



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, October 19, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

In Person: RTC Conference Room, 1101 Pacific Ave, Ste 250, Santa Cruz, CA

Online: Zoom

ITAC Members Present:

County Public Works & Planning Proxy	Casey Carlson
Santa Cruz Public Works	Matt Starkey
Santa Cruz Planning Proxy	Claire Gallogly
Watsonville Public Works	Murray Fontes
Watsonville Community Development	Justin Meek
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	Regina Valentine
California Department of Transportation	Paul Guirguis
Ecology Action-Transportation Programs	Jeanne LePage (AB2449)
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District and 1 Proxy	John Urgo

Non-Voting Committee Members/Alternates Attending Remotely:

AMBAG Alternates: Paul Hierling
Caltrans Alternates: Malinda Gallaher, Evelyn Frederic
UCSC: Georgina Arias

RTC Staff Present - In Person: Rachel Moriconi, Guy Preston

RTC Staff Participating Remotely: Sarah Christensen, Brianna Goodman, Amy Naranjo

Others Participating Remotely

Rebecca Downing, METRO
Miguel Lizarranga, City of Santa Cruz
Leif Kohler, Caltrans Local Assistance

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Matt Starkey called the meeting to order at 1:31p.m.
- 2. Roll Call/Introductions:** Introductions were made.
- 3. Consider AB2449 request(s) for voting members to participate in the meeting remotely:** Jeanne LePage participated via teleconference due to a AB2449-defined "just case."
- 4. Additions, deletions, or changes to consent and regular agendas:** Item 10 and Item 8 were moved before Item 7.

5. Oral Communications on Matters Not on the Agenda: None.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Approved Minutes of the September 21, 2023, ITAC meeting

The Committee unanimously approved a motion (Gallogly/Guirguis) approving the consent agenda, with Members Gallogly, Starkey, Carlson, Meek, Fontes, Valentine, Guirguis, LePage, and Urgo voting “yes”.

REGULAR AGENDA

10. Murray Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit Update (*moved after Item 6*)

Miguel Lizarranga, City of Santa Cruz provided an update on the Murray Street Bridge seismic retrofit and bridge replacement project. Construction is expected to take 2.5 years due to its complexity and constraints. The project involves relocating sewage facilities, upgrading numerous utilities, adding a new pedestrian walkway, bike lanes, and wider travel lanes. There will also be structural upgrades, new piles, and columns to support the bridge deck widening. Guy Preston and Sarah Christensen requested additional information about types of railing and design details. Miguel discussed the impact of the bridge construction project, detailing that only one-way vehicle traffic will be allowed and that bikes and pedestrian will be able to travel both directions. Miguel also discussed the impact on stakeholders and the importance of constant communication with RTC and the County of Santa Cruz on Highway 1 and Soquel Drive construction projects. The project team plans to move forward quickly, with construction bids due in November and a notice to proceed expected in January 2024.

8. Climate Adaptation Vulnerability Assessment and Priorities Report (CAVA) – Prioritization Framework (*moved before Item 7*)

Brianna Goodman provided an overview of the Santa Cruz County Climate Adaptation Vulnerabilities Assessment (CAVA) planning project, which involves analyzing climate hazards and transportation assets in Santa Cruz County, with a focus on predicting potential impacts of climate change in the next century and prioritizing transportation assets in the unincorporated areas of the County and RTC-owned Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor. She emphasized that the project is not about deciding on adaptation or management strategies, but rather about identifying vulnerable infrastructure, and consideration of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. The project is currently in the process of stakeholder engagement for the first milestone. Brianna requested feedback on the

project's draft milestone framework for further analysis and project completion.

Committee members suggested traffic signals and lighting be included in assets and discussed emergency response priorities for county roads and facilities, regular maintenance, and public feedback, potential impact of planned large-scale developments, such as planned low-income housing, on metrics and priorities.

7. Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) Rapid Corridors Study *(carried over from the September ITAC meeting)*

John Urgo presented information on the METRO Rapid Corridors study aimed at improving service quality and accessibility of METRO bus routes between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. METRO is working to address issues such as traffic congestion, bus stop redundancies, and suboptimal access to bus stops. Proposed changes to bus routes include the amalgamation of the 69 and 71 routes and increased frequency based on the Reimagined Metro phase one service map. He discussed plans to improve bus stop access, with 53% of bus stops in less than ideal locations and 69% lacking shelters or benches. The team aims to reduce wait times by improving bus service frequency and speed, and plans to rebrand and improve bus service with proposals for bus bulbs, transit islands, and signal priority at over 60 intersections. The plan also includes proposals to improve pedestrian crossings and significant reworking of the Morrissey/Soquel/Water intersection being considered. METRO estimates the total cost is \$26.7 million, with \$7.5 million already secured for bus stop enhancements. METRO will be conducting another round of outreach once the final report is ready (estimated December). The committee discussed travel time savings and differences in travel times between Northbound and Southbound buses.

