



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

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### MINUTES

Thursday  
February 5, 2009  
9:00 a.m.

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

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am.

Members Present:

Dene Bustichi	Kirby Nicol
Tony Campos	Ellen Pirie
Neal Coonerty	Antonio Rivas
Randy Johnson	Pat Spence
Don Lane	Mark Stone
John Leopold	Marcela Tavantzis
Rich Krumholz (ex officio)	

Staff Present:

George Dondero	Gini Pineda
Luis Mendez	Yesenia Parra
Kim Shultz	Rachel Moriconi

2. Oral communications

**Jack Nelson** said that future droughts will be part of California's climate change and that the Commission should include that consideration in its decision making process.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Executive Director George Dondero said that there were two handouts for Item 20.

**CONSENT AGENDA** (Campos/Pirie approved unanimously)

### MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the January 8, 2009 regular SCCRTC meeting
5. Accepted draft minutes of the January 12, 2009 Bicycle Committee meeting

**POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items*

**PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

6. Approved staff recommendation for the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD) Section 5311 Program of Projects and Application (Resolution 19-09)
7. Accepted FY08-09 second quarter SCCRTC Work Program Report

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

8. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

*No consent items*

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

9. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
10. Accepted correspondence log
11. Accepted letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies
  - a. Letter to Christopher J. Murphy, Office of Traffic Safety Director regarding support for the County of Santa Cruz Health Services OTS grant from Daniel Kostelec, RTC Bicycle Committee chair.
12. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues
13. Accepted information items

*No consent items*

**REGULAR AGENDA**

14. Accepted commissioner reports

Chair Randy Johnson thanked Commissioner Tony Campos for serving as Commission Chair for two years.

Commissioner Rivas noted that Commission Alternate David Koch was honored by the Monterey Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) as the Public Works Man of the Year. He commended Mr. Koch for his many contributions to the City of Watsonville including his work on a waste water treatment plant and a water recycling facility. In addition, Mr. Koch oversees a science project for youth that builds projects from recycled materials.

15. Accept director's report

Executive Director George Dondero reported on the status of the federal stimulus package working its way through Congress. He said that staff has asked Senator Feinstein to increase the ratio of funding going to regions.

Mr. Dondero said that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the San Lorenzo River bike/pedestrian bridge on January 23<sup>rd</sup> was well attended. He said that due to drought conditions, the City of Santa Cruz water department probably will not issue a permit for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project landscaping which could result in delaying plant installation.

Mr. Dondero said that he, Chair Johnson and Vice-Chair Stone will be attending Capitol Day on February 11<sup>th</sup> which CalCOG organized especially for transportation. He said that tomorrow he and Senior Planner, Rachel Moriconi would meet with Assemblymember Monning and Senator Simitian. He reported that the Transportation Research Board meeting, which he attended in January, was focused on climate change and that California is at the forefront of climate change policy. Mr. Dondero said that transportation is well represented on the advisory committee to the Air Resources Board which met last week.

Mr. Dondero said that there would be no closed session.

16. Accept Caltrans report and consider action items

Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5, announced that Caltrans workers will be furloughed on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of each month but that maintenance crews will be available for emergencies. The state budget impasse is affecting projects in line for Proposition 1B funds which includes a vehicle detection system for Santa Cruz County. If a budget is not reached by 5pm tomorrow five projects in district 5 will be suspended, one of which is the Salinas Road interchange.

Mr. Krumholz said that Caltrans is working with the City of Santa Cruz and hopes to come to an agreement regarding supplying water for the landscaping for the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project. He noted that the project would only need irrigation for the first three years to get the plants established. He added that the Glenwood Curve project is progressing well and announced deadlines for several grant applications including the Safe Routes to School and environmental justice grants.

Mr. Krumholz reported that Gregg Albright has left Caltrans and accepted a position as Deputy Secretary for Environmental Policy and Integration and will be involved in climate change and coastal issues.

17. Welcome new commissioners and solicit committee preferences

Executive Director George Dondero welcomed Commissioners Leopold and Lane representing the First District and the City of Santa Cruz respectively. Mr. Dondero said that if either of them were interested in serving on the Rail Acquisition or Budget and Administration/Personnel Committees to notify him or the Chair. Committee appointments will be made at the March meeting.

18. Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project – Construction Management Phase

Senior Planner Kim Shultz presented the staff report saying that if the Commission decides to manage the construction of the Auxiliary Lanes project, then a construction management consulting firm needs to be selected.

Commissioners discussed budget costs for construction management services, the general economic climate of the construction industry, cost overruns and change orders, and incentives built into any proposed contract to avoid cost increases.

Commissioner Bustichi moved to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission authorize staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Construction Management Services on the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project. Mr. Bustichi asked that the Commission review the RFP before it is released.

Commissioner Tavantzis seconded recommending that local firms be given priority.

Executive Director George Dondero added that the project is fiscally constrained because it is funded by Proposition 1B.

The motion passed unanimously.

