



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

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### MINUTES

Thursday  
September 3, 2009  
9:00 a.m.

Board of Supervisors Chambers  
701 Ocean St  
Santa Cruz CA 95060

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 am.

Members present:

Dene Bustichi	Kirby Nicol
Gustavo Gonzalez (Alt)	Ellen Pirie
Neal Coonerty	Antonio Rivas
Randy Johnson	Mark Stone
Don Lane	Michelle Hinkle (Alt)
John Leopold	Ron Graves (Alt)
Aileen Loe (ex officio)	

Staff present:

George Dondero	Luis Mendez
Kim Shultz	Yesenia Parra
Karena Pushnik	Gini Pineda

2. Oral communications

**Jean Brocklebank** asked that Item 14b be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda.

**Jack Nelson** referred to an article from the *Sentinel* about climate change problems in the arctic and said that the Commission needs to keep in mind climate change when making decisions.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas – Item 14b was moved to the regular agenda and considered after Item 16.

**CONSENT AGENDA (Pirie/Nicol)**

Approved unanimously as amended

**MINUTES**

4. Approved draft minutes of the August 6, 2009 regular SCCRTC meeting
5. Approved draft minutes of the August 20, 2009 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the August 10, 2009 Bicycle Committee meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the August 11, 2009 E&D TAC meeting

**POLICY ITEMS**

8. Approved FY 09 Section 5310 Scores for Community Bridges Vehicles and Equipment (Resolution 03-10)
9. Accepted Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the 2010 Monterey Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Plan

**BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

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

**ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

11. Approved Special Districts Risk Management Association (SDRMA) Board of Directors Election (Resolution 04-10)

**INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

12. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
13. Accepted correspondence log
14. Accepted letters from SCCRTC committees and staff to other agencies
  - a. Letter to Ken Anderson, Scotts Valley Public Works, from Daniel Kostalec, Bicycle Committee, regarding Mt. Hermon Rd traffic loop detector
  - b. Letter to Bonnie Neely, California Coastal Commission, from John Daugherty, Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Commission, regarding trail accessibility in Arana Gulch master plan – removed from consent agenda

- c. Letter to Mayor Cynthia Matthews and Santa Cruz City Council from Daniel Kostalec, Bicycle Committee, regarding access to San Lorenzo River Bike/Pedestrian path via Kennan St
- 15. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on SCCRTC projects and transportation issues
- 16. Accepted information items

*No consent items*

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

- 14.b Letter to Bonnie Neely, California Coastal Commission, from John Daugherty, Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Commission, regarding trail accessibility in Arana Gulch master plan letter -formerly on consent agenda

**Jean Brocklebank** asked that the letter not be sent until the RTC has a public hearing and people have a chance to discuss the scope of the project.

Executive Director George Dondero stated that this project was part of a project list that was presented to the Commission and that the public was invited to a public hearing to address concerns on any project on the list. During discussion it was noted that the Arana Gulch master plan is a long ongoing project that has had several public hearings, and that funding was already appropriated by the Commission. It was noted that the City of Santa Cruz is the lead agency for the project.

The letter had already been sent and some Commissioners expressed interest in discussing the committees' role in submitting letters directly to other entities without going to the RTC for consideration.

Commissioner Pirie moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded to accept the letter. The motion carried unanimously.

- 17. Commissioner reports- none
- 18. Director's report

Executive Director George Dondero said that the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee meeting will be held on September 17, 2009 immediately after the Transportation Policy Workshop.

A presentation on the status of regional projects to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) at a special Town Hall meeting held in Monterey on August 27<sup>th</sup> was well received.

- 19. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5, presented updates to the construction report and congratulated the County for securing a Safe Routes to School grant for improvements at College Rd and Holohan Ave.

The state will be updating the California Transportation Plan which will address issues such as goods movement, climate change, stable funding and aging infrastructure. The state plan will integrate with and provide consistency and continuity for regional plans. Public hearings will be held in February or March.

Commissioner Stone asked that a presentation to better understand the connection between state and regional plans be added to a future agenda.

A letter was distributed responding to Commissioner Rivas' question from the August 6<sup>th</sup> RTC meeting about whether the Highway 129 Industrial Road Traffic Signal project would be completed prior to the beginning of the school year. It is anticipated to be completed by November 2009.

#### 20. Highway 1 Progress Report

Senior Planner Kim Shultz reported that the target date for Caltrans' and the Federal Highway Administration's approval and release of the Final Environmental Document (FED) for the Highway 1 Soquel/ Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project is mid-September. Work is expected to begin on the final design phase in mid-October. RTC staff continues to meet with local agencies to review design details and traffic operation analysis for the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project. The next step for the HOV Lanes project is value analysis which consists of the engineering plans being scrutinized by a third party to reassess design engineering and make suggestions for superior design or cost savings.

