



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, November 2, 2023  
9:00 a.m.**

**In-Person Meeting**

Santa Cruz County  
Board of Supervisors Chambers  
701 Ocean St. Rm. 525  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**Remote Participation**

RTC Zoom  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85406910971>  
Dial-in: +1 564-217-2000

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

Sandy Brown	Bruce McPherson
Kristen Brown	Larry Pageler (Alt)
Randy Johnson	Andy Schiffrin (Alt)
Alexander Pedersen	Robert Quinn (Alt)
Mike Rotkin	Felipe Hernandez (Remote)
Eduardo Montesino	Scott Eades (Caltrans Ex-Officio) (Remote)
Manu Koenig	

Staff present:

Guy Preston	Yesenia Parra
Luis Mendez	Sarah Christensen
Cindy Convisser	Krista Corwin
Shannon Munz	Tommy Travers
Tracy New	Steph Britt
Grace Blakeslee	Anna Kalthoff
Riley Gerbrandt	Amy Naranjo
Rachel Moriconi	Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Approved AB2449 request(s)

Commissioner Hernandez was away attending a business conference and and requested an AB2449 approval.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

A handout for item 23 was posted to the website.

4. Oral communications

Received comment from:

Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail  
Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation  
Brian Peoples, Trail Now,  
Judy Gittelsohn  
Carey Pico  
Barry Scott  
Jim Helmer

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

### **MINUTES**

5. Accepted draft minutes of the September 21, 2023 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the October 02, 2023 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting
7. Approved draft minutes of the October 05, 2023 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
8. Accepted draft minutes of the October 10, 2023 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory committee meeting
9. Accepted draft minutes of the October 12, 2023 Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee meeting
10. Accepted draft minutes of the October 19, 2023 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee meeting

## **POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items*

## **PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS**

11. Adopted the *Final 2023 Public Participation Plan*

## **BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

12. Accepted status reports on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
13. Accepted status reports on Measure D revenues

## **ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

14. Approved appointments to fill the member position and alternate position vacancies on the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&DTAC)

## **INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

15. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
16. Accepted correspondence log
17. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies -*none*
18. Accepted information items -*none*

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

19. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner McPherson announced that the Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) signed a 20-year contract with solar energy company Yellow Pine, putting our county on path to eliminate fossil fuels 15 years ahead of target.

Commissioner Kristen Brown communicated about her attendance at the 2023 Self-Help Counties Coalition Focus on the Future conference with Executive Director Guy Preston and Senior Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen.

Chair Koenig communicated the Commission's appreciation for outgoing Executive Director Preston, highlighting his long career in transportation and civil engineering and his achievements during his 5-year tenure with the

RTC. Chair Koenig presented Mr. Preston with a resolution of appreciation.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner S. Brown seconded the motion to add the resolution to the agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Johnson, S. Brown, McPherson, K. Brown, Koenig, Pedersen, Rotkin, Montesino, Hernandez, and Commissioner Alternates Quinn, Pageler, and Schiffrin voting "aye."

Commissioners Johnson, S. Brown, Montesino, McPherson, Rotkin, Montesino, K. Brown, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Quinn discussed their appreciation for Mr. Preston's service and leadership.

Received public comment from:

Sarah Christensen  
Brian Peoples  
Michael Saint

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Kristen Brown seconded the motion to approve **Resolution 12-24**. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Johnson, S. Brown, McPherson, K. Brown, Koenig, Pedersen, Rotkin, Montesino, Hernandez, and Commissioner Alternates Quinn, Pageler, and Schiffrin voting "aye."

## 20. Selection of Chair Committee

Chair Koenig communicated that he would convene a selection of Chair Committee and that commissioners should contact him with their interest.

## 21. Director's Report

Executive Director Preston thanked the Commission for their kind comments and announced: a reminder about ongoing public outreach for the Climate Adaptation and Vulnerability Assessment (online survey open until Nov. 10); release of the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 (from 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Live Oak to State Park Drive in Aptos) and the public meeting taking place on November 16 at 5:00pm, location TBA; call for community input on aesthetic features for the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder project from State Park Drive to Freedom Boulevard & Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail and the public meeting on December 5 at 6:00pm at Rio Sands Hotel in Aptos; Monterey Bay Air Resources District awarded a grant of \$194,900 to the GO Santa Cruz County program for bicycle incentives.

Executive Director Preston delivered his parting remarks, highlighting the significance of transportation in our everyday lives, and appreciating his unique relationships with six RTC Chairs over the course of his tenure.

Received public comment from:  
Krista Corwin

22. Caltrans Report

Scott Eades communicated Caltrans' efforts to prepare for winter storms; continued litter removal efforts by way of the Clean California campaign and reminder to the public to avoid littering on California's highways; \$80 million dollar contract signed with Statler Rail to provide the first intercity zero-emission hydrogen passenger train operating between Merced and Sacramento; California selected as the National Hydrogen Hub, receiving \$1.2 billion from the Department of Energy to accelerate the deployment of clean renewable hydrogen; appreciation for Executive Director Preston.

23. **Public Hearing:** Measure D: Five-Year Programs of Projects for Regional Projects and Lift Line and Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) Update

Transportation Planner Tommy Travers delivered a presentation.

