



**Santa Cruz County  
Regional Transportation Commission**

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, December 4, 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 9:00 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.)

Larry Pageler (Alt.)

Lowell Hurst (Alt.)

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter (Remote)

Fabian Leonor

Donna Lind (Alt.)

Kelly McClendon (Remote)

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen

Amin AbuAmara

Grace Blakeslee

Italo Jimenez

Krista Corwin

Luis Mendez

Nisha Singh

Riley Gerbrandt

Shannon Munz

Yesenia Parra

Steven Mattas (RTC Counsel)

2. Considered AB 2449 Just Cause and Emergency Circumstances Requests
3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra noted that handouts for items 25 and 26 and replacement page for item 5 and 26 were posted to the website.

4. Oral Communications

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

Saladin Sale

Brett Garrett, Santa Cruz PRT

Fred Geiger, Santa Cruz PRT

Mark Lee, Santa Cruz PRT

Joe Jordan

Ron Swenson

Michael Saint, Santa Cruz PRT

Bob Hickman

Joe Rinquist

Commissioners Koenig, DeSerpa and Commissioner Alternate Hurst arrived to the meeting at 9:19 a.m.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Jensen communicated in regards to item 5 on the consent agenda that he had recused himself from voting on Resolution 22-26, and Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra confirmed that the minutes were corrected.

Commissioner Koenig made a motion and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Leonor, Quiroz-Carter, Koenig, DeSerpa, Montesino, Clark, Keeley, Jensen, and Commissioner Alternates Lind, Pageler, Schiffrin and Hurst voting "aye."

### **MINUTES**

5. Approved draft minutes of the November 6, 2025 Regional Transportation Commission meeting

6. Accepted draft committee meeting minutes
  - a. October 15, 2025 Safe on 17 Taskforce

## **POLICY ITEMS**

*No consent items*

## **PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS**

7. Accepted Release of the Draft 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
8. Adopted the Santa Cruz County Transportation Equity Action Plan
9. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend a Professional Engineering Services Agreement with Mark Thomas for the Highway 1 Freedom Blvd to State Park Drive Auxiliary Lanes and Bus on Shoulder, and Coastal Rail Trail Segment 12 Project (**Resolution 25-26**)
10. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with County of Santa Cruz Community Development and Infrastructure Sanitation Division for the Davenport lift station (**Resolution 26-26**)
11. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and execute amendments to the Cooperative Agreements with Caltrans for the Highway 1 41st/Soquel and Bay-Porter/State Park Final Design and Right of Way Components (**Resolution 27-26**)

## **BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS**

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

## **ADMINISTRATION ITEMS**

14. Accepted Fiscal Years (FY) 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 Triennial Performance Audits
15. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to amend the agreement with Redwood Public Law for legal services (**Resolution 28-26**)

## **INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS**

16. Accepted monthly meeting schedule

17. Accepted correspondence log
18. Accepted letters from committees and staff to other agencies
19. Accepted information items - *none*

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

#### 20. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Clark reported on his participation at the 2026 Focus on the Future conference (November 9-11, 2025) along with Chair Montesino, Executive Director Christensen, Director of Capital Projects Amin AbuAmara, Director of Internal Services Nisha Singh, and Supervising Transportation Planner Grace Blakeslee. He expressed appreciation to staff for attending and presenting and added that RTC is well-recognized and respected statewide, and our team exemplified the agency's professionalism and leadership.

#### 21. Recommendation for Chair and Vice-Chair for 2026

Chair Montesino reported that the RTC Chair nominating committee, was comprised of Commissioners Keeley, Jensen, Downing, and Koenig.

Commissioner Koenig reported that the ad hoc committee recommends Eduardo Montesino to serve another year as Chair in 2026 and Steve Clark to serve as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Keeley seconded the nominations.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Leonor, Quiroz-Carter, Koenig, DeSerpa, Montesino, Clark, Keeley, Jensen, and Commissioner Alternates Lind, Pageler, Schiffrin, and Hurst voting "aye."

#### Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now

#### 22. Director's Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen delivered updates on the Notice of Availability of the Draft 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); the three projects proposed for Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant funding: (1) the Watsonville Area Trucking Efficiency and Multimodal Enhancement Study, (2) Santa Cruz Multimodal Corridor Plan, and (3) Planning for Climate Resiliency of the South County Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line; release of the Transportation Equity Action Plan; North Coast Transportation Demand Management Project Outreach; New Brighton Railroad Bridge Storm Damage Repair; review of the Commission's accomplishments in 2025 and announced that the RTC office will be closed to the public for the holidays December 24-Jan 1 but that staff would be

reachable by telephone and email.

Commissioners discussed: impact of the Commission's accomplishments and gratitude to staff.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now  
John Will  
David Dean

23. Caltrans Report

Caltrans Ex-Officio Kelly McClendon, Senior Planner from District 5, delivered comments on Caltrans Sustainable Planning Grant program, which closed in late November and thanked Commissioner Martinez for hosting a recent townhall meeting in San Lorenzo Valley.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now  
Jack Brown  
Joe  
Sean

At the request of the Chair, Director of Capital Projects Amin AbuAmara responded to a concern raised by a member of the public regarding bicycle safety near the Mar Vista Overcrossing.

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

Italo Jimenez, Finance and Budget Officer, delivered the staff report.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin expressed his sincere appreciation to the staff for taking the time to meet and discuss concerns regarding the Reserve Fund, and noted that all of his questions were thoroughly addressed. Commissioner Keeley motioned and Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Leonor, Quiroz-Carter, Koenig, DeSerpa, Montesino, Clark, Keeley, Jensen, and Commissioner Alternates Lind, Pageler, Schiffrin and Hurst voting "aye."

**Resolution 29-26:**

1. Amending the FY 2025-26 Budget and Work Program for the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and FY2025-26 Budget for Measure D and

2. Authorizing the Executive Director to make amendments and modifications to the RTC's FY 2025-26 Overall Work Program as required by Caltrans to ensure receipt of grant funds and ensure the completion of work products as long as such amendments and modifications are consistent with the approved budget.

Received public comment from:

Mark Lee

## 25. Railbanking Overview

Executive Director Sarah Christensen presented the staff report and delivered a presentation on behalf of Real Property Specialist Bella Kressman. This presentation was prepared in response to a request from the Commission in September to provide an informational item at the December meeting. The purpose was to discuss rail banking and educate both the Commission and the public on what rail banking entails.

Commissioners discussed: rail banking process, abandonment, common carrier, and the ACL agreement.

Commissioner Alternate Schiffrin motioned and Commissioner Koenig seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to accept the informational overview of railbanking as it relates to the RTC-owned Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL).

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

Received public comment from:

Fred Geiger, Santa Cruz PRT

Jim Weller

Ryan Sarnataro

Dean Cutter

Jessica Evans

Charles Hicks

Buzz Anderson

Brett Garrett

Matt Farrell, Friends of the Rail and Trail

Jack Brown

Jessie Jarvie

Lani Faulkner

Saladin Sale

Elizabeth Malamorg

Mark Lee  
Paula Bradley  
Rosemary Sarka  
Tina Andreatta  
Trink Praxel  
Becky Steinbruner  
Brian Peoples, Trail Now  
Mary Alsip  
Annalyn Rutherford  
Anonymous Speaker  
Elizabeth Bertrand  
Gina Cole  
Eva Brunner  
Anonymous Speaker  
Sally Arnold  
Elia Bulaich  
Barry Scott  
David Dean  
Michael Saint  
Bob Hickman  
Rafa Sonnenfeld  
Jim MacKenzie  
David Date  
Sean  
Kevin Maguire  
Patrick Mottram  
Joe  
Jean Brocklebank  
Jevan Gray  
Susan Kaufman  
Tim Brattan  
John Will  
Tom Brady  
James Polizzi  
Corrina McFarlane

The Commission took a break at 11:43 a.m. and returned at 12:00 p.m.

