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Regional Transportation Planning Agency - Local Transportation Commission  
Monterey County Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways  
Monterey County Regional Development Impact Fee Joint Powers Agency  
Email: [info@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:info@tamcmonterey.org)

**Rail Policy Committee**

**Monday, March 4, 2024**

**\*\*3:00 PM\*\***

**MEETING LOCATION**

Voting members must attend a physical meeting location to count towards quorum

*55B Plaza Circle, Salinas, California 93901  
Transportation Agency Conference Room*

**Alternate Locations with Zoom Connection Open to the Public**

*2616 1st Avenue, Marina, California 93933  
Supervisor Askew's Office*

*11140 Speegle St., Castroville CA, 95012  
Supervisor Church's Office*

*168 West Alisal Street, 2nd Floor, Salinas, CA 93901  
Supervisor Alejo's Office*

**Members of the public & non-voting members may join meeting online at:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/654778900?pwd=L2daellZTW5NSDZMQ2RSY1hJVlpGZz09>**

**OR**

**By teleconference at: +1 669 900 6833**

**Meeting ID: 654 778 900**

**Password: 506977**

*Please note: If all committee members are present in person, public participation by Zoom is for convenience only and is not required by law. If the Zoom feed is lost for any reason, the meeting may be paused while a fix is attempted, but the meeting may continue at the discretion of the Chairperson.*

*Please see all the special meeting instructions at the end of this agenda*

Complete agenda packets are on display at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County office and at these public libraries: Carmel, Monterey, Salinas Steinbeck Branch, Seaside, Prunedale, and King City. Any person who has a question concerning an item on this agenda may call the Agency Secretary to make an inquiry concerning the nature of the item described on the agenda. Please recycle this agenda.

**1. Quorum Check, Call to Order and Introductions**

**A quorum is 7 of the following members: Adams, Askew, Alejo, Cabrera, Carbone, Church, Delgado, LeBarre, Oglesby, Potter, Sandoval and Smith.**

**If you are unable to attend, please make sure that one of your alternates attends the meeting. Your courtesy to the other members to assure a quorum is appreciated.**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Any member of the public may address the Board on any item not on the agenda but within the jurisdiction of the Board. Under this item, each member of the public is allowed three minutes to address concerns. Comments in items on this agenda may be given when that agenda item is discussed. Persons who wish to address the Board for public comment or on an item on the agenda are encouraged to submit comments in writing to Maria at [maria@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:maria@tamcmonterey.org) by 5:00 pm the Thursday before the meeting, and such comments will be distributed to the Board before the meeting.

Alternative Agenda Format and Auxiliary Aids: If requested, the agenda shall be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC Sec. 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals requesting a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, may contact Transportation Agency staff at 831-775-0903. Auxiliary aids or services include wheelchair accessible facilities, sign language interpreters, Spanish language interpreters, and printed materials in large print, Braille or on disk. These requests may be made by a person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in the public meeting and should be made at least 72 hours before the meeting. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the request.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Approve the staff recommendations for items listed below by majority vote with one motion. Any member may pull an item off the Consent Agenda to be moved to the end of the **CONSENT AGENDA** for discussion and action.

**3.1. APPROVE** the draft Rail Policy Committee Minutes for January 8, 2024.

**- Maria Montiel**

***The draft minutes of the January 8, 2024 Rail Policy Committee meeting are attached for review.***

**3.2. RECEIVE** update on the Salinas Rail Kick Start project.

**- Christina Watson**

***Activities on the Salinas Rail Kick Start project since the last update include operations scenario discussions and design coordination efforts with key stakeholders on Packages 2 (Salinas layover facility) and 3 (Gilroy track connections).***

3.3. **RECEIVE** media clippings attached online.

- Christina Watson

4. **RECEIVE** update on Santa Cruz County Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project.

- Alissa Guther, Riley Gerbrandt

*Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission staff will present an update on the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project.*

5. **RECEIVE** update on Elkhorn Slough Transportation Corridor Resiliency project.

- Alissa Guther

*Staff will provide an update and background on efforts to coordinate with local agencies on the rail corridor through the Elkhorn Slough.*

6. **RECEIVE** update on Pajaro Multimodal Station Project.

