

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Transportation Policy Workshop

MINUTES

Thursday, August 18, 2005
9:00 am
SCCRTC Conference Room
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Members Present: Cliff Barrett (Alt.) Emily Reilly
 Jan Beautz Antonio Rivas
 Tony Campos Mark Stone
 Mike Keogh Marcela Tavantzis
 Ellen Pirie Mardi Wormhoudt

Members Absent: Dennis Norton Pat Spence

Staff Present: Pat Dellin Luis Mendez
 Grace Blakeslee Cory Caletti
 Kim Shultz Tegan Speiser
 Gini Pineda Karena Pushnik

1. Introductions

Self-introductions were made.

2. Oral Communications - None

Acting Executive Director Pat Dellin noted that the final 2005 Regional Transportation Plan had been given to each Commissioner and was available to the public.

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Ms. Dellin said that an addition to Item 4 had been distributed.

4. Status Report on Highway 1 Projects and Pedestrian/Bike Crossing Locations Summary Report

Acting Executive Director Pat Dellin referred to the handout from Caltrans which gave a brief update on the status of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project. Ms. Dellin noted the issues that Caltrans is working to resolve in order to meet the September 2nd deadline to put the project on the September California Transportation Commission's agenda.

Mark McCumskey, Caltrans District 5, participated via speaker phone.

Ms. Dellin introduced Chris Metzger, Nolte Associates, who addressed the Commission on the bicycle and pedestrian crossings being considered for inclusion in the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project.

Mr. Metzger said that originally three pedestrian and bicycle crossings had been identified at Mar Vista Drive, Cabrillo College and Chanticleer / Mattison Lane. He said that after further investigation into the needs and demands of the population base and schools, input from groups that had an interest and knowledge of the issues, including the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee, the Bike Committee and the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee, and after collaborating with the county and the cities' planning, public works and redevelopment agencies, the Project Development Team recommended crossings at Mar Vista Drive, Chanticleer Avenue and Trevethan Avenue to be the preferred locations, in that priority order.

Mr. Metzger said that major considerations for choosing these locations include safe routes for students to get to school, direct links to shopping, business and activity centers (e.g. Dominican Hospital), connecting existing bike lane facilities and recreational demand.

Commissioner Keogh asked why Chanticleer Avenue, which is partly unimproved, had been chosen over 17th Avenue, which is more developed. Mr. Metzger answered that the higher traffic volumes on 17th Avenue made it less desirable for bike and pedestrian traffic.

Commissioner Pirie suggested developing a better connection between the town of Aptos and the beach.

Bill Comfort asked if under-crossings have crime and safety concerns. Mr. Metzger replied that if an under-crossing is in a tunnel situation there would have to be certain mitigations including entrance features with as much line of sight as possible, a wide enough tunnel to give a sense of space and it must be well-lit.

Commissioner Pirie noted that the under-crossing to the Aptos beach would not be through a tunnel would but would be part of Spreckles Drive.

Mr. Metzger summed up his presentation recognizing that the Arana Gulch and Rodeo Gulch areas may have more demand for pedestrian access in the future, that the Spreckles Drive under-crossing would be the least costly improvement and that the crossings at Branciforte and along the San Lorenzo River were not within the limits of the Highway 1 project.

Commissioner Beautz moved and Commissioner Campos seconded to approve the staff recommendations to:

1. Receive a Status Report on activities related to the Highway 1 project; and,

2. Accept the Pedestrian/Bike Crossing Locations – Summary Report prepared by Nolte Associates and direct work to begin on preliminary design and environmental clearance for the three recommended pedestrian/bicycle crossings of Highway 1, taking into consideration the design considerations expressed by E&D TAC and ITAC members.

The motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session

5. Conference with Real Property Negotiator for Acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Property: Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line from Watsonville Junction to Davenport

Agency Negotiator:	Kirk Trost, Miller, Owen & Trost
Negotiation Parties:	SCCRTC, Union Pacific
Under Negotiation:	Price and Terms

Open Session

6. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition – Additional Structural Analysis and Financial Plan

Acting Executive Director Pat Dellin distributed samples of informational maps prepared by County GIS which showed the Union Pacific valuation maps superimposed on aerial maps of the parcels along the rail corridor. Ms. Dellin said the work was more complicated than anticipated but that she hoped to have a full set for the Commission at the September Transportation Policy Workshop.

Transportation Planner Grace Blakeslee said that the maps will be on the RTC website as pdf files in the future and that staff planned to reproduce them on CD's.

Acting Deputy Director Luis Mendez noted that the maps are based on the Union Pacific valuation maps, County GIS information and the title report and are not perfect. The various information sources do not fully match.

Commissioner Tavantzis suggested that at some point it may be necessary to do some surveying as it looks like some residences are located on the right-of-way.

Acting Executive Director Pat Dellin continued with the staff report saying, per the Commission's direction, staff had obtained an estimate and developed a funding plan for the additional analyses of structures along the rail corridor, as recommended in the report prepared by Biggs Cardosa Associates and presented to the Commission at its August 4, 2005 meeting.

Ms. Dellin said that the financial plan recommended some changes in order to budget

for the additional \$140,000 needed for the analyses.

It was noted that amendments to the right-of-entry agreement with Union Pacific will be necessary to be able to conduct the analyses.

Commissioner Wormhoudt moved and Commissioner Reilly seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve the revised financial plan for acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line to fund the additional structural analyses recommended in the draft Structural Assessment; and
2. Approve contracting for the additional structural analyses through the Miller, Owen and Trost (MOT) contract as was done for the draft Structural Assessment, with the further direction that Kirk Trost of MOT report to the RTC the preferred consultant and before engaging the firm for this work.

Commissioner Keogh said he wanted all structures that might be used for passenger rail and/or for bike/pedestrian trails to be given seismic study.

Acting Executive Director Pat Dellin said that regarding trails, the Master Plan for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail will include alternatives for either going over the structures or not, and that for purposes of trails it is not known whether the structures would be used. She said that seismic study of these structures could wait until it was determined if each of the structures is an option for the trail. She noted that passenger rail was not being considered at this time.

Commissioners discussed the cost to perform seismic studies on all of the structures and if it would be beneficial at this time, noting that seismic analysis was recommended for the bridge crossing the San Lorenzo River because it currently has a public pedestrian crossing.

The motion passed with Commissioner Keogh voting “no”.

7. Next Meetings / Adjournment

The next regular RTC meeting will be held Thursday, September 1, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop will be held Thursday, September 15, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. at the RTC Office, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Robert Yount	
Genevieve Bookwalter	Santa Cruz Sentinel
Ken Kannegaard	Cemex
Bill Comfort	
Mark Greenfield	
Chris Cheleden	Santa Cruz County Counsel
Gustavo Gonzalez	Supervisor Campos' Office
Chris Metzger	Nolte Associates
Tripat Mangat	Nolte Associates
Bob Scott	SCCRTC Technical Advisor
Kirk Trost	Miller, Owen & Trost