



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, April 01, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

**NOTE: Teleconference
Community TV Zoom**

Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85653381847>

Dial-in: 1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 856 5338 1847

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Aurelio Gonzalez

Sandy Brown

Kristen Petersen

Patrick Mulhearn (Alt)

Jacques Bertrand

Mike Rotkin

Eduardo Montesino

Manu Koenig

Andy Schiffrin (Alt)

Randy Johnson

Greg Caput

Larry Pageler

Bruce McPherson

Lowell Hurst (Alt)

Scott Eades (Caltrans Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston

Luis Mendez

Tracy New

Rachel Moriconi

Krista Corwin

Grace Blakeslee

Yesenia Parra

Brianna Goodman

Tommy Travers

Amanda Marino

Amy Naranjo

Shannon Munz

Sarah Christensen

Ginger Dykaar

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Oral communications.

Received public comment from:

Ben Vernazza
Barry Scott
Carey Pico
Jean Brocklebank
Heather Troy
Brian Peoples

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas.

Handouts for item 10, item 20, and item 21 were posted to the SCCRTC website at 5:30pm on March 31, 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA

In response to a Commissioner's question, Director Preston provided context for mitigation planting for the rail trail projects. Commissioners discussed the proportional cost of mitigation plantings between projects of varying size & scope.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Bertrand seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Johnson, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Schiffrin, and Mulhearn voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples
Michael Saint

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the March 04, 2021 Regional Transportation Commission meeting.
5. Accepted draft minutes of the March 11, 2021 Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee meeting.

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items.

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

6. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans for the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) and Right of Way Phases for the Highway 1 Bay/Porter to State Park auxiliary lanes and bus-on-shoulder project (**Resolution 34-21**)
7. Approved FY20/21 Cap-and-Trade Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Funds (LCTOP) (**Resolution 35-21**)
8. Adopted a resolution to Amend the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and RTC budget (**Resolution 36-21**)
9. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to consent to or enter into agreements necessary to construct and operate the proposed new railroad crossing in Aptos at Parade Street (**Resolution 37-21**)
10. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the County of Santa Cruz for Highway 1 41st Avenue to Soquel Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project for Environmental Mitigation Cost Funding Augmentation (**Resolution 38-21**)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

11. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
12. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

No consent items.

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

13. Accepted monthly meeting schedule.
14. Accepted correspondence log.
15. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. March 3, 2021 Letter from Guy Preston, Executive Director, to Erika Carpenter, Senior Environmental Planner of Physical Planning, Development, and Operations at the University of California, Santa Cruz regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the UC Santa Cruz 2021 Long Range Development Plan

16. Accepted information items.

a. Santa Cruz News Release 3/24/21: Rail Trail Segment 7/Phase II Awarded \$9 Million Grant

b. Watsonville News Release 3/25/21: \$11.7 Million Awarded to the City of Watsonville for the "Safer Access to Pajaro Valley High School and Beyond" project

REGULAR AGENDA

17. Commissioner reports

Commission Chair Gonzalez reported on his and Commissioner Brown's participation at the California State Legislative Conference held over Zoom where they advocated for continued state support of highway safety and clean air projects. Commissioner Gonzalez also reported on his conversation with an official with the California State Transportation Agency about the conceptual drawings and business plan for electric passenger rail transit on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

Commissioner Bertrand reported on recent collisions and loss of life among bicyclists in Santa Cruz and requested that the Bicycle Advisory Committee address urgent safety needs in the community.

18. Director's Report

Executive Director Guy Preston delivered an oral report covering the following topics:

Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI): According to CALSTA, the state will continue to focus on the SB1 "Fix-it First" approach to maintaining the state's highways, roads, and bridges.

American Jobs Act Proposal: On March 31, 2021 President Biden introduced his proposed infrastructure bill dubbed the American Jobs Act, a roughly \$2 trillion plan for improving the nation's infrastructure and shifting to greener energy over the next 8 years. Appropriations requests have not been permitted since 2010 but appeared to be a possibility under the Democratic-controlled Senate and House. Appropriations come from the House and are generally less than \$1,000,000.

