



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

MINUTES

**Thursday, May 7, 2026
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 9:18 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 (Remote)

Lowell Hurst (Alt.)

Fabian Leonor

Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson

Rebecca Downing

Orchid Monroy-Ochoa (Alt.)

Staff present:

Sarah Christensen

Amin AbuAmara

Marshall Ballard

Krista Corwin

Nick Danty

Bella Kressman

Shannon Munz

Yesenia Parra

Nisha Singh

Steve Mattas (RTC Counsel)

Commissioner Martinez announced that she would attend the meeting remotely under the just cause provision of SB 707.

2. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agenda

Administrative Services Officer Yesenia Parra communicated that a revised agenda, a Spanish version of the agenda, and handouts for items 8, 11, and 18 were posted to the RTC website.

Executive Director Sarah Christensen proposed moving item 7 from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. The Chair pulled the item from the consent agenda and placed it for consideration under the regular agenda.

3. Oral Communications- No oral communication was requested.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Clark made a motion, and Commissioner DeSarpa seconded, to approve the consent agenda, with the exception of item 7.

Commissioner Downing recused herself from item 11 due to a conflict of interest.

The motion passed with Commissioners Kalantari-Johnson, Leonor, Downing, Martinez, Koenig, DeSarpa, Montesino, Clark, Keeley, Jensen, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Hurst voting "aye."

MINUTES

4. Approved draft minutes of the April 2, 2026 Regional Transportation Commission meeting
5. Accepted draft committee meeting minutes
 - a. March 19, 2026 Interagency Technical Advisory Committee
 - b. April 13, 2026 Bicycle Advisory Committee
 - c. April 14, 2026 Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee

POLICY ITEMS

No consent items

PROJECTS AND PLANNING ITEMS

6. Authorized the Executive Director to execute agreements to accept the permanent trail easement for Segment 12 (**Resolution 51-26**)

7. Approved amending the RTC Programming and FY2025/26 and FY 2026/27 Budget and approve TDA Claims from Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO), the Volunteer Center, Community Bridges, and the RTC (**Resolutions**) – ***Item was moved from consent agenda for consideration under the regular agenda***
8. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Lisac General Engineering for vegetation control along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (**Resolution 57-26**)

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES ITEMS

9. Accepted status report on Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues
10. Accepted status report on Measure D revenues

ADMINISTRATION ITEMS

11. Approved authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an Administration, Coordination, and Licensing (ACL) agreement with Santa Cruz County Coastal Rail (**Resolution 58-26**)

INFORMATION/OTHER ITEMS

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

REGULAR AGENDA

The Chair brought forth item 7 from the consent agenda for consideration on the regular agenda.

7. Approved amending the RTC Programming and FY 2025/26 and FY 2026/27 Budget and approve Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claims from Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO), the Volunteer Center, Community Bridges, and the RTC (**Resolutions**).

Supervising Transportation Planner Marshall Ballard and Director of Internal Services Nisha Singh delivered a presentation.

Director of Internal Services Nisha Singh responded to Commissioners' questions regarding the shift in budgeting strategy pertaining to programming TDA funds; provisions in the RTC's Rules and Regulations

regarding TDA apportionments; cashflow process through invoicing and reimbursement from grants.

Executive Director Sarah Christensen responded to Commissioners' questions regarding the Commission's communication to recipient agencies; the RTC's budget approval and TDA claims process; budgetary impacts of organizational restructuring; and cost saving strategies within the agency.

Commissioners discussed: background on TDA apportionment and budget approval process; impacts of previous years' decisions to allocate more funding to the recipient agencies at the expense of RTC's reserves; encourage RTC staff to be more proactive in communicating with recipient agencies regarding budgetary decisions; essential roles that METRO and Community Bridges play in the community; consideration of phased adjustment needed to avoid larger disruption in the future.

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas responded to a Commissioner's question regarding actions available to the Commission today.

Corey Aldridge, CEO of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District responded to a Commissioner's questions regarding METRO's budget.

Commissioner Keeley made a motion and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to adopt Resolutions:

1. Amending the Regional Transportation Commission Programming and FY 2025/26 and FY 2026/27 Budget (**Resolution 52-26**) to amend previously programmed projects, as requested by project sponsors, to reflect scope and funding updates.
2. Approve the FY 2026-27 claim from the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (**Resolution 53-26**) for:
 - a. TDA-Local Transportation Fund (TDA) funds in the amount of \$9,310,691; and,
 - b. State Transit Assistance Funds (STA) funds in the amount of \$4,595,164.
3. Approve the FY 2026-27 (TDA) Article 8 claim from the Volunteer Center (**Resolution 54-26**) in the amount of \$108,897.
4. Approve the FY 2026-27 (TDA) Article 8 claim from Community Bridges (**Resolution 55-26**) in the amount of \$914,735 (Exhibit A to Attachment 4).