Executive Director Guy Preston responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: the prospect of borrowing at the current interest rates; pros and cons of borrowing now versus waiting until interest rates come down; how the RTC plans to spend funds on Coastal Rail Trail when the choice between Interim and Ultimate trail alignment has not been decided; time restrictions of awarded grant funds; whether adverse abandonment could be pursued with the Surface Transportation Board in less than two years; can funds awarded by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) be used for Interim Trail; benefits of railbanking whether or not the tracks are left in place; can't bond for construction for a project that has not been environmentally cleared; likelihood of restoring capacity for freight rail service; mechanism by which a member of the public may propose a project for the Measure D expenditure plan.

Mr. Travers responded to a commissioner's question regarding possibilities for accelerating project delivery in Scotts Valley.

Commissioners discussed: achievements of the Measure D Five-Year plans, strategic implementation and leveraging the local match; review of the data warrants reflecting on the proposed plan; labelling the segments by streets and roads instead of sequential numbers; placing an item on the agenda to initiate adverse abandonment of the rail line; need to move aggressively forward on the funding package; complexity of the transportation system and trade-offs when making decisions about the future; "playing dodgeball" with the question of railbanking and calling the question; what the Measure D-2022 vote means to the public and what railbanking means regarding

“ripping out the tracks”; staff initiated the zero-emission passenger rail concept report in response to Measure D-2022 vote; advocates on either side of the railbanking issue and their stances; Commission makes decisions as a body; bonding against rail corridor revenues & Roaring Camp going up to the Boardwalk; heard that railbanking eliminates impediments to project delivery yet that analysis was rejected due to community groups voicing opposition.

The public hearing opened at 10:55 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Jim Helmer  
Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail  
Homeowner in Seacliff (name not provided)  
Brian Peoples  
Judy Gittelsohn  
Michael Saint  
Ben Vernazza  
Barry Scott  
Brian Largay

Senior Transportation Planner Grace Blakeslee responded that the public meeting for the Draft EIR for segments 10 and 11 is scheduled for November 16.

In response to a Commissioner’s question, Senior Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen provided more information regarding plans to fund increased costs for preconstruction activities for the rail and trail project; possible eligibility for state rail assistance funding for emerging corridors; balancing spending between capital projects and infrastructure preservation.

In response to a Commissioner’s question, Mr. Preston provided more information about increasing cost estimates for the preconstruction activities and the need for additional local funds that would be needed to build and operate a passenger rail system; competing for freight rail funding; replacement of bridges and infrastructure could be funded through passenger rail grant funds in the future.

Commissioner Montesino made a motion and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

Hold a public hearing, consider comments received, and adopt **Resolution 13-24** and **Resolution 14-24** to:

1. Approve the Fiscal Years (FY) 2023/2024-2027/2028 Measure D five-year programs of projects (5-Year Plans) for regional investment

categories and projects: Highway Corridors, Active Transportation, Rail Corridor, the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing and San Lorenzo Valley/Highway 9 Corridor Improvements (Attachment 1: Exhibits A through E) and Community Bridges Lift Line (Exhibit F); and

2. Adopt the 2023 Measure D - Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) (available online at [www.sccrtc.org/MeasureD](http://www.sccrtc.org/MeasureD))

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Pedersen, S. Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Hernandez, Koenig, McPherson, K. Brown, Rotkin, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin, Quinn, and Pageler.

#### 24. Amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Budget & Work Program

Director of Budget and Finance Tracy New delivered the staff report.

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

1. Adopt **Resolution 15-24** approving the proposed FY2023-24 RTC Budget and Work Program and Measure D Budget as shown on Exhibit A; and
2. Approve the proposed salary schedule for student intern positions.

Commissioners discussed: limited attendance at the Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee; staff responded to all questions; had there been a quorum, there would have been a vote to support the staff recommendation; appreciation for clarity in the staff report and highlight of key changes.

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

#### 25. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

RTC General Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that no reportable action is expected from the closed session item.

The Commission adjourned to closed session at 11:31 a.m. and did not return to open session.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

26. Public Employment (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957)  
Title: Executive Director and Interim Executive Director

27. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is a special meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 07, 2023 at 9:00 a.m., at the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chambers, located at 701 Ocean St. Rm. 525, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for November 16, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at a location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Corwin, Administrative Assistant

Attendees

Jim Helmer

Seacliff Homeowner

1(805)\*\*\*-3875

Heather Adamson, AMBAG

Jeanette Guire RC RR

Rob Tidmore, County of Santa Cruz

Michael Zeller

Erik

Tom Walker

Paul Guirguis, Caltrans Planning



Community Member

Barry Scott

N Yellin

Bryan Largay

Micheal Saint

David   Public Transit

1(831)\*\*\*1847

Judy Gittelsohn

Jesus Bojorquez

Carey

Heather

jaselli

Anonymous anonymous

Matt Machado, Community Development and Infrastructure

David Morris

Brian Peoples (Trail Now)

John Urgo



Ben Vernazza  
Johanna Lighthill  
Jacob Wysocki  
Murray Fontes, City of Watsonville  
Paula Bradley  
Aiyana Moya  
Douglas Underhill, Community Bridges  
Joni  
PK  
Nadene Thorne  
BoJohn  
BobFi  
Linda Wilshusen