



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

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### Minutes

**Thursday, June 4, 2015  
9:00 a.m.**

**Watsonville City Council Chambers  
275 Main Street, Suite 400  
Watsonville, CA**

1. Roll call

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m.

Members present:

Karina Cervantez	Cynthia Chase
Ed Bottorff	Zach Friend
Don Lane	Jimmy Dutra
Greg Caput	John Leopold
Ryan Coonerty	Aileen Loe (ex-officio)
Dennis Norton	Randy Johnson

Staff Present:

George Dondero	Karena Pushnik
Luis Mendez	Rachel Moriconi
Yesenia Parra	Ginger Dykaar
Jennifer Rodriguez	Cory Caletti

2. Oral communications

**Lowell Hurst**, Watsonville City Council, thanked Caltrans for fixing roads in Watsonville and mentioned that a tourist was recently amazed that Santa Cruz County has working railroad with economic possibilities due to its connection to the outside world.

**William Menchine**, said the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail master plan and the Rail Feasibility Study document should be merged as one plan.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

A replacement page for Item 10 and two handouts for Item 16 were distributed.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Lane moved and Commissioner Coonerty seconded the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Cervantez, Johnson, Lane, Coonerty, Chase, Dutra, Leopold, Bottorff, Caput, Friend, and Norton voting "aye".

## **MINUTES**

4. Approved draft minutes of the May 7, 2015 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
5. Approved draft minutes of the May 21, 2015 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting

## **POLICY ITEMS**

No consent items

## **PROJECTS and PLANNING ITEMS**

6. Received information on the Unified Corridors Investment Study – Phase 1 Update

## **BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

7. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
8. Approved amendments to the Fiscal Year 2014-15 Budget and Work Program  
**(Resolution 29-15)**

## **ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

9. Approved Executive Director's Employment Agreement

## **INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

10. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
11. Accepted correspondence log
12. Accepted letters from RTC committees and staff to other agencies
  - a. Letter to Caltrans regarding City of Santa Cruz Active Transportation Program Grant Application for Branciforte Creek Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge from the RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee
  - b. Letter to Caltrans regarding City of Watsonville Active Transportation Program Grant Application for Rail Trail Walker Street Project from the RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee

- c. Letter to Caltrans regarding RTC Active Transportation Program Grant Application for Santa Cruz County Bicycle Route Signage Program from the RTC Bicycle Advisory Committee

13. Accepted miscellaneous written comments from the public on RTC projects and transportation issues

14. Accept information items

None

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

15. Commissioner reports – oral reports

None

16. Director's Report – oral report

George Dondero, Executive Director, reported that the Cruz511 website is now live and a demonstration would be given at an RTC meeting in the fall. The Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail (MBSST) Planning Award from the American Trails Organization was passed around for the Commissioners to view. Mr. Dondero noted that Jeff Weeks, General Manager for Iowa Pacific, accepted a position with Caltrain and thanked Mr. Weeks for his work with the RTC. He also said that Brett Wallace is now the General Manager and the RTC contact. Mr. Dondero also reported that President Obama signed a two-month federal transportation funding extension; and noted some RTC projects that align with National Safety Month.

17. Caltrans report and consider action items

Aileen Loe stated that in 2014 Caltrans reduced their water consumption by 32% and that Caltrans is working to develop a Class 4 bike ways plan that includes guidelines.

18. Appreciation for completed murals on Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Luis Mendez, Deputy Director, thanked Arturo Tomei, Steven Allen, John Ton and Mya Negre for their mural work along the Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay rail line in Capitola and Aptos. Mr. Mendez noted that murals deter graffiti, which is a big concern along the rail line property.

Commissioners extended their appreciation of the murals and the significance of the depicted images, and commended the commission and community members for beautifying the community. Commissioner Norton said that the City of Capitola is interested in extending the Capitola mural onto the railroad bridge.

Commissioner Friend presented certificates to Arturo Tomei and Steven Allen for the Aptos mural. Commissioner Norton presented certificates to John Ton and Mya Negre for the Capitola mural.

**John Ton**, Capitola mural artist, stated that murals are a great deterrent to graffiti. He also presented proposed images for the railroad bridge in Capitola.

Chair Leopold called for a break at 9:47 a.m.

The commission reconvened at 10:03 a.m.

#### 19. Draft Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

George Dondero, Executive Director, presented the staff report. He said that the final document will be available in the fall after all public comments are compiled.

