



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, December 5, 2024  
9:00 a.m.**

**In-Person Meeting**

Scotts Valley City Council Chambers  
1 Civic Center Drive  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

1. Roll call. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present:

City of Capitola	Alexander Pedersen
City of Santa Cruz	Sandy Brown
City of Scotts Valley	Randy Johnson
City of Watsonville	Eduardo Montesino
County of Santa Cruz	Felipe Hernandez
County of Santa Cruz	Andy Schiffrin (Alt)
County of Santa Cruz	Robert Quinn (Alt)
County of Santa Cruz	Manu Koenig
County of Santa Cruz	Bruce McPherson
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Kristen Brown
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Larry Pageler
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Donna Lind (Alt)
Caltrans (ex-officio)	Kelly McClendon (Remote)

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen	Amanda Marino
Grace Blakeslee	Luis Mendez
Cynthia Convisser	Rachel Moriconi
Krista Corwin	Shannon Munz
Max Friedman	Tracy New
Riley Gerbrandt	Yesenia Parra
Brianna Goodman	Tommy Travers
	Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Considered AB 2449 Just Cause and Emergency Circumstances Requests  
- *none*
3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra communicated that handouts for items 21 and 22 were posted to the website.

4. Oral communications

Received public comment from:

Jean Brocklebank

Brian Peoples (Trail Now)

Michael Saint (Campaign for Sustainable Transportation)

Jim Helmer

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Harnandez seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Hernandez, Koenig, K. Brown, McPherson, Pageler, Pedersen, and Commissioner Alternates Lind, Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

### **MINUTES**

5. Approved draft minutes of the November 07, 2024 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
6. Approved draft minutes of the October 10, 2024 Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee meeting

### **POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items*

### **PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS**

7. Approved budget and term amendment for the professional services agreement with Associated Right-of-Way Services, Inc. (AR/WS)  
(**Resolution 24-25**)
8. Received information on the Vision, Goals, and Objectives of the Rural Highway Safety Plan (RFSP) and approved the proposed goals and objectives framework

## **BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

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

## **ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

11. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a consultant contract with The Justice Collective, LLC, for accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) and conflict resolution training services and an equity-focused evaluation and assessment of RTC policies, procedures and practices (Resolution) Approved authorizing entering into a master fund transfer agreement with Caltrans for transportation planning funds (**Resolution 25-25**)

## **INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

12. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
13. Accepted correspondence log
14. Accepted letters from committees and staff to other agencies - *none*
15. Accepted information items - *none*

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

16. Commissioner Reports - *none*
17. Director's Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen delivered updates on an upcoming virtual and in-person informational community session for the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project on December 16, additional sessions coming in 2025, and the virtual open house open until December 20; and announced that the RTC office will be closed to the public from December 23-January 1.

18. Appreciation for Outgoing Commissioners

Executive Director Sarah Christensen presented certificates of appreciation to outgoing Commissioners Bruce McPherson, Zach Friend, Randy Johnson, Sandy Brown, Kristen Brown, and Commissioner Alternates Gine Johnson and Robert Quinn.

Outgoing Commissioners delivered remarks about their time of service on the Commission and their perspectives and the future regional transportation needs of Santa Cruz County.

Commissioners discussed gratitude for the service of outgoing commissioners, successes over the years, and the effort and willingness to work together.

Received public comment from:

Jim Helmer  
Matt Farrell  
Brian Peoples  
Michael Saint  
Lowell Hurst

19. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025

Chair Brown reported that the Chair Selection Committee nominates Eduardo Montesino to serve as the Chair and Felipe Hernandez to serve as the Vice-Chair for 2025.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to approve the recommendations of the Chair Selection Committee. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Hernandez, Koenig, K. Brown, McPherson, Pageler, Pedersen, and Commissioner Alternates Lind, Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples  
Lowell Hurst

20. Caltrans Report

Kelly McClendon, Chief Transportation Planner for Caltrans District 5 delivered updates on: recent notice to proceed for a \$.13 million grant to study four climate vulnerable locations along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; highway maintenance projects on Highway 9 and Highway 1 near Watsonville; and a public open house meeting to be held January 15 for an upcoming paving project in Felton.

Commissioners discussed: need for a remedy for the unsafe parking situation along Highway 1 at Shark Fin Cove near Davenport.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples (Trail Now)

21. Update on Repairs to the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Damaged by

## Previous Severe Winter Storms in Santa Cruz County

Associate Engineer Riley Gerbrandt and Director of Finance and Budget Tracy New delivered the staff report and responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: why FEMA has only reimbursed a partial amount of the expenses of the 2017 storm damage repair projects; staff's expectation of the ultimate amount that may be reimbursed; categories of Measure D funds that have been used to carry out the repairs; hiring a consultant who has experience applying for FEMA assistance; impacts on cash flow for future projects; collaboration with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) and prospects for FEMA's response time;

Executive Director Sarah Christensen provided more context about disaster relief for a publicly-owned freight line being an uncommon situation for FEMA to consider; strategizing with county and other local agency staff to recover funds.