Highway 9/San Lorenzo Valley Complete Street PID Community Meeting: The evening of Wednesday, April 28, Caltrans in partnership with the RTC and the offices of Supervisor McPherson will be hosting a virtual community

information meeting to update the greater San Lorenzo Valley Community on the progress on the Highway 9/San Lorenzo Valley Complete Streets Project Initiation Document (PID).

Active Transportation Grants Awarded: On March 21, the California Transportation Commission adopted its Cycle 5 Active Transportation Program. As part of its program, the City of Watsonville was awarded an \$11.7 million grant for the Safer Access to Pajaro Valley High School and Beyond project and the City of Santa Cruz was awarded a \$9 million grant for construction of the Coastal Rail Trail Segment 7, Phase 2.

Bike to Work Month: Santa Cruz Bike to Work Month officially kicks off May 1 and goes through May 31.

19. Caltrans report

District 5 Deputy Director Scott Eades delivered the Santa Cruz County project updates, highlighting completion of a 6-mile project on Highway 17 which included improvements to the guardrails, pavement, visible lane markings, shoulder widening, and local streets and driveway connections. The project, completed by Granite Rock construction cost roughly \$19 million dollars funded through SB1.

The California Transportation Plan 2050 released early last month is a long-range vision for California and a road map to improve mobility and accessibility statewide while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The plan aims to continue expansion of safe walking and bicycle opportunities as well as an effective and interconnected rail network.

20. Consideration of Commissioner's Request to Remove District 1 Bicycle Advisory Committee Members

Tommy Travers, Transportation Planner and primary staff to the Bicycle Advisory Committee, delivered the staff report.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the commitment of the District 1 representatives and for their years of service; no precedence for current request; Commissioner right to appoint new representatives as the appointees' term comes to a natural end; good volunteers are hard to find; turnover sometimes expected during changes in administration; current Rules and Regulations provide for the Commission as a whole to make appointments of advisory committee members; refer process to Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee to make recommendations to change the Rules and Regulations; respect for the right of an elected official to choose representatives who would better represent the views of their constituent voters; current procedures should be respected.

Commissioner Koenig moved and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn seconded the motion to remove the District 1 representatives from the Bicycle Advisory Committee and initiate a new nomination process. The motion passed on a 7-5 vote with Commissioners Bertrand, Johnson, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "aye," and Commissioners Brown, Montesino, Gonzalez, Rotkin and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "no."

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to refer the process in the Rules and Regulations for appointing advisory committee members to the Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee for considering amending the rules of the Commission to allow for individual appointments. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Gonzalez, Rotkin, Petersen, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Mulhearn voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Grace Voss
Barry Scott
Jessica Evans
Sally Arnold
Janneke Strause
Brian Peoples
Bud Colligan
Michael Saint
Peter Bennett
Ryan Sarnataro
Bryn
Jeremiah Daniels
William Menchine
Bob Suess

21. Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Rail Network Integration Study – Business Plan for Passenger Rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

The Chair ruled that there would be one minute allowed for comments from members of the public and two minutes allowed for comments from Commissioners. Commissioner Rotkin moved and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn seconded the motion to overrule the Chair's decision and allow for unrestricted Commissioner comments while granting the Chair the privilege to interrupt at his discretion. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Caput, Koenig,

McPherson, Petersen, Gonzalez, Rotkin and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Mulhearn voting "aye."

Ginger Dykaar delivered the staff report. HDR consultants Steve Decker and Pam Yonkin delivered presentations on the locally preferred alternative and the proposed business plan.

