



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, February 1, 2024
9:00 a.m.**

In-Person Meeting

Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, Fourth Floor
Watsonville, CA 95076

Remote Participation

RTC Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89597173447>

Dial-in: +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 895 9717 3447

1. Roll call.

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

Members present:

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

Staff present:

Mitch Weiss	Riley Gerbrandt
Luis Mendez	Yesenia Parra
Sarah Christensen	Grace Blakeslee
Cindy Convisser	Krista Corwin
Shannon Munz	Tommy Travers
Tracy New	Rachel Moriconi
Brianna Goodman	Keith Rayburn-Garcia
Rachael Hughes	Steph Britt
Amy Naranjo	Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)
Anna Kalthoff	

2. Considered AB2449 request(s)

Commissioner Felipe Hernandez notified the Commission of his need to participate remotely due to a just cause related to medical.

The Commission considered an AB2449 emergency circumstances request from Commissioner Vanessa Quiroz-Carter. RTC Counsel Steve Mattas responded that the provided circumstances did not fall within statute. The request was withdrawn.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Handouts for items 27 and 29 and add-on pages for items 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, & 25 were posted to the website.

4. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that no reportable action was anticipated from the closed session discussions. The Commission entered closed session at 9:05 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

5. Conference with Labor Negotiators
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6)
Agency Designated Representatives: Tony Harry and Jesse Lad
Employee Organizations: CORE and RAMM
6. Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1))
v. Terrie Kajijara, et. al. (Case No. 21CV00211)

OPEN SESSION

7. Reconvene in open session and report on items discussed in closed session

The Commission reconvened in open session at 10:11 a.m. Steve Mattas communicated that there was no reportable action resulting from the closed session discussions.

8. Oral communications

Received comment from:

Jim Helmer

Barry Scott

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Michael Saint, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Executive Director Mitch Weiss responded to a Commissioner's question on item 14 regarding the state budget deficits and the potential impacts on transportation projects. In response to a Commissioner's question, Senior Transportation Planner Rachel Moriconi delivered additional information regarding AB 817.

MINUTES

9. Accepted meeting notes of the November 27, 2023 Equity Workgroup
10. Approved draft minutes of the December 07, 2023 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
11. Accepted draft minutes of the December 11, 2023 Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting
12. Accepted draft minutes of the December 12, 2023 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
13. Accepted meeting notes of the December 19, 2023 Equity Workgroup

POLICY ITEMS

14. Received update on 2024 State and Federal Legislative Programs

PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS

No consent items

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

15. Accepted status reports on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues from December 2023 and January 2024

16. Accepted status reports on Measure D revenues from December 2023 and January 2024

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

17. Approved City of Santa Cruz Article 8 Transportation Development Act claims and request to deallocate funds (**Resolution 22-24**)
18. Approved support for local revenue Measures K and L on the March 2024 Presidential Primary Election Ballot

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

19. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
20. Accepted information items - *none*
21. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. January 8, 2024 Letter to Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco RE: Assembly Bill (AB) 817 Local Government: Open Meetings – Support
 - b. December 31, 2023 Letter to Sinarath Pheng RE: Central Coast Coalition Comment Letter on CSIS 2.0 Metrics Methodology
22. Accepted correspondence log

REGULAR AGENDA

23. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Koenig reported highlights from his December 8, 2023 meeting with Dustin Earle of Glydways and asked that a short presentation be agendized for the March or April Commission meeting. Other Commissioners agreed that a presentation on Glydways be made to the Commission.

24. Director's Report

Interim Executive Director Mitch Weiss reported updates on: the release of the final Environmental Impact Report for the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes & Bus on Shoulder from State Park Drive to Freedom Boulevard and Segment 12; outreach efforts on the preferred bridge design over Aptos Creek and the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan; January testimony to the California Transportation Commission in support of our Regional Transportation Improvement Program; recruitment to vacancies on citizen advisory committees including the Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee, the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee; Notices to Proceed filed on projects funded by Caltrans

Sustainable Planning Grants, including rural highway safety, transportation demand management, and coastal resiliency projects; Segment 5 of the Coastal Rail Trail; Transportation Equity Action Plan; staffing announcements; upcoming conferences and trainings to be attended by staff.

