

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
AND
SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES

Draft Minutes

Thursday,
January 10, 2008
9:00 a.m.

Santa Cruz City Council Chambers
809 Center Street
Santa Cruz CA 95060

The meeting convened at 9:10 am.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Jan Beautz Ellen Pirie
Dene Bustichi Emily Reilly
Tony Campos Antonio Rivas
Neal Coonerty Dale Skillicorn (Alt.)
Randy Johnson Mark Stone
Kirby Nicol Marcela Tavantzis
Aileen Loe (ex-officio)

Staff Present: George Dondero Yesenia Parra
Luis Mendez Kim Shultz
Gini Pineda Cory Caletti
Rachel Moriconi Karena Pushnik

2. Oral Communications

Jack Nelson made an analogy between attitudes of most people regarding recycling before it was mandated by local jurisdictions and was strictly voluntary, and current attitudes about developing alternative transportation modes. He encouraged the Commission to be leaders and support non-auto centered transportation modes, predicting that over time people will accept the idea as the norm.

Bill Tysseling, Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, said that the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce is very interested in continuing to work with the Commission to place a transportation sales tax measure on the November 2008 ballot and is concerned about the timing of a ballot measure, because as state and federal funding becomes less available, sales taxes will be proposed to replace the lost funding.

He said that the transportation sales tax should be put on the ballot sooner rather than later in order not to be negatively impacted by other sales taxes measures that might be proposed as time goes on.

Christy Kirven noted that trains worked well in the past and asked the Commission to take the lead in supporting passenger rail.

3. Additions or Deletions to Consent and Regular Agendas

Executive Director George Dondero said that there were replacement pages for Item 6, and add-on pages for Items 20 and 25. He said that there would be no Closed Session.

Commissioner Coonerty asked to pull Item 17a and b from the Consent Agenda. Chair Campos designated the Items as 26a and b.

CONSENT AGENDA (Coonerty/Reilly)

4. Approved Minutes of the December 6, 2007 Regular SCCRTC Meeting
5. Approved Minutes of the December 20, 2007 Transportation Policy Workshop Meeting

POLICY

No Consent Items

PROJECTS and PLANNING

No Consent Items

COMMISSION BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

6. Accepted Information Item Regarding Transportation Development Act Claims from the Volunteer Center and Community Bridges

ADMINISTRATION

7. Approved Staff Recommendation Regarding Appointment to the Bicycle Committee
8. Approved Staff Recommendation Regarding Adopting an Employee Voluntary Time Bank Policy

COMMITTEE MINUTES

9. Accepted Draft Minutes of the December 13, 2006 Budget and Administration / Personnel Committee Meeting
10. Accepted Draft Minutes of the October 15 and November 12, 2007 Bicycle Committee Meetings
11. Accepted Draft Minutes of the December 11, 2007 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee

INFORMATION/OTHER

12. Accepted Monthly Meeting Schedule
13. Accepted Correspondence Log
14. Accepted SCCRTC Staff Comment Letters on Draft Environmental Documents and Plans Prepared by Other Agencies
 - a. Letter to the City of Santa Cruz Regarding Initial Study for the New Leaf Community Market Project
 - b. Letter to the City of Santa Cruz Regarding Initial Study for the Murray Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit Project
15. Accepted Letters from SCCRTC Committees and Staff to Other Agencies
 - a. Letter from Staff to the California Transportation Commission Regarding Regional Transportation Plan Guideline Revisions Related to AB32 Implementation
 - b. Letter from the Bicycle Committee to the California Coastal Commission Regarding Support for the East Cliff Drive Reconstruction Project
 - c. Letter from the Bicycle Committee to Caltrans Regarding Support for Bicycle Transportation Account Applications for the San Lorenzo River Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Spurs Project and the San Lorenzo River Trestle Bridge Connection Project
 - d. Letter from the Bicycle Committee to the RTC Regarding Appreciation for the Open House

- e. Letter from the Bicycle Committee to the City of Santa Cruz Regarding Support for the San Lorenzo River Bike/Pedestrian Bridge
 - f. Letter from the Bicycle Committee to the City of Santa Cruz Regarding Bicycle Facilities on King Street
16. Accepted Miscellaneous Written Comments from the Public on SCCRTC Projects and Transportation Issues
17. Accept Information Items - Moved to Regular Agenda as Item 26a and 26b.
- a. Letter from the County of Santa Cruz Regarding Highway 1 Northbound Off Ramp at Soquel Drive - Commercial Way Access
 - b. Letter from Staff to Peter Scott Regarding Request for Information on Traffic Operations Data Generated Through the Highway 1 HOV Lane Environmental Impact Report and the Regional Travel Demand Model

