



**Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission**

Draft 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 DeSerpa

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 Schiffirin 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, Schiffirin 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
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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
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Stephen Buchter
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John Will
Dscott
Frank Rimicci
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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
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iPad (3) JEFF MICK
Leslie Nielsen
Taylor Lahey
Jacques Bertrand
KMSzubielski
Ron Marquez
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Justin Blair
Scott Cohn
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Theresia Rogerson
Rebecca Hurley
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Monica Martinez (she/her)
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dcutter
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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
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Christina Holiday
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John Urgo
Ricardo Valdes
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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
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Susan Westman
Hil H.
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Jillian Ritter - District 1
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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
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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