



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Minutes

Thursday, March 5, 2015

**Board of Supervisors Chambers
701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA**

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Members present:

Aileen Loe (ex-officio)
Greg Caput
Ryan Coonerty
Don Lane
Bruce McPherson
Randy Johnson

Jimmy Dutra
Dennis Norton
Zach Friend
John Leopold
Deborah Lane (alt.)
Ed Bottorff

Staff Present:

George Dondero
Luis Mendez
Yesenia Parra
Ginger Dykaar
Daniel Nikuna

Rachel Moriconi
Maggie Miller Bardacke
Karena Pushnik
Kim Shultz
Grace Blakeslee

2. Oral communications

Jack Nelson, Santa Cruz resident, asked the Commission to think about sustainability and climate change when making decisions about widening Highway 1 and requested that Item 8 Highway 1 Projects status update be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda.

Pauline Seales, Physics teacher, said that widening Highway 1 is the last thing the Commission should be considering because climate change is already happening and that biking and walking is a healthier alternative than driving.

Amelia Conlen, Director of People Power, noted that Santa Cruz County is #2 in the state for bike trips and #1 for cyclist injuries and fatalities, which needs to be addressed. Ms. Conlen asked that the Commission consider biking and walking as part of the transportation priorities.

Peter Scott, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, explained that reducing the number of cars slightly can have a significant impact in preventing traffic jams on Highway. He added that the rail line can be used for reducing car travel by providing for both train and bike travel and that bicycle facilities should be added to the railroad bridges even if more costly.

9:12 a.m. Commissioner Dutra joined the meeting

Becky Taylor said that she was very distressed by the racists and homophobic statements made at the last METRO meeting.

Joe Jordan, Citizens Climate Lobby, said that a price on carbon that polluters have to pay is the best way to reduce car travel. He encouraged the Commission to subsidize electric bicycles or other transportation alternatives to take cars off the road instead of widening the highway.

Paul Elrick, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, said that adding an auxiliary lane to Highway 1 from Soquel to 41st Ave should be a concern for Capitola residents because it will add traffic to Capitola Roads

Suzanne Kent, Santa Cruz resident, told Commissioners that she appreciated them for addressing transportation issues and would like to see the creation of a carbon fee.

Don Dietrich, Santa Cruz County Fair Board of Directors, asked the Commission to move forward on the improvement project at the intersection at Holohan Road and East Lake in Watsonville because traffic backs up for miles.

Dave Kegebein, Santa Cruz County Fair, encouraged the Commission to get the Holohan Rd and East Lake project completed as it affects fair traffic and it is dangerous for pedestrians.

Lowell Hurst, City of Watsonville, told the commission that it took him one hour to get from Watsonville to Santa Cruz on Highway 1 this morning. He said

that something needs to be done. He congratulated staff and the Commission on the completion of the La Selva Beach Trestle and the wonderful Ceremony and that he can't wait to see a train running on biodiesel produced in Watsonville.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

A revised staff report for Item 14 and the Director's Report were distributed.

Items 8, 11, 14 and 17 were pulled from the consent agenda. Item 8 became 22.1, Item 11 became 26.1, Item 14 became 27.1 and Item 17 became 27.2.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Friend motioned and Commissioner Norton seconded the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Dutra, McPherson, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Norton, Don Lane, Johnson, Caput, Coonerty, and Deborah Lane voting "aye." Commissioner Bottorff abstained from Item 4.

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the February 5, 2015 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
5. Accepted draft minutes of the February 9, 2015 Bicycle Committee meeting
6. Accepted draft minutes of the February 10, 2015 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) meeting
7. Accepted draft minutes of the February 12, 2015 Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee meeting

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS

8. Accept Highway 1 Projects Status Report – *Moved to regular agenda and became Item 22.1.*

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

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

10. Accept the Fiscal Year 2013-14 Fiscal Audit Reports (Reports included for Commissioners Only) Reports available on-line.
11. Approve Amendments to the Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget and Work Program – *moved to the regular agenda and became Item 26.1.*

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

12. Approved Committee Member Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy
13. Approved Out of State travel
14. Approve Memorandum of Understanding Extensions – *moved to the regular agenda and became Item 27.1.*

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

15. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
16. Accepted correspondence log
17. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies – *moved to regular agenda and became Item 27.2*
 - a. Letter to Board of Supervisors Coonerty and McPherson from the RTC Bicycle Committee regarding Improvements to Graham Hill Road.
 - b. Letter to John Presleigh, County of Santa Cruz Public Works Director from the Bicycle committee regarding Green bicycle lanes at freeway interchanges.
 - c. Letter to Local Jurisdictions from RTC staff regarding RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee's Priority Bicycle Projects.
18. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues
19. Accepted information items
 - a. Letter from Anna G. Eshoo, Member of Congress, in support of RTC's application for funds under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)
 - b. Article: Advocates proposing green lanes at freeway intersections by the SantaCruzSentinel.com

REGULAR AGENDA

20. Commissioner reports – oral reports

Commissioner Leopold thanked staff for the wonderful job on the La Selva Beach Trestle completion ceremony.