SERVING AS THE SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES (SAFE)

No Consent Items

REGULAR AGENDA

18. Commissioner Reports - None
19. Director's Report

Executive Director Dondero said that the City of Santa Cruz would celebrate its designation by the League of American Bicyclists as a Silver Level Bicycle-Friendly Community with events on Tuesday, January 22. He said that the state budget would be released today and that it would probably be discussed at the next Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW). He said that he and Senior Planner Karena Pushnik will attend the annual Transportation Research Board meeting in Washington DC and meet with federal legislators and their staff. He added that the Commission's state and federal legislative analysts will attend the February 7 Commission meeting.

20. Caltrans Report

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5, said that the Construction Projects Report provided at the beginning of the meeting is correct. She provided information regarding the Caltrans

Climate Action Program, noting that the key features were the interaction of infrastructure, technology and people.

In response to a question asked by Commissioner Rivas about the status of portland cement, Ms. Loe said that one of the technical components of their program was to reduce the percentage of limestone used in cement and that Caltrans was currently using 25% flyash without compromising the durability of the cement.

21. Final 2008 State and Federal Legislative Agenda and 2007 Update

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi presented the staff report stating that staff, working with the Commission's state and federal legislative analysts, monitors legislation throughout the year. Key legislative issues for the state agenda include the budget deficit, insufficient funds for transportation making it very important to raise funds and to use them more creatively, and concerns over climate change and global warming. On the federal level, Ms. Moriconi said that there are shortfalls in the Highway Trust Fund and that staff is monitoring the reauthorization of the federal transportation law.

She addressed Proposition 91 which is on the February statewide ballot, and explained that most of the protections to safeguard revenues from state gasoline sales taxes were already written into Proposition 1A which was approved in November 2006.

In a response to a question from Commissioner Beautz, Ms. Moriconi said if Proposition 91 is approved by the voters, the Governor could still divert gas sales taxes to the General Fund, but that there would be more stringent guidelines regarding repayment. The downside, she added, is that if Proposition 91 passes, the legislature could lower transportation funding overall.

Commissioner Coonerty said that he would like to add to the climate change provision of the proposed state agenda that the Commission supports requiring that automakers make more fuel efficient cars.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Rivas seconded to approve the staff recommendations to adopt the proposed State and Federal Legislative Agendas with the addition suggested by Commissioner Coonerty.

The motion passed unanimously.

22. Article 8 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Allocation Request from the City of Santa Cruz for Bicycle Improvement Projects

Senior Planner Cory Caletti presented the staff report noting the new claim form developed by staff in response to requests from the Commission for additional information and analysis of TDA projects and asked for feedback on the claim form.

Responding to Commissioner Johnson's question about what constituted "minor improvements", City of Santa Cruz Public Works Director Mark Dettle said that requests come in daily, usually for repairs to potholes or pavement for the 30 miles of bikeways in the City.

After a brief discussion about TDA funding for other local jurisdictions, Commissioner Pirie moved and Commissioner Beautz seconded to approve the Bicycle Committee and staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission approve a resolution approving the City of Santa Cruz's FY 2007/2008 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 8 allocation request for \$20,000 for Bikeway Striping and Minor Improvements.

A roll call vote was taken and Commissioners Beautz, Campos, Coonerty, Johnson, Nicol, Pirie, Reilly, Rivas and Stone voted "aye". (Resolution 11-08)

23. Highway 1 HOV Lane Project Contract Amendment with Nolte Associates

Executive Director George Dondero provided the staff report noting that the cost increase is consistent with funds programmed and available in the *2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*. He added that, before entering into a contract, the Nolte team, working with Caltrans and RTC staff, developed strategies to minimize the project scope and reduce the initial budget from \$9 million to \$6.25 million by reducing the engineering design work from a 35% level to a 15% level and by using existing surveys to decrease the overall time for completing the environmental review process. Mr. Dondero said that Caltrans is not embracing the 15% design level approach and that costs are affected by the increased design work. He introduced Chris

Metzger, Nolte, to provide additional information regarding the need to increase the contract costs and to extend its duration.

Chris Metzger said that Nolte has adjusted the scope of work several times and reallocated budgets in order to keep the project moving. He said that there were a number of setbacks and unexpected changes in the scope of services resulting in delays and cost increases. These included surveying existing structures in the central section of Highway 1 and finding that they were not up to geometric standards; a one-year delay in the release of the Regional Traffic Demand Model produced by AMBAG; reassessment of the location of three proposed bicycle/pedestrian crossings; and a delay of archaeological excavation until after a preferred alternative has been selected, thereby extending the project schedule and management activities. In addition, items were added to the scope of work including the use of sustainable design elements; the need to address climate change in the environmental document; and designing geometry for more than one alternative. He said that the time to get from a draft environmental document to a final one is increasing.

