

# REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

## Transportation Policy Workshop

### MINUTES

Thursday, April 15, 2004  
9:00 am  
SCCRTC Conference Room  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Members Present:     Jan Beautz                     Richard De La Paz  
                          Scott Kennedy                 Randy Johnson  
                          Mike Keogh                     Dennis Norton  
                          Emily Reilly                   Edenilson Quintanilla (Alt)  
                          Pat Spence                     Mark Stone  
                          Mardi Wormhoudt         David Murray (ex-officio) (Alt.)

Member Absent:     Ellen Pirie

Staff Present:       Pat Dellin                     Tegan Speiser  
                          Karena Pushnik               Kim Shultz  
                          Luis Mendez                   Gini Pineda  
                          Rachel Moriconi

#### 1. Introductions

Introductions were made.

#### 2. Oral Communications

Senior Planner Karena Pushnik announced that nominations for the Paratransit Task Force were due April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### 3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Deputy Director Pat Dellin announced that the Closed Session was cancelled. She said that an add-on to Item 8 had been distributed to Commissioners and that an Emergency Item was presented to the Commission for discussion. Commissioner Kennedy moved to add the Emergency Item as Item 7.1 to the agenda. Commissioner De La Paz seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Beautz asked that Item 6 be taken off the Consent Agenda and Chair Johnson designated it as Item 8.1 on the Regular Agenda.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA (Quintanilla/Beautz)**

4. Accepted Minutes of March 18, 2004 TPW Meeting

Commissioner Wormhoudt abstained.

5. Accepted Information on Proposition 116 Local Election Results
6. Accept Information on Santa Cruz County Branch Rail Line Acquisition – Acquisition Services Contract, Revised Capital Budget and Timeline – Moved to Regular Agenda as Item 8.1

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

7. Accept Status Report Regarding Highway 1 Projects

Deputy Director Pat Dellin said that announcements for the public meetings for the Project Approval/Environmental Document (PA/ED) had been mailed to over 12,000 residents. She said that the initial public meeting will be held on Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 6:00 PM at the Seacliff Inn located at 7500 Old Dominion Court in Aptos and that the second public meeting will be held on Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 6:00 PM in the Live Oak Community Room at the Simpkins Family Swim Center located at 979 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Santa Cruz.

Ms. Dellin said that the county released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to staff the Highway Construction Authority (HCA).

County Public Works Director John Presleigh said that five or six consultants attended the pre-proposal meeting and that the new deadline for proposals to be submitted is May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Wormhoudt said the proposed budget was very general and asked if there will be a more detailed budget to review. She asked what period of time the budget covered.

Deputy Director Dellin said that the budget had been prepared by the County for the period from March 2004 through June 2004. She said that the budget for the next fiscal year will have more detail.

Commissioner Beautz commented that there was no budget from the previous year to use as a base. Commissioner Wormhoudt asked that the new budget show what has been spent, how much is being carried over and what expenses are expected.

### 7.1 Design-Build Authority for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project – Emergency Add-On Item

Director Dellin said that after the legislative agenda had been approved, Commission staff learned that Senator Bruce McPherson had introduced SB 1793 to provide the County of Alameda and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority the authority to “demonstrate an alternative and optional procedure for bidding” on highway construction projects. The bill was subsequently amended on April 12, 2004 to extend that authority to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and to the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. She said that staff had been advised that the bill is scheduled for committee review on April 20<sup>th</sup> and that Senator McPherson’s office had asked for a letter of support from the Regional Transportation Commission. Ms. Dellin said that staff proposed an amendment to page 3, line 18 of the bill to add the words “or its designee” referring to the Highway 1 Construction Authority.

Commissioner Beautz suggested replacing “or its designee” with “Highway 1 Construction Authority” since that is the actual name of the Joint Powers Authority designated to administer the project. Director Dellin said she would work with the RTC’s legislative assistant on amending the bill.

Janet Singer referred to page 5, line 15 which describes the Highway 1 project as “extending from Highway 9” and asked if the plan was to include the Highway 1/9 interchange. Director Dellin said it looked as if that option was included, even though the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project begins where the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project ends.

Commissioner Beautz moved to approve the staff recommendations to take a position of support on SB1793 (McPherson), as amended, to provide design-build authority for the construction of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project, and to forward the bill to the Highway 1 Construction Authority.

