

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Transportation Policy Workshop

MINUTES

Thursday, March 20, 2008

9:00 am

SCCRTC Conference Room
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Members Present: Jan Beautz Kirby Nicol
Dene Bustichi Ellen Pirie
Gustavo Gonzalez (Alt.) Emily Reilly
Neal Coonerty Mark Stone
Randy Johnson Marcela Tavantzis
David Koch (Alt.) Pat Spence

1. Introductions

Self introductions were made.

2. Oral Communications

Executive Director George Dondero welcomed SCCRTC intern Erich Friedrich. Mr. Friedrich will be with the Commission for six months and with the SCMTD for six months funded by a grant from Caltrans.

Deputy Director Luis Mendez noted that there are two documents on the AMBAG website for public review through April 28, 2008: the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan and the Monterey Bay Region Public Participation Plan, both required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Mr. Dondero said that RTC Chair Campos requested to postpone the Closed Session until the April 17 TPW meeting because he had not received all of Mr. Dondero's performance reviews.

Consent Agenda (Pirie/Nicol)

4. Accepted Report on Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting and Meetings with Federal Legislators

Jack Nelson, referring to the table on page 4-7 which showed the increase in petroleum imports for the US over the last 25 years, said that the decisions of the RTC affect where we go in the future regarding foreign policy.

Commissioner Stone commented that the report shows that the trend for federal transportation investment is becoming more program driven and that the more that the Federal Transportation Authority makes broad decisions, the more likely the possibility that small areas could be negatively affected.

Regular Agenda

5. Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project – Public Review Period for the Draft Environmental Document

Senior Planner Kim Shultz said that Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5 Director, indicated in his letter on page 5-3 that Caltrans intends to provide a 45-day review period. Mr. Shultz also commented on the fact that Caltrans is the lead agency for the environmental document and determines the length of the public review of the environmental document.

Dave Murray, Caltrans District 5, said that a 45-day review period is normal practice. He noted that excellent public outreach has already been done regarding the project and said that the review period could be extended if necessary. He added that Caltrans planned on having two public hearings during the review period. Mr. Murray said that a 45-day review period would move the project forward resulting in a cost savings at the end of the project.

Mr. Shultz said that the document, which will be quite extensive, would be available on the SCCRTC website and in libraries. He said that staff intends to provide the document on CD's and that hard copies would also be available.

Commissioners discussed the review period and whether it was sufficient to ensure public trust in the process. Comparisons were made to the review for the Mission Street/Highway 1 project and it was pointed out that the Mission Street project had a very active Task Force that was a model in public outreach for two years.

Commissioner Pirie said that she is uncomfortable that the Commission is on record requesting a 30-day review period and moved that the RTC ask Caltrans to extend the review period to 60 days. Commissioner Coonerty seconded.

Jack Nelson said that there will be some new issues, such as California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for global warming, which were not required in the past and asked for a 90-day review period.

Peter Scott, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, asked for a 60-day review period, saying that the document is voluminous and that there is a tremendous amount of public interest. He said that the comparison between the Mission Street and the HOV Lanes Projects is not warranted because the Mission Street project had a very active Task Force and that the public was involved with the design review.

The motion carried with Commissioners Stone, Reilly, Koch, Tavantzis, Bustichi, Coonerty and Pirie voting "aye" and Commissioners Nicol, Johnson, Gonzalez, Beautz and Spence voting "no".

6. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) in Santa Cruz County: An Assessment

Senior Planner Tegan Speiser said that in response to input from the Commission, a revised Transportation Demand Management report was prepared along with a table organized by organization (rather than transportation mode or program type). Ms. Speiser said that staff was following up on the Commission's request to track the success of individual programs but that some of the process measures are intermediate measures. She said that not only do people need real transportation choices but they also need incentives and personalized help.

Ms. Speiser addressed the recommendations on pages 59-61 which include confirming the RTC's commitment to multi modal transportation options; continuing to require performance measures; forming an alliance of local TDM providers to pool resources and avoid duplication of services; consider conducting an origin and destination study, consider establishing a regional 511 system, consider allocating funding to promote multi-passenger modes of travel; and determining the role of the Commute Solutions program.

Ms. Speiser also summarized how the Commute Solutions program could be more effective. She noted that the name "Commute Solutions" narrows the number of likely users who approach the program and that the Commission may want to rethink how to categorize what the program does.

Commissioners discussed attitudes towards carpooling and whether broadening the appeal to those interested in "casual" carpooling would be practical. It was noted that individuals wishing to participate in any rideshare program would have tools with which to screen potential riders, but that each person was ultimately responsible for their own safety.

Commissioner Beautz went on record saying that she thought that the One in Five Campaign was a failure and a waste of money.

Commissioner Coonerty congratulated Ecology Action for having specific programs, identified targets and clear reports.

Situations at UCSC and Cabrillo College were compared. It was noted that community colleges are limited in their ability to raise fees and that they tend to have part-time or older students who have many destinations in a given day besides the college campus. Ecology Action is actively working with Cabrillo's administration to increase carpooling.

Commissioner Bustichi suggested that one of the goals in the RTC Commitment to Transportation Demand Management be "reducing congestion".

Gine Johnson, Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Agency, and Sandra Coley, Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Agency, spoke about their programs and how they manage to leverage their funding.

Commissioner Spence asked that any origin and destination study include colleges and schools.

Commissioners agreed that, considering budget constraints, it was important to use funding more effectively by finding out what programs really work rather than putting more money into programs with limited success.

Commissioner Tavantzis suggested the bulletin board approach on a rideshare website for "casual carpooling" that allows people to take responsibility for their own matches. She asked that the Commission include the SCMTD in any planning if it decides to do advertising or promotion regarding bus transportation. Ms. Tavantzis also requested to see what methodology would be used before conducting an origin/destination study.

