

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Thursday
November 6, 2008
9:00 a.m.

Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, 4th Floor
Watsonville, CA

1. Roll Call

Members Present:

Jan Beautz	Kirby Nicol
Dene Bustichi	Ellen Pirie
Tony Campos	Emily Reilly
Neal Coonerty	Pat Spence
Randy Johnson	Mark Stone
David Koch (Alt.)	Marcela Tavantzis
Rich Krumholz (ex officio)	

Staff Present:

George Dondero	Gini Pineda
Luis Mendez	Yesenia Parra
Kim Shultz	

2. Oral Communications

Jack Nelson said that climate change should be on Commissioners' minds at every meeting and should influence their transportation choices.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Executive Director George Dondero referred to a handout from Caltrans related to Item 21. He announced that there would be no closed session.

CONSENT AGENDA (Reilly/Pirie) approved unanimously

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the October 2, 2008 regular SCCRTC meeting
Commissioner Coonerty and Commission Alternated Koch abstained from approving the minutes.

5. Accepted draft minutes of the October 2, 2008 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) meeting

6. Accepted draft minutes of the September 18, 2008 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the September 24, 2008 joint meeting of the Santa Cruz County Traffic Operations System (TOS) Oversight Committee and Safe on 17 Task Force
8. Accepted draft minutes of the October 14, 2008 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent policy items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

9. Accepted FY08-09 first quarter SCCRTC work program report
10. Approved Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee and staff recommendation regarding appointments for the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) member and alternate positions for the Potential Transit User seat
11. Accepted federal transportation update from federal legislative assistants Chaney & Associates

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

12. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
13. Accepted staff recommendation regarding proposed amendments to the FY08-09 Budget and Work Program (Resolution 07-09)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

No consent items

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

14. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
15. Accepted correspondence log
16. Accepted letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies

- a. Letter from John Daugherty, Chair of the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to the City of Santa Cruz regarding accessibility of city parking lot #5
 - b. Letter from Executive Director, George Dondero to Randall Adams, County of Santa Cruz Planning Department regarding comments on application #07-0002, APN #042-022-12
17. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues
18. Accepted information items
- a. Email from Bill Comfort regarding High Speed Rail and response from RTC Executive Director, George Dondero
 - b. "Dan Walters: State's terrible highways are getting worse" – Sacramento Bee, October 27, 2008

REGULAR AGENDA

19. Accepted commissioner reports – Oral Reports

Commissioner Nicol said that Monterey County's sales tax initiative (Measure Z) failed and that the SCCRTC's decision to not go ahead with a tax measure was a good idea.

Executive Director George Dondero said that the League of American Bicyclists has a program to honor employers who encourage cycling. Three local businesses received Bicycle Friendly Business Awards from the League for their commitment to promoting bicycling at the work place. Commissioner Campos presented a bronze award to Watsonville's California Giant Berry Farms. Commissioner Coonerty presented a bronze award to the Santa Cruz Seaside Company and a silver award to Ecology Action. Mr. Dondero added that Beckmann's Bakery and Geo. Wilson received honorable mentions.

20. Accept director's report – Oral Report

Executive Director George Dondero said that the RTC would host an open house today from 4-6 pm at the Commission offices. He said that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the 1/17 Merge Lanes Project would take place Friday, November 7 at 1pm at the Branciforte overcrossing. He added that staff received questions from the public indicating expectations that the completed Highway 1 Merge Lanes project would solve the Highway 1 congestion problems. He referred Commissioners to page 17-3 for a detailed response to these questions. Mr. Dondero summarized the transportation related items on ballots in Tuesday's election including a high speed rail bond and four successful sales tax measures. He also mentioned that although Measure Z, put forward by TAMC, did not pass, the positive votes went up by 5% from 57 to 62. He said that federal and state stimulus packages are being

discussed and if approved may provide funding for local road rehabilitation projects.

21. Accept Caltrans report and consider action items

Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5, said that the project list in the packet is current and that landscaping for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project would begin in spring 2009. Following up on a question posed by Commissioners at the previous RTC meeting, Mr. Krumholz referred to a handout that described movable barriers similar to those used on Highway 17 on the Glenwood Curves project. He reported that the department has received positive feedback from bicyclists regarding the new Mission Street signs. He said that two exit signs on Highway 1 were replaced with signs that included the exit number on them. He mentioned that the Commission might want to apply for Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program funding which is designed for projects to mitigate the environmental impacts caused by new or modified public transportation facilities. He said that more information is available at www.resources.ca.gov/eem.

Commissioner Spence asked if the highway exit numbers will be included on GPS coordinates. Mr. Krumholz said that he would investigate and follow up with an answer.

