



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

Draft MINUTES

**Thursday, August 04, 2022
9:00 a.m.**

**HYBRID MEETING
County Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean St., Room 525
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

**Community TV Zoom
Web: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81296262340>
Dial-in: +1 312 626 6799
Webinar ID: 812 9626 2340**

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Sandy Brown	Ari Parker (Remote)
Mike Rotkin	Greg Caput (Remote)
Manu Koenig	Kristen Brown (Remote)
Jacques Bertrand	Lowell Hurst (Alt) (Remote)
Andy Schiffrin (Alt)	Robert Quinn (Alt) (Remote)
Randy Johnson (Remote)	Felipe Hernandez (Alt) (Remote)
Bruce McPherson (Remote)	Brandy Rider (Caltrans Ex-Officio) (Remote)

Staff present:

Guy Preston	REMOTE
Tracy New	Brian Zamora
Luis Mendez	Rachel Moriconi
Yesenia Parra	Grace Blakeslee
Sarah Christensen	
Cindy Convisser	
Krista Corwin	
Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)	

2. Oral communications.

Received public comment from:

Barry Scott

Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit

Jack Nelson

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Commissioner Caput joined the meeting at 9:13 a.m. via zoom

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas.

A replacement page for item 15 and handouts for items 8, 24, and 25 were posted to the website.

CONSENT AGENDA

Deputy Director Luis Mendez responded to a Commissioner's question regarding item 15, communicating that the recommendations of the prior audit were met after the current audit period.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin motioned, and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Bertrand, S. Brown, Johnson, McPherson, K. Brown, Parker, Rotkin, Koenig, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Hernandez, Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the June 02, 2022 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
5. Accepted draft minutes of the June 16, 2022 Transportation Policy Workshop
6. Accepted draft minutes of the June 16, 2022 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

7. Approved draft minutes of the July 21, 2022 Regional Transportation Commission special meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items.

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

8. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a sole source agreement with Industrial Railways Company, Inc. to correct the deferred maintenance along MP 3 to MP 7 and invoice St. Paul and Pacific Railroad/Progressive Rail

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

9. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
10. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues
11. Approved Fiscal Year 2022-23 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 8 Claims for the Community Traffic Safety Coalition and the Ride 'n Stride Program (**Resolution 01-23**)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

12. Adopted Assembly Bill 361 Findings for Virtual and Hybrid Meetings
13. Accepted information on Legislative Updates
14. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into the new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for Community of RTC (CORE) and RTC Association of Middle Management (RAMM) and adopt the New Salary Schedule for Calendar Year 2022
15. Accepted the Transportation Development Act (TDA) Fiscal Years 2018-2019 to 2020-21 triennial performance audit report and direct staff to implement the recommendation of the RTC audit

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

16. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
17. Accepted correspondence log
18. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies

- a. June 20, 2022 Letter from Sandy Brown, RTC Chair, to Senator Alex Padilla re: Transportation Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Funding for Santa Cruz County Projects
 - b. July 5, 2022 Letter from Sandy Brown, RTC Chair, to Congresswoman Anna Eshoo re: Transportation Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Funding for Boulder Creek Complete Streets
19. Accepted information items
- a. July 1, 2022 News Release: California Allocates More than \$3 Billion for Transportation Infrastructure

REGULAR AGENDA

20. Commissioner reports
21. Director's Report

Executive Director Guy Preston delivered the director's report, highlighting the work of Transportation Planners Matt Schroeder and Rachel Moriconi on the legislative updates in consent item 13; an upcoming debriefing with staff from the California Transportation Commission in regards to the unsuccessful TIRCIP (Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Improvement Program) funding application for Pajaro Station project and segment 20 of the rail trail; appreciation for administrative staff on their work for hybrid meetings of the RTC; as it is the only venue capable of doing so at this time, regular meetings of the RTC will be held hybrid-style at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers for the remainder of the calendar year; date change of an upcoming Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee meeting; the groundbreaking ceremony for Segment 7, Phase 2 of the Coastal Rail Trail is scheduled for August 11, 2022 at La BARRANCA Park in Santa Cruz; collaborative efforts between SCCRTC and Michael Tree, new general manager of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District.

