

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)
RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
Final Minutes of August 4, 2025
 California Welcome Center at 1 Station Place in Salinas

	AUG 24	SEP 24	OCT 24	NOV 24	JAN 25	FEB 25	MAR 25	APR 25	MAY 25	JUN 25	JULY 25	AUG 25
L. Alejo, Dist. 1 (L. Gonzalez, J. Gomez)	P	P	N	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	E	P(A) (VC)	C	P(A) (VC)	P	N	P
G. Church, Dist. 2 (M. Vierra , L. Gray)	P(A) (VC)	P (VC)	O	E	P(A) (VC)	P (VC)	P(A) (VC)	A	P(VC)	P(A) (VC)	O	P
W. Askew, Dist. 4 (Y. Anderson, E. Mora)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	M	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	N	P(VC)	P(A) (VC)	M	P(A)
K. Daniels, Dist. 5, (K. Craig)	A	E	E	P(A) (VC)	A*	P	E	C	P(VC)	P(VC)	E	P
M. LeBarre, King City, Chair (C. DeLeon)	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	E	P
B. Delgado, Marina (J. McAdams)	A	E	T	A	A	P (VC)	P (VC)	L	P(VC)	A	T	P
E. Smith, Monterey (K. Barber, M. Garcia, A. Renny)	P	P	I	P	P	A	P	L	P	P	I	P
A. Sandoval, Salinas, (A. Rocha)	A	A	N	P	A	A	P	E	P	A	N	P
M. Carbone, Sand City (J. Blackwelder)	P	P	G	P	P	P	P	D	P	P	G	P
I. Oglesby, Seaside (D. Pacheco)	A	A		A	A	A	P		P	P		P
A. Velazquez, Soledad (F. Ansaldo-Sanchez)	P	P		P	A*	P (VC)	P (VC)		P(VC)	A		P
M. Twomey, AMBAG (H. Adamson , P. Hierling)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)		P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	A		P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)		A
A. Lopez, Caltrans District 5	P (VC)	P (VC)		A	A	P(VC)	P (VC)		A	A		P (VC)
C. Sedoryk, MST (L. Rheinheimer/ M. Overmeyer)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)		P(A) (VC)	A	A	P(A) (VC)		P(A) (VC)	A		P(A) (VC)

STAFF	AUG 24	SEP 24	OCT 24	NOV 24	JAN 25	FEB 25	MAR 25	APR 25	MAY 25	JUN 25	JUL	AUG
T. Muck, Executive Director	E	P	N	P	P	P	P	C	P	P	N	P
C. Watson, Director of Planning	P	P	O	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	O	P (VC)
M. Zeller, Director of Programming & Project Delivery	P (VC)	P (VC)	M	P (VC)	P (VC)	P (VC)	P (VC)	N	P (VC)	P (VC)	M	P (VC)
M. Montiel Admin Assistant	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	C	P	P	E	P
L. Williamson, Senior Engineer	P (VC)	P (VC)	E	P (VC)	A	A	A	E	A	P	E	P
D. Bilse, Principal Engineer	A	A	T	P	P (VC)	P	A	L	P (VC)	P (VC)	T	A
A. Guther, Transp. Planner	P	P	I	P	P	P	P	L	P	P (VC)	I	P
A. Sambrano Transp. Planner	P (VC)	P (VC)	N	A	A		A	E	A	P (VC)	N	A
J. Strause, Associate Transp. Planner	P	P	G	A	A		A	D	P (VC)	A	G	P (VC)
J. Kise, Director of Finance & Administration	A	P		A	A	A	A		A	A		A
M. Park, Finance Officer/Analyst	P	P		A	A	P	A		A	P (VC)		A

P = Present A = Absent P(A) = Alternate Present E = Excused (VC) = Video Conference * = New representative

1. QUORUM CHECK AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair LeBarre called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. A quorum was established.

OTHERS PRESENT

Dennis Donohoe	Mayor, City of Salinas	Blythe Wilson	TAMC Intern
Chris Lopez	Supervisor District 3	Brent Tietjen	Caltrain
Margaret D'Arrigo	City of Salinas	Sam Farr	Public
Jasmine Mejia Cortez	District 1 office	Debbie Hale	Public
Luiza Hastlestand	Monterey-Salinas Transit	Denise Estrada	Public
Craig Kaufman	California Welcome Center	Roland LeBrun	Public
Charles Franz	Capitol Corridor (CCJPA)	Elizabeth Madrigal	Public

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohoe welcomed everyone and noted that rail service is a strategic value for the region and the city. He expressed support for the train service as economic opportunity and connection with San Francisco Bay Area.

