

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC)

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Transportation Policy Workshop

MINUTES

Thursday, March 15, 2007
9:00 am
SCCRTC Conference Room
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Members Present: Jan Beautz Emily Reilly
 Gustavo Gonzalez (Alt.) Andy Schiffrin (Alt.)
 Randy Johnson Pat Spence
 David Koch (Alt.) Mark Stone
 Kirby Nicol Marcela Tavantzis
 Ellen Pirie
 Tim Gubbins (Alt. ex-officio)

Member Absent: Dene Bustichi

1. Introductions

2. Oral Communications

Executive Director George Dondero reported on the Bike Committee Workshop held on Saturday March 10th.

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Executive Director Dondero pulled Item 9 from the Agenda and announced that there would be no Closed Session.

Consent Agenda (Pirie/Reilly)

4. Approved Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and Staff Recommendations Regarding Job Classifications and Re-Classification

4.1 Approved Schedule and Procedure for Annual Performance Review of the RTC Executive Director

Commissioner Spence asked that the evaluation form for the Executive Director be provided electronically. Executive Director Dondero said that he would email the form to all the Commissioners.

Regular Agenda

5. Draft Fiscal Year (FY) 07-08 RTC Budget and Work Program

Deputy Director Luis Mendez presented the staff report regarding the FY07-08 Budget and Work Program including Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues and allocations, anticipated new revenues, Commission reserves, staff positions and the continuation of the temporary full time transportation planner position.

Commissioners asked for clarification of specific line items, allocations to local jurisdictions, carryovers from FY06-07 and the difference between TDA revenues received and forecasted.

Mr. Mendez responded to the Commissioners' questions and said that the FY06-07 carryovers will be known when the Commission makes its annual budget amendment in the fall.

Bonnie Morr asked if the allocation for Community Bridges was adjusted properly, saying that the agency has lost rides for Medical recipients and transportation for Elderday will soon stop. Mr. Mendez said that the allocation is based on a formula articulated in the Commission's Rules and Regulations. Senior Planner Karena Pushnik added that staff received information saying that the Alliance for Health is cutting its services dramatically, so there may be an increased need for Community Bridges to provide rides. She said that the TDA claim will be monitored closely when it is presented to the Commission for funding.

Commissioner Tavantzis said that she is uncomfortable with the amount of money spent on the Rideshare program, especially on the carpool component. Executive Director Dondero said that there is a report being prepared on all Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and that staff will come back with an analysis of these programs.

Commissioner Beautz asked for the statistics presented by an attendee at a Transportation Funding Task Force meeting that indicated that carpool ridership was not increasing.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Reilly seconded to approve the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee and staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Approve a resolution adopting the FY07-08 Budget and Work Program; and
2. Extend the current temporary planner position for one year through the end of FY 07-08 due to the additional work required for the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project, the Soquel to Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project and other projects.

The motion (Resolution 46-07) passed unanimously.

6. HWY 1/17 Cost Interchange Merge Lane Project Cost Increases

Executive Director George Dondero introduced representatives from Caltrans to explain the cost increases for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project.

Caltrans Senior Resident Engineer Siobhan Saunders gave a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the obstacles, which were discovered after construction of the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project had begun, that caused the cost increases. One unanticipated obstacle was buried man-made objects, such as concrete ribs across the creek bed at Market Street. Ms. Saunders said that these had to be removed before the October 15th deadline in order to comply with environmental permits. Another issue was rock slope protection which required removing buried layers of concrete bags and pumping water from the creek around the job site so that heavy machinery could access the areas that needed to be fortified. Problems with pile casings presented a major challenge when it was discovered that the length of the casings originally planned was not great enough to provide the necessary support for the bridge abutments. It was discovered that welding additional lengths of casings was too costly to solve the problem. Other problems included unsuitable materials at both abutments and medians and conflicts with underground utilities such as gas and water lines that were not identified on the original plans.

Commissioner Reilly asked if the rock slope protection using the layers of sandbags had been originally installed by Caltrans and if these would be found further along the Highway 1 corridor. Ms. Saunders said she would investigate the issue.

Commissioners discussed the problems with the pile casings at length including the methods used by the engineers to determine how deep a foundation was necessary and what solutions were being proposed.