- Alissa Guther

*Activities on the Pajaro Multimodal Station project include the release of a Request for Proposals and coordination with Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission on their rail projects as they pertain to the station and Monterey County.*

7. **RECEIVE** update on the planned increase in passenger rail service along the coast corridor between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

- Alissa Guther, Todd Muck

*Progress since the last update on the coast rail project to this Committee includes a meeting of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council Policy Committee.*

8. **HOLD** elections for Chair and Vice Chair for 2024-26.

- Christina Watson

*The bylaws call for the Rail Policy Committee to elect a Chair and Vice Chair in February of every even year.*

9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS** and/or **COMMENTS**

10. **ADJOURN**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
Next Committee meeting  
**Monday, April 1, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.**

**Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
Conference Room  
55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas CA 93901**

A quorum of voting members is required to be present to hold this meeting.

There will be a zoom link for hybrid participation.

If you have any items for the next agenda, please submit them to:  
Christina Watson, Rail Program Coordinator  
[Christina@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:Christina@tamcmonterey.org)

Important Meeting Information

Agenda Packet and Documents: Any person who has a question concerning an item on this agenda may call or email the Agency office to make inquiry concerning the nature of the item described on the agenda. Complete agenda packets are on display online at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County website. Documents relating to an item on the open session that are distributed to the Committee less than 72 hours prior to the meeting shall be available for public review at the Agency website. Agency contact information is as follows:

Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
[www.tamcmonterey.org](http://www.tamcmonterey.org)  
55B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA 93901  
TEL: 831-775-0903  
EMAIL: [info@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:info@tamcmonterey.org)

Agenda Items: The agenda will be prepared by Agency staff and will close at noon nine (9) working days before the regular meeting. Any member of the Board may request in writing an item to appear on the agenda. The request shall be made by the agenda deadline and any support papers must be furnished by that time or be readily available.

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Maria Montiel, Administrative Assistant  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** Draft RPC Minutes

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**APPROVE** the draft Rail Policy Committee Minutes for January 8, 2024.

**SUMMARY:**

The draft minutes of the January 8, 2024 Rail Policy Committee meeting are attached for review.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:****DISCUSSION:****ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft\_RPC\_Minutes\_January\_2023\_Meeting

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)

**RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Draft Minutes of January 8, 2024*

55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, California 93901 - Transportation Agency Conference Room

Alternate locations: 2616 1st Avenue, Marina, California 93933 - Supervisor Askew's Office

11140 Speegle Street, Castroville CA, 95012 Supervisor Church's Office

168 West Alisal Street, 2nd Floor, Salinas, CA 93901, Supervisor Alejo's Office

	JAN 23	FEB 23	MA R 23	APR 23	MAY 23	JUN 23	JUL 23	AUG 23	SEP 23	OCT 23	NOV 23	JAN 24
L. Alejo, Dist. 1 ( <del>L. Gonzalez</del> , J. Gomez)	P(A)	P	<b>C</b>	P	P	<b>C</b>	<b>N</b>	P	P	P(A) (VC)	P	P
G. Church, Dist. 2 ( <del>M. Vierra</del> , L. Gray)	A	P	<b>A</b>	P(A)	P(A)	<b>A</b>	<b>O</b>	P(A)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)
W. Askew, Dist. 4 (Y. Anderson, <del>E. Mora</del> )	P(A)	P(A)	<b>N</b>	P (VC)	P(A) (VC)	<b>N</b>		P(A)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P (VC)
M. Adams, Dist. 5, (C. Courtney)	E	A	<b>C</b>	P(A) (VC)	E	<b>C</b>	<b>M</b>	E	A	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)
M. LeBarre, King City, Chair (C. DeLeon)	A	P	<b>E</b>	P	P	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	P	P	P	P	P
C. Medina Dirksen, Marina (B. Delgado)	P	P	<b>L</b>	A	A	<b>L</b>	<b>E</b>	A	A	A	P (VC)	A
E. Smith, Monterey (K. Barber, M. Garcia, A. Renny)	P	A	<b>L</b>	P	A	<b>L</b>	<b>T</b>	P	A	P	P	E
A. Sandoval, Salinas, (A. Rocha)	P	P	<b>E</b>	E	P	<b>E</b>	<b>I</b>	A	P	P	P	P(A)
M. Carbone, Sand City (J. Blackwelder)	A	A	<b>D</b>	A	A	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	A	A	A	P	A
I. Oglesby, Seaside (D. Pacheco)	P	P		P	P		<b>G</b>	P	P	P	A	P
F. Cabrera, Soledad (A. )	P	P		P	P			P	P	A	A	P
D. Potter, At Large Member, Vice Chair (J. Barron)	P	P		E	P			E	A	E	P	P
M. Twomey, AMBAG ( <del>H. Adamson</del> , P. Hierling)	A	P(A)		P(A)	P(A) (VC)			P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	E	P (VC)	P(A) (VC)
A. Lopez, Caltrans District 5	P	P		A	P (VC)			A	A	P(A) (VC)	P (VC)	P (VC)
C. Sedoryk, MST (L. Rheinheimer/ <del>M. Overmeyer</del> )	E	P(A)		P(A)	P (VC)			P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P(A) (VC)	P (VC)	P(A)