Received public comment from:

Mike Tree, Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District General Manager

22. Caltrans report

Office Chief for Transportation Planning in Caltrans District 5 Brandy Rider delivered the Santa Cruz County Project Updates and highlighted the recent appointment of Caltrans Director Tony Taveres; a recently-introduced fourth foundational principle, Economic Prosperity in our Communities; priorities, which include SB1 projects, small business participation, investing in transit, inter-city rail program, Clean California initiatives, people experiencing homelessness, the broadband middle-mile initiative; and the announcement by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of new programming for

communities to build resilient infrastructure.

Commissioners discussed: progress on the Highway 152 at Holohan and College Roads.

23. Scotts Valley Project Updates Presentation

Chris Lamm delivered a presentation, highlighting the Active Transportation Plan adopted in Spring 2021; updates to the Pavement Management Program; \$11.5 million dollars programmed for the CIP this year.

Commissioners discussed: importance of the remediation along Mt. Hermon Road; gratitude to San Lorenzo Valley community for bringing business to Scotts Valley; enhanced bicycle safety along important routes.

24. Request for Proposals for Professional Engineering and Environmental Services – Electric Passenger Rail Transit & Coastal Rail Trail Project between Pajaro Junction and Santa Cruz along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Senior Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen delivered the staff report and gave a brief summary of the work included in the engineering and environmental services.

Commissioners discussed: a public outreach plan developed in concert with the chosen consultant; critical look at the vertical and horizontal alignment of the track; coordination of engineering work to expedite delivery of the trail; competition from rail lines that are already freight-active; and staff bringing recommendation forward now because they see a potential funding opportunity for an approved project on the unconstrained (unfunded) list of projects.

Received public comment from:

Barry Scott

Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit

Sally Arnold

David Van Brink

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Jack Nelson

Michael Saint

Mark Johannessen

David Schonbrunn

Mark Mesiti-Miller

Bruce Sawhill

Johanna Lighthill

Kyle Kelley

Sean
Linda Wilshusen
Saladin Sale
Casey Beyer
Greg Becker

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Caput seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Professional Engineering Services contract for preliminary engineering and environmental documentation for an Electric Rail Transit & Coastal Rail Trail project between the Pajaro Junction and Santa Cruz along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Executive Director Guy Preston explained that staff's priority is to define the project and complete the environmental review prior to consideration of a public-private partnership.

Commissioners discussed: the role of public input in the project; labor relations in public transit in this county; potential consequences of failing to maintain the freight easement; excitement for this item; a vote to support the staff recommendation represents the will of the Measure D-2022 voters; need to start looking for local funding support; desire for data as we move forward; desire for carbon-free transit in this community; and lessons learned from the RTC's relationship with Progressive Rail.

Ms. Christensen responded to a Commissioner's question clarifying the amount of Measure D funds that can be allocated to projects involving the rail line. Executive Director Preston communicated staff's intent to return to the Commission with a request for programming.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Bertrand, Rotkin, McPherson, Koenig, K. Brown, Caput, Parker, Johnson, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Quinn, and Hurst voting "aye."

25. Response to Court Ruling on CEQA Challenge of Highway 1 Tier I High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes Project

Senior Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen delivered the staff report.

Ms. Christensen and Executive Director Guy Preston responded to Commissioners' questions regarding the staff's recommendation to use Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds to recirculate the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Commissioners discussed: court's determination that the environmental work for the Tier I High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane project is not

required in order to move forward with the Tier II Auxiliary Lane project; concern for using flexible funds on a highway project when Measure D funds could be used instead; desire to see flexible funding sources put to use implementing rail projects that are on the unconstrained list.