Commissioners discussed the cost increases and the need for more information. Some Commissioners expressed concern that the increases were too high and that the changes should have been foreseen. Commissioner Beautz pointed out that the consultants were asked to perform several tasks not included in the original scope of work and that Caltrans' reluctance to agree to a lower level of engineering design resulted in extra environmental work.

Commissioner Nicol moved and Commissioner Rivas seconded to continue the item.

After continued discussion, Commissioner Pirie noted that there are two staff recommendations and that the first recommendation is for funds already programmed in the 2006 STIP. She asked to separate the recommendations in order to move ahead.

Commissioners Nicol and Rivas accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment.

Commissioner Pirie asked when the RTC staff could provide the information requested by the Commission. Mr. Dondero said that approximately in two months.

The motion was restated to:

1. Approve a resolution authorizing Contract Amendment No. 4 with Nolte Associates to increase the contract value by \$1,475,000 for a total amount not to exceed \$8,000,000, consistent with funds programmed and available in the *2006 State Transportation Improvement Program* (STIP), and to extend the duration of the contract to June 30, 2010 (Resolution 12-08); and
2. Direct staff to bring back detailed information to the Commission at a future date regarding programming additional funding in the *2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP) for the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project to address the remaining funding shortfall for consulting services.

The motion passed unanimously

24. Draft 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi presented the staff report saying that staff evaluated seven regionally significant and eight local projects that need funding according to previously established criteria and recommended funding for the Highway 1/HOV Lanes Project Approval/Environmental Document, the Highway Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project, the Freeway Service Patrol, the Regional Rideshare Program and several local projects, including \$1.48 million to the Corralitos area. She said that regarding the HOV Lane Project, the Commission could program the funding but not release the funds if the Commission decided that the designated amount could be reduced. Ms. Moriconi added that a public hearing was needed before action on programming the funds could be taken.

Commissioner Nicol moved and Commissioner Pirie seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review the preliminary draft staff recommendations for programming projected 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 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 February 7, 2008 RTC meeting to receive public input on and adopt the *2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP).

Ms. Moriconi clarified that unused funding for the Highway 1/HOV Lanes Project could be added to existing projects.

Aileen Loe, Caltrans, said that Caltrans will be discussing opportunities to move the Scott and Waddell replacement projects forward.

The motion passed unanimously.

25. Development of the Expenditure Plan for a November 2008 Ballot Measure

Executive Director George Dondero presented the staff report stating that one of the highest priorities is to agree on an expenditure plan. He provided data about how other agencies determined their taxing authorities and information regarding the number of attempts different counties made before obtaining voter approval for a sales tax measure.

Commissioner Coonerty asked if proposals substantially changed between ballot measures in these counties. Mr. Dondero said he would report back with the information.

Mr. Dondero said that an oversight committee is an important element to gain voter approval and provided information on committees in other counties. He said that staff is developing language regarding greenhouse gas emissions which will be presented at the January Transportation Policy Workshop.

Regarding the campaign which will be needed to garner voter support of the measure, Mr. Dondero referred to letters from Ecology Action which indicated that they were not ready to support any of the proposed plans. He said that one reason is that they are looking to the Commission for leadership. He also addressed a letter from the Business Council who voted not to support a ballot measure at this time, even though the ballot measure is still to be defined. He cautioned against using poll results too early in the process or giving too much credence to them.

Commissioners discussed the taxing authority emphasizing that the voters will need to know that the money will be used for what it is intended. Mr. Dondero agreed that a firewall protecting the funds is important, but that there needs to be some flexibility for bonding.

Commissioners expressed concern that there is no entity willing to organize a campaign. Mr. Dondero repeated that Commission leadership is key to achieving commitment from the business community to support a campaign to pass the measure. He added that the Commission could stop the process as late as August if it still seemed that there was not enough public support. He said that educating the public was important for people to understand how transportation funding worked and how counties that taxed themselves could leverage other funds more easily.

Commissioners discussed the proposed plans and whether voting for a plan that differed from the one approved by the Transportation Funding Task Force would lose public support.

Commissioner Beautz moved and Commissioner Bustichi seconded to accept the expenditure plan recommended by the Task Force.

