

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)

RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

FINAL Minutes of March 7, 2011

Transportation Agency for Monterey County

55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas

	MAR 10	APR 10	MAY 10	JUN 10	AUG 10	SEP 10	OCT 10	NOV 10	JAN 11	FEB 11	MAR 11
F. Armenta, Dist. 1 (J. Martinez)	P	P	P(A)	P	C	P	C	E	P	P	P(A)
L. Calcagno, Dist. 2 (H. Gowin)	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	A	P(A)	A	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)
J. Parker, Dist. 4 (K. Markey)	P	P	P	P	N	P	N	P	P	P	P
D. Potter, Dist. 5, Chair (K. Lee)	P	P	P	P	C	P	C	P	P	P	E
B. Delgado, Marina (F. O'Connell)	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	E	P	P	P
F. Sollecito, Monterey – Vice Chair (C. Della Sala)	P	P	P	P	L	P	L	P	P	E	P
K. Craig, Salinas (R. Russell, J. Serrano)	P	P(A)	P	P	L	-	L	P	P	P	P(A)
S. Matarazzo, Sand City (R. Simonitch)	P(A)	P	-	P(A)	E	P(A)	E	P(A)	P	P	P
F. Bachofner, Seaside (D. Ingersoll, S. Bloomer)	P	P	P	P	D	-	D	E	-	P	P
A. Chavez, Soledad (F. Ledesma)	P(A)	P	-	P		P		P(A)	P	P	P
J. Doughty, AMBAG (R. Deshazo)	-	-	-	-		-		-	-	-	-
M. McCumsey, Caltrans District 5	E	-	P (TC)	P (TC)		-		P (TC)	-	-	-
C. Sedoryk, MST (H. Harvath)	-	-	-	-		-		-	P(A)	-	-
B. Sabo, Airport	P	-	-	-		P		P	-	P	P
STAFF											
D. Hale, Exec. Director	P	P	P	E		P		E	P	P	P
D. Bachman, Dep. Exec. Director	P	P	P	P		P		P	P	P	P
C. Watson, Sr. Transp. Planner	P	P	P	P		P		P	E	P	P
K. Hoschouer, Assoc. Transp. Planner	P	E	P	P		P		P	P	P	P
A. Cook, Assoc. Transp. Planner	P	P	P	E		P		P	E	P	P
H. Myers, Assoc. Transp. Planning Engineer	P	-	-	E		-		P	-	E	-
M. Zeller, Assoc. Transp. Planner	-	P	-	P		P		P	P	E	E
E – Excused A – Alternate	VC – Video Conference TC – Teleconference										

1. QUORUM CHECK AND CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Sollecito called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Introductions were made and a quorum was established.

OTHERS PRESENT

George Dondero	Santa Cruz Co. RTC	A.J. Farrar	North Mo. Co. Resident
Chris Flescher	Rail Pass. Assoc. of CA	Theo Kosub	Monterey-Salinas Transit
Marlys Maher	Salinas Resident	Debby Platt	City of Marina
Paul Schlesinger (phone)	Alcalde & Fay	Sam Teel	Mo. Co. Hospitality Assn.
Richard Simonitch	Sand City Alternate	Bob Scales	Parsons

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were provided.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

M/S/C Delgado/Chavez

3.1 Approved minutes of the February 7, 2011 Rail Policy Committee meeting.

3.2 Received letter from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments describing the economic research that will be conducted in the Sustainable Communities Strategy as it relates to the Monterey Branch Line.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

4. FEDERAL NEW STARTS AND REAUTHORIZATION LEGISLATION

The Committee received a report on the Federal New Starts and Reauthorization Legislation.

Paul Schlesinger, federal legislative advocate for the Transportation Agency, reported that the federal budget policy appears to inspire a moratorium on earmarks, less security for the highway trust fund with the elimination of the firewall protecting transportation dollars, and drastic proposed cutbacks in transportation funding for the current and future fiscal years. Mr. Schlesinger noted securing federal funding for the rail projects will require supporting funding categories and grant programs in the transportation authorization bill. The administration and congress are moving quickly on the budget and authorization bill issues, but will most likely adopt a continuing resolution for the remainder of the federal fiscal year (through September 2011).

Executive Director Debbie Hale reported that she will be making a federal legislative trip to Washington D.C. for the week of March 14 with RPC Chair Dave Potter and TAMC Board Member Jason Burnett. The trip includes meetings with decision-makers, at which the delegation will be emphasizing the Agency's priorities to streamline regulations, preserve the federal New Starts program, and increase transportation funding in the next long term federal transportation authorization bill.

5. **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY RAIL LINE PURCHASE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission on the Santa Cruz branch line acquisition project.

George Dondero, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, reported that the California Transportation Commission approved funds for the acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way in January 2011. Available state funds will be used to complete bridge and drainage repairs needed on the southern portion of the line to support existing and proposed freight and recreational rail services on the line. Mr. Dondero commented that establishing passenger rail on the Santa Cruz Branch Line is considered the next step for developing the line, and that an “Around the Bay” passenger rail service should be reinvestigated.

Vice Chair Sollecito requested an update on the intermodal freight rail study for Monterey County being completed by AMBAG.

6. **MONTEREY BRANCH LINE HISTORY**

The Committee received a presentation on the history and alternatives for the Monterey Branch Line project.

Kristen Hoschouer, Associate Transportation Planner, reported that, since the purchase of the Monterey Branch Line in 2003, there has been a plan to reestablish rail/mass transit on the corridor. Ms. Hoschouer provided a presentation on the history of the corridor and the alternatives studied in the past several years, noting that an alternative proposed for establishing intercity rail on the Monterey Branch Line was not pursued after 2005 due to the lack of federal intercity rail funding and local opposition to such a service along the corridor. She noted that the capital cost for the Phase 1 light rail (the locally preferred alternative approved the Agency) is estimated at \$145 million and the annual operating cost is estimated at \$3.7 million. With light rail selected as the preferred alternative, intercity rail could run to Monterey from the Bay Area in the future.

Staff agreed to update cost projections for Bus Rapid Transit Alternative to provide a valid cost comparison between the Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit alternatives, and noted that some value engineering will be employed to minimize capital costs associated with the project. Staff noted that the environmental document for the project will be presented to the Board in April and that the staff report will include background on the project.

7. **COAST DAYLIGHT TRAIN SERVICE FIELD TRIP**

The Committee received a recap of the March 3 Coast Rail tour from Vice Chair Sollecito and staff. Approximately 50 people participated in the tour, most of whom disembarked in Soledad, the first time in about 50 years that a passenger stepped off a train in that city.

8. **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND/OR COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Staff noted that the “quorum check” paragraph on the agenda has been fixed on future committee agendas to reflect current committee membership.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chair Sollecito adjourned the meeting at 4:34 p.m.