



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, June 12, 2025  
6:00 p.m.**

**In-Person Meeting**

Watsonville City Council Chambers  
275 Main Street, Fourth Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076

**Remote Participation (see page 5 for more information)**

RTC Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89597173447>

Dial-in: +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 895 9717 3447

1. Roll call. The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Members present:

City of Santa Cruz	Fred Keeley
City of Scotts Valley	Steve Clark
City of Watsonville	Eduardo Montesino
County of Santa Cruz	Manu Koenig
County of Santa Cruz	Kimberly DeSerpa
County of Santa Cruz	Justin Cummings
County of Santa Cruz	Monica Martinez
County of Santa Cruz	Felipe Hernandez
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Vanessa Quiroz-Carter
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Fabian Leonor (Alt.)
Caltrans (ex-officio)	Kelly McClendon (Remote)

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen	Luis Mendez
Amin AbuAmara	Riley Gerbrandt
Amy Naranjo	Yesenia Parra
Bella Kressman	Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)
Krista Corwin	

2. Considered AB 2449 Just Cause and Emergency Circumstances Requests

Administrative Services Officer (ASO) Yesenia Parra communicated that there were no AB 2449 requests.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Yesenia Parra, ASO reported that replacement pages for the agenda, item 6, item 23, and item 31 were posted to the website. An attachment and a handout for item 31 were also posted to the website.

4. Oral Communications

Received public comment from:

Bill Beecher  
Brian Peoples  
Bryan Shields  
David Dean  
Jim Helmer  
Sean

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Martinez appreciated the staff for the information in the report for item 12. Commissioner Martinez also commended staff for the clean fiscal audit provided under item 15.

Commissioner Hernandez made a motion and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Koenig, Quiroz-Carter, DeSerpa, Montesino, Hernandez, Martinez, Cummings, Keeley, Clark, and Commissioner Alternate Leonor voting "aye."

**MINUTES**

5. Approved minutes of the May 1, 2025 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
6. Accepted draft committee meeting minutes
  - a. April 14, 2025 Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Coordination Committee
  - b. April 17, 2025 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee
  - c. April 17, 2025 Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee
  - d. May 13, 2025 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
  - e. May 15, 2025 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee

## **POLICY ITEMS**

7. Adopted Lactation Accommodation Policy

## **PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS**

8. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to award a contract to Environmental Science Associates for the San Vicente/Waddell Creek Coastal Resiliency Project (**Resolution 56-25**)
9. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to award a contract to Koala Tree Services Inc. DBA Clean Team Associates for ongoing and on-call janitorial services on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (**Resolution 57-25**)
10. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to award a contract to Capra Environmental Services Corp. for vegetation control along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line using goats (**Resolution 58-25**)
11. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the County of Santa Cruz for legal services for the Highway 1 Freedom Boulevard to State Park Drive and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project and enter into an agreement with special counsel for legal services for the portions of the project within the RTC's right of way (**Resolution 59-25**)
12. Accept information on how the RTC Engages Community Members in Development and Design Review

## **BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

13. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
14. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues

## **ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

15. Accepted SCCRTC FY 2023-2024 fiscal audit and FY 2023-24 audited financial statements for the Measure D fund
16. Approved Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claims for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26 Bike Encouragement and Walk and Roll to School Program work plan and budget from Ecology Action (**Resolution 60-25**)
17. Approved Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claims for the Vision Zero Program work plan and budget from the County Health Services Agency (**Resolution 61-25**)

18. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to implement railway safety standard operating procedures in accordance with Federal Rail Administration (FRA) regulations for the purpose of hi-rail vehicle use on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (**Resolution 62-25**)
19. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend a contract with Regional Government Services for recruitment services (**Resolution 63-25**)
20. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend a contract with Lotus Financial Solution, Inc. for interim support until the time the recruitment for the Finance & Budget Officer position is complete and the permanent position is filled (**Resolution 64-25**)
21. Approved salary schedule dated April 1, 2025
22. Approved job description for Budget and Finance Officer position
23. Received and accepted report on Status of Vacant Positions as required by AB 2561

#### **INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

24. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
25. Accepted correspondence log
26. Accept letters from committees and staff to other agencies - *none*
27. Accepted information items - *none*

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

28. Commissioner Reports

Chair Montesino reported on the robust discussion and stakeholder engagement during the South County-focus Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail workgroup sessions and appreciated staff for coordinating the series of meetings.

Commissioner Martinez reported on the productive discussions held with the Seaside Company and Roaring Camp during the North County-focus Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail workgroup sessions and emphasized that the commission is seeking solutions that benefit all of the various stakeholders.

29. Director's Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen delivered updates on: launch of the

North Coast Transportation Demand Management project, addressing congestion issues along the Highway 1 corridor between the Santa Cruz and San Mateo county line; launch of the Go Bike program on June 13, 2025 in partnership with Ecology Action, funded by the Monterey Bay Air Resource district and the SCCRTC; ribbon cutting of Coastal Rail Trail Segment 7, Phase 2 on May 21, 2025.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the new rail trail segment.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples

### 30. Caltrans Report

Kelly McClendon, Senior Planner for Caltrans District 5 delivered the Santa Cruz County Project Update List and announced: an upcoming emergency drainage project prompting closure of the off ramp at Sims road for two weeks starting June 16, 2025; upcoming public hearings at the city council and Board of Supervisors meetings to gather input on speed limit changes on Highway 17; annual mowing operation to reduce fire risk and a reminder to motorists to move over to the next available lane when passing work crews.

