



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, November 6, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

In-Person Meeting

Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, 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 9:02 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

Manu Koenig

Kimberly DeSarpa

Andy Schiffrin (Alt.)

Monica Martinez

Felipe Hernandez

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter (Remote)

Fabian Leonor

Rebecca Downing (Remote)

Darron Hill

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen

Amin AbuAmara

Grace Blakeslee

Krista Corwin

Luis Mendez

Nisha Singh

Rachel Moriconi

Riley Gerbrandt (Remote)

Shannon Munz

Yesenia Parra

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 participating remotely under the regular Brown Act with the remote location address noted on the agenda. Commissioner Downing communicated that she would be participating remotely with just cause for caregiving responsibilities.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra noted that replacement pages for items 6c, 10, and 19, an attachment for item 18, and handouts for items 14, 18, 19, 20, and 21 were posted to the website.

4. Oral Communications

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Jesus Bojorquez, Community Bridges
Lowell Hurst
David Dean
Brett Garrett
Michael Saint

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Commissioner Martinez thanked Caltrans for the planning grant to produce the Rural Highways Safety Plan, RTC staff for their work to produce the plan, and the Technical Advisory Committee and community members for their input on the plan. She encouraged continued feedback by the November 21st deadline and noted an opportunity to comment at the November 13th *State of the Roads* Town Hall. She highlighted safety concerns on Highway 9 in Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, and near Waterman Gap, and looks forward to the final plan next year.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Matt Farrell, Bicycle Advisory Committee member

MINUTES

5. Approved draft minutes of the October 2 and October 16, 2025 Regional Transportation Commission meeting and special meeting
6. Accepted draft committee meeting minutes
 - a. October 9, 2025 Budget & Administration/Personnel Committee
 - b. October 13, 2025 Bicycle Advisory Committee
 - c. October 14, 2025 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
 - d. October 16, 2025 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS

7. Accepted updated Guide for Specialized Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities in Santa Cruz County
8. Accepted Rural Highways Safety Plan Milestone 2: Transportation Strategy Development
9. Accepted bids and authorized the Executive Director to enter into a construction contract for the Capitola Bluff Fencing Project (**Resolution 21-26**)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

No consent items

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

No consent items

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

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

REGULAR AGENDA

14. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Keeley provided an oral report on the outcome of the meetings between California Transportation Commission (CTC) Chair and senior staff regarding the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8 through 11 projects.

Commissioners discussed: benefits of the CTC Active Transportation grant unrelated to rail; feasibility of the project through major scope change.

Chair Montesino reported on the Board Development Retreat that was held on October 16, 2025.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Jessica Evans
Trink Praxel
Barry Scott
David Van Brink
Saladin Sale

15. Nomination of Committee to Recommend a 2026 Chair and Vice-Chair

Eduardo Montesino requested Commissioners send him an email to communicate their interest in serving on the nominating committee for the 2026 RTC Chair and Vice-Chair.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

16. Director's Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen delivered updates on the release of the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project Final Concept Report; highlighted the Rural Highways Safety Plan Milestone 2; introduced the new Supervising Transportation Planner Marshall Ballard; and provided information on the Mar Vista Pedestrian Overcrossing construction currently underway.

Ms. Christensen responded to a Commissioner's question regarding the completion date of the Capitola Avenue Bridge construction.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Jessica Evans

17. Caltrans Report

Caltrans Ex-Officio Darron Hill reminded the Commission about the November 21, 2025, deadline for applications to the Caltrans Sustainable

Planning Grant; update on replacing and repairing the sidewalk on Struve Slough.

Commissioners discussed: appreciation for the work on Struve Slough to benefit the pedestrian community in Watsonville; and trash cleanup on Highway 1 in the active construction zones.

Commissioner Rebecca Downing announced that she will be recusing herself due to a conflict of interest and departed the meeting. Commissioner Jensen recused himself due to a conflict of interest and stepped away from the dais.

18. PUBLIC HEARING: Adoption of the Consolidated Grants Program and Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Senior Transportation Planner Rachel Morconi delivered the staff report and gave a presentation and responded to Commissioners' questions regarding funding recommendations for the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's (METRO) HASTUS project; eligibility for State Transit Assistance (STA) funding; scoring criteria; geographic equity & metrics for projects in rural/unincorporated areas; and acceptability of amendments to projects at a later date.

Commissioner Keeley delivered a letter from several Commissioners and provided an overview of their recommendations for project allocations and rationales.