STAFF												
T. Muck, Executive Director	P	P		E	P			E	P	P	P	P
C. Watson, Director of Planning	P	P		P	P			P	P	P	P	P
M. Zeller, Director of Programming & Project Delivery	E	P		P	P (VC)			P (VC)	E	E	P (VC)	E
M. Montiel Admin Assistant	P	P		P	P			P	P	P	P	P
L. Williamson, Senior Engineer	P	P		P	P (VC)			P (VC)	P (VC)	A	P	P
D. Bilse, Principal Engineer	A	P		P	P (VC)			P (VC)	A	P (VC)	P (VC)	A
A. Guther, Assis. Transp. Planner	P	P		P	E			P	P	P	P	P
T. Wright, Community Outreach Coordinator	A	P		E	A			A	A	A	A	A
J. Strause, Transportation Planner	A	A		A	A			P	P (VC)	P (VC)	A	A
A. Hernandez Transp. Planner		P		A	A			A	A	A	A	A
A. Sambrano Transp. Planner									P (VC)	P (VC)	P (VC)	P

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

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

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Tarah Gatten	Caltrans	Javier Gomez	District 1 staff
Shannon Simonds	Caltrans	Jasmine Mejia Cortez	District 1 staff
Vibeke Norgaard	City Manager, Sand City	Javier Fernandez	Public
Zane Mortensen	Sand City Staff	William Godwin	Public
Michael Groves	EMC	Walt	Public
Brianna Goodman	SCCRTC		

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

**M/S/C** Alejo/ Potter/ unanimous

- 3.1** Approved minutes of the November 6, 2023, Rail Policy Committee meeting.
- 3.2** Received update on the Salinas Rail Kick Start project.
- 3.3** Received update on the Pajaro Multimodal Station Project.
- 3.4** Received media clippings attached online.

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**4. SAND CITY BIKE TRAIL AND PARKING PROPOSAL**

The Committee received information related to a proposal for a multi-use trail and parking on the Monterey Branch Line in Sand City.

Executive Director Todd Muck reported that he has discussed with city representatives potential uses of Agency-owned property within Sand City. He noted that Sand City is proposing a one-mile segment of a multi-use trail and parking in two areas within TAMC-owned right-of-way. Mr. Muck noted that the city promises that the “proposed multi-use trail will take into consideration the future use of the TAMC corridor for rail and/or bus transit would no obstruct any of the existing rail infrastructure” and would minimize conflict with the existing property leases.

Zane Mortensen, City Planner, Sand City, presented the City’s proposal of a 12-20-foot-wide path for pedestrian and bike traffic within the Monterey Branch Line right-of-way.

Committee members provided the following feedback on the proposal:

- Ensure any improvements preserve the rail corridor and avoid any rework when eventual rail and/or bus corridor is constructed;
- Ensure plans, vision, images reflect preservation of rail corridor;
- Show connections to broader trail network such as the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway project;
- Consider whether there needs to be a fence between the trail and rail corridor;
- City would be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the trail and parking and ensuring adequate lighting; and
- Consider solar panels as a source of energy that may help cover maintenance costs.



Lisa Rheinheimer, Monterey-Salinas Transit, reported that MST supports Sand City's proposal and MST is happy to be part of the planning process.

**M/S/C Askew/Alejo/unanimous**

On a motion by Committee Member Askew, seconded by Committee Member Alejo, the Committee voted 9-0 to support the conceptual project and direct staff to continue coordination with Sand City staff and recommend a presentation to the full Board to provide support for the conceptual design as currently envisioned.

Executive Director Muck noted that staff will work with Sand City staff to bring a presentation to the February or March Board meeting.