In response to Commissioners' questions, Ms. Dykaar, Mr. Decker, and Ms. Yonkin provided additional information regarding: compatibility of 30-60 minute headways with commuter needs; data upon which ridership and fares were estimated; the \$0 right-of-way cost estimate; consideration of the Coastal Commission priorities; post-COVID travel demand data.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Mr. Decker and HDR consultant Buzz Berger provided more information about safety regulations for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)-compliant vehicles vs Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-compliant vehicles. Ms. Dykaar responded to Commissioners' questions about the risk analysis and grant requirements. Executive Director Guy Preston provided details on the need and cost estimates for upgrading/replacing existing trestles, railbanking considerations, and implementation of a trail-only project on the maintenance of existing trestles.

Commissioners discussed: funding landscape for electric rail transit project; preservation of right-of-way for future transit; expert opinion on rail transit feasibility; competition with high-density regions for grant funds; important to facilitate transportation connection between South and North County.

Commissioner Montesino made a motion and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendations.

Commissioners discussed: support for rail among South County residents; gratitude to staff and consultants; good public policy to preserve the public's options; financial, legal, and physical challenges remain; community can find agreement on several issues regarding use of the right-of-way; Caltrans seeing significant shift in funding priorities away from highway widening and towards projects similar to this one; future funding & feasibility is still unknown; efforts continue to build the trail; ripping up tracks does not guarantee quicker construction of trail; antiquated technology; put train plan to countywide vote; definition of "feasibility" in the SCBRL corridor studies; competition for funding; federal infrastructure plan still has to make it through Congress; opportunity costs of pursuing rail; investment in bus transit could return quicker deliverables on equity, environment, economy goals; gratitude for public input; need to meet equity goals now; future-focused projects require patience; funding streams not fungible; SMART train ridership; no-growth mindset of community; ACL agreement prevents

removing the rails for another 10 years; investment for future; world-class trail would attract tourism which would have new, undetermined impacts on communities.

On a 6-6 vote, the motion did not pass. Commissioners Rotkin, Gonzalez, Caput, Montesino, Brown and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voted "aye" and Commissioners Petersen, McPherson, Koenig, Johnson, Bertrand and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voted "no."

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to accept the business plan and to adopt a resolution accepting the business plan.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Director Preston clarified the implications of accepting the staff recommendation and proposed to remedy the resolution by removing the specific fiscal year designations to the more generic "Year 1" and "Year 2."

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin amended his motion to amend the resolution in agreement with Director Preston's resolution recommendation and Commissioner Rotkin also accepted those changes to the motion.

Commissioners discussed: need for a full staff report to understand implications of Director Preston's recommendation; need to meet Rail Network Integration grant deadlines; reluctance to endure more of the same testimony at a subsequent meeting; if the proposed recommendation is minor, may it appear on the consent agenda.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Ms. Dykaar provided specifics on Rail Network Integration grant deliverables.

In response to a Commissioner's concern, Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin amended his motion to amend the resolution by removing the verbiage "as a guide for implementation." Commissioner Rotkin also accepted those changes to the motion.

Commissioner Koenig made a substitute motion and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn seconded the motion to accept the portions of the business plan that meet minimal requirements of the state grant and complete the consulting contract.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Commissioner Koenig clarified that the intent of his motion is to meet the requirements of the grant and the consulting contract and there will not be a need to review the business plan on a future day.

The substitute motion failed on a 6-6 vote with Commissioners Bertrand, Johnson, Mulhearn, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "aye," and Commissioners Brown, Montesino, Caput, Gonzalez, Rotkin and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "no."

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin's original motion, seconded by Commissioner Rotkin, failed on a 6-6 vote with Commissioners Montesino, Brown, Caput, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "aye," and Commissioners Bertrand, Johnson, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, and Commissioner Alternate Mulhearn voting "no."

Commissioner Bertrand made a motion to direct staff to bring this item back with the full implications of the amendments considered in a staff report. The motion was not seconded.

Commissioners discussed: procedural disagreements over what should be done next, including what would be most useful to the Commission and what would be fair to the public.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to continue the item to the next meeting and direct staff to return to the next meeting with responses to concerns raised by the Commissioners with regards to the business plan.

The motion passed on an 11-1 vote with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Montesino, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn and Schiffrin voting "aye," and Commissioner Johnson voting "no."

