

**TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)**  
**RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
*FINAL Minutes of March 3, 2014*  
 Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
 55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas

	MAR 13	APR 13	MAY 13	JUN 13	AUG 13	SEPT 13	OCT 13	NOV 13	JAN 14	FEB 14	MAR 14
F. Armenta, Dist. 1 (J. Martinez)	<b>C</b>	E	P	<b>C</b>	-	P	-	<b>C</b>	P	<b>C</b>	P(A)
L. Calcagno, Dist. 2 (H. Gowin)	<b>A</b>	P(A)	-	<b>A</b>	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	<b>A</b>	P(A)	<b>A</b>	-
J. Parker, Dist. 4 (K. Markey)	<b>N</b>	E	P(A)	<b>N</b>	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)	<b>N</b>	E	<b>N</b>	P(A)
D. Potter, Dist. 5, Chair ( <del>K. Lee</del> , J. Mohammadi)	<b>C</b>	P	P	<b>C</b>	P	P(A)	P	<b>C</b>	P	<b>C</b>	P(A)
B. Delgado, Marina (F. O'Connell)	<b>E</b>	P(A)	P	<b>E</b>	P	P	P	<b>E</b>	P	<b>E</b>	P
F. Sollecito, Monterey – Vice Chair (C. Della Sala, R. Deal)	<b>L</b>	P	P	<b>L</b>	P	P	P	<b>L</b>	E	<b>L</b>	P
K. Craig, Salinas ( <del>R. Russell</del> , J. Serrano)	<b>L</b>	P	P	<b>L</b>	P	P	P	<b>L</b>	P	<b>L</b>	P
S. Matarazzo, Sand City (L. Gomez)	<b>E</b>	P(A)	P(A)	<b>E</b>	P(A)	P	P	<b>E</b>	P	<b>E</b>	-
R. Rubio, Seaside (A. Edwards)	<b>D</b>	P	E	<b>D</b>	P	P(A)	P(A)	<b>D</b>	P	<b>D</b>	P
A. Chavez, Soledad (F. Ledesma)		P	P		P	E	P		E		P
M. Twomey, AMBAG (H. Adamson)		-	-		P(A)	-	P(A)		P(A)		P(A)
M. McCumsey, Caltrans District 5		-	-		E	E	-		-		P (TC)
C. Sedoryk, MST (H. Harvath)		P	-		P(A)	P	P(A) (TC)		P(A)		P(A)
M. Nelson., Airport (R. Searle)		-	-		-	-	-		-		-
<b>STAFF</b>											
D. Hale, Exec. Director		P	P		P	P	P		P		P
T. Muck, Dep. Exec. Director		E	P		E	P	P		P		P
C. Watson, Principal Transp. Planner		P	P		P	P	P		E		P
A. Green, Transp. Planner		P	-		P	P	P		P		P
A. Cook, Sr. Transp. Planner		P	-		E	-	-		-		-
M. Zeller, Sr. Transp. Planner		P	-		E	-	-		P		P
H. Myers, Assoc. Transp. Planning Engineer		P	P		P	P	-		-		P
M. Montiel, Admin. Assistant		-	P		-	-	-		-		-
	<b>E – Excused</b> <b>VC – Video Conference</b> <b>P(A) – Alternate</b> <b>TC – Teleconference</b>										

**1. QUORUM CHECK AND CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Sollecito called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Chris Flescher	Rail Pass. Assoc. of CA	Tim O'Halloran	City of Seaside
Eric Peterson	Salinas Resident	Luis Mendez	SCCRTC
Sam Teel	Monterey Co. Hospitality Assoc.	Jeffrey Weeks	Iowa Pacific

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

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**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

M/S/C Delgado/Craig/unanimous

Committee Member Chavez and Alternate Martinez arrived after the approval of the consent agenda.

**3.1** Approved minutes of the January 6, 2014 Rail Policy Committee meeting.

**3.2** Received map showing existing and planned rail services in California.

**3.3** Received updated on the status of the planned Coast Daylight train service between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

**3.4** Defer elections for Chair and Vice-Chair for 2014-2016 to April 7, 2014.

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**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

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**4. SANTA CRUZ BRANCH RAIL LINE UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the Santa Cruz Branch Line rail service.

Luis Pavel Mendez, Deputy Director at the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), reported that the Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay Railway reported a successful "Train to Christmastown" operation in 2013. Jeff Weeks, Iowa Pacific, reported that ridership was up in 2013 compared to 2012 and that they served approximately 7,000 people.

Mr. Mendez and Mr. Weeks reported that the next focus will be on building freight along the Santa Cruz Branch Line. In terms of future passenger rail, the next steps are bridge rehabilitation and a feasibility study. SCCRTC is currently working to obtain permits to proceed with the rehabilitation of the La Selva Beach trestle. SCCRTC will also conduct a feasibility study to determine what sort of passenger service could be supported along the rail line. Mr. Mendez reported that a dinner train service between Santa Cruz and Davenport may debut in Fall 2014.

Committee Alternate Markey asked if it is possible to have passenger service around the entire Monterey Bay. Mr. Mendez replied that the feasibility study may review that question and that TAMC will participate in the study.