Commissioners discussed: need for analysis of the impacts on future rail projects; limits to capacity with RSTPX Fund.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Montesino seconded the motion to approve **Resolution 26-25** approving long-term interest-free borrowing from the Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) fund to pay for storm damage repairs until reimbursement is received from state and federal public assistance programs. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioners S. Brown, Johnson, Montesino, Hernandez, Koenig, K. Brown, McPherson, Pageler, Pedersen, and Commissioner Alternates Lind, Schiffrin and Quinn voting "aye."

### Received public comment from:

Matt Farrell  
Becky Steinbruner  
Jim Helmer  
Brian Peoples (Trail Now)  
Lowell Hurst  
Jocelyn Wolfe  
Anna  
Michael Saint  
Raudel Covarrubias

## 22. Public Hearing: Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project Milestone 3

Associate Engineer Riley Gerbrandt delivered the staff report and responded to Commissioner questions regarding: factors that affect ridership modeling,

including number of stops, wait times at stations, service to employment centers, and duration of the trip from Watsonville to Santa Cruz; development of the final feasibility report; the Boardwalk's and other stakeholder's input on the alignment in the Beach Street area; proposed trail corridor alignment along Sumner, Jade Street, Park Avenue, Brommer Street, Capitola Trestle, and 38<sup>th</sup>-41<sup>st</sup>;

Mr. Gerbrandt and Project Lead Mark McLaren of HDR, Inc. responded to a question from a Commissioner regarding the decision-making around serving the West Side of Santa Cruz versus Depot Park

Executive Director Sarah Christensen responded to a question from a commissioner regarding limiting the number of permutations of proposed rail service that the public is invited to comment on; concern for nearly half the trail being diverted to surface streets;

The public hearing opened at 11:44 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Jeffrey Ellis  
Terrie Thomas  
Anne Easley  
Lani Faulkner  
John Lewis  
Matt Farrell  
Becky Steinbruner  
Saladin Sale  
Sally Arnold  
Tina Andreatta  
Mimi Edgar  
Paula Bradley  
Brian Peoples (Trail Now)  
Michael Saint  
Jocelyn Wolfe  
Dianne D.  
Cynthia Dzendzel  
Sean

The public hearing closed at 12:20p.m.

Commissioners discussed: Employment centers that would be serviced by transit on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL); ridership data from Santa Cruz METRO; looking forward to community dialogue around the final concept report; project costs extend over the long term; keeping promises made to the Measure D-2016 voters; preference for service to the West Side; providing options of alternatives moving forward; not inconsistent with

the master plan for trail to divert off right-of-way; patience for the public process.

23. Review of items to be discussed in closed session.

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that there would be one item under discussion in closed session. No reportable action was anticipated from closed session.

The Commission adjourned open session and entered into closed session at 12:33 p.m.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

24. Conference with Labor Negotiators  
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6)  
Agency Designated Representatives: Sarah Christensen and Jesse Lad  
Employee Organizations: CORE and RAMM
25. Report on items discussed in closed session - Closed session adjourned at 12:42

There was no reportable action from the closed session.

26. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 9:00 a.m., at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, located at 275 Main Street, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

#### Attendees

Mark McLaren  
Raudel Covarrubias  
Jean Brocklebank  
Michael Lewis  
Jocelyn Wolfe  
Anna  
Brian Peoples (Trail Now)  
Paula Bradley  
Jondi  
Dianne D.

Joni S.  
Paul Guirguis, Caltrans  
Tiffany Mendoza  
Sue  
Katharine P. Minott  
Catherine Brennan  
Heather Adamson, AMBAG  
Michael Saint  
Tim Brattan  
Kate Elliott  
Bob Fifield  
Kris Reyes  
Eva Brunner  
Ross  
Cynthia Dzendzel  
Dan  
Linda Wilshusen  
Nancy Yellin  
Tracy Lewis  
Sean  
Dan Jensen  
Marc B. Yellin, M.D.  
Peter Haworth  
Caroline Carney  
PK Hattis  
Maggie Barr  
Howie Schnieder  
Bruce Weder  
Rob Tidmore, Santa Cruz County  
Lowell Hurst  
Steven Jonsson  
Jeanette Guire  
Nadene Thorne  
Christina Watson, TAMC  
Steven Jonsson  
Jack Brown  
Frank Rimicci, Jr.  
Rebecca Downing  
Johanna Lighthill