



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, August 3, 2023
9:00 a.m.**

In-Person Meeting

Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean Street, Room 525
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Remote Participation

RTC Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85406910971>

Dial-in: +1 564-217-2000

Webinar ID: 854 0691 0971

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Sandy Brown

Kristen Brown

Alexander Pedersen

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter

Eduardo Montesino

Manu Koenig

Felipe Hernandez

Mike Rotkin

Bruce McPherson

Randy Johnson

Robert Quinn (Alt)

Andy Schiffrin (Alt)

Scott Eades (Caltrans Ex-Officio)

Staff present:

Guy Preston

Luis Mendez

Shannon Munz

Riley Gerbrandt

Tommy Travers

Amanda Marino

Yesenia Parra

Sarah Christensen

Krista Corwin

Tracy New

Rachel Moriconi

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Approved AB2449 request(s) - *none*
3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Replacement pages for item 15 were posted to the website. Handouts for items 24 and 27 were posted to the website.

4. Oral communications

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner McPherson appreciated the collaborative efforts of staff and partner agencies on item 10.

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

MINUTES

5. Approved draft minutes of the June 1, 2023 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the June 13, 2023 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the June 15, 2023 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

8. Accepted State and Federal Legislative Updates

PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS

9. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to execute a contract with Community Bridges to provide Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV services) (**Resolution 1-24**)
10. Approved San Lorenzo Valley Schools Complex Circulation and Access Study Final Report

11. Accepted Work Plan for the *2050 Regional Transportation Plan*
12. Approved rejection of bids and adopt revised Scope of Work and Specifications for the Phase 2 Debris Removal and Erosion Repair Project along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

13. Accepted status reports on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues for June and July 2023
14. Accepted status reports on Measure D revenues for June and July 2023
15. Approved Amendments to the Fiscal Years (FYs) 2022-23 and 23-24 Budget and Work Program (**Resolution 2-24**)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

16. Accepted Fiscal Year 21/22 Measure D Annual Report

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

17. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
18. Accepted correspondence log
19. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. June 1, 2023 Letter to Steve McShane, Chair of the Central Coast Community Energy Policy Board re: Requesting Collaboration on New Bike Voucher Program
20. Accepted information items - *none*

REGULAR AGENDA

21. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Rotkin discussed the health and safety concerns presented by high volumes of cars parked along Highway 9, forcing traffic into the adjacent lane, and a lack of restroom facilities for state park visitors between Felton and Santa Cruz. Chair Koenig will draft a letter to Caltrans requesting some attention to the issue.

22. Director's Report

Executive Director Preston delivered updates on storm damage repair on the

Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; phase 2 of debris removal and erosion control work; comments on the FY22-23 Measure D Annual Report and appreciation to the staff and members of the Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee; funding included in the state budget for new rail and zero-emission transit programs; staffing changes including the departure of Transportation Planner Matt Schroeder and upcoming retirement of Executive Director Preston, scheduled for December 1, 2023.

Commissioners discussed: surprise upon hearing Director Preston's retirement announcement; appreciation for Executive Director Preston's service, collaboration, transparency, and leadership throughout his tenure at the RTC.

23. Caltrans Report

Commissioner Scott Eades appreciated Executive Director Preston for his work and partnership; provided a staffing update on the position of Deputy Director for District 5, which has been filled by Brandy Rider; the upcoming Climate Adaptation Planning grant workshop on August 16 from 1:30pm-3:00pm; explained the process for making temporary and permanent repairs to the highway; highlighted storm damage repairs including the Soquel Creek Bridge Scour Protection Project, Highway 35 at Bear Creek Road, and on Highway 9, ongoing work at Jayne's Slide and at milepost 22.

Commissioner Eades responded to questions regarding: the necessity of a 24-hour closure of Highway 236; funding and formalizing off-road parking for visitors to Shark Fin Cove; Kevin Drabinski's contact information for District 5 updates.

24. Highway 1 Construction Update

This item was heard out of order after item 26. Senior Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen gave a presentation highlighting construction progress, project schedules, and public outreach.