**5. COAST CORRIDOR RAIL PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the planned increase in passenger rail service along the coast corridor between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Christina Watson, Director of Planning, reported that the next CRCC Policy Committee meeting is planned for February 16, 2024, in Oakland. She noted that certain member agencies of the CRCC have voted to allocate some portions of their Senate Bill 125 funding to projects that support the Coast Rail project. Ms. Watson noted that staff will seek authorization from the Board in January to contribute \$10,000 to the grant application consultant contract.

Shannon Simonds, Caltrans, reported that the Federal Railroad Administration announced the Corridor Identification grant awards, five of which went to Caltrans to help California rail operators create Service Development Plans, which will enable them to apply for federal funding. She noted that several of California's rail corridors are larger than most states. She noted that Caltrans wants to support all the projects along the Coast in making progress.

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

None this month.

**7. ADJOURN**

Chair LeBarre adjourned the meeting at 3:59 p.m.

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Christina Watson, Director of Planning  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** **Salinas Rail Kick Start Project Update**

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**RECEIVE** update on the Salinas Rail Kick Start project.

**SUMMARY:**

Activities on the Salinas Rail Kick Start project since the last update include operations scenario discussions and design coordination efforts with key stakeholders on Packages 2 (Salinas layover facility) and 3 (Gilroy track connections).

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The capital cost of the Monterey County Rail Extension project, Phase 1, Salinas Kick Start project (the Salinas station and improvements in Santa Clara County), is estimated at \$81 million. The Kick Start project is proceeding with secured state funding under the adopted state environmental clearance.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Monterey County Rail Extension Project will extend passenger rail service from Santa Clara County south to Salinas. TAMC is pursuing a phased implementation of the Project. Phase 1, known as the Kick Start Project, includes Salinas train station circulation improvements, a train layover facility in Salinas, and track improvements at the Gilroy station and between Salinas and Gilroy. The Kick Start Project has wrapped up construction of Package 1, improvements at the Salinas train station. The layover facility (Package 2) and Gilroy track improvements (Package 3) are now in final design.

**Property Acquisition**

Four parcels remain that are potentially required for the layover facility and Gilroy track improvements, which are owned by Union Pacific. Property rights negotiations are on hold pending Union Pacific's review of the design plans.

**Final Design**

HDR Engineering prepared the 100% plans, specifications and estimates for stakeholder review on September 1, 2022, and has gathered stakeholder input on those plans. Since the last report to this Committee, the design team has held design review meetings with Amtrak.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Christina Watson, Director of Planning  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** **Media Clippings**

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**RECEIVE** media clippings attached online.

**SUMMARY:****FINANCIAL IMPACT:****DISCUSSION:****ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 2024-01 Salinas Valley Chamber article: Monterey County Commuter Rail

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

- [January 25, 2024 article in the Monterey Herald, "Sand City receives donated parcel that may help with future traffic flow"](#)
- [February 1, 2024 article in the Monterey Herald, "TAMC plan to bring Caltrain operations to Salinas chugging along"](#)
- [February 1, 2024 article in StreetsBlog Cal, "Caltrans Issues Emergency Declaration for Orange County Rail"](#)
- [February 3, 2024 report on KSQD, "Santa Cruz Rail and Trail: Questions and Conundrums"](#)
- [February 7, 2024 report on KION, "Caltrain looking to expand rail service to Monterey County"](#)



Salinas Valley  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Monterey County Commuter Rail: Progress Continues Toward Vision

by Kevin Dayton, Governmental Affairs Liaison



MONTEREY COUNTY  
RAIL EXTENSION

**T**he ambitious project to connect Monterey County with the San Francisco Bay Area (and beyond) via commuter rail continues to advance.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) is overseeing the long-term "Monterey County Rail Extension Project" in coordination with the City of Salinas, the City of Gilroy, Caltrain (the Peninsula/South Bay commuter rail system between San Francisco and Gilroy), Caltrans, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), Union Pacific Railroad, and various public utilities such as Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) and the Salinas City Center Improvement Association



Kimbley Craig, then a Salinas City Councilmember and now Salinas Mayor, speaks at the groundbreaking for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project in August 2018.

(SCCIA) also have interests in this project.

### **Pessimism Turns Into Achievement**

Preparation for the Monterey County Rail Extension was ongoing in the early and mid-2010s, when TAMC was seeking

funding and working to acquire properties around the Salinas train station for a future Downtown Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center. TAMC was also working with the City of Salinas to design an extension

**COMMUTER RAIL** - see page 7



## COMMUTER RAIL - from page 1

of Lincoln Avenue and improve circulation and parking at the train station on Market Street.

