



**Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission's**

BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

**Monday, June 14, 2021
6:00 pm to 8:30 pm**

Teleconference

This meeting was held by teleconference in accordance with the Brown Act as currently in effect under the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19, and the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, which allow local board and committee members and the public to participate and conduct meetings by teleconference, videoconference, or both. [View full executive order.](#)

1. Call to Order: Chair, Amelia Conlen called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Introductions

Members Present:

Amelia Conlen, Bike-to-Work, Chair
Kathleen Bortolussi, District 2
John Hunt, District 2 (Alt.)
Peter Scott, District 3
Sally Arnold, District 3 (Alt.)
Anna Kammer, District 4
Liz Hernandez, District 4 (Alt.)
Rick Hyman, District 5
Theresia Rogerson, District 5 (Alt.)
Paula Bradley, City of Capitola
Matt Farrell, City of Santa Cruz
Grace Voss, City of Santa Cruz (Alt.)
Richard Masoner, City of Scotts Valley
Murray Fontes, City of Watsonville
Leo Jed, CTSC

Staff:

Tommy Travers, Transportation Planner
Guy Preston, Executive Director

Guests:

Jim Langley, former committee member
Alan Romero, Monterey Bay Air Resource District
Matt Machado, County of Santa Cruz
Piet Canin, Bike-to-Work/Ecology Action
Gina Gallino Cole, Bike Santa Cruz County
Robert Johnson, Kathy Jaggi, Dave Riggs, Joni Steele, Barry Scott, Becky Steinbruner, Ryan Sarnataro, members of the public

Unexcused Absences:

Excused Absences:

Michael Moore, City of Capitola (Alt.)
Drew Rogers, City of Watsonville (Alt.)
Matt Miller, Bike-to-Work (Alt.)

Vacancies:

City of Scotts Valley – Alternate
CTSC – Alternate

3. Staff announcements – none
4. Oral communications – Grace Voss announced a Santa Cruz County Bike Club upcoming mountain challenge with three distances. Murray Fontes announced that the coastal rail trail Segment 18 Phase 1 is open and an opening event is planned for July. Amelia Conlen announced that the next temporary bike/ped improvement installation as part of the unincorporated county Active Transportation Plan update will be installed on Portola Drive next week, with a celebration event on June 25, and she also encouraged the community to take an online survey after experiencing the temporary projects. Leo Jed announced that the state bill AB122 for “stop as yield” is progressing and will likely clear the legislature. Gina Cole announced that the Bicycle Film Festival Santa Cruz is upcoming with tickets available at bicyclefilmfestival.com, and will fund a bicycle grant program. Matt Machado announced that improving bike lanes and pedestrian facilities are a high priority for the County Department of Public Works but are currently unfunded, that he hopes the Committee can work with the County to find funding solutions, and that the County will bring concepts and designs of the upcoming major complete streets project on Soquel Drive to the Committee. Robert Johnson announced that there should be a better bicycle route between Scotts Valley and Santa Cruz. Becky Steinbruner announced that a recent County project that removed a segment of bike lane on Soquel Drive in Aptos is a problem.
5. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas – none

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion (Roseman/Farrell) was made to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with members Conlen, Bortolussi, Roseman, Scott, Kammer, Hyman, Bradley, Farrell, Masoner, Fontes, and Jed voting in favor.

6. Approved draft minutes of the May 10, 2021 Bicycle Advisory Committee special meeting
7. Accepted summary of hazard reports. Members of the Committee requested correction of the last item which appears to have incorrect information. Becky Steinbruner commented that she had not received a satisfactory resolution of a hazard report.
8. Accepted letter from ad-hoc subcommittee providing Committee comments on the Mt. Hermon Road bike lane striping project to County Department of Public Works

REGULAR AGENDA

9. Recognition of Jim Langley for service on Bicycle Advisory Committee – Tommy Travers, RTC Transportation Planner, presented a certificate of recognition and thanked Jim Langley, who recently ended his service, for his 18 years of volunteer work on the Committee. Several members of the Committee expressed appreciation and related stories.
10. Proposal for e-bike incentive program by the Monterey Bay Air Resources District – Alan Romero, District staff, presented a proposal for a financial incentive program within the three-county Monterey Bay region to encourage purchases of new e-bikes, with the belief, based on studies showing that most younger people who own e-bikes

use them for getting to work, that it will help replace car trips. The program is proposed to offer \$200, or \$400 for low-income persons based on whether they are eligible for utility subsidies. The price of an eligible e-bike would be set at between \$1,000 and \$4,000 and only commuter-style or cargo-style bikes would be eligible. The program has one-time funding but may be renewed in the future if successful. Various committee members offered many ideas for the air district to consider when making their ultimate decision on implementing the project:

