



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, September 4, 2025
9:00 a.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 Capitola

City of Santa Cruz

City of Scotts Valley

City of Watsonville

County of Santa Cruz

County of Santa Cruz

County of Santa Cruz

County of Santa Cruz

County of Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District

Caltrans (ex-officio)

Gerry Jensen

Fred Keeley

Steve Clark

Eduardo Montesino

Jillian Ritter (Alt.)

Kimberly DeSerpa

Andy Schiffrin (Alt.)

Monica Martinez

Felipe Hernandez

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter (Remote)

Fabian Leonor

Rebecca Downing

Scott Eades (Remote)

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen

Amin AbuAmara

Nisha Singh

Luis Mendez

Grace Blakeslee

Sierra Topp

Rachel Moriconi

Bella Kressman

Yesenia Parra

Shannon Munz

Krista Corwin

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

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. She noted that Commissioner Eades would be remote as well.

There were no requests.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

A handout for item 27 was posted to the website.

4. Oral Communications

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples
Brett Garrett
Bill Beecher
Joe Jordan
Aurelio Gonzalez
Lowell Hurst
Antonio Rivas
Michael Saint
Jim Helmer
Bernie Gomez
Patrice Boyle

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a motion and Commissioner DeSerpa seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda with the added direction to item 9 that with future funding for the GO BIKE! Program, vouchers may be used to subsidize electric pedal assisted bikes that only up to 20 mph. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, Hernandez, DeSerpa, Martinez, Leonor, Downing, Quiroz-Carter and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Ritter voting "aye."

MINUTES

5. Approved draft minutes of the August 7, 2025 Regional Transportation Commission meeting and the August 7, 2025 Regional Transportation Commission special meeting
6. Accepted draft committee meeting minutes

- a. August 12, 2025 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
- b. August 21, 2025 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS

7. Accepted update on Highway 1 41st Avenue to Soquel Auxiliary Lanes and Bus-on-Shoulder Project Construction Support Cost Overruns Verification
8. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a contract with EcoSystems West for consultation with environmental resource agencies on behalf of the RTC to secure permits for maintenance and preservation activities on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (**Resolution 8-26**)
9. Accepted report on Santa Cruz County GO BIKE! Bicycle Incentive Program

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

10. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
11. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues
12. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and award a contract to Moss, Levy, & Hartzheim LLP for financial audit services (**Resolution 9-26**)
13. Approved programming State of Good Repair funds, amending the FY 2025-26 budget, and authorizing the Executive Director to execute documents as may be required (**Resolution 10-26**)

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

14. Accepted Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee report regarding Fiscal Year 2023/24 expenditures and audits
15. Approved the City of Santa Cruz's Pacific Beach Roundabout funding request for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds and approve the County of Santa Cruz's Highway 152/Holohan Road Intersection Project funding request for TDA funds (**Resolution 11-26 and Resolution 12-26**)

16. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and award a contract to Foster and Foster for Professional Actuarial Services (**Resolution 13-26**)
17. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend an agreement with Lotus Financial Solution, Inc. for Finance and Budget Special Advisor Support (**Resolution 14-26**)

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

18. Accepted monthly meeting schedule
19. Accepted letters from committees and staff to other agencies - *none*
20. Accepted correspondence log
21. Accepted information items - *none*

REGULAR AGENDA

22. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Alternate Jillian Ritter, first district alternate to the SCCRTC, introduced herself to the public.

Commissioner Clark reported on the meeting of the encroachments and easements along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ad-hoc subcommittee who met for the second time on August 25 to assess how to provide relief to the mobile home owners.

Commissioner DeSerpa reported on her attendance at the Coast Rail Coordination Council meeting in Los Angeles and her trip to San Bernardino to view the hydrogen train and maintenance facilities.

Commissioner Jensen appreciated staff for their support in postponing the Bay/Porter ramp closures in advance of the Capitola Art and Wine Festival.

Chair Montesino reported on his visit to his home town of Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico and observations of infrastructure and change.

Commissioner Downing highlighted a Week Without Driving and noted engagement opportunities across the county.

23. Proclamation for a Week Without Driving

Commissioner Downing made a motion and Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion to approve the resolution proclaiming September 29, 2025 through October 5, 2025 as Week Without Driving. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino,

Hernandez, DeSerpa, Martinez, Leonor, Downing, Quiroz-Carter and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Ritter voting “aye.”