The public hearing opened at 10:35 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Matt Farrell

Lani Faulkner

Jessica Evans

Steve Johnson, Bike Santa Cruz County

Murray Fontes, Watsonville Public Works & Utilities

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Paula Bradley

Gina Cole

Nadia Noriega

Trink Praxel

Antonio Rivas

Lowell Hurst

Brett Garrett, Santa Cruz PRT

Michael Saint, Santa Cruz PRT

David Dean

Bernie Gomez

Jean Brocklebank

Jim Helmer
 Piet Canin, Ecology Action
 Owner

The public hearing closed at 10:53 a.m.

Commissioners discussed: challenges with funding all projects and the various project needs;; worthy needs and limited resources; and appreciation for staff.

Commissioner Keeley moved and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to approve staff and Commissioners’ recommendations to adopt **Resolution 22-26**

- a. Adopting the 2025 Consolidated Grants program and 2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for Santa Cruz County, approving projects to receive Santa Cruz County’s regional shares of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Surface Transportation Block Grant/Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (STBG/RSTPX), SB1 Local Partnership Program (LPP), Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) and State Transit Assistance funds, as shown below and to be included in Exhibit A of Attachment 1;

Applicant	Project	Approved
Capitola	Bay Avenue Corridor – Final Design	\$500,000
Scotts Valley Granite Creek Overcrossing \$500,000 Watsonville	Freedom Blvd Road Rehab & Traffic Calming	\$1,800,000
Watsonville	Clifford Ave Road Rehab and Traffic Calming	\$850,000
Watsonville	Pennsylvania Dr	\$560,000
County	Soquel Dr Multimodal Project	\$3,800,000
County	Interlaken Routes Resurfacing Phase 1	\$436,000
County	Emergency Routes Resurfacing Phase 2	\$2,566,000
Ecology Action	Bike Safe/Walk Safe	\$100,000
SC METRO	90X Operations/BOS Service	\$650,000
SC METRO	ParaCruz Vans	\$288,000
SC METRO	Beach St Parking Lot	\$150,000
SC METRO	HASTUS 2026 Upgrade	\$600,000
SCCRTC	Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8-11 Preconstruction	\$2,000,000
SCCRTC	STIP Planning, Programming, & Monitoring	\$191,000

- b. Designating \$1 million of 2028 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) shares for the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project (ZEPRT);
- c. Authorizing staff to work with projects sponsors to determine the most appropriate funding source to designate to approved projects, to submit and execute documents required by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and/or Caltrans which may be necessary to obligate or otherwise secure funds programmed by the RTC and confirming that STIP funding shall not be used to “back-fill” other non-STIP funds previously committed to a project;
- d. Requiring project sponsors to comply with all conditions and requirements set forth by applicable state and/or federal statutes, regulations, procedures, and guidelines;
- e. Amending the RTC Budget and Work Program to include funds programmed that flow through or to the RTC;
- f. Requesting that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) incorporate project funding and amendments into the 2026 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), as applicable;
- g. Stating the RTC’s requirements that:
 - a. Any project cost savings shall be made available for programming in future competitive grant cycles;
 - b. Project sponsors shall obtain RTC concurrence in allocation, extension, amendment, or other requests for projects prior to submittal of such requests to Caltrans or the CTC. Concurrences will generally be handled administratively by RTC staff, though major project scope, funding, or other changes shall be subject to RTC board action; and
 - c. Prior to final design, projects with bicycle, pedestrian, and/or transit components shall undergo review by the RTC’s Bicycle Committee and/or Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&DTAC) and project sponsors shall incorporate Complete Streets components where feasible and/or appropriate

Commissioner Clark moved a friendly amendment to allocate the remaining \$100,000 to the City of Capitola for their Complete Streets Sidewalk Infill project. The maker and seconder of the motion accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioners discussed: comments by the staff of the City of Watsonville; art and science of grant fund allocations; appreciation for collaboration of

Commissioners; redirection of funds going to the City of Watsonville; significance of Interlaken Routes project; support for rail/trail projects; upcoming decision about rail and trail project delivery; encouragement to work with local jurisdictions to achieve balance.

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas clarified for the record that the motion would revise the numbers in the exhibit to the resolution to reflect Commissioner Keeley's motion and modified by the friendly amendment from Commissioner Clark and that Section 2 of the resolution would reference \$1 million in future STIP funds for the ZEPRT project. Commissioner Keeley confirmed that the motion shall reflect the advice of legal counsel. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Keeley, Clark, Montesino, Hernandez, DeSerpa, Koenig, Martinez, Quiroz-Carter, Leonor, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "aye."

19. PUBLIC HEARING: Measure D: Five-Year Programs of Projects for Regional Projects and Lift Line

Commissioner Jensen rejoined the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Supervising Transportation Planner Grace Blakeslee delivered the staff report, gave a presentation, and responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: preserving future programming for segments 13-19 in Watsonville.