26. Accept Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Final Project Concept Report

Riley Gerbrandt, Associate Transportation Engineer, delivered the staff report and consultant Marc McLaren of HDR Engineering provided a presentation.

Mr. Gerbrandt and Executive Director Sarah Christensen responded to Commissioners' questions regarding: the condition of the rail line upon purchase and its condition today; responsibility for maintenance of the rail line; cost estimates for elevated/at-grade service at the Boardwalk; challenges at Walker Street in Watsonville; likelihood of project acceptance by the California Coastal Commission; funding strategies for capital costs and operational costs; peer review of the cost analysis; challenges of the Beach Flats area and funding challenges.

Marc McLaren responded to a Commissioner's question regarding the role of fare revenue in operational costs.

Commissioner Koenig made a motion and Commissioner Keeley seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Receive a presentation on the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail (ZEPRT) Final Project Concept, and
2. Approve the resolution to
  - a. Accept the Final Project Concept Report,
  - b. Direct staff to continue pursuing eligible state and federal funding to complete the preliminary engineering and environmental review for the ZEPRT Project, and
  - c. Direct staff to continue coordinating with state and federal partners to pursue passenger rail along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

And the following recommendations:

1. Accept the ZEPRT Report and modify section 1 of the resolution to change the word "adopted" to "accepted."
2. Agree to use future STIP funding allocated at the November 2025 meeting to the ZEPRT EIR for a combined rail and trail project for the Santa Cruz Branch Line and direct staff to seek full funding for this project and return for approval of the RTC prior to any funding application submittal for the rail program.
3. Approve a Resolution of Support for Future Rail and continued partnership with the Caltrans Division of Rail on Corridor Identification and Development.
4. Direct 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.
5. Direct Staff to bring back to the Commission for consideration a final design for and take any other actions to implement the Interim Trail on Segments 9-11 as expeditiously as possible. Pause project activities on the Ultimate Trail segments 9-11, and investigate where the tracks can be preserved next to the trail.



6. Direct Staff to work with project sponsors to advance construction of Segment 8 Ultimate Trail.
7. Direct Staff to bring back to the Commission for consideration revised Rail Trail Cooperative Agreements with the City and County of Santa Cruz to implement the above direction.

And additional friendly amendments to:

8. Invite the Chief of Caltrans Division of Rail to present information to the RTC on the Federal Corridor ID Program and the service development plan at the January meeting if feasible, or as soon as possible; and
9. Direct staff to return to the RTC with designs for interim trail that include an alternative that does not require removal or complete covering of the tracks no later than the February 2026 meeting, if feasible.
10. Direct staff to pursue and bring back to commission options for retrofitting the historic Capitola trestle for interim bicycle and pedestrian use as quickly as possible either as part of the Coastal Rail Trail Segment 11 project or a separate project with the intent to move forward with such a project over the Capitola trestle when feasible.

The motion passed on a 7-5 vote with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, DeSerpa, Koenig, and Commissioner Alternate Lind voting "aye," and Commissioners Quiroz-Carter, Leonor and Commissioner Alternates Hurst, Schiffrin, and Pageler voting "no."

Received public comment from:

Saladin Sale  
Elizabeth Bertrand  
Debbie Hale  
Brian Peoples  
Fred Geiger  
Brett Garrett  
Stephanie Auld, IHSS Advisory Commission  
Lani Faulkner  
Matt Farrell  
Mark Lee  
David Van Brink  
Paula Bradley  
Ryan Sarnataro  
Trink Praxel  
Rosemary Sarka  
Jack Brown  
Jim Weller  
Tina Andreatta

Jessica Evans  
Becky Steinbruner  
Elizabeth Malamorg  
Eva Brunner  
Sally Arnold  
Anonymous Speaker  
Barry Scott  
Elia Bulaich  
Sean  
Rafa Sonnenfeld  
Micheal Saint  
Kevin C Maguire  
David Dean  
Jim  
Jean Brocklebank  
James Polizzi  
Bob Hickman  
David Date  
Tom Brady  
Johanna Lighthill  
Dianne D.  
Piet Canin, Ecology Action  
Steve Graff  
Leslie Neilsen  
Jevan Gray

27. Review of items to be discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas provided an overview of the item to be discussed in closed session, stating that there will be no reportable action.

