



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, August 7, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

In-Person Meeting

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

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 9:10 a.m.

Members present:

City of Capitola	Gerry Jensen
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	Andy Schiffrin (Alt.)
County of Santa Cruz	Monica Martinez
County of Santa Cruz	Felipe Hernandez
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Vanessa Quiroz-Carter (Remote)
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Fabian Leonor
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District	Rebecca Downing
Caltrans (ex-officio)	David Silberberger (Remote)

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen	Luis Mendez
Amin AbuAmara	Riley Gerbrandt
Amy Naranjo	Yesenia Parra
Bella Kressman	Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)
Grace Blakeslee	Max Friedman
Sierra Topp	Amanda Marino
Shannon Munz	

2. Considered AB 2449 Just Cause and Emergency Circumstances Requests

Administrative Services officer Yesenia Parra noted that Commissioner Quiroz Carter would be remote under the regular Brown Act and the location address is noted on the agenda.

There were no requests.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Staff reports for item 13, 14, 16, and 17, Handouts for item 26, including Attachment 3, and public comments on item 26 were posted to the website.

4. Accepted Grant Award of \$128.7 Million in SB 1 Funds from the California Transportation Commission

Bob Tiffany, California Transportation Commissioner, presented an award of SB 1 funds for the Watsonville-Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Program for the implementation of several multimodal projects along the corridor.

Commissioners discussed: gratitude for Commissioner Tiffany's presentation today; the Chanticleer Overcrossing Ribbon Cutting ceremony on July 30, 2025; gratitude for staff's dedication and grant writing skills; the impact of Highway 1 congestion on families; importance of segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail for bike and pedestrian safety.

The Commission accepted the award (Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin/Commissioner Keeley) with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, Hernandez, Schiffrin, DeSerpa, Koenig, Martinez, Downing, Quiroz-Carter, Leonor and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Lowell Hurst
Michael Saint
Becky Steinbruner
Brian Peoples, Trail Now

5. Oral Communications

Received public comment from:

George Ow
Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit
Jack Brown
Greg Kassner
Elio Blige

William Ow
Lowell Hurst
Becky Steinbruner
Sean

CONSENT AGENDA

Steve Mattas stated the terms of the contract in item 18 in accordance with state law.

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

Commissioner Downing thanked Executive Director Christensen for the letters of support in item 20 for METRO facilities and ParaCruz program, and asked staff a question about item 8. In response to the question, Max Friedman, Transportation Planner, stated that staff will follow up with the U.S. Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy regarding the Safe Arterials for Everyone Initiative.

MINUTES

6. Approved minutes of the June 12, 2025 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
7. Accepted draft committee meeting minutes
 - a. May 19, 2025 Bicycle Advisory Committee
 - b. June 9, 2025 Bicycle Advisory Committee
 - c. June 10, 2025 Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee
 - d. July 8, 2025 Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Coordination Committee

POLICY ITEMS

8. Accepted information on State and Federal Legislative Updates

PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS

9. Accepted the draft Existing Conditions Report of the North Coast Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan
10. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Community Tree Service for vegetation control maintenance along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (**Resolution 1-26**)

11. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Segment 5 Maintenance and Operations Agreement with the County of Santa Cruz and amend the Measure D 5year Plan to increase the amount approved for Segment 5 maintenance activities in FY25/26 for additional expenditures (**Resolution 2-26**)
12. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with HDR for professional services to prepare a climate resilience plan for specified vulnerable locations of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way (ROW) (**Resolution 3-26**)

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. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend an agreement with the County of Santa Cruz to continue treasury services and update the compensation structure and extend the contract term (**Resolution 4-26**)
16. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to award a contract to KNN Public Finance, LLC for financial advisory services for Measure D Planning (**Resolution 5-26**)
17. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend a contract with CASCADE SOFTWARE SYSTEMS, A SUBSIDIARY OF VALSOFT INC for WinCams cost accounting management software system (**Resolution 6-26**)
18. Approved amendment to employment agreement with the Executive Director (**Resolution 7-26**)

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

19. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
20. Accepted letters from committees and staff to other agencies
 - a. June 9, 2025 Letter to Taylor Bateman Re: Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Town Center Specific Plan Update