Ms. Christensen responded to questions regarding the plan for transitioning to bus-on-shoulder operation after project completion; syncing light signals on Soquel Drive; potential planning for improvements to the three-way stop at Robertson & Soquel Drive; coordination of traffic control measures with the time of day; safety reminders for moving through the construction zone.

25. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Draft 2023 Public Participation Plan for the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Council of San Benito County Governments (SBtCOG), the Santa Cruz County

Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

Communications Specialist Shannon Munz delivered the staff report.

The public hearing opened at 9:47. No comments were made. The public hearing closed at 9:48.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the work and the impact of public outreach on project implementation; AMBAG's discussion on the limitations of public engagement via social media.

26. Receive presentation from County Health Services Agency – Public Health Division on Safe and Active Transportation Programs

Health Services Agency Staff Theresia Rogerson and Arnold Shir gave a presentation. In response to a question from a Commissioner, Mr. Shir discussed more details about safety education programming for youth who use micro-mobility (e-bikes and scooters); members of the public are invited to join the Community Traffic Safety Coalition to lend their support.

Received public comment from:

Ben Vernazza
Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit
Jonathan Goren
David Van Brink

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for Vision Zero efforts; good progress in Watsonville; more infrastructure on rural roads will serve young bicyclists in South County.

27. Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Grant Funding Master Agreement, Contract Award for Professional Engineering and Environmental Services, and Amendment to the Measure D-Rail Category 5-Year Program of Projects for the Zero Emission Passenger Rail & Trail Project between Pajaro Junction and Santa Cruz along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Associate Engineer Riley Gerbrandt delivered the staff report. Mr. Gerbrandt responded to Commissioner questions regarding the need to request additional funds; outcome of concept report and project readiness for environmental review; how the additional \$1.5 mil will be spent on public outreach and communication.

Executive Director Guy Preston responded to questions regarding: rail projects eligible for RTIP funds, but difficult decisions will need to be made with respect to project prioritization; Measure D-rail category funding and TIRCP funding can both be programmed for this purpose; however Measure D funding is strained by maintenance and storm damage repair needs and delays in reimbursement from FEMA; transit (i.e. METRO) projects would be in direct competition for TIRCP funds, however roadway projects would not; RTIP funding decisions planned for December; requesting Measure D-rail category funds be allocated to bridge the gap; strategize pursuing alternative funding sources for the environmental document; Measure D programs are managed via a cash flow model and the model extrapolates out through the end of the 30-year tax measure in 2047.

Ms. Christensen responded to a Commissioner's question regarding the cost of an environmental document and availability of funding sources for such a document; discretionary funds are helpful for pre-construction projects such as environmental review; however, we don't want one project to monopolize our discretionary funds; concept report will inform an estimate of operational costs; another funding source must be identified in order to operate and maintain the passenger rail system; planning for the outreach activities.

Commissioners discussed: support for concept report in order to understand feasibility of rail project; desire to avoid diverting funds from other projects in order to pursue rail project; balancing funding sources; impacts of reallocation on our capacity to implement projects; what the project concept report will entail; considering capital expenditures versus operational costs; unexpected costs and the validity of project cost estimates.

Received public comment from:

Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail
Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Ben Vernazza
Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit
David Van Brink
Barry Scott

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin motioned and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Adopt **Resolution 3-24** authorizing the Executive Director, or their designee, to:
 - Negotiate and execute Master Agreements (Exhibit A to Attachment 1), Program Supplement Agreements, and other Agreements, and amendments to such agreements, with the State of California, Caltrans and other state agencies to

