



*Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission  
1101 Pacific Avenue, Suite 250, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
phone: (831) 460-3200  
email: [info@sccrtc.org](mailto:info@sccrtc.org); website: [www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org)*

*CONTACT: Shannon Munz, Communications Specialist ([smunz@sccrtc.org](mailto:smunz@sccrtc.org))*

## **Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) March 5, 2026 Meeting Highlights**

### **Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee Appointments**

The Commission approved one new appointment and one reappointment to the Measure D Taxpayer Oversight Committee. New committee member Antonio Rivas was appointed to represent County supervisory District 4, and current committee member Mark Johannessen was reappointed to a second two-year term representing County supervisory District 2.

### **Formation of a Nonprofit Corporation Subsidiary as Common Carrier for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and Contract Amendment to Contract with RailPros, Inc.**

The Commission authorized Executive Director Christensen to take the necessary administrative steps to form a subsidiary to serve as the designated common carrier for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) and to present to the Commission final documents for adoption at a special RTC meeting on March 19. The RTC is taking steps to become the common carrier to advance transportation solutions along the branch line, protect the public's interest, preserve existing freight in Watsonville, and continue recreational rail use by Roaring Camp. Establishing a non-profit subsidiary to serve as the common carrier of the SCBRL is the next step in the process. The Commission also approved an amendment to the contract with RailPros, Inc., who currently provides real property and rail-related consultation services to the RTC. To better maintain the rail assets for the Watsonville Branch Line, the RTC recommends moving forward with an assessment of rail infrastructure and facilities for the first 3 miles of the SCBRL, which will be performed by RailPros.

### **Request for State and Federal Earmarks to Fund the Environmental Component of the Zero Emissions Passenger Rail and Trail Project**

In December 2025, the Commission accepted the [Zero Emission Passenger Rail & Trail \(ZEPRT\) Final Project Concept Report](#). The next phase of the ZEPRT Project is the completion of preliminary engineering and environmental analysis of the Project. Currently, there is a \$15 million funding gap for this next phase of work, and the remaining work is on hold until additional funds are secured. To address the funding gap, staff continue to seek full funding to complete this phase of work. However, there are very few available competitive grant programs at the state and federal level for pre-construction components of capital projects. Given this, the Commission authorized staff to pursue federal earmarks, as well as grant funding opportunities, and funds from the state budget, for the purpose of preparing necessary environmental reports for either the ZEPRT project or Coastal Rail Trail projects if the amount needed for the ZEPRT project is not fully funded. The Commission also authorized Commissioners Montesino, Koenig, and Keeley to work with state and federal representatives to pursue state and federal funding these EIRs, including negotiating terms/conditions regarding fund use, retention period, and compliance with Corridor ID requirements.

## **Rural Highways Safety Plan: Milestone 3 - Final Report**

The Commission accepted the [Final Rural Highways Safety Action Plan](#) (RHSP), including options for implementing safety improvements on Santa Cruz County's six rural highways. The objective of the RHSP is to create a suite of transportation facility enhancement options that are focused on eliminating fatal and severe crashes on rural highways. The intent is to achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries on rural highways by 2050 through close partnerships with Caltrans and local partners. The RHSP provides a data-driven and community-informed framework to guide future safety investments on rural state highways in Santa Cruz County. Adoption of the Plan establishes a consistent foundation for prioritizing safety enhancements while allowing implementation priorities to evolve based on updated data, community input, and agency priorities.

## **Upcoming RTC and Committee Meetings**

### **[Regional Transportation Commission Meeting](#)**

Thursday, April 2, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

### **[Budget, Administration & Personnel Committee](#)**

Thursday, March 12, 2026, 1:30 p.m.

### **[Safe on 17 Taskforce](#)**

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

### **[Interagency Technical Advisory Committee](#)**

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 1:30 p.m.

### **[Bicycle Advisory Committee](#)**

Monday, April 13, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

### **[Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee](#)**

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.communitytv.org) or call 831-425-8848 for schedule and station Information.*