Rob Tidmore, Principal Planner for the County of Santa Cruz responded to Commissioners' questions about the difference in the cost estimates for the final design of the interim trail and the ultimate trail in segments 10 & 11; and escalation of costs provided in the tables for interim and ultimate trail configurations.

Murray Fontes, Assistant Public Works Director for the City of Watsonville responded to a Commissioner's question regarding programming funds for segments of the rail trail in and around Watsonville, and confirmed Watsonville's preparedness to pursue an Active Transportation grant for project development, as informed by the design proposed in the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Concept Report.

Executive Director Christensen responded to the discussion about the City of Watsonville with more information about the Commission's approach to funding construction of the City of Watsonville's rail trail segments.

Commissioners discussed: including additional funding for South County segments in the five-year plan in subsequent years; demonstrating the Commission's commitment to funding projects in South County; finishing preconstruction now so that projects can be shovel-ready to compete for

grants; urgency of the residents of Watsonville's request for trail construction.

The public hearing opened at 11:34 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Matt Starkey, City of Santa Cruz
Lani Faulkner
Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail
Paula Bradley
Jessica Evans
Lowell Hurst
Michael Saint
David Van Brink
Brett Garrett
Owner
Ray Cancino
John Will
Barry Scott

Commissioner Keeley made a motion and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendations to:

1. Adopt Resolution 23-26

- a. Approving the Fiscal Years (FY) 2025/26-2029/30 Measure D five-year programs of projects (5-Year Plans) for regional investment categories and projects: Highway Corridors, Active Transportation, Rail Corridor, the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing and the San Lorenzo Valley-Highway 9 Corridor Improvements and Community Bridges Lift Line; and
 - b. Amending the RTC budget and work program to incorporate the funds programmed with this resolution and corresponding expenditures; and
2. Receive information regarding cost estimates to complete final design of the Coastal Rail Trail Segments 8-11 in the Ultimate Trail Configuration and in the Interim Trail Configuration;

with the following modifications:

1. Utilize \$679,000 of funds from the Measure D SLV-Highway 9 Corridor 5-year plans to the Felton/San Lorenzo Valley Schools Complete Street Enhancements in the year of construction.
2. Program \$2,730,000 additional funds from Active Transportation/MBSST to Segments 8 & 9 in FY 25/26
3. Advance \$3,600,000 of FY 27/28 funds from Active Transportation/MBSST to Segments 10 & 11 to FY 25/26

4. Commit to fully funding Segments 8 & 9 with state, federal, and local funding sources and direct staff to work with City and County project sponsors on resolving the funding challenges to meet requirements of the Active Transportation Grant

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin made a friendly amendment to the motion to add \$10 million of the remaining Active Transportation Funds for the South County Projects. The maker and seconder of the motion accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioners discussed allocating funds for a local share makes future South County Active Transportation grants more competitive; balance of funds between North and South County; goals of Measure D; making good on the promises of Measure D; and advocacy for future funding for San Lorenzo Valley projects.

Ms. Blakeslee responded to a Commissioner's question about the difference between the terminology "program" and "utilize."

Commissioner Leonor made a substitute motion to program \$30 million of the remaining Active Transportation Funds for Coastal Rail Trail projects in and around Watsonville. The motion died for lack of a second.

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

20. Highway 1 Freedom Blvd to State Park Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder, and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project – Construction Administration Strategy Options

Director of Capital Projects Amin AbuAmara delivered the staff report, gave a presentation, and responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: sufficient funding for the options presented; staffing levels at Caltrans and outsourcing work to consultants; impacts of the two strategies on costs and project delivery; and Caltrans' portion of the project includes both the rail bridges and the trail bridges.

Executive Director Sarah Christensen provided more information about scaling up the agency to deliver projects of this size and responded to a Commissioner's questions about replacement of rail bridges and trail bridges included in the project scope.

Commissioners discussed: implications of hybridization of the project; strategic conversation about the Commission's role in delivering and

planning regional transportation projects; and implications of scaling up the Commission's staffing.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Lani Faulkner

Grace Blakeslee, Community of RTC Employees

Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail

Michael Saint,

Brett Garrett

Jack Brown

Kevin Maguire

Commissioner Hernandez stepped away from the dais at 12:57 p.m.

Commissioner Montesino made a motion and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to implement Strategy 1, Caltrans/RTC Hybrid Implementation, with Caltrans being the Implementing Agency for the construction of Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder portion of the Project between Freedom Blvd Ave to State Park Drive (including the two pedestrian overcrossings and the two rail bridges), and the RTC being the implementing agency for the construction of the Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 portion of the project.

