



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

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

**NOTE: Teleconference  
Community TV Zoom**

**Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85655865732>**

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

**Webinar ID: 856 5586 5732**

1. Roll call.

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Members present:

Sandy Brown	Alta Northcutt
Kristen Petersen	Andy Schiffrin (Alt)
Randy Johnson	Robert Quinn (Alt)
Greg Caput	Lowell Hurst (Alt)
Manu Koenig	Larry Pageler (Alt)
Bruce McPherson	Eduardo Montesino
Jacques Bertrand	Felipe Hernandez (Alt)
Mike Rotkin	Scott Eades (Caltrans Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston	Tracy New
Luis Mendez	Amy Naranjo
Yesenia Parra	Ginger Dykaar
Shannon Munz	Cindy Convisser
Krista Corwin	Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)
Sarah Christensen	

2. Oral communications.

Received public comment from:

Judy Gittlesohn  
Kaki Rusmore  
Carey Pico  
Lani Faulkner  
Mark Johannessen  
Saladin Sale  
David Van Brink  
Katie Freeman  
Myles Corcoran  
Sally Arnold  
Jack Brown  
Michael Wool  
Sean  
Jessica Evans  
Michael Saint  
Tina Andreatta  
Ryan Sarnataro  
Barry Scott  
Lawrence Kaplan  
Ann Kaplan  
Rebecca Downing

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas.

Handouts for items 16 and 19 were posted to the website.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas and Executive Director Guy Preston responded to questions from a Commissioner about agenda item 10.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples

Commissioner Rotkin made a motion and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda and the motion passed with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Caput, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, Northcutt, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

## **MINUTES**

4. Accepted draft minutes of the September 23, 2021 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting
5. Approved draft minutes of the October 07, 2021 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the October 12, 2021 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

## **POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items.*

## **PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

7. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend the Professional Services Agreement with Mark Thomas Company (TP1938) for design support during construction (DSDC) (**Resolution 24-22**)

## **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. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to mandate full COVID-19 Vaccination or a weekly negative COVID-19 test for all current and future RTC staff members (**Resolution 25-22**)

## **INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

11. Accepted monthly meeting schedule.
12. Accepted correspondence log.
13. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies.
  - a. October 15, 2021 Letter to Nathan Nguyen, P.E. RE: Notice of Preparation of an EIR for Rail Trail Segments 8 & 9
  - b. October 15, 2021 Letter to Chris Schmidt, Division Chief RE: Support for AMBAG-Freight Study for Caltrans Strategic Partnerships Planning Grant
  - c. October 20, 2021 Letter to Murray Fontes RE: Watsonville Active Transportation Plan

14. Accepted information items. - *none*

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

15. Commissioner reports

Commissioner Petersen delivered comments of support for RTC Commissioner Mike Rotkin in response to emails and a letter to the editor suggesting that he be removed from the RTC for his support of the recent rail vehicle demonstration. Commissioner Peterson communicated that Commissioner Rotkin is a thoughtful decision maker and expressed a hope for the Commission and all stakeholders to find common ground in order to move forward. Commissioner Rotkin and Chair Brown expressed appreciation for the comments and Chair Brown emphasized a desire to work together for the good of the public despite disagreements.

16. Director's Report

Executive Director Guy Preston welcomed Commissioner Alta Northcutt, recently appointed to the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) Board by the City of Watsonville and appointed to the RTC by the METRO Board.

Director Preston updated the Commission on its official relocation, plans for hybrid meetings, and staffing changes. Transportation Planning Technician Fernanda Pini is departing the RTC and the vacant Administrative Assistant III position has been filled by Cindy Convisser.

The Executive Director also delivered updates on the expansion of the GO Santa Cruz County program and responded to a question from a Commissioner regarding visiting the new office.

17. Caltrans report

Caltrans District 5 Deputy Director Scott Eades reported that construction of the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing Project has been delayed until February 1, 2022. The California Transportation Commission recently allocated \$960 million, including State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) funds to replace culverts on Highway 1 in Davenport north of Swanson Road and south of Waddell Creek. Construction scheduled to begin in February. An application workshop for the Clean California local grant program will be held on Thursday, November 18.

Executive Director Guy Preston responded to a question from a Commissioner regarding eligibility and plans to apply for a Clean California grant.

## 18. Assembly Bill 361 Findings for Virtual and Hybrid Meetings

Deputy Director Luis Mendez delivered the staff report. Commissioner McPherson reported recent correspondence between the County Board of Supervisors and the California Public Utilities Commission concerning PG&E power shut offs. Director Mendez and Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra responded to a Commissioner's question regarding impacts to the RTC's ability to hold meetings during power shut offs.

### Received public comment from:

Lani Faulkner  
Gina Cole  
Kyle Kelley  
Jack Brown  
Jessica Evans

Commissioners discussed: importance of the capacity of the RTC to meet both in-person and virtually at this time; success of remote meetings so far; unlikelihood of interruption to meetings; coming of flu season; protocols for hybrid meetings well established by the County Board of Supervisors; remote capabilities expand participation and maximize accessibility; hybrid meetings require higher level of coordination and logistics.