- b. June 24, 2025 Letter to the Honorable Sean Duffy Re: Safe Streets and Roads for All Program (SS4A): Support for Santa Cruz County Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 & 9 (Project)
- c. July 7, 2025 Letter to the Honorable Sean Duffy Re: Low or No Emission Grant Program – 5339(b and c) – Support for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) New Operations and Maintenance Facility
- d. July 7, 2025 Letter to the Honorable Sean Duffy Re: Low or No Emission Grant Program – 5339(b) – Support for Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) to Replace and Expand Paratransit Vehicle Fleet

21. Accepted correspondence log

22. Accepted information items - *none*

REGULAR AGENDA

23. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Downing announced that Corey Aldridge, Chief Executive Officer of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and delivered an update about the upcoming countywide engagement opportunities during a Week Without Driving, September 30-October 5, 2025.

Commissioner Clark reported on the August 4, 2025 kickoff meeting to address encroachments on Segment 10 of the Coastal Rail Trail.

Commissioner Hernandez reported on his and Chair Montesino's visit to Watsonville's sister cities in Michoacan and Jalisco to better understand bicycle infrastructure in Mexico.

Commissioner Leonor introduced himself, announcing that he has been appointed into the vacancy left behind by the late Commissioner Mike Rotkin and delivered comments on his priorities for transportation improvement in Santa Cruz County.

Chair Montesino and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin also delivered comments on Commissioner Mike Rotkin's legacy as a transportation advocate.

24. Director's Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen delivered updates on the Go Bike! Program; call for interest to serve on the Coast Rail Coordinating Council

(CRCC); call for projects for the 2025 Consolidated Grants Program including the SB 1 Transit State of Good Repair Program and 2026 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); Rural Highways Safety Plan (RHSP) Outreach opportunities; the Chanticleer Bicycle/Pedestrian Overcrossing Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony; update on the Community Traffic Safety Coalition (CTSC) Crash Report.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for staff's hard work and the quality of the Chanticleer Overcrossing Ceremony; concerning findings in the CTSC Crash Report; impacts of increasing speed of e-bikes on bicyclist safety; celebrating the opening of the "Whale Bridge."

In response to questions from Commissioners, Transportation Planning Technician Sierra Topp described the safety training requirements of the Go Bike! Program; the work of Ecology Action in providing e-bike safety education; classifications and speed specifications of the bicycles.

Received public comment from:

Jacques Bertrand
Lani Faulkner
Jean Brocklebank
Bill Cook
Jack Brown

25. Caltrans Report

David Silberberger, Office Chief North for District 5 of Caltrans, delivered the Santa Cruz County Project updates and congratulated the Commission on the grant award and continued progress on the Highway 1 corridor projects; provided updates on: the recent engineering traffic speed survey and proposed speed limit changes which are awaiting public feedback from the City and County of Santa Cruz; projects ready-to-list over the next 5 years including Highway 129, Highway 152 in Watsonville, Highway 9 through Felton and above Boulder Creek, and Highway 1 through Santa Cruz.

Commissioner Rebecca Downing departed the meeting

26. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Zero Emission Rail and Trail Project Milestone 4
Public Hearing

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

In response to questions from Commissioners, Mr. Gerbrandt provided more information regarding cost estimates for rail trail implementation; input from

the Coastal Commission; Mr. McLaren provided information regarding Pajaro to Santa Cruz travel time estimates and travel times for popular trips that would require bus transfers; how tourism factors into the estimates; details about the hydrogen fuel cell vehicle; comparison of cost per passenger mile and competitiveness for state and federal grants.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Executive Director Sarah Christensen provided information about the local commitment needed to deliver the project and the impact on local projects if half of regional discretionary funds were to be dedicated to the development of passenger rail.

Commissioners discussed: need for specific feedback from the Coastal Commission; impacts to Beach Street and costs; Roaring Camp's continued access to the Boardwalk; public reception of sales tax increases; affordability as a commuter option; need for final project report; climate resiliency; giving staff more time to finalize the report; getting closer to a 90% design and collaboration with other jurisdictions; frustrations of commuters in the current gridlock; economic and quality of life benefits; investing in Watsonville community; importance of engaging youth; suggested timeline for release of final report.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion to continue the item until December when the report is complete.

Commissioner Koenig proposed a friendly amendment to (1) review the final report in November, that (2) the report is released no later than two and a half weeks prior to the meeting, (3) that the final report includes specific feedback from the Coastal Commission about any input they have that would add costs, (4) specific discussion of constraints on Beach Street and Walker Street, (5) specific financial analysis of cost per passenger mile that compares to cost of our system to others as well as (6) peer review of the report.

