner  
Lisa Smith  
Gregory Becker  
Linda Wilshusen  
Charlie Wilcox  
Timothy Randazzo  
Trink Praxel

The public hearing closed at 11:35 a.m.

Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn requested the insertion of the following language into the resolution: "Whereas following the environmental phase and prior to implementing the preferred alternative, a tax measure supporting rail transit shall be passed."

Commissioners discussed: preparedness to move the staff recommendation as it is; opportunity costs should be considered prior to voting for an expensive transit project; premature to require a tax measure vote as suggested by Mr. Mulhearn; locally-preferred alternative overestimates ridership when compared with SMART; decision today is to preserve the rail option; responsible spending; TCAA report provides needed information but more information is needed in terms of a business plan.

Commissioner R. Johnson made a motion and Commissioner Bertrand seconded the motion to overturn the Chair's two-minute limitation on Commissioner comments prior to consideration of a motion. The motion failed with Commissioners Bertrand and R. Johnson voting "aye," and Commissioners Brown, Montesino, Caput, Koenig, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffirin, Mulhearn, V. Johnson, and Meyers voting "no."

Mr. John Olejnik, Caltrans, expressed support for the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Montesino made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. Commissioner Caput seconded the motion and proposed a friendly amendment to insert the language suggested by Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn into the resolution stating "Whereas following the environmental phase and prior to implementing the preferred alternative, a tax measure supporting rail transit shall be passed." Commissioner Montesino did not accept the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Caput's suggested amendment to the main motion was taken as a motion to amend the main motion and seconded by Commissioner Koenig. The Commissioners discussed the motion to amend Commissioner Montesino's motion. Discussion points included: the need for a tax measure has been assumed without adequate financial information; tax measure

language would help public decide what is possible; additional language would unnecessarily restrict the Commission at this time; funding shortfall is already identified in the TCAA final report.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Director Preston communicated that the passage of the resolution today would not require the RTC to continue to spend funds on the next level of environmental review for our preferred alternative.

Commissioners discussed: proposed language is premature; amending the proposed language amendment to match the language in the TCAA final report.

The amendment to the motion was restated: Insertion of "Whereas following the environmental phase, prior to implementing the locally-preferred alternative, a tax measure supporting rail transit shall be passed," into the resolution. The amendment to the motion failed on a 7-5 vote with Commissioners Bertrand, R. Johnson, Koenig and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn and V. Johnson voting "aye," and Commissioners Brown, Montesino, Caput, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Meyers voting "no."

Commissioner Bertrand made a substitute motion and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to suspend the vote on the locally preferred alternative until a business plan is created.

Commissioners discussed: rationality of developing a business plan without selecting the transit alternative which the business plan will be based upon.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Ms. Dykaar clarified that staff is looking for direction from the Commission to determine the locally preferred alternative in order to develop a business plan on the locally preferred alternative.

Commissioner Koenig made a friendly amendment to Commissioner Bertrand's motion to specify that the business plan would be developed around passenger rail and light rail. Commissioner Bertrand accepted the amendment.

Commissioners discussed: implications of developing a business plan without approving the staff recommendation and thus without accepting the data presented in the TCAA final report; current vote is about accepting/denying rail as the preferred alternative; prioritizing financial feasibility; support for directing staff to develop business plan on the proposed alternative before saying yes to the preferred alternative.



The motion on the floor was restated: The Commission would direct staff to prepare the business plan on the proposed preferred alternative and that plan would be reported back to the Commission before the Commission takes action on the TCAA. The motion failed on a 5-7 vote with Commissioners Bertrand, R. Johnson, Koenig, and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn and V. Johnson voting "aye," and Commissioners Brown, Montesino, Caput, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commission Alternates Schiffrin and Meyers voting "no."