Commissioners continued to discuss whether the Task Force recommendations were representative of the priorities of the community as a whole. Commissioner Stone noted that when looking at the plans, the Commission should also be looking at what can be leveraged from other sources and that \$50 million for the rail could be leveraged more effectively than a smaller amount. He said that money for the highway could be leveraged, even if reduced somewhat to provide funding for local roads, and that support for local projects resonates well with the voters.

Commissioners expressed their opinions about whether tweaking the Task Force's plan would alienate people that the Task Force represented, whether it was disrespectful of the 27 months of work performed by the Task Force and the definition of the charge of the Task Force, which was not to necessarily craft a sales tax measure, but to advise the Commission which would be responsible for presenting a measure to the Board of Supervisors for their approval.

Commissioner Reilly said that the measure will be very difficult to pass and opposed the motion to move forward.

Commissioner Nicol called the question.

It was clarified that the motion is to adopt the TFTF expenditure plan.

Public comment was heard.

Jack Nelson said that the proposed plans were only coating the pill of widening Highway 1 with things that tax payers will approve. He said that Transportation Demand Management provides options for congestion relief and that the Campaign for Sensible Transportation has developed a ballot measure that he would support.

Mike Keogh said that he would support a measure to widen the highway with some money for local roads and streets.

Bruce Sawhill Friends of the Rail Trail, said that he does not think that there is political will to support any of the proposed expenditure plans and that the only slam dunk would be a streets only plan. He added that the Commission should continue with buying the railroad.

The motion passed with a 7 to 5 vote with Commissioners Stone, Coonerty, Campos, Pirie, and Reilly voting "no".

Commissioner Beautz said that this vote was only regarding the first of the staff recommendations which was concerned with adopting an expenditure plan. She said she would like to register a "no" vote on the second recommendation.

Commissioner Stone moved that staff come back with more information on the second recommendation regarding the taxing authority. Commissioner Reilly seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Beautz moved and Commissioner Nicol seconded to approve the staff recommendation that the Regional transportation Commission approve including an oversight committee in a November 2008 Transportation sales Tax Measure and direct staff to return to the RTC with potential committee composition options.

The motion passed unanimously.

26. Review of Items to be Discussed in Closed Session - N/A

26 a and b - Accepted Information Items - Formerly Item 17

- a. Letter from the County of Santa Cruz Regarding Highway 1 Northbound Off Ramp at Soquel Drive - Commercial Way Access
- b. Letter from Staff to Peter Scott Regarding Request for Information on Traffic Operations Data Generated Through the Highway 1 HOV Lane Environmental Impact Report and the Regional Travel Demand Model

Regarding 26a, Commissioner Coonerty asked whether the Commission will proceed with the project if the Commercial Way access is closed and to be maintained informed regarding this issue. Commissioner Beautz said that there have been meetings with county staff and feels that Caltrans needs to be flexible. Director Dondero said that he can provide a status report in February and that the RTC, its consultants and the County are at an impasse with Caltrans. Senior Planner Kim Shultz said that there have been several iterations regarding this issue and that the Commission has requested to take the issue to higher level of Caltrans bureaucracy.

Regarding 26b, Commissioner Coonerty expressed concern that the Commission is not releasing complete information. Director Dondero said that the Commission is trying to keep within the law regarding an environmental document that is not complete and not yet public. He said that some of the information was approved by Caltrans for public release in aggregate, such as bar graphs which were drawn from data that Caltrans says cannot yet be released. He said that when the environmental document is released all the technical information going into the document can be released. He said the problem is in the level of detail regarding how much information can be released before the environmental document is complete and that the Commission cannot run contrary to the cooperative agreement with Caltrans.

Commissioners discussed whether releasing selected information items could lead to skewed information and if the Commission should post something to the website if all the data cannot be released.

Commissioner Nicol moved and Commissioner Rivas seconded to approve Items 26a and 26b, formerly Item 17 on the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

27. Oral and Written Communications Regarding Closed Session - N/A

CLOSED SESSION -Removed from Agenda

28. 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

29. 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

30. Report on Closed Session - N/A

31. Next Meetings/Adjournment

The meeting adjourned 12:04 pm.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 7, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at Watsonville City Council Chambers, 215 Union St., Watsonville, CA

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Chris Metzger	Nolte
Parag Mehta	Nolte
Jack Nelson	
Bruce Sawhill	
Christy Kirven	
Bill Tysseling	Santa Cruz Chamber
Bill Comfort	
Sandra Coley	PVTMA
Peter Scott	CFST
Teresa Buika	UCSC
Cliff Walters	Sierra Railroad
John Presleigh	County Public Works

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