Executive Director Preston delivered additional clarification about the staff's recommendation, highlighting potential drawbacks of amending the Measure D expenditure plan; recommendation reflects staff's efforts to be responsive to the court's order.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Ms. Christensen provided clarification for the "baseline" issue cited in the court ruling & the process of recirculating the Environmental Impact Report.

Commissioners discussed the untenable situation of Highway 1 congestion; exploring all the options; importance of moving the project forward; court's order to recirculate the environmental document has little bearing on whether an HOV lane project will come to fruition in this county, but it does give the public more information which could be put to use in the future.

Received public comment from:

Rick Longinotti, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation and Sierra Club

Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit

Micah Posner

Brian Peoples

Michael Saint

Jack Nelson

Jacqueline Griffith

Adam Millard-Ball

Ron Swenson

Barry Scott

Casey Beyer

Commissioner Bertrand motioned and Commissioner McPherson seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to adopt Resolution 02-23:

1. Authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute amendment 5, up to a maximum amount of \$200,000, to contract TP1938 with Mark Thomas & Company, Inc. to provide technical support to address the Superior Court of California ruling on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) challenge by the Campaign for Sustainable Transportation against Caltrans for the Highway 1 Tier I High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA), and
2. Program and Budget \$250,000 in FY 2022-23 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds and exchange those STBG funds for state

Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds in FY23 to fund the contract amendment and project management efforts.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Ms. Christensen and Mr. Preston provided additional clarification about the court's order related to the Tier I project, reiterating that the purpose of spending the funds is to recirculate the environmental document to gather public input on the baseline year being 2035.

Commissioners discussed: desire to move forward; balancing skepticism with compromise; approving staff recommendation #1 sends the desired message of compliance to the court.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin motioned to amend the motion on the floor to revise recommendation #2 to provide a direction to staff to return to the Commission with funding for the recirculation of the EIR to come from the Measure D highway funds and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the amendment to the motion.

In response to the motion, Ms. Christensen provided more information about the 30 days plus 45 days process of amending the expenditure plan; potential costs of mitigation resulting from the recirculation; recirculation will have a very narrow focus; petitioner's claims regarding vehicle miles travelled (VMT) & greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were rejected by the court and will not be subjected to public comment.

Commissioners discussed: Environmental Impact Report recirculation procedures under CEQA; skepticism of environmental benefits of highway widening; Caltrans has no source with which to fund the recirculation.

The substitute motion failed, with Commissioners Koenig, S. Brown, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Hernandez voting "aye," and Commissioners Bertrand, McPherson, K. Brown, Parker, Johnson, and Commissioner Alternates Quinn and Hurst voting "no."

Commissioner Schiffrin made a request to staff to bring a discussion of possible other non-Measure D funding sources that are under our local control when they bring forth the contract award for the rail project approved in item 24.

Commissioners discussed: skepticism of HOV lanes; support for auxiliary lanes and South County voters; question to staff about what the STBG funds can be used for; skepticism that highway widening will address the real challenges commuters face on Highway 1.

The main motion passed with Commissioners Koenig, Bertrand, McPherson, K. Brown, Parker, Johnson, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Quinn, Hernandez, and Hurst voting "aye," and Commissioners S. Brown and Rotkin voting "no."

The meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

26. Next meetings

The next Hybrid RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean St. Room 525 with remote access by Zoom teleconference.

The next remote only Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. by Zoom teleconference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yesenia Parra
Administrative Services Officer

Attendees:

Barry Scott
Lani Faulkner
Jack Nelson
Michael Saint
Brian Peoples
Mike Tree
Sally Arnold
David Van Brink
Mark Johannessen
David Schonbrunn

Mark Mesiti-Miller
Bruce Sawhill
Johanna Lighthill
Kyle Kelley
Sean
Linda Wilshusen
Saladin Sale
Casey Beyer
Greg Becker