21. Director's report – oral report

Executive Director George Dondero presented his report. Mr. Dondero welcomed the new Commissioners; explained that Holohan Road is a project under County Public Works with cooperation from Caltrans and that RTC is not involved in the execution of the project; 30 volunteers came out to clean up the rail corridor near Aptos on Saturday and the next clean up is scheduled for March 21st near 17th Ave; there were about 150 attendees at the La Selva Beach Trestle completion ceremony, speakers included Commissioners Leopold and Friend as well as Michael Dorsa, project manager of the construction company, and Jeff Weeks, Iowa Pacific. The event was well covered by the media. He thanked the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds for the flatbed truck that served as a stage, thanked staff for their work and thanked Howard Cohen for the photos.

Mr. Dondero noted that the Passenger Rail Feasibility Study is underway and the draft will be ready for review later this Spring. Mr. Dondero reported that on March 11th he and Commissioners Leopold and Lane will be in Sacramento as part of the Central Coast Counties Coalition's annual Legislative Day to learn about state wide activities affecting transportation funding and policy and to meet with representatives to discuss RTC's needs and priorities.

(Note-Item 22 was taken out of order before item 21.a.)

22. Caltrans report and consider action items – oral report

Aileen Loe, Deputy Director of Caltrans Region 5, presented the Caltrans Report. Ms. Loe reported that the draft California Transportation Plan 2040 is being released this month and that Caltrans seeks public feedback on the plan. Ms. Loe called attention to the Caltrans Improvement Project 2015, which identifies five work groups to improve Caltrans operations. All reports are available on the Caltrans website.

Ms. Loe noted that Caltrans is committed to contribute funding for the Holohan Road project, which the County of Santa Cruz is working on to implement.

Commissioners discussed the intersection of Holohan Road and East Lake Ave in Watsonville and its funding, the involvement of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Fish and Wildlife office, and crosswalks on Highway 152.

21.a Approve appointment of Commissioners to Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee – oral report
(*John Leopold, Commission Chair*)

Chair Leopold recommended appointing Commissioners Friend, Coonerty, McPherson, Caput and himself to the Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee,

Commissioner Norton motioned and commissioner Don Lane seconded to approve the Chair's appointments to the Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Dutra, McPherson, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Norton, Don Lane, Coonerty, Johnson, and Deborah Lane voting "aye." Commissioner Caput stepped out.

Commissioner Leopold also noted that Commissioner Dutra joined the construction oversight ad-hoc committee.

22.1 Accept Highway 1 Projects Status Report – *formerly Item 8 on consent agenda*

Kim Shultz presented the staff report.

Jack Nelson, Santa Cruz resident, said that he appreciates being able to move this item to the regular agenda and asked Commissioners to pull the plug on the Highway 1 widening project and instead use the money on alternative transportation in order to save our economy and climate.

Amelia Conlen stated her concerns about the delay of the Mar Vista Bridge overpass project and asked that the project be pushed forward.

Paul Elerick said that he sees students and their parents crossing Mar Vista Drive and wants to see the overpass completed, that it took him 30 minutes to get here from Watsonville and that he doesn't see the need to spend millions of dollars to make it ten minutes faster.

Joe Jordan talked about the problem of getting people out of their cars and off the road and using trains and electric bikes as alternative transportation.

Pauline Seales shared a chart in a book that shows Greenland's ice melting and said that we need to rethink this whole situation.

Lowell Hurst, City of Watsonville, said that the Commission needs to continue doing this work. He said that there are many ways to manage congestion but it can't all happen at once and this project's task is to shorten commute time between Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

Commissioners discussed the impact of electric cars on the environment.

Commissioner Don Lane moved and Commissioner Friend seconded to accept the staff report. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Dutra, McPherson, Bottorff, Caput, Coonerty, Friend, Leopold, Norton, Don Lane, Johnson, and Deborah Lane voting "aye."

23. Draft of the Monterey Bay Public Participation Plan

Senior Transportation Planner Karena Pushnik presented the staff report.

Commissioners discussed reintroducing the Transportation Cafe and using social media to engage the public.

Commissioner Coonerty moved and Commissioner Friend seconded the staff recommendation to review and provide comments on the Draft 2015 Monterey Bay Area Public Participation Plan.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Caput, Coonerty, Dutra, McPherson, Don Lane, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Norton, Johnson, and Deborah Lane voting "aye."

24. State Transportation Funding Update

Senior Transportation Planner Rachel Moriconi presented the staff report.

Commissioners discussed the decrease in state and federal funding for local transportation and the need for Santa Cruz County to become a self-help county to pay for some of the transportation costs locally and how to reward residents for taking alternative transportation.

Mark Dettle, City of Santa Cruz Director of Public Works, said that one impact of the drought is that roads are currently in better condition than when it rains but are still deteriorating and once it starts raining it will accelerate the deterioration, and that he supports becoming a self-help county.

25. FY2015 Cap and Trade Low Carbon Transit Operations Program

Senior Transportation Planner Rachel Moriconi presented the staff report.

Commissioners discussed the cooperative efforts between METRO and the RTC, disadvantaged communities, and Paracruz.