The Commission called the question on the original motion (Montesino/Caput) to approve the staff recommendations. The motion carried on a 9-3 vote with Commissioners Brown, Montesino, Caput, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Mulhearn, V. Johnson, and Meyers voting "aye," and Commissioners Bertrand, R. Johnson, and Koenig voting "no."

20. Report of items to be discussed closed session.

RTC Counsel Steven Mattas reported that no reportable action was anticipated from the closed session.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

The meeting entered into closed session at 12:35 p.m.

21. 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 1:25 pm and there was no reportable action from the closed session.

22. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 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:

Doug	Dd
Deb Molina	Deborah Culmer
Nick Adams	Debora Salkind
415-5968957	Don Lauritson
831-406-7780	Doug Silveira
831-8183660	Elaine Rohlfes
Alex Clifford	Emily Trexel
Amelia Conlen	Eric Patterson
Apple	Faina Segal
Barry Scott	Felipe Hernandez
Ben Vernazza	Fort
Benjamin Levine	FORT – Kyle Kelley
BobFi	FORT – Matt Farrell
Brad Read	FORT – Rebecca Rockom (she/her)
Brian (RTC)	FORT – Tina A.
Brian (Trail Now)	FORT Chris Weir
Bud Colligan	FORT Dan Dion
Buzz Anderson	Fort geri lieby
Carl Kaplan	FORT Jim Weller
Casey Beyer	FOR Jimmy Virk
Cathy Bowers	FORT Lee Silvergate
Charlie Wilcox	FORT Phillippe Legros
Chloe Mietzel	FORT RAIL Grant
Colleen Stobbe	FORT Raman Virk
Cory Caletti	FORT Sally Arnold
Craig C.	FORT Timothy P. Randazzo
Curt Simmons	FORT Zoom Host
D. Scott	FORT – Golden Love
Daniel Harper (Rail)	FORT – Robin Sale
Daniel Zaragoza	FORT – Saladin Sale
dave riggs	Francisco Estrada (he/him/el)

Gina Cole – BSCC  
Gregorybecker  
Gustavo Alfaro  
Heather Adamson, AMBAG  
Howard Cohen  
Jack Brown  
James Sandoval  
Jason Smith  
Jeanette  
Jeremiah Daniels (FORT)  
Jessiebristow  
Jillian Ritter  
Jim Jensen  
Joe Carranco  
Johanna Lighthill  
John Olenik  
Joseph Haenlein  
Judy Gittelsohn  
Julianna Bentley  
Keith Otto  
Lani-ForRail&Trail  
Larry Detloff  
Lesley Franz  
Linda Wilshusen  
LisaSmith  
Loree Burroughs  
Mark Bedford  
Mark Dettle  
Mark Johannessen  
Martin Levy  
Michael Wool  
Murray Fontes (he/him/his)  
N. Yellin  
Nadene Thorne  
Nathaniel  
Nick Adams  
Passenger Rail Supporter Trician  
Comings  
Pat McCormick  
Patrick Mottram  
Patrick Riley  
Paulschoellhamer  
Peter Emanuel  
phil  
Phil Boutelle  
RAIL Dianne Dryer

RAIL Doug  
Rail Gray Jameson  
RAIL plan please david van brink  
Reed Geisreiter  
Rick  
Rob Tidmore, County of Santa Cruz  
Robert Singleton  
Rosemary Sarka  
Ryan Sarnataro  
Sandy  
Sean  
Sebastian Frey  
Stanley Sokolow  
Stephen  
[sephen@santacruzlocal.org](mailto:sephen@santacruzlocal.org)  
Steve Wiesner – Asst. Dir of DPW  
STEVEN MENDIVIL  
Susan Solt  
T  
Teresa Buika  
Terri Steinmann  
Thomas McGlashen  
Tim  
Todd Guild  
Tom  
Tom & Susan Haid  
Tracy New SCCRTC  
Trink Praxel  
Veronica Elsea  
Virginia Wright  
Will Mayall  
William Philipps  
Zoom Host2