



**Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC)**

MINUTES

Thursday, June 15, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

In Person: RTC Conference Room, 1101 Pacific Ave, Ste 250, Santa Cruz, CA
Alternative Locations: *Online Zoom and
Caltrans-50 Higuera St, San Luis Obispo, CA*

ITAC Members Present:

County Public Works & Planning (via Zoom-AB2449)	Steve Wiesner
Santa Cruz Public Works and Planning Proxy	Mark Starkey
Scotts Valley Public Works and Planning Proxy	Chris Lamm
Watsonville Public Works	Murray Fontes
Watsonville Community Development	Justin Meek
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	Chris Duymich
California Department of Transportation (via Zoom)	Paul Guirguis
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District and 1 Proxy	John Urgo

Non-Voting Committee Members/Alternates Attending Remotely:

(Did not meet AB2449 requirements)

University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC): Georgina Arias
AMBAG Alternates: Paul Hierling, Will Condon, Heather Adamson

Excused Absences

Kailash Mozumder, Capitola Public Works

RTC Staff Present - In Person: Sarah Christensen, Amy Naranjo, Rachel Moriconi

RTC Staff Participating Remotely:

Others Present In-Person:

Faina Segal, Friends of the Rail & Trail (FORT)

Others Participating Remotely

Ben Vernazza

- 1. Call to Order:** Vice Chair Chris Lamm called the meeting to order at 1:30p.m.
- 2. Roll Call/Introductions:** Introductions were made.
- 3. Consider AB2449 request(s) for voting members to participate in the meeting remotely:** Steve Wiesner participated remotely due to an AB2449

“just-cause.” It was noted that Paul Guirguis is attending remotely under regular Brown Act rules with the Caltrans office noticed on the agenda as an alternate location open to the public. Other committee members and alternates attending remotely did not meet AB2449 requirements and were not eligible to vote or count towards quorum.

4. Additions, deletions, or changes to consent and regular agendas:

Presentation slides for Item 8 AMBAG Public Participation Plan, Item 9 Programming Process for RTC Discretionary Funds, and Item 11 State Road Charge, and public comments are posted on the [ITAC meeting webpage](#).

5. Oral Communications on Matters Not on the Agenda:

- Ben Vernazza encouraged the RTC to consult with the California Coastal Commission about planned projects.
- Rachel Moriconi announced:
 - **Chair/Vice Chair Elections next month:** The committee will consider chair and vice chair elections at its next meeting. In accordance with RTC Committee bylaws, all officers shall continue in their respective offices until their successors have been elected and have assumed office.
 - **Year End Invoices:** Rachel Moriconi reminded agencies to submit invoices to RTC for RSTPX, Measure D, TDA, and other expenditures for FY22/23 as soon as possible but no later than early-July. Agencies should invoice Caltrans for other programs at least every six months to ensure funds do not lapse or become inactive.
 - **VMT Projects:** Rachel Moriconi reminded agencies to provide lists of projects that will reduce vehicle miles traveled for consideration in the County’s [VMT Mitigation Program](#) to Anais Schenk by 6/16/23.
 - **Measure D 5-year Plans:** Rachel Moriconi reminded agencies to solicit public input and post plans online.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Approved Minutes of the May 18, 2023, ITAC meeting

7. Received Notices and Headlines

The Committee unanimously approved a motion (Fontes/Urgo) approving the consent agenda, with members Duymich, Fontes, Guirguis, Lamm, Starkey, Urgo, and Wiesner voting “yes”.

(Committee member Meek was not present for the vote.)

REGULAR AGENDA

Member Meek joined the meeting at 1:40pm

8. **AMBAG Draft 2023 Public Participation Plan**

Heather Adamson, AMBAG presented the draft Public Participation Plan for regional transportation planning and programming documents. The plan has been updated to respond to federal and state legislation since 2019, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and addresses SB375 (2006) requirements for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The plan includes public outreach strategies and best practices, including innovative online outreach and visualization techniques, identifies key stakeholders, and strategies for increasing equity-focused engagement with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP) Populations, low-income households, people of color, persons with disabilities, and tribal groups. She shared preliminary input received on outreach methods, including in-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings and pop-up outreach events and community events, such as farmers markets. **Comments on the draft plan are due August 23, 2023**, with the AMBAG board scheduled to adopt the plan in October. **She requested that ITAC members provide input and help solicit input on the plan.**

ITAC members shared information about successful outreach techniques, including in-person pop-up surveys and signage near project sites (such as West Cliff Drive); Spanish-only meetings; having surveys at events/gathering places both electronically and in paper; soliciting input at food distribution locations, ethnic grocery stores, senior centers; sandwich boards with project and input information; mailing surveys and postcards with QR codes and web addresses to households; getting local leaders (such as stakeholder groups, chambers, school districts) to serve as ambassadors to share information about projects.

9. **Programming Process for RTC Discretionary Transportation Funds**

Amy Naranjo presented the proposed process and evaluation criteria for programming regional shares of Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)/Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and SB-1 LLP formula funds in 2023.

Committee members requested additional time be built into the schedule for project sponsors to prepare applications and indicated support for the application to be kept short (especially compared to several state grant applications). Members discussed potential scoring rubrics for evaluation criteria including: whether to use pass/fail, high/medium/low or give some

criteria more weight than others; using a median and eliminating outliers and allowing the lowest/non-responsive criteria to be dropped; ensuring geographic equity; not providing funding for projects with negative impacts; and support for criteria as presented. Metro staff suggested equity, safety and climate change impacts be given the highest priority. County staff expressed concern about measuring the scale of benefits/number of users benefiting from a project. Caltrans staff suggested setting targets for ensuring at least some percent of the funds are directed to equity communities and focusing funds in areas historically underserved that have greater needs. Several committee members suggested a public engagement process should have resulted in identification of projects/priorities. Committee members suggested Paul Guirguis serve on the application review team.