Received public comment from:  
Jessica Evans

The Commission entered closed session at 2:41 p.m.

Commissioner Leonor and Commissioner Alternate Lind departed the meeting at 2:41 p.m.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

28. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation  
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2))  
Significant Exposure to Litigation: Two Cases

## **OPEN SESSION**

29. Report on items discussed in closed session

The Commission returned from closed session at 3:00 p.m. There was no reportable action from closed session. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

30. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 6:00p.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Fourth Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

### **Attendees**

Brian Peoples, Trail Now  
Saladin Sale  
Brett Garrett, Santa Cruz PRT  
Fred Geiger, Santa Cruz PRT  
Mark Lee, Santa Cruz PRT  
Joe Jordan  
Ron Swenson  
Michael Saint, Santa Cruz PRT  
Joe Rinquist  
John Will  
David Dean  
Fred Geiger, Santa Cruz PRT  
Jim Weller  
Ryan Sarnataro  
Dean Cutter  
Jessica Evans  
Charles Hicks  
Buzz Anderson  
Brett Garrett  
Matt Farrell  
Jack Brown  
Jessie Jarvie  
Lani Faulkner  
Saladin Sale  
Elizabeth Malamorg  
Mark Lee  
Paula Bradley  
Rosemary Sarka

Tina Andreatta  
Trink Praxel  
Becky Steinbruner  
Mary Alsip  
Annalyn Rutherford  
Elizabeth Bertrand  
Gina Cole  
Eva Brunner  
Anonymous Speaker  
Sally Arnold  
Barry Scott  
Bob Hickman  
Rafa Sommerfeld  
Jim MacKenzie  
David Date  
Kevin Maguire  
Jean Brocklebank  
Jevan Gray  
Susan Kaufman  
Tim Brattan  
Tom Brady  
James Polizzi  
Karina  
Leonard Foreman  
Dean Cutter  
Ilia Bulaich  
Elisabeth Bertrand  
Charles Hicks

Meghan Largent  
Joni Steele  
David Morris  
mark's iPad  
Rafa Sonnenfeld (he/him)  
Bud Colligan  
Deborah Still  
Regina Kelbert  
John's iPad  
TJ  
Brian  
cookconstr@cruzio.com  
Bob Berlage  
Kelly Mercer-Lebov, Santa Cruz  
County Parks  
PRC243  
Ben  
Amy Meza's iPhone  
Fernanda D. Pini  
Jesse Jarvie  
Mike Sherrod  
Courtney  
Molly ording  
Lana Martinez Davis  
MARY  
david date  
Kevin McGuigan  
Christina Watson, TAMC  
1831\*\*\*\*730  
nasya  
Jamie  
Stephen Buchter  
SCCRTC  
joe  
John Will  
Dscott  
Frank Rimicci  
mhuffaker  
donnaHall  
Ari Parker  
Michael Zeller  
Michele DiFrancia  
Rob Cunningham  
Mrt  
CCC Central Coast  
Linda Locklin, Coastal Commission