The motion passed with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, DeSerpa, Koenig, Martinez, Quiroz-Carter, Leonor, and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin voting "aye,"

Chair Montesino announced that the Commission would take a 10-minute recess before hearing the next item.

The Commission returned to the meeting at 1:19 p.m.

21. Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Right of Entry Agreement with the City of Santa Cruz for the Murray Street Bridge Project and Temporary Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail

Executive Director Sarah Christensen delivered the staff report and gave a presentation on behalf of Real Property Specialist Bella Kressman.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Ms. Christensen elaborated on Progressive Rail's concerns and follow-up regarding insurance coverage and right-of entry agreements; removing the temporary trail after completion of the Murray Street Bridge retrofit project;

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that the Commission may have liability in case of a claim and explained what actions Progressive Rail may take if the Commission proceeds with its plans to allow the rail bridge to be converted to a temporary bike and pedestrian path; staff's intention to work with Progressive Rail to come to concurrence about use of the bridge.

In response to a Commissioner's question, Nathan Nguyen, Public Works Director for the City of Santa Cruz described design options and the decision-making process.

Received public comment from:

Jessical Evans

Laurie Negro, Betty Burgers

Lani Faulkner

Paula Bradley

Saladin Sale

David Van Brink

Kevin Maguire

Patrice Boyle, La Posta

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

David Dean

Jack Brown

Commissioners discussed: legal commitment to restore rail bridge to its current condition.

Commissioner Keeley made a motion and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve **Resolution 24-26** authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a Right-of-Entry Agreement with the City of Santa Cruz for a temporary pedestrian and bicycle trail between Seabright Avenue and 7th Avenue, and to use adjacent areas of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor for construction staging to support the Murray Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit and Barrier Replacement Project.

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

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

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas provided an overview of the two items to be discussed in closed session, stating that there may be reportable action.

CLOSED SESSION

23. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4))
Initiation of Litigation: Two Cases
24. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2))
Significant Exposure to Litigation: Two Cases

OPEN SESSION

25. Report on items discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas reported that for the first item Initiation of Litigation there was no reportable action. For the second item Exposure to Litigation, on a unanimous vote, the Commission authorized staff and the Committee to work with the interested parties on potential resolution to avoid litigation.

26. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 4, 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

1831****319

1831****701

Aaron Henkel

alyson

Amer Bata - AECOM

Antonio Rivas

AP

Barry Scott

Bernie Gomez

Bhupendra Patel

BobFi

bradleyps

Brett Garrett

Brian

Brian Peoples

Bud Colligan

C. Blair

Casey Carlson

Cook Construction

Courtney

Courtney Lindberg - Watsonville

David  Public Transit

David Dean

David Morris

David Silberberger - District 5

Don

Doug Underhill

Edward McNamara

Erin Malsbury
Fernanda D. Pini
Frank Rimicci Jr.
Gina Cole
Gregory Becker
Guest Guest
Hollie (Juniper)
Howard Cohen
iPhone
Ivan Messina
Jack Brown
James Weller
James's iPad (4)
Jason Wilkinson - Caltrans D5
Jean Brocklebank & Michael Lewis
Jenz iPhone (3)
Jessica Kahn - City of Capitola
Jeanette Guire
Jillian
Jillian Ritter - District 1
Jim Helmer
Jim MacKenzie
Joanna Edmonds
Johanna Lighthill
John
John Cutler
John Urgo, Santa Cruz METRO
John Will
Joni Steele
Justin Blair
Justin Davilla
Karina Aragon
Karina Moreno
Kate Elliott
Kayla Szubielski
Keith Wood
Kevin Crossley
Kevin Maguire
KMSzubielski
Kris Reyes
Krista Bjelde
Lana Martinez Davis
Larry Pageler
Marc B. Yellin MD
Mark McLaren
Martin - Caltrans

Mary Edmund
Member
Michael N. Conneran
Michael Pisano
Michael Zeller
Micheal Saint
Nadene Thorne
Name (original name)
Nancy
Nancy Yellin
nasya
Nathan Nguyen
Nick Fabbricino
oriana nolan
owner
patri
Paul Guirguis, Caltrans
Paul Hierling, AMBAG
pcanin
Pete Rasmussen
Peter Haworth
prc316
prc316
Raymon Cancino
Rebecca Downing
Rebecca Hurley
Rebecca Moore
Regina Kelbert
Ricardo Valdes
Rick H
Ricky Longinotti
Ronald L Perrigo Jr
s112837
Sakura Cannestra
Six
Steve Wiesner
Teresa Buika
Teresa's iPhone
Tiffany Mendoza
Tim Brattan
Tim Campbell
Tim's iPhone
Tony Nunez
William Cook
William Kelley