- Incentivize regular bikes as well
- \$4,000 limit is too low
- \$4,000 limit is too high
- Provide even more subsidy for low-income and less for wealthy
- Do not incentivize "out of class" e-bikes that may be too fast or illegal
- Include education or a required course on e-bike etiquette/safety for recipients
- Concern that more e-bikes will create conflicts for regular bicyclists
- Limit the incentive to only e-bikes purchased from local businesses
- Seek more input from the low-income community
- Bring back past MBARD funding for secure biking programs
- Include e-bike styles that are similar to commuter, such as road bike and street bike
- Include mountain bikes
- Consider subsidizing utilities for low-income if owning an e-bike increases household utility bill
- Consider public locations to charge e-bikes

Piet Canin commented that the program should include education for safety and e-bike information, that public outreach to lower-income populations should be done in order to make the project successful, that the subsidy should be increased, and encouraged partnering with other existing e-bike incentive programs. Barry Scott commented that the requirement for a purchase to cost at least \$1,000 should be lowered to accommodate e-bikes likely to be purchased by low-income people. Kathy Jaggi commented that class III e-bikes should not be excluded.

11. Highway 1 – State Park to Freedom Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project & Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Professional Engineering Services Contract Award & Addition of Interim Trail Alternative Seg 12 – Guy Preston, RTC Executive Director, spoke in place of Sarah Christensen who was not able to attend. He described the overall Highway 1 project that includes Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail. The branch line includes four railroad bridge crossings. There will be a need to acquire property between at least two of the bridge crossings for the trail adjacent to the rail line alternative. The goal of the project team is to maximize the defensibility of the environmental document, which requires a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed project that could feasibly attain most of the proposed project's basic objectives and would avoid or substantially lessen any of the proposed project's significant effects. A draft report is expected in summer 2022. Since this is a highway and trail project and not a rail project, the study will not include advanced engineering for future rail service. However, the combined cost of both alternatives would likely approximate the full cost of building the interim trail and then relocating the trail adjacent to the rail line. It is anticipated that the interim trail alternative would remove tracks from the existing rail bridges, so that they could be repurposed for bikes and pedestrians. The project team will consider whether the interim trail alignment should remove the tracks for the remaining limits of Segment 12 or just a portion of it. Committee members requested a trail width sufficient to accommodate separation of pedestrians and bicyclists, an interim trail built at high quality, and that

the design team share preliminary drawings with the Committee once they have interim trail alignment and width. Members expressed concern as to whether there is more risk added by adding the interim trail to the EIR, due to the fact that railbanking is outside RTC and Caltrans control, whether a different alternative such as aligning the trail south of Highway 1 would be considered a more feasible alternative, whether the highway and trail elements being part of one overall project creates more risk of environmental challenges and delays for each, and whether grant funding for construction may be more difficult to secure if the interim trail will not be permanent. In a response to questions, Director Preston clarified that the rail bridges over the highway could not be repurposed. Those bridges would need to be removed regardless of alternative, due to insufficient bridge length to accommodate the highway widening. The alternative for the trail adjacent to rail will propose new crossings to accommodate both rail and the trail, whereas, it is undetermined as to whether the interim trail alternative would propose to replace the rail bridges with active transportation bridges or a rail bridge, as part of this project. The team will consider cost-effective options for the interim trail alternative, as to not preclude future potential rail service.

12. Capitola Trestle Update, Interim Trail Alternative, and Amendment to Professional Engineering Services Agreement with RailPros Inc. – Guy Preston, RTC Executive Director, spoke in place of Sarah Christensen who was not able to attend. He described the current condition of the Capitola trestle. The current scope of the Coastal Rail Trail project for Segments 10 & 11 does not include the center of Capitola due to the Capitola Trestle. In June 2021, RTC authorized a feasibility study of utilizing the structure for an interim trail, so that the County of Santa Cruz may consider an interim trail alternative as part of scoping for their Segments 10 & 11 project. Committee members commented that the need to remove the interim trail for future rail service should be considered in the environmental report, and that the ability to bicycle along the bridge corridor is an important transportation need.
13. Updates related to Committee functions – Anna Kammer reported that the opening event for the temporary protected bike/ped path on Green Valley Road was very well-attended, and Liz Hernandez shared parts of her impactful speech she gave at the event, regarding the importance of bicycle transportation for herself and the community. Rick Hyman reported that as Highway 9 north of Graham Hill Road will soon be repaved, he requests that the Chair write a letter to Caltrans requesting narrowing the vehicle lanes, as has been requested by the Committee and members of the public, in a temporary manner to study its effect and safety.
14. Adjourn – 8:40 pm

NEXT MEETING: The next Bicycle Committee meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2021 from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. The meeting will be held **via teleconference.**

Minutes respectfully prepared and submitted by:
Tommy Travers, Transportation Planner