### 31. Zero Emission Rail and Trail Project Update

Riley Gerbrandt, Associate Transportation Engineer delivered the staff report, and Marc McLaren, Project Manager from HDR, delivered a presentation.

In responses to Commissioner questions, consultants and staff provided more information on: ridership measures and travel patterns, train frequency; comparisons to similar transit systems in existence; impacts to Beach Street; hydrogen fuel cell versus electric power; costs; funding landscapes; value engineering; factors that influenced ridership projections; train speeds; more details about next steps and phasing of the project; implementation strategies; and an analysis of how the project would interface with freight service.

Executive Director Sarah Christensen provided more information on the local match that would be needed to make the project competitive for state and federal grants; funding sources; freight service and revenue; and feasibility.

Commissioners discussed: federal funding landscape; environmental review timing; sales taxes as source of local match for transportation projects; level of community commitment required to deliver the project; keeping an open mind on freight; long term project; opportunities for funding; enabling transportation options for future residents of transit-oriented housing currently in development; collaboration with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC); braiding together the information presented in the report and the need for local share of cost for capital and operations and maintenance.

Received public comment from:

Bill Beecher  
Lani Faulkner  
Saladin Sale  
Isabella Blevins  
Rosemary Sarka, Roaring Camp Railroads  
Taxpayer  
Brian Peoples, Trail Now  
Jack Brown  
Robert Bearsch  
Mike Morrissey  
Schoolteacher  
Sally Arnold  
Barry Scott  
Matt Farrell  
Lowell Hurst  
Bud Colligan  
David  
David Dean

Commissioner Keeley made a motion and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion that the Executive Director in consultation with fiscal staff (1) calculate the local share of capital and O&M cost, (2) assume three scenarios: 20%, 30% and 40% local share on the capital side and 100% on the operations and maintenance side; (3) provide a table assuming (1) and (2) of taxes that would fit that model.

Commissioner Koenig offered a friendly amendment – for whatever percentage will be grant funded, to provide the cost per rider mile or whatever factor the FDA is going to use, to have some insight into how competitive we are versus other systems that have recently received funding. The maker of the motion accepted the amendment.  
Commissioner Clark offered a friendly amendment to include a 50% local share on the capital side as well. The maker of the motion accepted the amendment.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Koenig, Quiroz-Carter, DeSerpa, Montesino, Hernandez, Martinez, Cummings, Keeley, Clark, and Commissioner Alternate Leonor voting "aye."

### 32. 2025 Consolidated Grant Criteria and Evaluation Process

Transportation Planner Amy Naranjo delivered a presentation.

Ms. Naranjo and Executive Director Christensen responded to a Commissioner's questions about projects that the RTC will submit for consideration to receive Regional Transportation Improvement Program grant funds.

Received public comment from:

Jim Helmer

Commissioner Hernandez made a motion and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the proposed evaluation criteria and process for the 2025 Consolidated Grants and 2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Koenig, Quiroz-Carter, DeSerpa, Montesino, Hernandez, Martinez, Cummings, Keeley, Clark, and Commissioner Alternate Leonor voting "aye."

### 33. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas provided a brief overview of the three items to be discussed in closed session.

The Commission entered closed session at 9:13 p.m.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

34. Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957) Title: Executive Director
35. Conference with Labor Negotiators (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6) Agency Designated Representative: Steve Mattas Unrepresented Employee: Executive Director
36. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4): Initiation of Litigation: Two Cases

## **OPEN SESSION**

37. Report on items discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that there was no reportable action from closed session.

38. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Scotts Valley City Council Chambers, 1 Civic Center Drive, Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

### Attendees

Rachel Moriconi	EMalmborg
Sierra Topp	Sean
Max Friedman	Elizabeth Madrigal
Gine Johnson	Na None
Bryan Shields	Paul Roberts
Brian Peoples	Johanna Lighthill
Jack Brown	Debbie Bulger
Barry Scott	Tiffany Mendoza
BobFi	Jeff Anderson
Paul Hierling, AMBAG	Frank Rimicci Jr.
Michael Zeller	Bill Beecher
David Dean	Lani Faulkner
Jim Helmer	Saladin Sale
Christina Watson, TAMC	Isabella Blevins
James Weller	Rosemary Sarka
Max Chun	Robert Bearsch
Grace Blakeslee	Mike Morrissey
Nadene Thorne	Sally Arnold
Jesse Kathan	Matt Farrell
Ahtziri	Lowell Hurst
Piet Canin	Bud Colligan
Paul Guirguis, Caltrans	David
Bryan	Marc B. Yellin
Keith Otto	Larry Pageler

Mari Tustin  
Richard James  
1831\*\*\*\*205  
Bill Spence  
Brad  
Peter Haworth  
Will Mayall  
Tim B  
Alberta James  
Nancy  
Scott Roseman  
Rebecca  
Greg Becker  
Brad Kava  
Joni S.  
Wallace Baine  
Dianne D.  
Andrea Millert  
Tony  
Kris Reyes  
Pam  
Davis  
Tom Ginsburg  
Brett Garrett  
Ned McNamara