Some Monterey County residents at that time believed the Rail to Monterey County project was a fanciful concept unlikely to get started, let alone be completed. Downtown Salinas was speckled with blighted and vacant buildings, and its infrastructure was drab and outdated. The County of Monterey had shifted much of its workforce from Downtown offices to the former Capital One building on Schilling Place. One of the abandoned buildings on Market Street near the train station was even repurposed in the winter of 2016-2017 as a warming shelter for the homeless.

But on August 9, 2018, TAMC hosted a Monterey County Rail Extension Project groundbreaking ceremony on the crumbling asphalt parking lot at the Salinas train station. Soon afterwards, the blighted buildings near the station were demolished.

TAMC awarded a construction contract for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project Phase 1 (Salinas Kick Start Project) Package 1 of 3 (Salinas Commuter Rail Station) in April 2019. The project was completed in March 2021. An unsightly area around the train station was transformed into an Intermodal Transportation Center.

This project occurred in conjunction with numerous other projects related to implementation of the 2015 Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan, including the Main Street Streetscape Project and the West Alisal/Lincoln Avenue Downtown Complete Streets Project. In 2019, the El Charrito burrito purveyor renovated its building nearby on Market Street. Developers responded to City of Salinas requests with proposals for new density housing and commercial development near the Intermodal Transportation Center.

Adjacent to the train station, the historic Southern Pacific Freight Depot was renovated and converted into the Salinas California Welcome Center, with its beautiful museum of Central Coast history. Monterey County residents began promoting a possible "Heritage Park" comprised of the historic buildings at the Intermodal Transportation Center (such as the First Mayor's House).

An area to avoid has become an area with potential.

### What's Next?

Package 2 of 3 for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project Phase 1 is a layover facility in Salinas for the commuter trains. As of December

COMMUTER RAIL - see page 22

## COMMUTER RAIL - from page 7

2023, the Salinas Layover Facility is in final design, and TAMC has acquired the property for it. Package 3 of 3 for Phase 1 - improvements at the Gilroy station and on the track between Salinas and Gilroy - is also in final design.

Meanwhile, TAMC and numerous agency partners are obtaining funding and making plans for the Monterey County Rail Extension Project Phase 2: development of a Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Transit Hub. This will be the connection point for rail commuters on a Santa Cruz Branch light rail line to go to Salinas and then to the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. In April 2023, TAMC received a state grant to complete environmental review for this station. It's an opportunity to bring hope to the beleaguered unincorporated Monterey County community of Pajaro.

Phase 3 of the Monterey County Rail Extension Project will be a multi-modal station in Castroville to serve as the connection point for rail commuters from the Monterey Peninsula. Far in the future is the dream of a Monterey Branch light rail line that would connect this station with stations on the Monterey Peninsula.

### If This Plan Works, What Will Happen?

Once rail commuters from Monterey County get to Gilroy, they can continue on the Caltrain commuter rail all the way to San Francisco. Along the way they can transfer to the Capitol Corridor line, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Amtrak, and a future Valley Link to Northern San Joaquin County. A California High-Speed Rail station is planned at the Gilroy train station.

After all of this government money is spent to create these train networks, will people ride them? How will new public transportation connections affect economic development, urban revitalization, housing availability, and traffic congestion in Monterey County?

Some Monterey County residents are skeptical and cynical about the benefits of the project in relation to the costs to taxpayers. Others are wary of how their communities would change if the commuter rail actually becomes popular.

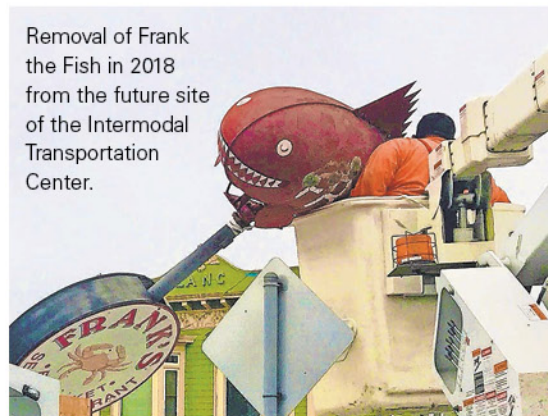
Changes bring challenges; however, your Chamber of Commerce believes the Monterey County Rail Extension Project will help advance the Chamber's official vision of "a thriving, welcoming Salinas Valley where people, families and businesses succeed via economic growth and opportunity."