25. Caltrans Report

Director for Caltrans District 5 Scott Eades delivered the Caltrans project updates: SHOPP projects under development including the Highway 129 pavement project and the Highway 152 downtown pedestrian safety project; close of the Sustainable Transportation Planning grant application cycle with 2 applications from Santa Cruz County; release of Design Information Bulletin 94, focused on design guidance for Complete Streets Developments; coordination with the City and County of Santa Cruz on Route 9 parking and installation of pedestrian safety beacons on Highway 1.

26. Presentation on Transportation Projects in the City of Watsonville

Assistant Director of Public Works & Utilities and City Engineer Murray Fontes delivered a presentation.

Commissioner McPherson departed the meeting at 11:00 and Commissioner Alternate Virginia Johnson replaced him at the dais.

Received public comment from:

Barry Scott
Lowell Hurst
Aurelio Gonzalez
Trina Coffman-Gomez
Rick Longinotti
Michael Saint
Nancy Faulstich
John
Sean

27. **Public Hearing:** Zero Emission Passenger Rail & Trail Project
Preliminary Purpose and Need

Associate Transportation Engineer Riley Gerbrandt delivered a presentation and responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: messaging to the residents of Scotts Valley and the San Lorenzo Valley; how the concept report relates to a future environmental document; potential for the development of non-rail zero-emission vehicles on the Santa Cruz Branch

Line; significance of the word "constraint" in the public dialogue moving forward; timeline of the concept report release.

Commissioners discussed: desire for factual information upon which to make informed decisions; clarification of terms related to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); desire to outline a level of specificity that will clarify improvements in travel times and affordability to individual users; the concept report is the first step in the process to pursue rail as a transit option; alternatives analysis performed in 2019 (Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis).

Received public comment from:

David Schwartz
Aurelio Gonzalez
John Hall
Matt Ferrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail
David Van Brink
Alexandra Fisher
Eva
Laurie Rubio
Tony Rubio
Tina Andreatta
Sally Arnold
KG Murimoto
Don Redman
Paula Bradley
Barry Scott
Lowell Hurst
John Speckert
Trina Coffman-Gomez
Rick Longinotti
Michael Saint
Nancy Faulstich
Johanna Lighthill
David Dean
John
Brian Peoples
Elizabeth Madrigal
Michael Loik
Dianne D.
Sean
Becky Steinbruner
Brett Garrett

The public hearing closed at 12:45 p.m.

Commissioners discussed: planning for impacts to the project due to state requirements for additional housing; concerns about ridership returns on investment in the rail project; need for voters to approve a tax measure to build & operate a transit facility between Santa Cruz and Watsonville; travel by train an enjoyable commuting experience; project concept report coming in winter 2024/2025 expected to answer public's questions; popular support for passenger rail in Watsonville.

Commissioner Hernandez (remote) departed the meeting and Commissioner Alternate Judy Gittelsohn (remote) replaced him at the meeting at 1:00 p.m. communicating a family emergency.

28. Climate Adaptation Vulnerability Assessment and Priorities Report (CAVA) Milestone 1: Prioritization Framework

Transportation Planner Brianna Goodman delivered a presentation.

Tim Gross, WSP Project Manager, responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: inclusion of access to disadvantaged communities in addition to proximity in the asset prioritization model; engagement with the Coastal Commission; prioritization metrics of segments of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line/Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail; timeline of release of the prioritized areas list.

Commissioner Sandy Brown motioned and Commissioner Rotkin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to provide input and approve the Prioritization Framework for the Climate Adaptation Vulnerability Assessment and Priorities Report (CAVA).