Ms. Speiser noted that one of the staff recommendations was to conduct an employer survey, which could include attitudinal questions about carpooling and what incentives work. The survey could be on-line.

Jack Nelson urged science based decisions and supported an origin and destination study. He added that casual ridesharing could lead to more carpooling.

Peter Scott said that there is inadequate bike parking at Dominican Hospital.

Commissioner Stone moved to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Review and accept with comments as appropriate the revised Draft Assessment of Transportation Demand Management activities in Santa Cruz County; and
2. Approve the staff recommendations found on pages 59-60 of the report

with the addition of adding "reducing congestion" to the RTC's goals.

Commissioner Beautz wanted stronger criticism of the One in Five Program and Commissioner Stone added the instruction that staff work with Commissioner Beautz to develop suitable language to the motion.

Commissioner Coonerty seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7. FY 08-09 Budget and Work Program

Deputy Director Luis Mendez gave the staff report. He said that Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues, which are dependent on sales tax revenues, were below projections and that additional shortfalls are anticipated. Mr. Mendez said that figures are readjusted by the state Controller's office as they proceed from projected to actual revenues. He said that amounts allocated to TDA recipients are lower partly because of lower revenues and partly because there were surplus revenues last year. He added that it may be necessary to dip into TDA reserves to meet current obligations.

Mr. Mendez said that State Transit Assistance (STA) funds for FY 08-09 show an estimated increase due to recent legislation regarding Public Transportation Account (PTA) spillover funds, but the final amount of funding will not be known until the state budget is adopted.

Mr. Mendez said that most budget numbers are preliminary estimates and that final numbers, which show carry over and actual expenditures, will be known in the fall.

Mr. Mendez reviewed the Work Program which includes state-mandated responsibilities and Commission priorities.

Commissioners discussed aspects of the Budget and Work Program. It was asked whether the Commute Solutions marketing line item could be used to market transit options. Staff indicated that it could.

Commissioner Nicol moved and Commissioner Stone seconded to approve the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee and staff recommendation that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) adopt the attached resolution approving the draft FY08-09 Budget and Work Program.

The motion (Resolution 18-08) passed unanimously.

8. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project – Proposition 116 Application

Deputy Director Luis Mendez said that recent negotiations indicate that all due diligence work necessary to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line will resume soon and that the RTC needs \$500,000 of additional Proposition 116 funds to complete the work. He said that California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff suggested that the RTC request a waiver of Guideline #34 in order to allow more than 5% of the total grant application to be used for pre-construction work. He added that the application for Proposition 116 funding is based on preserving and improving the rail corridor and not on developing passenger rail.

Commissioner Spence asked if the estimated completion costs listed on page 8-2 will need to be increased. Mr. Mendez said that the figures were adjusted

recently but that the final estimate from Geomatrix has not yet been received and that the figures could be higher.

Ms. Spence said that she is disappointed that this application is being presented at this time and not at a regular commission meeting, adding that the staff report is sending signals that the intention of the Commission is heading in a different direction, i.e. the pursuit of recreational/passenger rail, and that the public has a right to know what is in the report.

Deputy Director Mendez said that long lead times required by Caltrans to place items on the CTC agenda made it necessary to bring the item before the Commission at this time.

Bill Comfort said that procurement for preservation of the corridor is the intent of the Commission, but that references to passenger rail and recreational rail appear in the application.

Mr. Mendez replied that the project description on page 8-9 indicates that the passenger/recreational rail refers to the one mile section of Union Pacific track that Big Trees Railroad uses for its service between Felton and the Boardwalk.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Stone seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review and approve with revisions as appropriate the attached Uniform Transit Application for \$500,000 in Proposition 116 funds for right-of-way work connected with acquisition of and improvements to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way (ROW);
2. Adopt a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to submit a Uniform Transit Application for \$500,000 in Proposition 116 funds for right-of-way work related to acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW for corridor preservation and to make improvements to the rail line; and
3. Direct staff to seek letters of support from legislators, business groups, community groups, agencies and individuals in support of the above mentioned Uniform Transit Application.

Mike Keogh asked if the appraisal work, scheduled to be completed in May 2008, will be made public at that time and if the updated structural assessment estimates have been made public. Mr. Mendez affirmed that as soon as the work is complete it will be made public. Mr. Keogh asked that the public have adequate time to review the lease investigation report.

Commissioner Beautz suggested that the language on page 8-9 would be clearer if it were changed to say ". . . to ensure continued operation of the existing freight and existing recreational rail service . . ." She added that rail stations and park and ride lots, mentioned in the application form on page 8-8 are huge issues. The maker of the motion agreed to adding the word "existing" as shown above.

Commissioner Stone pointed out that items included on the application form on page 8-8 indicate what would be able to be funded with this funding source, but that the Commission's intended scope of work is stated on page 8-9.

Peter Scott said he is very supportive of this action and glad to see progress.

Commissioner Spence departed the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

The motion (Resolution 19-08) passed unanimously.

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

Closed Session – Removed from Agenda

10. Annual Performance Review for Executive Director Pursuant to Government Code 54957

11. Conference with Real Property Negotiator Pursuant to Government Code 54956.8 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 |

Reconvene to Open Session – N/A

12. Report on Closed Session – N/A

13. Next Meetings / Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2008 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 is scheduled for Thursday, April 17, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

Sandra Coley
Theresia Rogerson
Peter Scott
Jack Nelson
Hill Comfort
Cliff Walters
Gine Johnson
Lex Rau
Les White
Piet Canin
Mike Keogh
Bill Comfort

PVTMA
CTSC
CFST

Sierra Railroad
Ecology Action

SCMTD
Ecology Action