Received public comment from:

Faina Segal, Friends of the Rail and Trail
Summer Rose
Mark Mesiti-Miller
Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Christina Watson, TAMC
David Van Brink
Jessica Evans
Matt Ferrell
Judy Gittelsohn
Steven Woodside
Craig C
Dianne D
Jeanette Guire
Buzz Anderson
Jason Smith

Jack Brown
Emily Trexel
Johanna Lighthill
Paula Bradley
Paul Roberts
Mark Johannessen
Kyle Kelley
Bud Colligan
Bryn
David Date
Rebecca Downing
Keith Otto
Enda Brennan
Jeremiah Daniels
Josh Stephens
Bennett Williamson

Barry Scott
William Menchine
Gina Cole
Sally Arnold
Cynthia Hirsch, Climate Healers

Ryan Sarnataro
Bruce Sawhill
Ghali Mjali
Yahya Regragui

22. Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 Proposed Budget

Director of Budget and Finance Tracy New delivered the staff report.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffirin made a motion and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Montesino, Brown, Johnson, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, Gonzalez, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Mulhearn and Schiffirin voting "aye."

Received public comment from:
Barry Scott

23. Report of items to be discussed closed session.

RTC Counsel Steven Mattas reported that no immediate action is necessary on item 24. By consensus, the Commission decided to continue item 24 to the next regular meeting of the RTC.

The meeting adjourned at 1:33pm.

24. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 06, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. by teleconference.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. by teleconference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yesenia Parra
Administrative Services Officer

Attendees:

1-831-***-1434

1-831-***-1884

1-818-***-9959

[FORT]-Bruce Sawhill

Alex Clifford

Amy Miyakusu

Anderson Shepard

AnnKaplan

Ashley Winn

Barry Scott

Ben Sowards

Ben Vernazza

Bennett Williamson (he him)

Bill

Bill Philipps

BobFi

Brian

Brian (Trail Now)

Bryn

Bud Colligan

Buzz Anderson

Cara for rail

Casey Beyer

Christina Watson (TAMC)

Cory Caletti

Craig C

Dane Elliot

Dave Riggs

David Cooper

Ellen Martinez

Emily Trexel

Enda Brennan

Eric Patterson

Faina (Fay-na) Segal – FORT Chair

FORT – Chris Weir

FORT – Kyle Kelley

FORT – Rebecca Rockom (she/her)

FORT Saladin Sale

FORT Sally Arnold

Gina Cole – BSCC

Grace Blakeslee, RTC

gracevoss[at]sbcglobal.net

Greg Becker

Heather Adamson, AMBAG

Jack Brown

James Weller

Janneke Strause

Jason Smith

Jean Brocklebank

Jeanette Guire

Jeremiah Daniels (FORT)

Jessie Bristow

Johanna Lighthill

John Urgo

Jondi Gumz

Jordan Taylor

Jordan Vascones

Judy Gittelsohn

Kara Meyberg Guzman

Kathi Hart

Keith Otto

Kirk Ance

kp

Lee Silverglate

Linda Wilshusen

Mark Johanessen

Mark Mesiti-Miller

Matt Farrell

Matt Marquez

Melissa Hartman

Michael Pisano

Michael Saint

Mike Guth

Murray Fontes (he/him/his)

Nadene Thorne

Nancy Yellin

Patrick Mottram

Patrick Riley

Paul Roberts

Paula Bradley

Peter Bennett

Paula Woods

Peter Emanuel
Peter Haworth
Phil
Piet Canin
Rail David Robinson
Rebecca Downing
Rob Tidmore, County of Santa Cruz
Ronnie Lipschutz
Rose Ashford
Rosemary Sarka
Ryan Sarnataro
SCCRTC Fan David Van Brink

Sean Hebard
Seven Woodside, Call of the Sea,
educational non-profit
Tim Brattan
Todd Guild
Trician Comings
Trink Praxel
Virginia Wright
William Menchine
Yes on rail-Jessica Evans
Young