**Jack Nelson** said that he is opposed to the project noting that climate change does not happen gradually when it has progressed past the tipping point.

**Charles Huddleston** asked the Commission to consider projections and assumptions saying that estimates for continued growth may not be accurate and the widening may not be needed.

**Ed Davidson** supports the widening and noted that waiting in traffic burns a lot of gas, contributing to air pollution.

**Bobbie Haver** said that she supports the project but is concerned about the Arana Gulch watershed and hopes that environmental issues will be mitigated.

Commissioner Johnson said that there are technical reports that deal with these issues.

**Peter Pethoe** said that the intersections at 41<sup>st</sup> Ave, Morrissey Blvd and Soquel Dr will still be problematic and that the money should be spent on rail.

**Toni Danzig** stated that the environmental review information she has seen does not include a reference to Arana Gulch.

#### 21. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition

Deputy Director Luis Mendez said that there is an agreement in principal with Union Pacific to acquire the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and that in order to be ready to purchase, if that is the Commission's decision, the funding must be in place. A revised draft uniform transit application for \$10.2 million in Proposition 116 funds and \$10 million in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds was presented to the Commission for approval. Review appraisal services are also recommended. It was noted that the cost for these services to be provided by Sierra West Valuation is \$30,000, not \$35,000 as stated in the staff report.

Commissioners discussed STIP funding and time frames and the proposed billing rate to process post-review depositions and public testimony.

Commissioner Leopold moved and Commissioner Lane seconded to approve the staff recommendations with the one change noted above.

**Charles Huddleston** urged the Commission to proceed with the purchase.

**Ed Davidson** said that the project is a boondoggle and that passenger rail will never exist on the line, resulting in the need to repay Proposition 116 funding.

**Libby Huyck** said that she is against the passenger rail project but supports acquiring the right-of-way for a bike trail. She suggested delaying the decision until 2030 when the freight contract expires. She questioned whether the waivers of Proposition 116 guidelines 9 and 33 will be allowed.

Commissioner Johnson asked for clarification regarding the availability of Proposition 116 funding without passenger rail. Luis Mendez said that this application is to use Proposition 116 funds for the preservation of the right-of-way which is allowed by the Proposition 116 statute.

**Allan McLean** said to get the right-of-way now.

**Jack Nelson** said that the Rails to Trails Conservancy website shows many safe trails within operating rail line right-of-ways.

**Peter Scott** said that he supported the acquisition and urged the Commission to consult the Rails to Trails Conservancy website.

**Bobbie Haver** said that as an interpreter at Wilder Ranch, she wants a rail trail to come to Wilder and bring visitors.

**Carolyn Jett**, said that transportation decisions are often made without considering the needs of young people who cannot drive. She supported the right-of-way as a great place to cycle and brought a banner with 145 signatures supporting the rail trail.

**Batya Kagan** said that she has used a rail trail in Massachusetts that was very safe and increased tourism.

**Peter Pethoe** supported the rail line acquisition.

The motion to approve the staff recommendations that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Review and approve with revisions as appropriate the attached revised draft uniform transit application for \$10.2 million in Proposition 116 funds and \$10 million in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds for acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way (ROW) for corridor preservation and rail line improvements;
2. Adopt a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to submit a Uniform Transit Application for \$10.2 million in Proposition 116 funds and \$10 million in STIP funds for acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW for corridor preservation and rail line improvements;
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; and
4. Adopt a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Sierra West Valuation for review appraisal services not to exceed \$30,000.

passed unanimously (Resolutions 05-10 and 06-10).

22. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

The Commission recessed into closed session at 10:17 am.

#### **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**

The Commission reconvened to open session at 12:05

24. Report on closed session - none
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 12:06

The next Transportation Policy Workshop meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the SCCRTC office, 1523 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA

The next SCCRTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2009 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,

Gini Pineda, Staff

### **ATTENDEES**

Jean Brocklebank	
Bill Burgel	
Jack Nelson	
John Presleigh	Santa Cruz County Public Works
Bobbie Haver	AGWA
Toni Danzig	AGWA
Libby Huyck	
Ed Davidson	
Matt Goerz	Amec Geomatrix
Susan Gallardo	Amec Geomatrix
Peter Scott	
Cliff Walters	
Carolyn Jett	People Power
Batya Kagan	
Allan McLean	
John Sears	
Peter Pethoe	
Robert Johnson	