Commissioner Montesino departed the meeting and Commissioner Alternate Hurst replaced him.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Alternate Hernandez seconded the motion to find that:

1. The RTC has reconsidered the circumstances of the current COVID-19 state of emergency; and
2. The state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members of the RTC, its committees, its staff and the public to meet safely in person; and
3. State or local officials continue to impose and recommend measures to promote social distancing

And to direct staff to move forward with holding hybrid meetings as soon as possible. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, Brown, Johnson, Koenig, McPherson, Petersen, Northcutt, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Hernandez, Schiffrin, and Quinn voting "aye."

Deputy Director Mendez communicated staff's intention to place an AB 361 Findings item on the consent agenda at subsequent meetings as indicated by

the law. In response to a question as to whether a staff member may be designated to make the findings in lieu of the legislative body doing so every 30 days, RTC Counsel Steve Mattas will report back to the Commission.

#### 19. Unsolicited Rail Proposal – TIG/m and Roaring Camp

Executive Director Guy Preston delivered the staff report and responded to Commissioner questions regarding the agreement between Progressive Rail and Roaring Camp and the feasibility of certain track upgrades. Mr. Preston also responded to a Commissioner's question regarding preservation of the freight capacity of the rail line.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the proposal and RTC staff for the recommendations on public-private partnerships not being viable at this time; preservation of freight service in Watsonville and excursion passenger rail; lack of local funds for estimated maintenance and capital costs; honor Measure D commitments; enjoyment of TIG/m demonstration; invest to bring equity to Watsonville; agreement with staff's recommendation to take no action on this proposal; importance of open and fair Request-for-Proposals (RFP) process; proposals envision a future for transit on the corridor; hope for increased freight service to pre-pandemic levels; continue to seek funding for passenger rail in the future; concern for commercial service in Watsonville in light of Progressive's correspondence; rail line provides jobs & commerce; proposers did not do their homework on SCBRL constraints and potential; provided opportunity for public to assess the issue; demo vehicle and views beautiful; highlighted condition of the track; noise & traffic impacts; narrowness of ROW between Capitola and Santa Cruz; despite demo location, proposal excluded Watsonville; lack of operating experience; limits/opportunities of the METRO transit system; current condition of the tracks limited speed of the vehicle; similar to entertainment experience; does not address equity problem; gratitude to staff for thoughtful report; in the interest of time, criteria must be defined before entertaining further proposals; funding assessment premature before an analysis of the federal infrastructure bill; 14-year estimate is due to the scale of the rail project; state grants are competitive.

#### Received public comment from:

Trink Praxel

Mark Mesiti-Miller

Mark Johannessen, TIG/m

Judy Gittelsohn

Kyle Kelley

Jessica Evans, Friends of the Rail and Trail

Lani Faulkner

Bob Berlage, Big Creek Lumber Company

Jean Brocklebank

Jack Brown  
Tina Andreatta  
Barry Scott  
Sally Arnold  
David Van Brink  
Brad Wilson, Agron Bioenergy, Watsonville  
Sean

The meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

## 20. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 02, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. It will be a hybrid with in-person participation at the Santa Cruz County Board Chambers, 701 Ocean Ave. 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Santa Cruz and virtual participation via Zoom.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at a location TBD

Respectfully Submitted,

Yesenia Parra  
Administrative Services Officer

### Attendees:

310-\*\*\*-9902  
408-\*\*\*-6957  
408-\*\*\*-1292  
831-\*\*\*-6710

Ann L Kaplan  
Barry Scott  
Bill Philipps  
Bob Berlage  
Brad  
Brad Read  
Brian  
Brian (Trail Now)  
Bud Colligan  
Carey Pico  
Christina Watson  
David  
David <3 public transit  
David Dean  
Doug Huskey

Ellen Martinez  
Equity and Environment for Rail and Trail  
Gina Cole  
Gustavo Alfaro  
Heather Adamson, AMBAG  
Jack Brown - YES Greenway!  
Jacob Wysocki  
James Turk  
Jayna Frank  
Jbm  
Jean Brocklebank & Michael Lewis  
Jeanette Guire RC RR  
Jessica Evans for Rail Transit  
Joe – Trail Now  
Johanna Lighthill  
Judy Gittelsohn  
Julia Wahnsiedler, TIG/m  
Kaki Rusmore

Katie Freeman  
Kay  
Kyle Kelley  
Lawrence Kaplan  
Mark Johannessen  
Mark-Mesiti-Miller  
Martin Villa  
Matt Machado  
Melissa Hartman  
Michael Pisano  
Michael Saint  
Michael Wool  
Murray Fontes  
Myles Corcoran  
Nadene Thorne  
Nancy Yellin  
Paula Bradley  
Peter Albert  
Peter Haworth  
Polly Chellew  
Rebecca Downing  
Rebecca Rockom  
Rich Didday  
Robert Arko  
Ryan Sarnataro  
Saladin Sale – Rail & Trail  
Sally Arnold for Rail and Trail  
Sean  
Shane Mckeithen  
Stephanie Wells  
Steve Wiesner  
Steven Schieffer  
Tim Brattan  
Tina Andreatta  
Todd and Susan Guild  
Trink Praxel