Public Comments: Ben Vernazza suggested public safety be prioritized, the Coastal Commission be considered, and expressed concern about shared use bike/pedestrian paths. Faina Segal expressed support for considering the California Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) in determining how to spend funds and taking politics out of decision-making process and using evaluation criteria.

The committee unanimously approved a motion (Fontes/Lamm) recommending the RTC use the evaluation criteria presented by staff and allowing the lowest scoring criteria per project to be dropped from consideration, with Urgo, Starkey, Fontes, Duymich, Guirguis, Lamm, Starkey, Wiesner, and Meek voting “yes”.

10. State Legislative Update

Matt Schroeder provided an update on state legislation, including a summary of state budget proposals and bills that may impact local transportation projects and planning.

11. State Road Charge Update

Amy Naranjo provided an update on the state Road Usage Charge (RUC) pilot program, which would allow drivers to pay a per-mile fee instead of the state’s gas tax.

Committee members mentioned heavier electric vehicles have a greater impact on pavement than lighter vehicles, considering equity in how fees are collected, phased implementation, out-of-state vehicles, and other considerations for new per mile fees.

12. Status of transportation projects, programs, studies, and planning documents

ITAC members and RTC staff provided updates on projects, programs, studies, planning efforts, and storm damage.

METRO: John Urgo reported that METRO will consider its Measure D 5-year plan at its June meeting and METRO has been seeking input on public priorities for METRO service through the “Reimaging Metro” effort, with public indicating preferences for more frequent service. METRO will also be seeking public input on the “Rapid Corridors” options to speed up service for cross-county routes this summer.

Santa Cruz: Mark Starkey reported on West Cliff Drive short and long-term storm damage repairs, that (pending bids) the Murray Street Bridge project could start construction as soon as December 2023, the bikeshare program launch, and that the Measure D 5-year plans were approved on June 13.

Watsonville: Murray Fontes reported the Freedom Boulevard repaving project is starting, the city is seeking a federal earmark through Senator Padilla for Downtown Specific Plan improvements, and the Highway 1/Harkins Slough Road bike/pedestrian bridge project time extension is going before the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

Justin Meek expressed interest in applying for planning grants with METRO for affordable housing at Metro’s Watsonville Transit Center; the EIR for the Downtown Specific Plan is out for public review that includes more housing downtown, with council review scheduled for September; work is underway on the city’s General Plan and Housing Element updates; and the city is coordinating with Caltrans on planning Main Street/Highway 152 and other specific plan recommendations, including traffic calming, safety, and street modifications.

AMBAG: Chris Duymich reported that the AMBAG board approved the REAP 2.0 guidelines, with a grant workshop on July 11, and applications due in August.

Scotts Valley: Chris Lamm reported city council approved the Measure D 5-year plan, SB1 Local Streets and Roads project list, and pavement management program updates at its June meeting. The city is also soliciting input on its draft Housing Element. The city has awarded a contract to repave Bean Creek Road this summer.

County of Santa Cruz: Steve Wiesner reported that its draft Housing Element is also out for public review. The County’s Measure D 5-year plan is scheduled to be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors on July 27. The

County and RTC kicked off the Climate Adaptation Vulnerability Assessment for transportation facilities. They are also working with partners to start the Safe Street for All plan and will be updating its Pavement Management System this year.

Construction started on several summer pavement projects, funded by a combination of STIP, RSTPX, Measure D, and other funds. The County awarded a contract for the Soquel Drive buffered bike lanes and road rehabilitation project and will coordinate construction schedules with the City of Santa Cruz's Murray Street bridge and Caltrans Highway 1 projects. The Holohan/152 intersection is expected to start construction in late summer/fall, pending coordination on other Caltrans projects. The county plans to go out to bid on the Green Valley Road multiuse path in late June. The County continues to make repairs to nearly 200 locations damaged during winter storms, with emergency projects at 20 sites completed so far, 40 under construction, and another 10 starting in the next few weeks. Sewer line construction on East Cliff Drive from 13th-26th Avenues and several projects in southern parts of the county, including Paulsen, are also underway.

Chris Duymich left the meeting.

Caltrans: Paul Guirguis reported on road closures, including for permanent repairs to Highway 9 near Ben Lomond and Highway 236 near Big Basin. He encouraged members to sign up for Caltrans construction news releases. Caltrans will be having meetings to discuss plans for the north coast of Highway 1 and how increased tourism will impact the area. Rachel Moriconi noted she included several Local Assistance updates in the consent agenda and that items for the August California Transportation Commission (CTC) meeting are due to Caltrans on June 19.

SCCRTC – Rachel Moriconi reported that comments on the SLV Schools Access plan are due June 30. The Highway 1 Freedom-State Park Drive and Trail Segment 12 project team are working on responses to comments on the draft environmental document, and RTC board authorized staff to pursue grants for a countywide bike subsidy program.

13. Funding Program Opportunities and Updates

The Committee received information about several upcoming grant opportunities and shared information on potential applications. Rachel Moriconi highlighted that a lot of work went into quickly obligating the balance of Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) funds that were rescinded as part the congressional Debt Ceiling deal, including funds designated for the Capitola Road/41st Ave project.

14. Next meeting. The next meeting of the ITAC is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on August 17, 2023 at the RTC conference room, 1101 Pacific Ave, Ste 250. RTC committees do not meet in July. ITAC meetings will be canceled if there are no action items to be brought before the committee.

Vice Chair Lamm adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Moriconi

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