Thomas Hiltner, Santa Cruz METRO, thanked the Commission for supporting and sponsoring this project that provides customer services in Watsonville and the increased use of transit.

Lowell Hurst, City of Watsonville, said that he looks forward to services funded by RTC and METRO that will address transit needs in Watsonville.

Commissioner Dutra moved and Commissioner McPherson seconded to designate the RTC's share of FY14/15 Low Carbon Operations Program (LCTOP) funds to the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (Santa Cruz METRO) for renovations to the Watsonville Transit Center to create a customer and paratransit eligibility office; and authorizing staff to sign and execute any agreements necessary to pass FY14/15 funds through to Santa Cruz METRO.

The motion passed unanimously (**Resolution #19-15**) with Commissioners Caput, Dutra, McPherson, Coonerty, Deborah Lane, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Norton, Johnson, and Don Lane voting "aye."

26. Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Amendments

Senior Transportation Planner Rachel Moriconi presented the staff report. Ms. Moriconi said that Attachment 2 had been changed because the Watsonville Airport Project no longer needs an amendment.

Commissioner Don Lane moved and Commissioner Caput seconded to amend the 2014 Regional Transportation Improvement Program to reflect updates to RTC-funded projects as requested by project sponsors.

The motion passed unanimously (**Resolution #20-15**) with Commissioners Caput, Coonerty, Dutra, McPherson, Don Lane, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Norton, Johnson, and Deborah Lane voting "aye."

26.1 Approve Amendments to the Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget and Work Program— *formerly Item 11 on the Consent agenda.*

Commissioners discussed the cost of the amendments, project construction fees, and Cruz 511.

Commissioner Caput moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded to approve the amendments to the Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget and Work Program.

The motion passed unanimously (**Resolution #16-15**) with Commissioners Caput, Dutra, McPherson, Don Lane, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Coonerty, Norton, Johnson, and Deborah Lane voting "aye."

27. Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 Proposed Budget

Deputy Director Luis Mendez presented the staff report.

Commissioners discussed the Rail Feasibility Study, the funding of two segments of the MBBST, CalPERS contributions, staffing cost for Commute Solutions, RTC rideshare programs, and percentage of people per car traveling on Highway 1 and taxes.

Jack Nelson said that he is puzzled by the money going into Highway 1 projects and would rather have that money used for more sustainable transportations options.

Commissioners discussed the rideshare/Cruz511.

Commissioner Norton moved and Commissioner Lane seconded to adopt the attached resolution (Attachment 1) approving the proposed Fiscal Year 2015-16 budget.

After some additional discussion, Commissioner Friend called the question. The motion to call the question passed, with Commissioners Dutra, Deborah Lane, McPherson, Don Lane, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Coonerty, and Norton voting "aye," and Commissioners Johnson and Caput voting "no."

The motion to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2015-16 budget passed **(Resolution #21-15)** with Commissioners Caput, Dutra, McPherson, Don Lane, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Coonerty, and Norton voting "aye," Commissioner Johnson voting "no." Commissioner Alternate Deborah Lane abstained.

27.1 Approve Memorandum of Understanding Extensions – *formerly Item 14 on the Consent Agenda.*

Commissioners discussed pay adjustments and employee and RTC contributions to the CalPERS Retirement System.

Commissioner Don Lane moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded the staff recommendations to adopt the resolution approving the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) side letters with the bargaining units outlining the provisions for a three-year extension of each MOU and adopt the CalPERS resolution to change the employer paid member contribution rate for the Community of RTC Employees consistent with the MOU side letter.

The motion passed **(Resolutions # 17-15 and 18-15)** with Commissioners Caput, Dutra, McPherson, Coonerty, Bottorff, Friend, Leopold, Don Lane, and

Norton voting "aye" and Commissioner Johnson voting "no." Commissioner Alternate Deborah Lane abstained.

27.2 Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies – *formerly Item 17 on the Consent agenda.*

- a. Letter to Board of Supervisors Coonerty and McPherson from the RTC Bicycle Committee regarding Improvements to Graham Hill Road.
- b. Letter to John Presleigh, County of Santa Cruz Public Works Director from the Bicycle committee regarding Green bicycle lanes at freeway interchanges.
- c. Letter to Local Jurisdictions from RTC staff regarding RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee's Priority Bicycle Projects.

Commissioners discussed a letter from the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&D TAC) to METRO regarding METRO's structural deficit. Responding to a question, Deputy Director Mendez confirmed that the letter was submitted and will be included in the next RTC meeting packet.

28. Next Meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2015 at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers, 701 Ocean St., 5th floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Attendees

Don Dietrich	Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds
Dave Kegebein	Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds
Lowell Hurst	City of Watsonville
Heather Adamson	AMBAG
Thomas Hiltner	Santa Cruz METRO
Paul Elerick	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Samantha Clark	Santa Cruz Sentinel
Suzanne Kent	Citizens Climate Lobby
Joe Jordan	Citizens Climate Lobby
Jack Nelson	Citizens Climate Lobby
Peter Scott	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Pauline Seales	

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Miller Bardacke