Committee Member Delgado asked if the feasibility study would include the entire Santa Cruz Branch Line from Watsonville to Davenport, and if there are many commute trips between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. Mr. Mendez replied that the study would look at service between Watsonville and Davenport but that most of the demand for service is expected to be between Santa Cruz and Watsonville in part due to the commute trips that occur between the two cities.

**5. MONTEREY BRANCH LINE PROJECT UPDATE**

Received an update on the Monterey Branch Line Project.

Hunter Harvath, Assistant General Manager, Finance & Administration, Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST), presented an update on MST's proposal for the use of the Monterey Branch Line as a single-lane express busway. The City of Monterey and MST have been studying a busway along Del Monte Avenue. MST has extended the study area to Marina. As proposed, the busway would consist of a single 12- to 16-foot lane that would accommodate one-directional bus traffic (southbound in the morning and northbound in the evenings); buses would complete the route in regular traffic on the roads and highway. The proposed alignment of the busway would be next to the existing railroad tracks within the Monterey Branch Line right-of-way between Marina and Monterey. MST is pursuing a Very Small Starts grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which would cover up to 80% of the cost for a project costing up to \$30 million. The grant MST hopes to use the appraised value of the Monterey Branch Line as a local match.

Committee Member Rubio asked if the busway project would affect the chances of getting Small Starts funding for the light rail project in the future. He also asked what the value of the land will be based on, and how leases along the right-of-way would be handled. Mr. Harvath replied that in terms of leasing the right-of-way or utility easements, he would assume that transportation uses would have priority. He also clarified that the existing rails would remain intact.

Committee Alternate Markey asked if park and ride lots will be considered as part of the project. Mr. Harvath replied that such lots have already been identified through Monterey Branch Line planning efforts and that this study would include an evaluation of parking options.

Vice Chair Sollecito asked if people would be able to easily access local transit service from the busway. Mr. Harvath replied that the stations for the regional busway would be close to local transit stops.

Committee Alternate Adamson asked about the deadline to apply for FTA Very Small Starts funding. Mr. Harvath replied that there is no deadline, but that FTA approached them to do another BRT project after the success of the JAZZ Line, and that he would be meeting with FTA next week to discuss the application.

Committee Member Delgado asked what kind of environmental documentation would be needed. Mr. Harvath responded that they might seek a categorical exclusion/exemption under both federal and state law. MST hopes to use the environmental documentation drafted for the Monterey Branch Line Light Rail project. Mr. Delgado inquired about the bus on shoulder alternative. Mr. Harvath noted that the study will also evaluate the option for buses to use the shoulders of Highway 1 during rush hours.

Executive Director Debbie Hale asked about advantages of the busway for future light rail. Mr. Harvath replied that the FTA likes to see existing service along a dedicated corridor, and that having a proven busway service could help future applications for a light rail project.

Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner, thanked Mr. Harvath for the presentation and requested that MST coordinate with TAMC staff moving forward.

**6. SALINAS RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the Salinas Extension project.

Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner, reported that progress since the last update to the Committee about the project on January 6, 2014, includes coordination with the California Transportation Commission staff regarding the Agency's request for state-only funding for this project, meetings with the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, and solicitation of a design firm. She noted that the Agency requested \$18.856 million in state-only funding in the next State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) round for the construction of the Salinas train station and layover facility in fiscal year 2015/16. This allocation would fully fund the project and enable the project to be built without federal funding. She added that after much negotiation, the CTC staff has recommended state-only funding for the project but moved out the year to 2017/18. She noted that Executive Director Debbie Hale and Senior Transportation Planner Mike Zeller will attend the CTC meeting on March 20. She acknowledged the importance of the Capitol Corridor staff support in this effort.

Ms. Watson also reported that the recent final audit report from Caltrans called into question some of the project's contracts, and that staff disputes the findings and is coordinating with Caltrans to respond. Vice Chair Sollecito requested that the Board be apprised of the action plan.

**7. SALINAS RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT KICK-START DESIGN PHASE CONTRACT**

**M/S/C** Craig/Delgado/ unanimous

The Committee recommended the Board approve selection of HDR Engineering for the Salinas Rail extension Kick-Start design work, with the request that the consultant provide a letter stipulating there will be no conflict of interest with their other projects.

Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner, reported that the Agency staff published the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Salinas Rail Extension Kick-Start Design Phase in November 2013. She noted that staff held the pre-proposal conference on December 5, 2013. Twenty consultants attended the meeting representing thirteen firms. Three consultants were interviewed by a panel made up of TAMC staff and representatives from MST, Capitol Corridor, City of Gilroy, City of Salinas, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. The interview panel ranked HDR Engineering the highest due to their relevant experience and good working relationship with Union Pacific and Capitol Corridor. Staff is now in contract negotiations with HDR and will present a draft contract to the Committee and Board in April.

Committee Member Delgado asked if we have to select the lowest bidder for the project.

Ms. Watson responded a design contract is a qualifications-based process, and that staff is only negotiating with HDR at present.

Committee Member Rubio and Committee Alternate Markey expressed concern that HDR is a consultant used by Union Pacific and that there may be a conflict of interest. Luis Mendez, SCCRTC, noted that they had similar concerns when they first contracted with HDR for a previous project, but that HDR provided them a letter stating that they would be objective. Mr. Rubio and Ms. Markey requested that TAMC staff request such a letter from HDR.

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

Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner, distributed the California Intercity Passenger Rail Program brochure.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chair Sollecito adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.