19. Regional Transportation Plan update

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi presented the staff report saying that the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-range state-mandated document that will need to be adopted in 2010 to cover the period from 2010-2035. She said that SB 375, approved in 2008, requires that all RTPs adopted after October 1, 2010 contain a Sustainable Community Strategy component that focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through coordinated land use and transportation planning but that implementation guidance and emission

targets will not be available in time to meet the RTC 2010 RTP adoption deadline. Ms. Moriconi said that staff recommends a minor update for 2010 with a more robust update to be adopted in 2012.

Ms. Moriconi said that an environmental review will be necessary for the RTP and that participating in a joint environmental document with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), and the San Benito Council of Governments (SBCOG) would decrease costs.

Commissioner Rivas moved and Commissioner Campos seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Receive a preliminary report on the upcoming Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update and discuss key issues that should be considered in the next RTP; and,
2. Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and San Benito Council of Governments (SBCOG) for the purposes of developing one environmental document that covers the tri-county's regional transportation plans and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and to sign agreements as necessary to implement the joint process.

The motion passed unanimously.

## 20. Federal Economic Stimulus project prioritization

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi reported that staff worked with RTC advisory committees and local jurisdictions to identify projects to receive potential economic stimulus funds within the time frame required in the final bill. She reviewed the individual recommendations and noted the various scenarios that could cause projects to be added or eliminated depending on the funding.

Commissioners discussed project funding requirements, allocation methods, materials availability, Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and paratransit vehicles at UCSC. It was noted that since the economic downturn is global, there could be less competition for construction materials.

City of Santa Cruz Assistant Public Works Director **Chris Schneider** explained that any road rehabilitation over one inch thick requires handicap ramps which would be included in the project plan.

**Larry Pageler**, UCSC, clarified that the paratransit vans at the university complement regular shuttle service on campus and these would be the only funds available to them for these purchases. He added that being able to

purchase them means that they would continue to provide paratransit service at UCSC.

Commissioner Campos moved and Commissioner Nicol seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Select projects to receive up to \$6.5 million in potential Federal Economic Stimulus funds that may need to be used within 90-180 days of enactment of the bill, contingent on provisions of the final bill, and require that project sponsors immediately initiate pre-construction work on these projects, if they have not already;
2. Consider recommendations and input from the RTC's advisory committees;
3. Require project sponsors to add bicycle lanes, cross-walk striping, curb cuts, and other accessibility improvements as part of road repair projects, where appropriate and feasible.
4. Request that the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), Caltrans, and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) amend the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), if required, to include these projects;
5. In the event that the final Economic Stimulus bill makes additional funds available to the region, and those funds do not need to be used within 90-180 days, indicate its intent to program those additional funds as part of a subsequent project selection process;
6. If projects are at risk of missing deadlines 75 days in advance of "use it or lose it" deadlines to obligate funds, authorize staff, in consultation with project sponsors, to redirect those funds to SCMTD for vehicle replacements or to other agencies for projects that are ready to award a federally-funded contract; and
7. Take additional actions, if necessary, based on any new information that becomes available prior to the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### 21. Rail acquisition project update

Deputy Director Luis Mendez presented the staff report reviewing the due diligence work performed by the RTC. He referred to a timeline showing what has been done and what needs to be completed and said that once all the reports are presented the Commission can make the final decision regarding the purchase which he expects can be made in August 2009. He said that the California Transportation Commission will make its decision the following week. Mr. Mendez said that because certain services contracted with Egan Consulting Group (ECG) require more work than anticipated and because oversight of the track inspection was added to their scope of work, staff recommends adding \$15,000 to their contract. He said that these funds are in the budget for the rail line acquisition project.

Commissioners discussed the Proposition 116 requirements and the role of freight service in the RTC's application. Commissioners also asked whether the Cemex plant closure would impact the application. Commissioners also discussed the Coastal Conservancy loan agreement.

Mr. Mendez clarified that freight service is not necessary to qualify for Proposition 116 funding, but since it is a component of the RTC's overall plan it must be included in a comprehensive business plan. He said that the agreement with the Coastal Conservancy has expired and that a request to extend it stalled because of the state budget. It should be extended after the budget is resolved.

**Jack Nelson** asked if there is sufficient staff time to manage all the tasks. George Dondero assured that there is sufficient staff.

**Cliff Walters**, Sierra Railroad, said that he thought that short line freight service is a viable business even if Cemex did not reopen. He added that Cemex will probably reopen when the price for cement is higher.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Campos seconded to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Accept this status report on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition project; and
2. Approve a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to amend the contract with Egan Consulting Group (ECG) to add \$15,000.

The motion (Resolution 20-09) passed unanimously.

22. Review of items to be discussed in closed session – N/A

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

23. 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**

24. Report on closed session – N/A

25. Adjourn to special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

a. No agenda items this month

26. Next Meetings

The meeting adjourned at 10:54 am.

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC office, 1523 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5 at 9:00 a.m. at the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean St., 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Santa Cruz, CA

Respectfully submitted,

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Gini Pineda, Staff

### **ATTENDEES**

Les White	SCMTD
Leo Moll	
Bruce Shewchuk	PB
Bart Ligtell	PB
Sandra Coley	PVTMA
Peter Scott	CFST
Jack Nelson	
Cliff Walters	Sierra Railroad
Chris Schneiter	City of Santa Cruz PW
Larry Pageler	UCSC
Jennifer Calate	Caltrans