Commissioner Reilly noted that costs had increased 30% since 2005.

Commissioners asked Caltrans Deputy District 5 Director Tim Gubbins to validate the agency's negotiating procedures regarding change orders and to explain why Proposition 42 funds were not being passed on to local jurisdictions. Commissioner Beautz asked for a report on the disbursement of Proposition 42 funds.

Commissioners requested information about design exceptions for the Branciforte Bridge that could provide a possible cost savings.

Executive Director Dondero said that he and the Project Development Team would be taking a field trip in the near future to physically examine the project site. It was noted that Caltrans is keeping Commission staff informed on the problems.

Commissioners suggested peer review of the project cost increases using the Commission's on-call engineer and the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) and expressed concern that the need for pile extensions and discovery of unsuitable materials were a surprise to Caltrans, since test borings had been drilled at various locations along the project to identify potential problems.

Commissioner Beautz asked for a report on all the crossings planned for the Highway 1 HOV Widening Project, saying that if Caltrans design exceptions could allow the Branciforte Bridge to be left intact, perhaps the other bridges could be left intact and project costs lowered.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin moved to continue the item to the April RTC meeting and to ask staff to provide information on the issues raised today, an evaluation of Option B (to deny Caltrans' request for additional funding), further evaluation and comment on proposed change orders and, if necessary and feasible, to arrange for peer review of the project. Commissioner Pirie seconded.

Bruce Sawhill said that cost overruns are predictable, partly due to the nature of the bid process.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. Transportation Funding Task Force-Membership Update

Senior Planner Karena Pushnik referred to the updated Transportation Funding Task Force roster noting the status column that indicated which members are no longer interested in participating and who will designate new representatives.

Commissioner Beautz said that the position for Auto Advocate, Driver at Large, South County should be left open since it was an RTC appointment. Commissioner Pirie said she would find someone to fill the position.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Pirie seconded to accept the updated roster and to delete the Felton Business Association from the membership but to leave the position of Auto Advocate open for a new appointment.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. Draft 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Augmentation

SCCRTC Planner Grace Blakeslee presented the staff report and noted that the recommendation of the Highway 1 Bike/Pedestrian Bridge near Mar Vista project was considered "conditional" due to the cost overruns associated with the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project.

Commissioners expressed several concerns with the preliminary draft staff recommendations, including:

1. Separating elements, such as the Mar Vista Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge, from the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project especially before completion of the final design;
2. Estimated cost for the Mar Vista Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge;
3. Exclusion of the Highway 1/9 intersection improvements; and,

4. Need of a full Project Study Report (PSR) for the Mar Vista Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge.

Staff will provide more information on the estimated cost for the Mar Vista Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin moved and Commissioner Beautz seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review the preliminary draft staff recommendations for programming projected State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds and proposed amendments to other projects;
2. Notify staff if additional information is needed on any of the recommendations; and
3. Schedule a public hearing for the April 5, 2007 RTC meeting to receive public input on and approve amendments to the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP).

The motion included that staff return to the Commission with the information requested by Commissioners during discussion of the item.

9. Social Security Referendum – Removed from Agenda
10. Review of Items to be Discussed in Closed Session
11. Oral and Written Communications Regarding Closed Session

Closed Session – Removed from Agenda

12. Conference with Labor Negotiators Pursuant to Government Code 54957.6

Commission Negotiators: Ellen Aldridge and George Dondero

Bargaining Units: Mid-Management Unit and General Representation Unit

13. 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

14. Report on Closed Session

15. Next Meetings / Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.

The next regular RTC meeting will be held **Thursday, April 5, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.** at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop will be held **Thursday, April 20, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.** at the RTC Office, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Luis Duazo	Caltrans
Siobhan Saunders	Caltrans
Tim Gubbins	Caltrans
Bob Begun	Alternate for City of Capitola
Bonnie Morr	UTU
Sandra Coley	PVTMA
Bruce Sawhill	
Bob Yount	
Chris Schneiter	City of Santa Cruz
Lisa Hochstein	
Bill Comfort	
Jose Herrera	UTU
Ed Oberweiser	People Power
Corrinne Hyland	CTSC
Teresia Rogerson	CTSC