9. Measure D: Five-Year Programs of Projects for Regional Projects and Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) Update

Rachel Moriconi presented proposed updates to the Measure D five-year program of projects for regional projects and categories. No new projects are proposed, but the plans reflect updated cost and schedule information. She highlighted the potential need for financing starting in 2025 to accelerate construction of highway and trail projects. Guy Preston and Sarah Christensen provided information on rail corridor maintenance, including short-line operator responsibilities, the strategy of waiting to make some rail infrastructure and bridge upgrades in combination with a rail transit project. They noted that additional funding would be needed for the remaining segments of the trail project, particularly Segments 13 to 20, maintenance of the rail and trail infrastructure, and strategies to partner with other agencies. Matt Starkey asked if some of the funds designated for the

highway category could be redirected to other categories once all the highway projects in the Expenditure Plan are complete; Guy responded that the voter-approved Ordinance identified the funding splits. Committee members did not recommend any changes to the proposed 5-year plans.

11. Funding Program Opportunities and Updates

Committee members were encouraged to review grant opportunities and program updates listed in the agenda, as well as the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) grant opportunity. Agencies considering applying for Cycle 7 Active Transportation Program (ATP) funds were encouraged to meet after the ITAC to discuss project ideas, best practices, and opportunities to partner on applications.

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.

Santa Cruz: Matt Starkey and Claire Gallogly provided updates on West Cliff Drive, citywide paving, Bethany Culvert replacement, Metro Station relocation, and crosswalk projects.

County of Santa Cruz: Casey Calson reported on the County's progress in dealing with storm damage sites; paving of Emergency Routes in the mountains and other pavement management projects across the county. The County will rebid the Green Valley Road path project. The Soquel Drive multimodal project is scheduled to be completed in December 2024. The Holohan Road project is now scheduled to start construction Spring 2024. The County has several HSIP-funded crosswalk upgrade projects on Graham Hill Road, 7th Ave, and Green Valley Road.

Watsonville: Justin Meek reported on the adopted Downtown Plan, which includes new Complete Streets policies, exploring various growth scenarios for the downtown area, Highway 152/Beach/Lincoln decoupling, Freedom/Main roundabout, sidewalks, bulb outs, street furnishing, and upgraded bicycle facilities. He also provided updates on the General Plan development, storm response, grant applications to address truck impacts on the community, and using REAP 2.0 funds to apply for the state pro-housing designation. Murray Fontes reported city crews have been busy filling potholes and restriping roads. The Freedom Boulevard project is stalled due to supply chain issues.

AMBAG: Paul Hierling provided an update on the status of the Central Coast Sustainable Freight Study, including the review of the existing conditions

report and the preparation of project strategies. AMBAG is also considering Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) goals at its November 8 meeting. Rincon Consulting will be kicking off the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the MTS/SCS. He also reminded agencies that one of the goals for the REAP 2.0 program is VMT reduction.

UCSC: Oxo Slayer and Georgina Aria shared information about recent developments and initiatives related to transportation on the UC Santa Cruz campus, including new bike sharrows, the launch of the new B-cycle system and upcoming traffic signal, bike and pedestrian, and circulation studies. They reported that B-cycle has been hugely popular, with over 3500 rides sold. They are focused on improving education and outreach to students, including providing free helmets. The California Transportation Commission approved an extension and allocation of Active Transportation Program (ATP) funds for ongoing educational and engagement activities.

METRO: John Urgo reported on the approval and upcoming implementation of the Reimagine Metro phase one plan, increasing service starting in December 2023; plans for even more frequent service next year; the purchase of 57 hydrogen fuel cell buses; and the award of a Clean California grant for upgraded bus stops. A \$1.2 billion grant program was also announced for producing clean hydrogen in California that MERO will pursue. He also reported on significant ridership increases in under 18 ridership (500%) and the return of students to campus and fitting increased riders on new articulated buses. He also mentioned the departure of Wondimu Mengistu.

Caltrans: Paul Guirguis reported he is processing agreements for recently awarded Caltrans planning grants and he encouraged agencies to apply for the next cycle, with applications due January 18, 2024. He also encouraged everyone to look at [Caltrans QuikMap](#) for the latest road closure information, including for full closures planned on Highway 1 and Highway 9. The monthly Caltrans project update list will be available in the RTC's November board meeting packet.

RTC: Sarah Christensen reported on Highway 1 projects, including planned closures. Guy Preston reported that RTC received an Air District grant for electric bikes for low-income individuals.

- 14. Next meeting.** The next meeting of the ITAC is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on November 16, 2023, at the RTC conference room, 1101 Pacific Ave, Ste 250.

Chair Starkey adjourned the meeting at 3:47 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Moriconi

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