Sam Farr expressed the need for signage, benches, and time schedule at the Salinas train station. He expressed his belief that the Salinas rail station has great potential as a tourism stop, the need for increased investment in rail, and the beautification of the train station.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

M/S/C Oglesby/ Carbone/ unanimous

3.1 Approved minutes of June 2, 2025, Rail Policy Committee meeting.

3.2 Received update on the planned increase in passenger rail service along the coast corridor between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

4. CALIFORNIA WELCOME CENTER RAIL PROJECTS

The Committee received a presentation from Craig Kaufman, California Welcome Center, on Rails and Trails and Salinas City Heritage Park programs.

Christina Watson, Director of Planning, reported that Transportation Agency invested in the construction of the circulation improvements at the station, known as Package 1, with state funds and transferred ownership of property to the City of Salinas. Ms. Watson noted that TAMC presented to the Salinas Valley Visitor Bureau Board in September 2024 and March 2025 on rail projects and specifically on the Salinas rail extension project.

Craig Kaufman, California Welcome Center, presented on the past, present, and future of the area known as "Heritage Park". He reported that now open to the public are the historic properties, including the First Mayor House and the Welcome Center. Mr. Kaufman noted that they continue to develop new opportunities for economic development through heritage tourism programs. He noted rail travelers utilize trains and buses for business and pleasure. Mr. Kaufman reported that the Salinas Valley Tourism and Visitor Bureau is focused on

creating points of interest that incentivize travelers to use the train and buses and support partnerships that will diversify and grow economic opportunities in the region.

Denise Estrada announced for those interested to please stay after the meeting for tour of the Welcome Center building and rail museum.

Sam Farr thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted that freight rail transporting iceberg lettuce is a historical basis for the city's population. He expressed the need for increased investment in rail.

5. SALINAS RAIL KICK START PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Salinas Rail Kick Start Project.

Christina Watson, Director of Planning, reported that the Monterey County Rail Extension Project will extend passenger rail service from Santa Clara County south to Salinas. Transportation Agency is pursuing a phased implementation of the Project. Ms. Watson noted that the Phase 1, Salinas Kick Start project (the Salinas station and improvements in Santa Clara County), is proceeding with secured funding under the adopted state environment clearance and is currently in the final design phase.

Ms. Watson announced that Union Pacific Railroad held a layover facility site visit in May and TAMC staff met with Caltrans and Capitol Corridor in June; TAMC staff is continuing to coordinate with Caltrain.

Public comment:

Sam Farr asked when service could start to Salinas. Ms. Watson replied that the most optimistic scenario shows operations starting in 2028.

Sam Farr asked who is responsible for station area cleanup. Executive Director Todd Muck replied that Amtrak is responsible for cleanup at the station.

Debbie Hale asked about the operating scenarios. Ms. Watson explained there are scenarios in which both Caltrain and Capitol Corridor might extend service to Salinas.

6. PAJARO MULTIMODAL STATION PROJECT UPDATE

The committee received information on the Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Transit Hub project activities.

Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner, reported that the proposed Pajaro/ Watsonville station will be the connection point to Santa Cruz to new passenger rail service on the Coast mainline tracks between Salinas and the San Francisco Bay Area, as well a hub for future round-the-bay service. Ms. Guther noted that TAMC staff have been attending community meetings and plan to do further outreach to the community this fall. TAMC has been meeting with Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) and is planning a meeting between SCCRTC commission members and RPC members to facilitate planning efforts around the connection between Santa Cruz Branch Line and the Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Station.

Public comment:

Debbie Hale asked if we should provide Union Pacific with a letter of support. Executive Director Todd Muck replied that we have been in communication with Union Pacific and it's a work in progress.

7. HIGHWAY 1 ELKHORN SLOUGH CORRIDOR CLIMATE RESILIENCY PROJECT

The Committee received an update on the Highway 1 Elkhorn Slough Corridor Climate Resiliency Project.

Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner, reported that this project will evaluate the risk of sea level rise and develop multimodal and nature-based transportation adaptation solutions to address this vulnerability in a key transportation corridor. Providing multimodal options and integrating nature-based solutions are top priorities for this project. Ms. Guther noted that steering committee meetings have been held monthly since project activities began in May. A presentation on the outreach plan is forthcoming.

Ms. Guther noted that the rail tracks through Elkhorn Slough, owned by Union Pacific railroad, carry freight rail traffic and Amtrak Coast Starlight passengers. She noted that future rail expansion plans call for an increase in passenger rail traffic on that line, including an extension of commuter rail to Gilroy to Salinas, and passenger rail service between Santa Cruz and Monterey.

Committee Member Velazquez asked who is putting together the stakeholder's advisory group. Ms. Guther replied that TAMC staff will put together the advisory committee and stated that Rail Policy Committee members can give input on who should be included in the stakeholder advisory group.

Public comment:

Sam Farr asked when the last time the rail line was closed due to flooding. Ms. Guther replied that it experiences occasional delays due to wintertime King Tide flooding.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND/OR COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

None

9. ADJOURN

Chair LeBarre adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.