Mr. Dondero introduced consultant team members Bob Grandy, Steve, Crosley and Buzz Burger. The consultant team gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the feasibility study findings, highlighting the status of the study, and describing and clarifying options from an engineering stand point.

Commissioner Cervantez left the meeting.

Commissioners discussed: the feasibility study estimated costs, ridership forecasts, hybrid studies, agency comparisons, quiet zones, safety, environmental impact cost, capital cost, Federal Rail Administration compliance, options of building in phases, impacts of alternative technologies, community outreach, fare options, funding and the importance of including service to the City of Watsonville.

**Bud Colligan**, Santa Cruz resident, stated his concerns on: costs for rail operations, climate change, CO2 emissions, the viability of commuter options on the bike path proposed, and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) master plan. He asked that RTC staff explore issues and understand economic, environmental, and commute benefits of a trail only option; and understand viability vs. feasibility and that the RTC consider rail banking.

**Heather Adamson**, Association of Monterey Bay Area Government (AMBAG) staff, clarified that the demand model is a 3 county model, which is updated every 5 years.

**Cliff Walters**, Roaring Camp, communicated that Roaring Camp would like to continue services to the Boardwalk, and noted that some expenses in the plan may not be quite as stated.

**Paul Elerick**, Campaign for Sensible Transportation, supports rail service and a sales tax measure.

**Brian Peoples**, Aptos Rail Trail, said he's not sure if the plan is feasible, and is concerned about the speed of the train going through communities.

**Rick Longinotti**, wants the feasibility study to include electrification on the rail line because it's quieter and reduces pollution. He said the diesel trains are dependent on fuel sources that will rise in price.

**Eli Puglizevich**, Seacliff resident, is concerned with the noise level when the trains honk at rail crossings.

**Steve Hill**, Vice President of Engineering for Iowa Pacific, stated that Iowa Pacific could provide more reasonable and cost effective service as stated in Scenario S. He also noted that they are very interested in continued efforts in the development of freight service.

**Nancy Bilicich**, Mayor of Watsonville, supports Scenario G and said that the City of Watsonville needs to be included from the start of the project in order for the city to give its support. The roads in Watsonville need repair and there is a need for funding and alternative transportation.

**Lowell Hurst**, Watsonville City Council, said that while there are many unknowns, the RTC should be brave and think big.

**Barry Scott**, Rio del Mar resident, said the RTC needs to keep in mind that the rail corridor is a piece of a bigger transportation system that could link with other transportation corridors and should keep in mind the costs of not having this rail corridor. He also noted that rail banking is not a secure option.

**Trina Coffman-Gomez**, Watsonville City Council, stated that rail transportation alternatives to Watsonville will provide relief on highways and supports the project but it must include Watsonville.

**Ronald Caplan**, Seascape resident, said his commute to Scotts Valley via Soquel Avenue is comparable to a Highway 1 commute. The rail option is needed and will help connect to other transportation options. The cost is also 15% less than widening Highway 1.

Commissioners directed RTC staff to extend the comment period until July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Karena Pushnick, Senior Transportation Planner invited all to the Rail Study Open House being held this evening starting at 6:30 pm at the Simpkins Swim Center in Live Oak.

20. The meeting adjourned to a special meeting of the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies at 12:21 p.m.

Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 6, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Scotts Valley City Council Chambers, 1 Civic Center Drive, Scotts Valley, CA.

A special meeting of the Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Santa Cruz Council Chambers, 809 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Staff

Attendees:

Heather Adamson	Association of Monterey Bay Area Government
Lowell Hurst	City of Watsonville
Trina Coffman-Gomez	City of Watsonville
Dr. Nancy A. Bilicich	City of Watsonville
Murray Fontes	City of Watsonville
Angela Aitken	Santa Cruz Metro
Kimberly Ferm	Pajaro Valley Shelter Services
Paul Elerick	Campaign for Sensible Transportation
Donald Miller	Valley Heights resident
Cliff Waters	Roaring Camp Railroads
Barry Scott	Rio del Mar resident
Eli Puglitech	Seacliff resident
Ursula Puglitech	Seacliff resident
Buzz Burger	Fehr & Peers
Steve Crosley	Fehr & Peers
Bob Grandy	Fehr & Peers
Brian Peoples	Aptos resident
Steve Hill	Iowa Pacific
Ronald Caplan	Seascape resident
Bud Colligan	Santa Cruz resident
John Ton	
Mya Negre	
Arturo Tomei	
Steven Allen	
Brandon Kett	
Eric Child	
Trevor Park	
William Menchine	
Rick Longinotti	