The maker of the motion accepted the friendly amendment, except for (1) that the final report be ready for review in November. The seconder of the motion accepted the friendly amendment as amended. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, Hernandez, DeSerpa, Koenig, Martinez, Quiroz-Carter, Leonor, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "aye."

Executive Director Christensen clarified that peer review may take longer to complete than the end of the year and that the Coastal Commission may not be willing to provide specific feedback on the RTC's timeline.

Received public comment from:

Greg Kassner
Saladin Sale
Lani Faulkner
Jack Brown
William Ow
Brett Garrett
Mark Klee
Leslie Neilson
Tina Andreatta
Elio Blige
Sally Arnold
Lowell Hurst
Elizabeth Bertrand
Michael Saint
Jean Brocklebank
Brian Peoples
iPad Mini 6th Generation
Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail
David Van Brink
Bud Colligan
Robert Meads
Johanna Lighthill
Barry Scott
Paul
Cami Corvin
Trink Praxel
John Will

27. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas provided a brief overview of the item to be discussed in closed session and stated that no reportable action is anticipated from closed session.

Commissioner Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to pause the current meeting and convene the special meeting, then resume the current meeting at the conclusion of the special meeting. The motion passed with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, DeSerpa, Koenig, Martinez, Quiroz-Carter, Leonor, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "aye."

The regular meeting paused at 12:14 p.m. and reconvened at 12:58 p.m.

The Commission entered closed session at 12:59 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

- 28. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation (Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4))
Initiation of Litigation – Two Cases

OPEN SESSION

- 29. Report on items discussed in closed session

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

- 30. Next meetings

The next Transportation Policy Workshop is scheduled for August 21, 2025 at 9:00a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Fourth Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076.

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 9:00a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Fourth Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076.

The meeting adjourned at 1:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

Attendees

Patrice Boyle	Matt Farrell
Java Junction Owner	Barry Scott
Bill Cox	Cami Corvin
Lani Faulkner	Ryan Sarnataro
Saladin Sale	Trink Praxel
Jack Brown	Janine Ramirez
Enda Brennan	Cindy Convisser
Elizabeth Bertrand	BobFi
Sally Arnold	Terre Thomas
Tina Andreatta	Will Mayall
Lowell Hurst	Steve Weisner
John Will	BVB
Brian Peoples	Elizabeth Madrigal
Jean Brocklebank	Jeannette Guire
David Van Brink	Bill Lewis

Miller Maxfield
Lori
Vkostca
Jean Brocklebank
Michael Lewis
David <3 Public Transit
Ramon Gomez
Blake Anderson
Nadene Thorne
Kevin Crossley
Isaac Jensen
Rosemary Sarka
Nasya
Jon Chown
Reed Geisreiter
C Schneider
James Weller
Nathan Nguyen
Rachel Moriconi
Holland
Buzz Anderson
Jacob Wysocki
Paul Guirguis
Jillian Ritter
Alissa Guther
Katherine Sinsky
Michael Burns
Frank Rimicci Jr
FORT Zoom Host
Johanna Lighthill
Elaine Rohlfes
Michael Pisano
E Malmborg
Bud Colligan
Theo Kell
Joni Steele
Sergio Berrueta
Ginny
Ramon Cancino
Melissa Shick
John Urgo
Jesus Bojorquez
Brian Peoples
Larry Pageler
Becky
Don

MHopper
James
Pearson Bradley
Greg Becker
Jim Tracey
LipkinB
Don Lauritson
Ben Vernazza
Nancy
Bill Spence
Tony
Kevin C Maguire
Steph from Santa Cruz
Justin
Susan True
Heather Adamson
Supervisor DeSerpa's Office
831-***-2915
Kevin Drabinsky
TJ Welch
Adrian Brandt
Heriberto Diarte
Dianne
Marty
Forrest Revere
Tony Nunez
Rob Tidmore
Jen Abrams
Tony
Douglas Underhill
Robert Means
Anderson
Member
Jim Tracey
Jesse Kathan
Justin Maffia
Jim Carpenter
Jennie Dusheck
Dough Hahn
James Falkenroth
Toby Goddard
Janneke Strause
Sean
Kara Dyble Heri
Marta Bulaich