Salinas Train Station today.

Multi-story density housing will likely sprout up around the three new train stations in Salinas, Pajaro, and Castroville. Agriculture-related technology in Salinas may get a boost with a commuter rail connection to Silicon Valley. New jobs and new urban housing supply may give young people who grew up in Monterey County an incentive to stay in Monterey County. Some local residents may even choose to forgo personal vehicle ownership and exclusively use public transportation, thus reducing traffic congestion and surface parking demands.

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce appreciates the diligence and persistence of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and its partners as it advances the Monterey County Rail Extension Project. 🌱



Removal of Frank the Fish in 2018 from the future site of the Intermodal Transportation Center.

## GROUNDBREAKING NOTICE



### SPEAKERS:

ASSEMBLYMEMBER  
ANNA CABALLERO

MONTEREY COUNTY  
SUPERVISOR  
TAMC BOARD CHAIR  
JOHN PHILLIPS

SALINAS COUNCILMEMBER  
TAMC RAIL POLICY CHAIR  
KIMBLEY CRAIG

SOCIA PRESIDENT  
CATHERINE  
KOBRIŃSKY EVANS

TAMC  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DEBBIE HALE

CALIFORNIA STATE  
TRANSPORTATION AGENCY  
SECRETARY  
BRIAN ANNIS (INVITED)

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 2018**  
**SALINAS RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT**  
**11:00 A.M. GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY**

**Salinas Train Station, 18 Station Place, Salinas**

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County invites you to join community members, elected officials, and business leaders to commemorate the groundbreaking of this project to bring more passenger rail service to connect Monterey County and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Please send your RSVP for the ceremony to  
[maria@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:maria@tamcmonterey.org).



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY  
FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

831-775-0903

[www.tamcmonterey.org](http://www.tamcmonterey.org)

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner, Riley Gerbrandt  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** Zero Emission Rail Project-SCCRTC Update

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**RECEIVE** update on Santa Cruz County Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project.

**SUMMARY:**

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission staff will present an update on the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

No current direct financial impact to TAMC.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (SCBRL) is a continuous transportation corridor that spans approximately 32 miles of Santa Cruz County from the community of Pajaro in northern Monterey County to Davenport on the north coast of Santa Cruz County. The study area includes 22 miles of the SCBRL Right-of-Way (ROW) from Pajaro to Natural Bridges Drive on the west side of Santa Cruz, and runs parallel to the often-congested Highway 1 while connecting to regional and state rail lines in Pajaro in Monterey County.

In 2012, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) acquired the rail line, which has been a transportation corridor since the mid-1870s, bringing it into public ownership. In 2015, SCCRTC completed the Rail Transit Feasibility Study, which included a broad technical analysis of several public transportation service scenarios developed based on input from the public, ridership projections, capital and operating cost estimates, review of vehicle technologies, and evaluation of funding options. In 2021, the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis & Rail Network Integration Study evaluated the feasibility of rail transit service on the SCBRL. The Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project Purpose and Need statement was developed using information derived from the 2021 Alternatives Analysis/ Network Integration Study.

**Project Needs**

The current state of Santa Cruz County's transportation infrastructure is strained and unable to effectively serve the community. The existing transportation network is an impediment to a stronger local economy, improved environmental and public health, improved equity and a better quality of life. Transportation needs contributing to this project include:

- Diverse Transportation Needs not Fully Met and Slow Transit Travel Times
- Deficiencies in Roadway Travel and Insufficient Alternative Travel Options



- Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction Mandates
- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Reduction Mandates
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Linkages Missing and Safety Concerns

### **Project Purpose**

The project's fundamental purpose is to support and improve equitable multimodal transportation options in Santa Cruz County. Constituent elements of the project purpose include the following:

- Provide increased access to convenient, accessible, and reliable public travel options.
- Improve transit connections to community activity centers supporting the local economy and providing better access to housing and jobs.
- Integrate with plans for future land use.
- Reduce transit travel times and improve transit system reliability.
- Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and safety.
- Promote alternative transportation modes to increase overall transportation system capacity and reliability, improve health and reduce mortality.
- Provide a critical link between the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz and communities in between as an alternative to congested roadways.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated GHG emissions.