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples
Brett Garrett
Aurelio Gonzalez
Michael Saint
Jim Helmer

24. Director’s Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen highlighted the Measure D Annual Report; Milestone 4 outreach for the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project (ZEPRT); QR code for the Community Traffic Safety Coalition annual report; GO BIKE! Program; August 15, 2025 Metrolink ZEMU Arrow tour attended by Commissioner DeSerpa and Associate Engineer Riley Gerbrandt; seeking volunteers for the vacancy on the Coast Rail Coordinating Council; welcomed Nisha Singh to the SCCRTC as Director of Internal Services; upcoming Transportation Demand Management Conference in Portland, Oregon will be attended by Transportation Planning Technician Sierra Topp.

Director Christensen also provided the following updates on the Murray Street Bridge Temporary Detour: the City of Santa Cruz rejected the rail shuttle option and that the California Transportation Commission declined RTC’s request for emergency funding.

Matt Starkey, Transportation Manager for the City of Santa Cruz responded to Commissioner questions regarding funding and timeline for the temporary detour at the Murray Street Bridge and provided details of the proposed timeline for construction of Segment 8 of the Coastal Rail Trail.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation to the voters for the passage of Measure D.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit
Marta Bulaich
Aurelio Gonzalez
Michael Saint
Kevin Maguire

25. Caltrans Report

Commissioner Scott Eades, Caltrans District 5 Director, provided updates on an unexpected closure on Highway 17 today due to an overturned truck; welcome newly appointed Caltrans Director Dina El-Tawansy; 2025 California Coast Classic Bike Tour coming through the community Saturday Sept 6 and Friday Sept 12; full overnight closure on Highway 1 tonight; re-opening of three of the four Park Avenue ramps; long term closures of Bay/Porter ramps postponed; emergency drainage and retaining wall project on the northbound lane of Highway 9 between San Lorenzo and Prospect; additional SHOPP-funded drainage and paving project on Highway 9 between Willowbrook Drive and the northern junction with Highway 236.

Received public comment from:

Aurelio Gonzalez

26. Highway 1 State Park to Bay/Porter Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder Project Amendment to Construction Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans, Amendment to Measure D Five-Year Program of Projects for Highway Corridors Category, Amendment to Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget, and Authorization to Secure Short Term Financing

Director of Capital Projects Amin AbuAmara and Assistant Transportation Engineer Brian Zamora provided the staff report. Caltrans Project Manager Madilyn Jacobsen and Caltrans District 5 Construction Office Chief Tim Lang delivered a presentation.

Caltrans staff responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: decision-making around simultaneous ramp closures in the workplan; cost-saving measures related to soundwalls and smoothness standards; cost of removal of man-made objects and trees; ramp inefficiencies; percentage of change order costs; changes to the Mar Vista Bridge pedestrian overcrossing design due to utility conflicts.

Executive Director Sarah Christensen responded to Commissioners' questions regarding contingency funding for the project and environmental mitigation of tree removal.

Director of Capital Projects AbuAmara clarified the costs of delay inefficiencies; provided background on the RTC's responsibility for shouldering cost overruns and explained the causes for shifting the footprint of the landing of the Mar Vista pedestrian overcrossing.

Commissioners discussed: need for more money to repair and restore surface streets and lack of sufficient funding sources; need for pedestrian

and bicyclist safety to be considered in the design of the intersection at Mar Vista and McGregor Drive.

Commissioner Montesino made a motion and Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Authorize the Executive Director to execute Amendment 2 to the construction Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans (Exhibit A to Attachment 1) for a total value not to exceed \$6.6 million for the construction capital component of the project;
2. Program an additional \$6.6 million of Measure D-Highway Corridor funds in fiscal year (FY) 2025-26;
3. Amend the FY 2025-26 budget accordingly; and
4. Authorize the Executive Director to initiate the process for financing needed to secure additional resources for the Measure D Highway category to cover Caltrans cost overruns and other construction costs, which includes securing and entering into an agreement for bond counsel services, and return to the RTC with a financing plan for consideration.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Keeley, DeSerpa, Clark, Martinez, Hernandez, Montesino, Downing, Leonor, Quiroz-Carter, Jensen, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Ritter voting "aye."

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Aurelio Gonzalez
Lani Faulkner
Kevin Maguire

Commissioner Downing departed the meeting at 11:09 a.m.

27. Measure D Active Transportation Expenditures and Financing Options

Supervising Transportation Planner Grace Blakeslee delivered a presentation on project status and funding needs of the segments of the Coastal Rail Trail and Melissa Shick of KNN Finance delivered a presentation on financing options.