Nick Fabbricino  
Nadene Thorne  
Elika Changizi  
karlrice  
Dianne D  
Elaine Rohlfes  
Jillian  
christine miguel  
Meilin Obinata  
Peter Haworth  
Mike  
Tim Brattan  
Jaeden Gales  
Todd Guild  
Justin Davilla  
s163636  
Nyanko  
iPhone  
iPad (3) JEFF MICK  
Leslie Nielsen  
Taylor Lahey  
Jacques Bertrand  
KMSzubielski  
Ron Marquez  
Zoom user  
Justin Blair  
Scott Cohn  
Steve Galletly  
LW  
LC  
1952\*\*\*\*579  
Theresia Rogerson  
Rebecca Hurley  
Marshall  
Monica Martinez (she/her)  
1669\*\*\*\*020  
dcutter  
Amelia Conlen's iPhone  
Kara Dyble  
Steve Wiesner  
Elizabeth Madrigal (she/her)  
jguire@aol.com  
Johanna Lighthill  
Diane D.  
Piet Canin, Ecology Action  
Steve Graff

Leslie Neilsen  
Maria Perez - Regeneración  
Christine's iPad  
Jeff  
Prof Mike Arnold  
Jim's iPad (3)  
Ramon Gomez, Sup. Hernandez  
Mike Fulton  
Henrik's iPhone  
Janine Ramirez  
Santa Cruz Black  
Gloria  
Nora Hochman  
Gregory Becker  
Kris Reyes  
Sean  
Hil Hamm  
Alan C. Miller, Davis CA  
Sandy Brown  
Ben Wolfe  
Adam  
cschneider  
Brian Harrison  
1831\*\*\*\*248  
kris's iPhone  
Christina Holiday  
Marc B. Yellin MD  
Joanna Edmonds City of Santa Cruz  
John Uργο  
Ricardo Valdes  
Nicole Steel  
Brendan Quirk, LTSCC  
Maureen  
miguel.lizarraga  
BobFi  
LoriC  
robert.schneider  
Mikey Cohen  
Jeanette Bent  
Tiffany Mendoza  
jesus bojorquez  
Teresa Buika  
Michael Lewis  
Liam Keeton  
John  
Steve Graff

Michael N. Conneran  
iPhone  
Teresa Maguire  
Jackie  
Kate's iPad  
Adam C  
Amelia Conlen, City of Santa Cruz  
Nyanko Nyasu  
Mauricio Arias  
Steve Wiesner  
Jeanette  
Richard James  
1408\*\*\*\*939  
PRC001  
Seb Frey, REALTOR | Silicon Valley  
prc316  
Howard Cohen  
Member  
Susan Westman  
Hil H.  
RCNV  
Jillian Ritter - District 1  
Don  
Sakura Cannestra  
virginiajohnson  
iPhone (2)Big Daddy  
Edward McNamara  
iPhone (2)  
jessie hess  
Casey Beyer  
Darrell Maxey  
Doug Valby, SCWD  
Antonio Rivas  
Michael Pisano  
Paul Guirguis | Caltrans  
Rae Hughes SCCRTC  
Kelly McClendon# Caltrans D5  
Guest Guest  
Mark  
Mikey Cohen  
Geo  
Gigi Kelbert  
GSD662  
Ginger  
Laurie Waters  
Cynthia Convisser, SCCRTC

Toby Goddard  
Nancy  
Ann  
Rebecca Hurley  
James Polizzi  
Alyson  
Emilia Gamboa  
43983  
Joe Martinez  
Cami Corvin  
Ron Swenson  
David Date  
Charles's iPhone  
Joe Martinez  
Fred  
Marc's iPhone (2)  
Janine Roeth  
Paul Hierling, AMBAG  
Janneke Strause, TAMC  
mark Mattern  
Rebecca Moore  
Madilyn Jacobsen  
Corrina McFarlane  
Andreas Mueller  
Andrew Hoeksema  
Zoom user  
iPad  
Laurie  
Zoom user  
Jessie hess  
Heather Adamson, AMBAG  
Rob Tidmore  
Will Mayall  
Patrick Mottram  
Jacob Lutz  
Nathan Nguyen  
David Moody  
MRT  
Randy  
zoe barb  
Dog  
Courtney Bonifant  
Jamie Sehorn  
Tiffany Mendoza  
Max Chun  
Connie Croker

AP  
Anja's iPhone  
Cami Corvin, Santa Cruz, CA  
Bob Broussard  
pcanin