

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Transportation Policy Workshop

MINUTES

Thursday, January 24, 2008
9:00 am
SCCRTC Conference Room
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Members Present: Jan Beautz Kirby Nicol
 Dene Bustichi Ellen Pirie
 Tony Campos Dale Skillicorn (Alt
 Neal Coonerty Mark Stone
 Randy Johnson Marcela Tavantzis

Members Absent: Emily Reilly Antonio Rivas

1. Introductions

Self introductions were made.

2. Oral Communications

Jack Nelson said that people's belief systems do not allow them to try new solutions. He said that the Commission needs to set an example by trying new innovative traffic solutions.

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Executive Director George Dondero said that there would be no Closed Session for the Rail Line Acquisition.

4. Oral and Written Communications Regarding Closed Session - None

Commissioner Beautz arrived.

The Commission adjourned into Closed Session at 9:10 am.

Closed Session

Commissioner Campos arrived

5. Conference with Labor Negotiators Pursuant to Government Code 54957.6

- a. Commission Negotiators: Ellen Aldridge and George Dondero

b. Bargaining Units: Mid-Management Unit Employees

The Commission reconvened into Open Session at 9:22 am.

Commissioner Johnson pulled Item 6 from the Consent Agenda.

Consent Agenda (Tavantzis/Skillicorn)

6. Update on the Governor's Fiscal Year 2008/09 Budget Proposal

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi said that transportation funding survived the Governor's budget cuts because most transportation projects are not funded by the General Fund. She reported that the Governor proposed to fully fund Proposition 42 at \$1.5 billion. She also reported that there could be some changes when the budget is amended in May and that staff will continue to keep the Commission informed.

Regular Agenda

7. Transportation Sales Tax Measure Development for the November 2008 General Election

Executive Director George Dondero introduced Peter Schellenberger, Public Financial Management, who used a Power Point presentation, which was handed out to the Commissioners, to explain program policy and financial considerations when passing a sales tax measure.

Mr. Schellenberger added accountability and program equity to the Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Policies. He said that the ordinance needs to define the eligible uses of the sales tax revenues; that an independent taxpayer oversight committee is recommended; and that maintenance of effort, which states that the new revenues will augment, not replace exiting revenues, should also be stated in the measure.

Mr. Schellenberger cited examples of how allocation revenues were made in other regions in the state. He said that the transportation authority needed some flexibility in prioritizing projects in order to maximize project delivery or to take advantage of leveraged state and federal dollars. He explained the bonding process, and said that the only reason to borrow is to accelerate a project.

SCCRTC consultant Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies, added that when bonding for certain projects it is important to explain the benefits to the public and that bonding needs to be timed so that the money is expended within the time allowances of the bond. She said that this timing issue could result in several bonds at different times throughout the life of the sales tax.

Mr. Schellenberger wrapped up his presentation with examples of how other entities structured their plan implementation, saying that in most cases the tax authority is the

same entity as the regional planning agency and that this approach usually results in a stronger more coordinated effort to compete for state and federal dollars.

Referring to the staff report, which included excerpts from both Sonoma and Santa Barbara Counties' sales tax measures, Commissioner Bustichi asked to see arguments that were presented against these measures.

Commissioner Tavantzis expressed concern that local projects that are not included in the Regional Transportation Plan would need RTC approval, affecting the ability of local jurisdictions to prioritize their projects.

Peter Scott said he would like to see information for ballot measures from other counties in addition to those included in the presentation. Senior Planner Karena Pushnik said that information for other ballot measures has been provided in the past and is available.

Responding to an issue posed by **Vic Marani**, Mr. Schellenberger clarified that financing costs for debt management resulting from bonding would be made public.

8. Addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Executive Director George Dondero presented the staff report stating that greenhouse gas emissions is an emerging topic in many states, that there are no clear methods to implement green house gas reduction strategies, and that a number of legislative, planning, and policy efforts are underway at the local, state and federal levels to address global warming.

Director Dondero referred to Attachment 1, a list from the Federal Highway Administration of strategies which can be implemented locally to reduce emissions including greenhouse gas emissions. He underscored that recommendations from the Transportation Management Report presented in December 2007 were listed among the strategies. He said that we are entering a new era in which the realities of greenhouse gas emissions cannot be ignored. He added that it might be a good time to revisit the 511 program which the public has embraced in other parts of the state.

After a short discussion, Commissioners decided to consider the staff recommendations separately. Commissioner Bustichi moved and Commissioner Tavantzis seconded to approve the first staff recommendation that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Direct staff to monitor and participate in local, state, and federal efforts to address global warming, including any required actions.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners proceeded with discussion of potential green house gas emissions language and requirements (listed on page 8-4 of the staff report) for a sales tax measure. Commissioners expressed concerns with specific requirements, specifically land use

requirements. Commissioners emphasized that the ballot measure should be clear that the Commission will follow state and federal laws regarding emissions and climate change, and that there is a need to state that the Commission is committed to emissions reduction and to show it when competing for federal funds. Commissioners also discussed existing green construction practices for transportation projects, the importance of quantifying results and how road repair and rehabilitation reduces green house gas emissions.

Vic Marani said that the perception in the community is that hard and fast decisions will be made on February 7th. He said that talking endlessly and doing nothing is a waste of time and that the Commission needs to listen to what various groups, such as the Republican Party of Santa Cruz which he represented today, have to say.

Commissioner Campos agreed and suggested that Director Dondero make presentations to such groups and that he would accompany Mr. Dondero.

A motion was made (Stone/Pirie) that the RTC staff prepare general language regarding greenhouse gas emissions for the transportation sales tax measure using statements 1, 2 and 5 from page 8-4 of the staff report written as follows:

1. The Plan funded by this ballot measure shall be consistent with the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32).
2. Projects will comply with state and federal rules and regulations addressing GHG emission reduction as they are enacted or adopted by the responsible regulatory entity.
5. Encourage green construction practices in projects funded by the plan.

Bill Malone stated that he was favorably impressed with the discussion and asked if an EIR would have to be done before a measure was put on the ballot. Director Dondero said that one would be done.

Jack Nelson said that the central project which is the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lanes Project will increase greenhouse gas and therefore a conflict with the Commission's stated goals. Commissioner Pirie said that the HOV lanes encourage the use of public transit.

The motion passed unanimously.

9. Oral and Written Communications Regarding Closed Session – N/A

Closed Session – Removed from Agenda

10. 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

- a. Agency Negotiator: Kirk Trost, Miller, Owen & Trost
- b. Negotiation Parties: SCCRTC, Union Pacific

c. Under Negotiation: Price and Terms

11. Report on Closed Session – N/A

12. Next Meetings / Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

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

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Tom Walsh
Paul Elerick
Peter Scott
Robert Vallerga
Michael Ponza
Vic Marani
Bill Comfort
Bill Malone
Cliff Walters
Virginia Johnson

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