Piet Canin thanked Caltrans for installing the share the road signs on Mission Street.

22. Accept Report on City of Watsonville Transportation Projects – Oral Report

City of Watsonville Public Works Director David Koch gave a PowerPoint presentation on the City's recently completed road improvement projects and projects planned for the future. Completed projects include the Struve Slough Bridge, Harkins Slough Bridge and additional trails in the wetlands rehabilitation project. To date 6.9 miles of trails have been completed with another 1.9 miles scheduled to be built. Future projects include a proposed roundabout at Main St/Freedom Blvd.

Commissioners congratulated the City for its transportation project achievements, especially the wetlands rehabilitation and the beautification of the slough areas.

Commissioner Stone asked about the effect the roundabout would have on bicyclists. Mr. Koch said that cyclists would be part of the traffic flow and that City staff is working with specialists to design signage and other safety precautions.

Piet Canin suggested looking at the roundabouts built in Bend, OR and said that cyclists are given fliers describing how the roundabouts work so that they don't get hit by exiting vehicles.

23. Appoint nominating committee for RTC chair and vice chair – Oral Report

Commissioner Campos appointed Commissioner Beautz as Chair and Commissioners Bustichi and Tavantzis as members of the Nominating Committee to select the 2009 RTC Chair and Vice-Chair.

24. Highway 1 status report

Senior Planner Kim Shultz said that progress has been made in resolving design issues for the Highway 1 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane project. He said that staff met with Caltrans and Nolte & Associates to discuss issues such as interchanges and geometrics. He said that staff is proposing a full briefing to be delivered to the Commission in January instead of December.

Mr. Shultz said that the *Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment* for the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project was released by Caltrans on October 13, 2008. An Open House/Public Hearing was held on October 29, 2008. Comments on the environmental document are due to Caltrans by November 14, 2008. He added that 15 technical studies were used to develop the draft environmental document.

Jack Nelson said that these technical documents do not address environmental concerns and that he believes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is called for. He said that the project is not consistent with the County of Santa Cruz general plan and that the public is not being informed about what the project will look like. He added that an EIR would require the inclusion of alternatives to the proposed plan.

Commissioner Campos said that the decision is up to Caltrans.

25. Presentation from Ron De Carli and John Shoals of the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments Regarding Regional Blueprint Planning

Executive Director George Dondero introduced Steve Di Vicenzi from SLOCOG who stood in for Mr. De Carli.

Mr. Di Vicenzi gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation describing SLOCOG's development of a plan that integrates transportation planning with plans for future housing, land use, environmental resources, infrastructure and public services. He said that during focus groups, the community identified areas where growth is desirable and areas needed for agriculture or preservation. Issues such as job/housing imbalance and sparse road networks were factored into the raw data. Using this data, traffic models were developed. Although this approach to regional planning is part of a statewide effort to address climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by connecting land use and transportation planning, Mr. Di Vicenzi stressed that a successful

blueprint process should be a bottoms-up approach built around the general plans of the local jurisdictions and that local jurisdictions should have ownership of solutions to these complicated issues.

John Shoals, Mayor of Grover Beach and president of SLOCOG, spoke about implementing blueprint planning. He said that SLOCOG is looking to incentives to encourage developers and local jurisdictions to adopt smart growth policies.

Commissioners discussed similarities and differences between the Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo regions including amounts of open land, demographics and population trends. It was noted that SLOCOG is both the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of their region as opposed to the SCCRTC which is only the RTPA for Santa Cruz with AMBAG designated as the MPO. Coordinating plans between these two agencies poses additional challenges.

Responding to questions about incentives, Mr. Shoals said that obtaining transportation funding is a key incentive with the idea that state and federal funding for transportation projects may be linked to consistency with a sustainable plan. Another possible incentive is giving priority to projects that fall within the plan's guidelines.

In response to a concern raised by Commissioner Campos, Mr. Shoals said that quality of life can be preserved in denser housing developments with a creative approach to design elements.

CDs of the PowerPoint will be made available to Commissioners.

26. Review of items to be discussed in Closed Session – N/A

CLOSED SESSION – Removed from Agenda

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

27. Report on closed session – N/A

28. Next Meetings

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 am.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the Santa Cruz County Board Supervisor Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th floor, Santa Cruz, CA

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

ATTENDEES

John Presleigh

County DPW

Jack Nelson

Bill Comfort

John Doughty

Sandra Coley

PVTMA

Piet Canin

Ecology Action

JoAnn DeLott

Seaside Company

Steve Di Vicenzi

SLOCOG

John Shoals

SLOCOG

California Giant Berry Farms