Ms. Blakeslee responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: constrained Measure D Active Transportation revenues; projected shortfall; cash flow with and without borrowing; analysis assumptions; funding deadlines; funding received and sought for segments 8-11 from state/federal sources; California Transportation Commission's (CTC) Active Transportation grant cycle; approvals that may be required to change scope of project and funding for potential litigation.

Ms. Shick clarified that the shortfall is predicted for Measure D Active Transportation category only and this shortfall does not impact the other categories of Measure D.

Commissioners discussed: managing the risk of losing grant funding; the need to obtain additional construction funding for segments 8-11; completing the project prior to funding deadline; feasibility of the project; having a public discussion on railbanking; commitment to the Coastal Rail Trail; borrowing against Measure D to bring forward segments RTC is already committed to; concern for allocation of funds towards development of South County segments.

Commissioner Clark made a motion and Commissioner DeSerpa seconded the motion to:

1. Authorize staff to work with Coastal Rail Trail project sponsors and funding partners on strategies to deliver the Coastal Rail Trail segments 8-11 within available funding resources;
2. Bring cost and scope in line with available funds to complete the projects;
3. Work with municipal advisors KNN Public Finance to initiate the process for financing and return to the Commission with a financing plan for consideration to address both the previously programmed expenditures and a separate plan to address possible future expenditures; and,
4. Bring forth a discussion of railbanking including its applicability and feasibility for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin proposed a substitute motion and Commissioner Keeley seconded the substitute motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Accept information on project cost estimates of Coastal Rail Trail Projects under development;
2. Direct staff to work with Coastal Rail Trail project sponsors and funding partners on strategies to reduce costs and deliver Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8-11 projects, which could include modifications to the scope of the project;
3. Authorize the Executive Director to initiate the process for financing needed to secure additional resources for the Measure D Active Transportation category to cover approved project costs and programming, which includes securing and entering into an agreement for bond counsel services, and return to the Commission with a financing plan for consideration; and

4. Direct staff to bring forward a discussion of railbanking at the December meeting.
5. Direct staff to contact our elected state and federal representatives, as well as the California Transportation Commission, and appeal for the necessary funding to complete the construction as proposed of segments 8 through 11.

The substitute motion passed with Commissioners Keeley, Hernandez, Schiffrin, Martinez, Leonor, Quiroz-Carter and Montesino voting "aye," and Commissioners Jensen, Clark, DeSerpa, and Ritter voting "no."

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Lani Faulkner
Matt Farrell
Sally Arnold
Matt Starkey, City of Santa Cruz
Rob Tidmore, County of Santa Cruz
Lowell Hurst
Kevin Maguire
Saladin Sale
Jean Brocklebank
Cami Corvin

28. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas gave an overview of the two items on closed session and requested that the Labor Negotiation item be considered first. No reportable action was anticipated.

The Commission entered closed session at 12:41 pm and did not return to open session. The meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

CLOSED SESSION

29. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4)
Initiation of Litigation: Two Cases
30. Conference with Labor Negotiators
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6)
Agency Designated Representative: Sarah Christensen
Employee Organization: RAMM
31. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 2, 2025 at 9:00a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Fourth Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

Attendees

Jesus Bojorquez
Patrice Boyle
James
Nick Fabbicino
Joni Steele
Larry Pageler
Maureen McCarty
Brett Garrett
Douglas U
Kevin Maguire
Jim Helmer
Paul Guirguis
IC
Celeste Morales
Supervisor DeSerpa's Office
Amy Naranjo
Kate
AP
Brian
BobFi
Tommy Travers
Michael Saint
Nadene Thorne
Jim Tracey
Max Friedman
Rick H
Jeanette
Ramon Gomez
Heather Adamson
Nancy
Riley Gerbrandt
Bernie Gomez
Steve Mattax
Hatem Ahmed
Kate Elliott
Steve Wiesner
Bud Colligan

Cynthia Convisser
Morgane Staaake
Cami Corvin
Chris Johnson
Trink Praxel
Mickey Adams
Karina Moreno
Howard Cohen
Saladin Sale
Lori C
Mike Sherrod
Kayla Szubielski
Carpenter
Johanna Lighthill
Max Chun
PLN965
Victor Leong
Amanda Marino
Peter Haworth
Bernard
Jean Brocklebank
Michael Lewis
Alyson Tom
Nathan Nguyen
Ned McNamara
Michael McMurtry
Leslie
Deborah
Rebecca Hurley
Jeanette Bent
Elizabeth Mitchell
Marcus Pimentel
TJ Welch
Ilia Bulaich
Marta Bulaich
Lowll Hurst
Antonio Rivas