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

Received public comment from:

David Schwartz
Brian Peoples
Barry Scott
Sean

29. Highway 1 State Park-Freedom Auxiliary Lanes, Bus on Shoulder, and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project Amendment to Professional Engineering Services Agreement TP2122

Senior Transportation Engineer Sarah Christensen delivered a presentation and responded to Commissioner questions regarding: the difference in cost

between the two bridge options over Aptos Creek and Soquel Drive; structural differences of the two options; proposal to update the concept of operations of the bus-on-shoulder facility to add three miles south of Freedom Boulevard; cost estimates and funding to add the 3-mile bus on shoulder extension to a Caltrans project not yet identified; the Caltrans safety project in the design phase; signage & striping would be added to facilitate bus movement on the shoulder during traffic backups to Buena Vista; opportunities for updates to be brought before the Commission; no new fiscal impacts to the Measure D 5-year plan nor the RTC budget; reallocation of funds from tasks that came in under budget; additional funds requested for this contract; however, the request is within the project funding; environmental work for the bus on shoulder extension has yet to be determined.

Commissioners discussed: request to have a separate item on the agenda to advance further discussions on the additional bus on shoulder facility; beneficial to the public & taxpayers by updating the scope of work of a project as opposed to beginning a new project; proposed update to the concept of operations is aligned with expansion of METRO service, specifically the 90-X route; collaboration with Caltrans, timing of the concept updates and construction timeline.

Commissioner Montesino motioned and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute amendment 4 to Professional Engineering Services Agreement TP2122 with Mark Thomas for additional scope at cost of \$1,299,972 for a not to exceed value of \$13,728,717 for the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project between State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard interchanges, which includes Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail (Project).

Ms. Christensen responded to a commissioner's question regarding the RTC's role in the main project with respect to CEQA.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin proposed a friendly amendment to approve the staff recommendation and direct staff to (1) bring the final environmental impact report (EIR) for the Highway 1 Bus-on-Shoulder and Auxiliary Lane from Freedom Blvd. to State Park Drive and Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail project at the appropriate time to make findings; and (2) as a separate item deliver a report on the environmental impacts of the proposed bus on shoulder facilities extension from Freedom Boulevard to Buena Vista.

Ms. Christensen clarified that the proposed updated concept report is for bus-on-shoulder facilities and is not an auxiliary lane project.

The maker of the motion accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Eades clarified that the proposed bus on shoulder facilities extension south of Freedom Boulevard would be added to a high priority Caltrans safety project. The Caltrans safety project has completed environmental work and is currently in the design phase. Mr. Eades assured that Caltrans will continue to collaborate with staff and offered a caution that shoulders are not always designed to sustain operation of heavy vehicles.

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

Received public comment from:

Lowell Hurst

David Schwartz

Matt Ferrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail

Rick Longinotti, Campaign for Sustainable Transportation

Brian Peoples

Faina Segal

John

Sean

Joe Jordan

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

30. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 7, 2024 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Corwin, Administrative Assistant

Attendees

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter

Brian

Dianne D

Taylor Lahey

Tim Brattan

(831)-***-1847

Chubby

Forrest Revere

Tem

Susan Cavalieri

KS

Brett Garrett

Nadene Thorne

AM

Crystal Wallace
Michael Loik
John Eastman
Chris
Brian Peoples (Trail Now)
Jesse Kathan
Suzi Merriam
Ginger
Murray Fontes
(831)-***-0283
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John Mulry
Michael Saint
Courtney Lindberg
Daniel Stonebloom
Paul Guirguis
Sue Renner
JohnOldenkamp
Shalom Compost
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Steven Bennett
Joe Wright
Alexandra McCoy
Steve Wiesner
Trician
Jeanette Guire
Lola Quiroga
Maggie
Julie Castro-Orozco
Vern
Elisa
Christina Watson
Amy Cebada
Heather Adamson
Bruce Jaffe
Tim Frank
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David Carlson
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Mark McLaren
Vanessa Ross
Justin Meek
Lucien
Rosemary Sarka
Ben Vernazza