



**Santa Cruz County Regional  
Transportation Commission  
Transportation Policy Workshop**

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**MINUTES**

Thursday May 21, 2009

9:00 a.m.

SCCRTC Conference Room  
1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz

Commissioner Mark Stone called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

1. Introductions

Self introductions were made.

Members present: Dene Bustichi, Tony Campos, Norm Hagen, Michelle Hinkle, Don Lane, Donna Lind, John Leopold, Kirby Nicol, Ellen Pirie, Mark Stone

Member absent: Antonio Rivas

Staff present: George Dondero, Luis Mendez, Yesenia Parra, Gini Pineda, Cory Caletti, Kim Shultz, Rachel Moriconi, Grace Blakeslee, Karena Pushnik

2. Oral communications

**Rick Longinotti** from Transition Santa Cruz distributed a flier and encouraged commissioners to attend the event being held June 18, 2009 regarding the future of transportation and land use...

**Micah Posner** thanked the Commission for supporting the Bike to Work program.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

Commissioner Stone announced that Item 14 would be postponed to the June 4, 2009 Commission meeting. He said that Item 13 would immediately follow Item 7.

Executive Director George Dondero said that a press release from the office of state Senate President pro tem Darrell Steinberg regarding rebalancing the state budget was distributed to the Commissioners.

**CONSENT AGENDA** (Leopold/Lane) approved unanimously

4. Approved staff recommendation regarding awarding a consultant contract for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network Master Plan and Environmental Review project (Resolution 38-09)

**REGULAR AGENDA**

5. State legislative overview and proposed positions on bills

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi said that the Regional transportation Commission adopts a legislative agenda each year to guide its support of and opposition to state legislative or administrative actions. She introduced RTC consultants John Arriaga and Steve Schnaidt to give updates on proposed legislation and recent developments regarding transportation funding.

Mr. Arriaga said that the May 19<sup>th</sup> election results were not surprising, so we are now faced with a 21.3 billion state budget deficit and said that the legislature must find ways to bridge the gap over the next 30 days. He said that severe cuts to health care, education and law enforcement are anticipated, in addition to redirecting transportation dollars. He stated that everything is back on the table including fees that the democrats had proposed and were vetoed. He reported that the Governor is proposing tapping into 2 billion dollars from local government. However there is a lot of opposition about his plan to borrow money and many organizations have begun to show their opposition to his proposal.

Steve Schnaidt reported that the governor is proposing borrowing against Proposition 1A money and redirecting State Transit Assistance funds. The governor is also looking at gasoline sales tax spillover funds and taking these straight off the table to fill the gaps in the budget. Borrowing Proposition 42 funds is also a possibility, but all of these measures are temporary fixes. Mr. Schnaidt said that immediate cash flow is the biggest problem because the state relies on the bond market for short term borrowing and the state's credit rating is the lowest in the nation. At this point the state is asking the Federal Government to basically co-sign which can create other problems.

Commissioners discussed how the state prioritizes projects and the impacts on small regions. It was noted that landscaping projects are not given a high priority by the state compared to congestion relief or safety projects. The Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project landscaping will most likely be postponed.

Ms. Moriconi said that the California Transportation Commission will develop an allocation plan which will help the Commission to see where its projects rank in the priority list.

**Peter Scott** wanted to know the best strategy to get funding for public transit. Mr. Schnaidt said to work with the Transit Association in Sacramento and to keep talking to state legislators.

**Rick Longinotti** asked when state elected officials would be attending an RTC meeting to defend their position of slashing funding for transit. Mr. Dondero said they would probably not be able to attend until fall.

**Micah Posner**, People Power, said he was willing to add his support in Sacramento to any legislation that was consistent with People Power's mission.

John Arriaga gave highlights of key bills. Responding to a Commissioner question, Ms. Moriconi noted that staff recommended "watch" rather than "support" for AB 1464, the California Bicycle Routes of State or Regional Significance Act, because staff hasn't fully vetted the bill and there is a potential for conflict with the Commission's own signage projects.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of a constitutional convention to overhaul the state's constitution and the role that ballot initiatives may play in developing legislation to lower voter thresholds to approve taxes.

Commissioner Stone expressed concern about SB 406, Land use: environmental quality, and asked the Commission to take a "support" position only if the state collected the levy instead of a municipal planning organization.

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

1. Receive an oral report from RTC's Sacramento Assistants John Arriaga and Steve Schnaidt on State legislative matters and the State Budget; and
2. Approve staff recommended positions on State bills, with the additional direction that the Commission incorporates Commissioner Stone's language to its "support" position for SB 406.

Commissioner Leopold asked for a friendly amendment that the Commission send AB 1464 to the Bicycle Committee for input.

The amendment was accepted and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

The Commission adjourned into closed session at 10:08 am.