Commission Alternate Quintanilla seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### 8. Approve Release for Public Comment the Draft Expenditure Plan for a Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure

Deputy Director Pat Dellin reported that the Expenditure Plan Subcommittee developed a proposed list of projects to be included in a local sales tax measure. Ms. Dellin said the financial plan was prepared by the CAO’s office with support from bond counsel.

Ms. Dellin said it was important to focus on what the project categories are and not exactly how they would be stated on the ballot, and on the relative amount of money set aside for each project. She said the Expenditure Plan Subcommittee considered many issues and points of view to develop the list of projects and it was time for it to be released to the public for comment. Director Dellin said a preliminary draft ordinance was included for Commissioners to review, explaining that the ordinance would be part of the voter information packet but that the ballot itself would be limited to 75 words. Ms. Dellin asked

that the Commission review the list of projects, the timeline and the draft ordinance and release the Expenditure Plan with any changes.

Commissioner Johnson asked SCCRTC consultant Eileen Goodwin to comment on the plan.

Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies, said that the project choices were supported by poll results and that traditionally a sales tax measure has multiple projects in order to gain the maximum number of votes. She said that polling indicated that the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project could not pass a ballot measure on its own and that the Watsonville Junction, Highway 17 improvements, road repair and enhanced services for the elderly and disabled were high priorities for different segments of the population. She said it was important to be cognizant of the cash flow and make sure that projects can be delivered as promised.

Commissioner Beautz said that funding for local jurisdictions had been increased so that the local jurisdictions could make their own decisions. She said that under the Highway 1 Widening category, money had been targeted for three new bicycle/pedestrian crossings, express busses and park/ride lots. In addition, the current overcrossings would be upgraded.

Commissioner Wormhoudt asked if there would be information on the ballot regarding when funding for specific projects would be available. Ms. Goodwin said that there would not be room on the ballot but that the expenditure plan could include a cash flow analysis appended to it. She cautioned that usually this level of detail is left to the managing agency to allow for flexibility.

Commissioner Wormhoudt said that while she understood the need for flexibility, those who don't care about the highway might want to know when they will get money for projects that they support. She said that it was important to not be disingenuous and that people should know when to expect funding for their projects. Ms. Wormhoudt also questioned whether the amount allocated for non-highway projects was sufficient to attract people who did not have an interest in widening the highway and suggested additional polling that were not "push" polls. She asked if the decision whether the Citizens for Improved Transportation organized a campaign in support of the ballot measure or not would affect the Commission's decision to move forward.

Director Dellin said that that piece of the timeline was for information only and that the Commission could move forward without a campaign or that another group might want to organize a campaign.

Commissioner Beautz said that the signature project has to have enough money allocated to it to ensure its completion and that the \$333 million allocated to the widening had to remain, but that money for other projects could be changed. She said one reason the money for local jurisdictions was so high was so that they could put money towards alternative transportation or transit projects.

Commissioner Keogh asked how the Widening Project polled in the absence of fishhook improvements, saying that the project is dead without these improvements. Ms. Goodwin will look into that scenario.

Commissioner Stone said that most people think the Widening Project and the Merge Lanes Project are a complete package. He also noted the timing of the projects is missing saying it is hard to find out if people will support the tax measure if they do not know when projects will be delivered.

Eileen Goodwin said that timing is a key part of the question and that different delivery options could be presented in the polls.

Commissioners discussed the necessity of being honest with the public by not making promises that could be impossible to fulfill in the event of lower tax revenues than projected, and explored options to juggle projects to provide for optimum delivery for all projects.

Commissioner Reilly raised the issue of not seeing money being directed to the transit district and asked if there was money to be used for bus rapid transit on Soquel Drive during construction.

Commissioner Beautz noted that the purpose of the widening was not to further subsidize the transit district, that the transit district has its own ½ cent sales tax revenue, and that the transit district would be receiving the express busses as part of the proposed Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project sales tax measure. She said that bus rapid transit was not being considered and that two lanes of the highway would remain open during construction.

Commissioner Johnson said that local jurisdictions can use their share of the \$108 million allocated to them for transit projects if they wished.

Commissioner Kennedy said that the money allocated to the local jurisdictions was important especially for the less excited jurisdictions. He said that the City of Santa Cruz had unfunded transportation projects, so the bigger the local share the better. Mr. Kennedy said he would be placing a recommendation on the Santa Cruz City Council agenda to endorse the sales tax measure and the Expenditure Plan. He added that the City may want to have a seat on the HCA. He said that his recommendation of support of the sales tax measure was contingent on the RTC proceeding with plans to use Proposition 116 funds to acquire the rail right-of-way.