- administer grant funding for Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Grant Awards;
 - Negotiate and execute Master Agreements, Program Supplements, Cooperative/ Contribution Agreements, Fund Exchange Agreements, and other agreements, and amendments to such agreements, with the State of California, Caltrans, California State Transportation Agency, the California Transportation Commission and other state or federal agencies, as may be necessary, to receive and administer regional, state and federal funds, and
 - Prepare and submit applications for funding of projects and programs, consistent with the RTC's adopted Annual Budget and Work Program or other RTC documents and actions.
2. Adopt **Resolution 4-24** authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a professional engineering and environmental services contract for the full Project Concept Report for the Zero Emission Passenger Rail & Trail Project between the Pajaro Junction and Santa Cruz along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line with HDR Engineering, Inc. for a total amount not to exceed \$7,703,548; 27-1 TIRCP Master Agreement & ZE Passenger Rail & Trail Contract Page 2
 3. Amend the Measure D-Rail Category Program of Projects to add \$1.63 million of funding in FY23/24 through FY24/25 to fully fund the Project Concept Report;
 4. Amend the RTC FY 23/24 budget accordingly; and
 5. Authorize inter-program loans from other Measure D fund categories to the Measure D Rail category, if needed.

Commissioners discussed: considering alternative sources of funds for advancement of the concept report and continue to leverage Measure D funds; interpreting the results of the concept report.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Pedersen, K. Brown, Quiroz-Carter, Koenig, Johnson, McPherson, Rotkin, Hernandez, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

28. Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Call for Projects

Senior Transportation Planner Rachel Moriconi delivered a presentation in lieu of planner Amy Naranjo, who could not be present due to illness.

Ms. Moriconi responded to Commissioner questions regarding: the breadth of project criteria; gratitude to 2016-Measure D voters; implementation

requirements of agencies who request RTIP funds for a project; processes by which the RTC can make adjustments to the funding allocation decisions;

Commissioners discussed: whether an applicants' consideration of alternative funding sources should be added to the call-for-projects; balancing priorities of county road maintenance versus the vision of a transformative public transit system; to advance equity goals, development of transit-oriented affordable housing must coincide with implementation of transit.

Received public comment from:
Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit

Commissioner Rotkin motioned and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Approve evaluation criteria and the proposed process for programming various state and federal funds and production of the 2024 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP); and
2. Issue a call for projects for projected new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)/Regional Surface Transportation Exchange (RSTPX) funds, SB 1 formula Local Partnership Program (LPP) funds.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion to amend the motion on the floor to add the availability of other funding and the potential for leveraging as additional considerations and Commissioner S. Brown seconded the motion. The motion to amend the motion passed unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Pedersen, K. Brown, Quiroz-Carter, Koenig, Johnson, McPherson, Rotkin, Hernandez, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

The vote was called on the amended motion and the amended motion passed unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Pedersen, K. Brown, Quiroz-Carter, Koenig, Johnson, McPherson, Rotkin, Hernandez, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

29. Review of items to be discussed in closed session.

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that there may be reportable action after closed session.

CLOSED SESSION

The Commission entered closed session at 12:10 p.m.

30. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4))
Initiation of Litigation: Two cases

OPEN SESSION

31. Report out of items discussed in closed session

On a vote of 11-0, the Commission unanimously authorized the filing of two quiet title actions related to a portion of the SCBRL where there is an existing disagreement between the property owners and the RTC as to the ownership and the fee interest of those properties.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

32. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is a special meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 17, 2023 at 9:00 a.m., in the Redwood Room on the fifth floor of the County Governmental Center, located at 701 Ocean St. Rm. 525, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The next regular RTC meeting is scheduled for September 07, 2023 at the Scotts Valley City Council Chambers located at 1 Civic Center Drive, Scotts Valley, CA, 95066.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

Attendees

Casey Carlson	Keith Wood
Ben Vernazza	Johanna Lighthill
Lani Faulkner for Equity Transit	Kevin Drabinski
Celeste Gutierrez	Brian Peoples (Trail Now)
David Van Brink	Janneke Strause, TAMC
Tom Walker	Frank Rimicci, Jr.
Paul Martin	Nancy Yellin
Faina Segal	Robert Tidmore
Christina Watson, TAMC	Clare Gallogly
Jeanette Guire RC RR	PK
Steve Wiesner	S. English

Dianne D
Jonathan Goren
Brian
Alissa Guther
Linda Wilshusen
Michael Saint
Paul Guirguis, Caltrans
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Maureen
Mark McLaren
Chris O’Gara
BobFi
Barry Scott