**CLOSED SESSION**

7. 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

13. Conference with Real Property Negotiators Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8. Property: 1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (Taken out of order)

Agency Negotiator: George Dondero, Luis Mendez, Yesenia Parra  
Negotiation Parties: Louis Rittenhouse  
Under Negotiation: Lease Price and Terms

**OPEN SESSION**

The Commission reconvened into open session at

8. Report on closed session – There was nothing to report
9. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line acquisition project

Deputy Director Luis Mendez said that the RTC continues its due diligence work necessary in connection with the acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. He said that the RTC has continually provided information to the public about the negotiations whenever possible and is committed to providing information related to the acquisition to the public for 30 days, if practicable, before making a final decision on the purchase. Mr. Mendez said that some members of the community continue to urge the Commission to extend the public review period to 60 days but that doing so may require a compromise to elements still under negotiation.

Commission Alternate Schiffirin asked if staff would object to adding the language "at least" 30 days for a public review period. Mr. Mendez said that this language would not compromise negotiations.

Commissioners discussed the recommended review period and noted that most of the negotiation information has already been made public. Staff will produce a binder containing the documents that are available for public review. It was noted that this information is also currently available on the RTC website.

**Bill Comfort** said that he favors a 60-day review period and that public perception might be that too much has been discussed in closed session. He also asked that the caveat "if practicable" be more clearly defined.

**Micah Posner** said that a 60-day review period would be preferable but not if increasing the project time could result in a loss of state funding.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commission Alternate Schiffrin seconded to approve the staff recommendations with the change that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) continue its commitment to make information related to acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line public for at least 30 days prior to its final purchase decision, if practicable.

The motion passed with Commissioner Bustichi voting "no".

10. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Funding Program – preliminary staff recommendations

Senior Planner Rachel Moriconi gave the staff report saying that criteria for scoring projects that applied for funding focused on the number of people being served by a project, geographic equity and project readiness.

Commissioners discussed the criteria used to prioritize projects and suggested funding shifts between projects. Other topics under discussion included the allocation for reserves, backfilling funding for the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project, bike route signage, the value of a 511 system in Santa Cruz County and input from advisory committees.

**Piet Canin**, Ecology Action, reported on the Go Green program saying that at Cabrillo College purchases for bus passes increased 6%. Other components of the program include bike loans, bike racks and carpool incentives.

**Micah Posner** said that a bike route signage system, as part of a statewide system, would bring tourism to the county and would provide a safer environment for cycling. He distributed route sign samples.

Senior Planner Cory Caletti clarified that staff has not met with local jurisdiction to determine what the signs would look like.

Commissioner Leopold departed the meeting.

Commissioner Pirie said that there could be an issue regarding liability if the RTC recommended certain bike routes for safety.

**Hannah** said that people are interested in a signage system and that she had a petition with 100 signatures supporting the plan.

**Eduardo Green**, a traveler from Brazil and bicycle tourism business owner said that when he books bicycle trips around the world he looks for cities with

safe bike routes that also offer good bike signage and he has bypassed cities that do not meet this criteria.

**Carolyn Jett**, Greenways to Schools, said that the value of signage is underestimated especially for high school students. She said that students would be more inclined to bike if safe bike routes were pointed out using bike signage.

Commissioner Campos departed the meeting at 12:15 and was replaced by Commission Alternate Gonzalez.

**Theresa Rogerson**, Community Traffic Safety Coalition, asked for support for a south county based Community Traffic Safety Coalition which was not among the staff recommended project proposals.

Commission Alternate Schiffrin asked that project proposal documents be placed on the RTC website and that the link be sent to the Commissioners. A motion was made (Lane/Schiffrin) to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Consider and provide input on staff's preliminary recommendations for programming \$5.6 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and \$5.8 million in Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds; and
2. Schedule a public hearing for the June 4, 2009 RTC meeting in Watsonville to obtain public input prior to taking action to program these funds.

The motion passed unanimously.

11. *Timing and draft policies and evaluation measures for the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan*

Senior Planner Karena Pushnik said that a minor update of the *Regional Transportation Plan* is currently underway in order to comply with federal and state requirements and that a major update that would incorporate new requirements of SB 375 will be conducted in 2012. At that point, staff recommends shifting to a four year update cycle in order to maximize regional benefits from SB 375.

Commissioners discussed the amendments to the 2005 *Regional Transportation Plan*. It was decided that the second item be postponed to the June 4, 2009 RTC meeting and that Commissioners would forward comments to staff by Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>.

A motion was made (Schiffrin/Lane) to:

1. Approve the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' (AMBAG) request to shift to a four year regional transportation plan update cycle

- starting with the 2012 RTP, in order to maximize regional benefits from SB 375; and
2. Continue to the June 4<sup>th</sup> RTC meeting consideration of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goals and policies and evaluation measures.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

12. Annual Performance Review for Executive Director pursuant to Government Code 54957 –Postponed to the June 4, 2009 RTC meeting.
13. Next meetings

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 pm.

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 4, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main St, Watsonville, CA

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, June 18, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC Offices, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Gini Pineda, Staff

### **ATTENDEES**

Rick Longinetti	Transition Santa Cruz
Mark Dettle	City of Santa Cruz
Les White	SCMTD
John Presleigh	County of Santa Cruz
Peter Scott	SFCT
Eduardo Green	
Theresia Rogerson	CTSC
Katie LeBaron	HSA