Gine Johnson said it was important to look at ways to develop both the rail and Highway 1 transportation corridors and to not polarize the community by making them mutually exclusive.

Commissioners discussed cash flow mechanics and the role of the Auditor-Controller.

Micah Posner said the Campaign for Sensible Transportation would oppose the highway widening and mount a campaign against it.

Commissioner Spence asked if there would be park and ride lots and if money designated for paratransit would be subject to an open RFP or simply allotted to the Metro and Community Bridges.

Commissioner Beautz noted the park and ride listed lots as part of the highway component in the Expenditure Plan and said that allocation decisions for other projects would be made on a yearly basis.

Debbie Hale, Transportation Agency for Monterey County, handed out a flier with information on how the rail project is coming along in Monterey County, saying they had received a federal earmark for \$1 million which they matched with Proposition 116 funds. She said they hoped the Pajaro station will be ready when the line is open for service. Ms. Hale said that TAMC is counting on federal money in addition to local revenues from the transportation sales tax and developer fees and that they are working in partnership with the Redevelopment Agency.

Andrew Horne suggested using Santa Cruz County's Proposition 116 funds for the Pajaro Station and using sales tax money to acquire the rail right-of-way.

Commissioners discussed administrative costs and asked for a breakdown. Director Dellin said she would return to the next meeting with more information.

Commissioner Beautz moved to approve the Expenditure Plan Subcommittee and staff recommendations that the Commission review and release for public comment the Program of Projects for a local Transportation Sales Tax Measure and that the Commission review and release for public comment the Draft Ordinance and Expenditure Plan, with the additional directive that staff return to the next possible meeting with information on cash flow, information on the breakdown of administrative costs and information on the contingency/reserve. Commissioner De La Paz seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### 8.1 Accept Information on Santa Cruz County Branch Rail Line Acquisition – Acquisition Services Contract, Revised Capital Budget and Timeline – Formerly Item 6

Commissioner Beautz expressed concern about the business plan and timeline and asked what major changes had been made to this timeline and when the business plan will be available. Ms. Beautz said that it was critical to be able to review the business plan carefully over a series of months and asked staff to return to the next meeting with more specific information.

Commissioner Keogh asked if the Commission had authorized a funding request to the Coastal Conservancy or other sources as stated in the timeline. Commissioner Spence asked for the minutes recording this action.

Senior Planner Luis Mendez confirmed that the Commission had made this request and said he would provide the minutes.

Commissioner Spence referred to the part of the timeline that showed the investigation of hazardous materials scheduled between April 2004 and June 2004, noting that it would be impossible to keep to the timeline since right of entry had not yet been acquired. She also said she was opposed to investigating AB3090 plans because the definition of the Commission's highest priority project could change from year to year and possibly affect the availability of State Transportation Improvement Program funds for a particular year.

Ms. Spence commented that there were two entries for salaries and benefits totaling nearly \$173, 000. Senior Planner Mendez said that they were separate expenditures and that the entry for \$20,439 was specifically for staff time to review environmental documents.

Commissioner Spence asked what it meant for the Commission to "accept" a staff report.

Deputy Director Dellin said it meant the Commissioners had read it and not changed it. Commissioner Beautz added that it doesn't mean the Commission endorses the information, but that the Commission agrees that this is what was given to them.

Neal McElwee asked when the public would be able to see the demonstration train.

Commissioner Beautz responded that the Commission had voted against the visual simulations.

Micah Posner said that the Friends of the Rail Trail was prepared to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of volunteer labor to help build a trail and asked that insurance for volunteer labor be included in the budget.

Commissioner Spence asked what the funding sources were for the Miller, Owen & Trost contract, what had been spent and how much remained from each source.

#### 10. Next Meetings / Adjournment

The next regular RTC meeting will be held Thursday, May 6, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the Capitola City Council Chambers, 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop will be held Thursday, May 20, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Office, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gini Pineda, Secretary

**ATTENDEES**

Bill Comfort  
Les White  
Gine Johnson  
John Presleigh  
Donna Ziel  
Michael and Janet Singer  
Neal McElwee  
Mark Dettle  
Andrew Horne  
Ken Kannegaard  
Micah Posner  
Debbie Hale  
Heather Boerner  
Eileen Goodwin  
Bob Scott  
Robert Jones

SCMTD  
Ecology Action  
County Department of Public Works  
  
City of Santa Cruz Public Works  
  
RMC Lonestar  
CFST  
TAMC  
Sentinel  
Apex Strategies  
SCCRTC Consultant