



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
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Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) December 4, 2025 Meeting Highlights

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026

The Commission voted unanimously to select Commissioner Eduardo Montesino as Chair for a second year and Commissioner Steve Clark as Vice Chair of the Commission for 2026.

Release of Draft 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Draft Environmental Impact Report

The Commission received information on the release of the Draft 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for public review. The RTP identifies transportation needs and priorities in Santa Cruz County over the next 25 years. It sets policy and a vision for the transportation system and estimates the amount of funding that will be available for planned transportation projects. The plan is an essential first step in securing funding from federal, state, and local sources. The Draft 2050 RTP will be available for review on Dec. 15, 2025 at www.sccrtc.org/2050rtp. Comments can be submitted through Jan. 30, 2026, by email to info@sccrtc.org or at a public hearing at the Jan. 15, 2026, RTC meeting.

Santa Cruz County Transportation Equity Action Plan

The Commission adopted the [Santa Cruz County Transportation Equity Action Plan](#). The Plan documents transportation disparities in the county, updates the regional definition of "Disadvantaged Communities" or "Equity Priority Communities" used to identify communities and individuals that have faced greater barriers due to historic or systemic inequities or racism, identifies transportation priorities and engagement strategies that can reduce disparities, and includes an assessment of RTC policies, procedures and practices.

Amendments to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 RTC Budget & Work Program and Measure D Budget

The Commission approved amending the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 RTC Budget & Work Program and Measure D budget to incorporate information from prior year-end balances, new projects or funds, updated estimates, and other necessary changes for regional programming and pass-through revenues, operating, and capital. Proposed budget changes to the RTC Budget and Overall Work Program include updates to specific line items including staffing resources for staffing of two new positions, administration increases due to salary, overhead and legal costs, and planning program budget for planning efforts. The proposed FY 2025-26 budget amendment for Measure D includes proposed amendments to programming for projects and programs that receive Measure D funds, including San Lorenzo/Highway 9, Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing, Rail, Active Transportation/Coastal Rail Trail and Highway.

Railbanking Overview

The Commission received an [informational overview of railbanking](#) as it relates to the RTC-owned Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL). Railbanking is the process of preserving a rail corridor for future rail use while removing freight service obligations. Staff provided a background of the SCBRL ownership and preservation strategy, an overview of the railbanking process, and how the railbanking process could apply to the SCBRL.

Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Final Project Concept Report

The Commission received a presentation on the [Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail \(ZEPRT\) Final Project Concept](#), and accepted the [Final Project Concept Report](#). The report presents the project concept developed for the proposed implementation of a new daily passenger rail service and multi-use trail operating on the RTC-owned Branch Line corridor. The report also details the development and related background, analysis, assumptions, findings, and potential next steps. The next phase of the ZEPRT Project would be to complete preliminary engineering and environmental analysis. However, there is a \$14 to \$15 million funding gap for this work, and the work is on hold until additional funds are secured. The Commission also approved a Resolution of Support for future passenger rail and continued partnership with the Caltrans Division of Rail on Corridor Identification and Development, which aligns with the 2024 State Rail Plan.

Additionally, the Commission voted in favor of developing the Interim Trail (trail in place of existing tracks) for Coastal Rail Trail Segments 9-11 between the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz and State Park Drive in Aptos on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line while continuing long-term planning for future passenger rail on the line. This change is necessitated to reduce project costs and save significant grant funding for the Coastal Rail Trail, which otherwise would be eliminated or substantially reduced. The Commission directed staff to return within two months with a proposal to allow the construction of the Interim Trail without the need for adverse abandonment of the freight easement or railbanking. Staff were also directed to prepare the final design for and take any other actions needed to implement the Interim Trail on Coastal Rail Trail Projects as expeditiously as possible, and additionally requested that staff investigate a design alternative that does not require the removal of the tracks. Staff were also directed to pursue options to retrofit the Capitola Trestle for bicycle and pedestrian use either as part of the project already under development or as a separate future project.

Upcoming RTC and Committee Meetings

[Regional Transportation Commission Meeting](#)

Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

[Bicycle Advisory Committee](#)

Monday, December 8, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

[Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee](#)

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

[Interagency Technical Advisory Committee](#)

Thursday, December 18, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

RTC and committee meetings are held in person. Non-voting members of the

Commission and its committees, as well as members of the public and staff, will have the option to participate in person or remotely, provided equipment is available at the meeting location to allow remote participation. If there are technical difficulties during a meeting that prevent remote participation, the meeting will continue. Please check the RTC website [<https://sccrtc.org/meetings/calendar/>] or call 460-3200 to confirm meeting and video conference information for future meetings. Agendas are posted to the website at least 3 days before the meeting and will also include attendance information. Meetings may be canceled if there are no action items to be considered by the committee.

The RTC is committed to its compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please contact the RTC at least 3 days in advance of a meeting if special accommodations are needed. If any document, webpage, meeting, or recording is inaccessible to you, kindly notify us at info@sccrtc.org or by calling 831-460-3200.

Public input on transportation issues is welcomed and encouraged. For more information, visit the SCCRTC website at www.sccrtc.org or call 460-3200. Some Regional Transportation Commission meetings are televised countywide by Community TV of Santa Cruz. Consult www.communitytv.org or call 831-425-8848 for schedule and station information.