5. Approve the FY 2026-27 (TDA) Article 3 and Article 8 claim (**Resolution 56-26**) for RTC administration (\$1,000,000) and planning (\$917,378).

The motion passed with Commissioners Jensen, Keeley, Clark, Montesino, DeSerpa, Koenig, Martinez, Downing, and Commissioner Alternates Hurst and Schiffrin voting "aye" and Commissioners Kalantari-Johnson and Leonor voting "no."

Received public comment from:
Corey Aldridge, Santa Cruz METRO
Jesus Bojorquez, Lift Line
Tony Nunez, Community Bridges
Nadia Noriega, Lift Line
Ray Cancino, Community Bridges
Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Michael Saint
Doug Underhill
Sean
Jim Helmer

15. Commissioner Reports

Chair Montesino requested an update on potential new RTC office locations.

16. Director's Report

Executive Director Sarah Christensen reported on the completion of the emergency sidewalk repair project along Main Street in Watsonville and presented a certificate of appreciation to Caltrans Ex-Officio Orchid Monroy-Ochoa for collaboration on the project; community engagement opportunities to learn more and give feedback on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) Corridor Climate Resilience study; public comment period on the North Coast Transportation Demand Management Plan open through May 15, 2026; ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Panther Beach Parking lot scheduled for May 20, 2026 at 4:00pm; full overnight closure of Highway 1 at the Mar Vista Overcrossing scheduled for May 14, 2026; Santa Cruz Bike Fest kick-off on May 1, 2026 and month-long activities planned; staffing updates; staff attendance at the California Passenger Rail Summit; expression of condolences for the passing of influential Bay Area transportation advocate, teacher, and leader, Rod Diridon, Sr.

Commissioners discussed: legacy and memories of Supervisor Diridon; sending a delegation of Commissioners and staff to the Mineta Institute's celebration in memoriam of Mr. Diridon.

Commissioner Jensen departed the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Michael Saint
Jim Helmer
Sean
Lani Faulkner

17. Caltrans Report

Orchid Monroy-Ochoa, Office Chief of Transportation Planning at Caltrans, delivered the Santa Cruz County Project Updates list and highlighted: issues resolved with the two temporary signals north of Boulder Creek; Caltrans offering an on-call shuttle service through the construction zone seven days per week, from 7am-6pm; Felton Safety Project continues with utility relocations and has an anticipated completion date at the end of the month, with sidewalk construction starting thereafter; update to the Fiscal Year 2027/28 Sustainable Planning grant application guide and upcoming identical virtual workshops on May 12 and May 14; appreciation for the certificate of recognition and gratitude to the community of Watsonville for their patience through the construction period.

Commissioners discussed: Appreciation for Caltrans' work in the Pajaro Valley on Highway 152.

Commissioner Martinez departed the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Jim Helmer

18. 2026 Draft Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs List

Transportation Planning Technician Sierra Topp delivered a presentation.

The public hearing opened at 11:30 a.m.

Received public comment from:

Matt Farrell, Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail
Brian Peoples, Trail Now
Michael Saint
Jim Helmer

Commissioners discussed: pedestrian safety measures around bus stops; the importance of public education about improving safety for non-motorist travelers.

Commissioner DeSerpa made a motion and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion to approve the staff recommendation to:

1. Adopt the 2026 Draft Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs List with revisions as appropriate following the public hearing; and
2. Consider unmet transit and paratransit needs as funding becomes available.

The motion passed unanimously with Commissioners Kalantari-Johnson, Leonor, Downing, Koenig, DeSerpa, Montesino, Clark, Keeley, and Commissioner Alternates Schiffrin and Hurst voting "aye."

19. 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 and communicated that reportable action is anticipated from the closed session.

The Commission entered closed session at 11:45 a.m.

CLOSED SESSION

20. Conference with Legal Counsel: Existing Litigation
(Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1))
SCCRTC v. Kajihara, et al. – Santa Cruz Court Case No. 21CV00211

OPEN SESSION

The Commission reconvened in open session at 11:51 a.m.

21. Report on items discussed in closed session

RTC Counsel Steve Mattas communicated that the Commission gave unanimous authority to enter into a settlement agreement in the Kajihara claim. Mr. Mattas noted that Commissioner Downing abstained from participating in the closed session.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

22. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the Watsonville City Council Chambers, 275 Main Street, Fourth Floor, Watsonville, CA 95060.

Respectfully submitted,

Yesenia Parra, Administrative Services Officer

Attendees

Corey Aldridge

Jesus Bojorquez

Tony Nunez

Nadia Noriega

Ray Cancino

Brian Peoples

Michael Saint

Doug Underhill

Sean

Jim Helmer

Lani Faulkner

Matt Farrell

Cynthia Convisser

Paula Bradley

Heather Adamson

Larry Pageler

Linda Wilshusen

Paul Guirguis

Veronica

Derek

Ilia Bulaich