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission staff will present an update on the Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None

### **WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

[Zero Emission Passenger Rail and Trail Project \(scrtc.org\)](http://scrtc.org)

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** **Elkhorn Slough Resiliency Project Update**

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**RECEIVE** update on Elkhorn Slough Transportation Corridor Resiliency project.

**SUMMARY:**

Staff will provide an update and background on efforts to coordinate with local agencies on the rail corridor through the Elkhorn Slough.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

In July 2023, the Governor signed Assembly Bill (AB) 102, which included a Priority Legislative Budget Project grant allocation of \$1,000,000 for TAMC to initiate planning work on the Highway 1 Elkhorn Slough Transportation Corridor Climate Resiliency project. TAMC staff is currently coordinating with The Nature Conservancy, the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to secure additional funds for planning efforts to prepare the project for engineering and environmental analysis.

**DISCUSSION:**

On January 12, 2024, TAMC staff met with representatives from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve at the Elkhorn Slough Reserve to observe the overtopping of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) rail tracks at the North Marsh location of the reserve. The top of the tracks at the North Marsh is near 6.5 feet; any tides higher than that will overtop the tracks. A "king tide" is considered anything over 7 feet in this location, which currently happens approximately twice per year near the winter and summer solstices, but is expected to be more common and more severe with increasing sea level rise.

When an overtopping event is expected, UPRR sends a Hy-Rail Truck to observe the high water coming over to ensure the tracks are safe to operate on, and then track inspectors exit the vehicle to remove any debris that the flow left on the tracks and assess any concerns. At king tide, there is a significant difference in water surface elevation between the west and east sides of the tracks. High differential between marsh areas on either sides of the rail line results in water flow across the tracks that can be substantial, causing erosion of the ballast rock along the railway, meaning that the track inspectors need to replace the ballast before trains can operate on the line. If the water levels were equal on each side of the tracks via additional culverts, the ballast erosion would be mitigated. However, this could put the nearby low-lying Elkhorn Road underwater during king tides in the current conditions.

On January 12, 2024, TAMC staff observed a moderate overtopping of the rail line as well as a Hy-Rail Truck operator working for UPRR who examined the conditions of the rail line after the overtopping event ended.

The rail line will be included in the future planning work that TAMC is pursuing for the Highway 1 Elkhorn Slough transportation corridor, which will evaluate and prioritize alternatives for the rail line. This planning work follows in the footsteps of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG's) 2020 Central Coast Highway 1 Climate Resiliency Study (**web attachment**), which called for improvements to be constructed no later than 2050 and recommended initiating the engineering analysis of elevating the rail line on a trestle in the near term.

Staff will present a video and photo slideshow of the January 12 king tide at the meeting. Partner agency staff may also be available for questions.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

- [AMBAG Central Coast Highway 1 Climate Resiliency Study \(2020\)](#)

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** Pajaro Multimodal Station Project Update

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**RECEIVE** update on Pajaro Multimodal Station Project.

**SUMMARY:**

Activities on the Pajaro Multimodal Station project include the release of a Request for Proposals and coordination with Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission on their rail projects as they pertain to the station and Monterey County.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Pre-construction work will begin in 2024 with state-secured funding for environmental review. In December 2023, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) approved a \$2.3 million grant to cover the cost of California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act documentation. This documentation will allow TAMC to pursue further state and federal funding for the design update and right of way work. The total estimated cost of pre-construction work for the Pajaro Multimodal Station Project, which includes environmental review, design, and right of way, is \$19.5 million.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Monterey County Rail Extension Project will extend passenger rail service from Santa Clara County south to Salinas. TAMC is pursuing a phased implementation of the Project. Phase 2 is the Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Transit Hub. The proposed Pajaro/Watsonville station will be the connection point for Santa Cruz County to new passenger rail service on the Coast mainline tracks between Salinas and the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as a hub on future round-the-bay service.

After a successful application to the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), TAMC received \$2.3 million to fund environmental review documentation. In December 2023, TAMC released a Request for Proposals that received no submissions. Staff has re-released the Request for Proposals after more outreach to potential consultants. The schedule for a request for proposals and a contract to begin this work is as follows:

- March 28, 2024 - Proposals due to TAMC
- May 22, 2024 - Contract to TAMC board for approval
- June 2024 - Project activities begin

Meetings attended that pertain to the project:

- February 12, 2024: Zero Emission Passenger Rail & Trail Project Development Open House
- February 16, 2024: Coast Rail Coordinating Council Policy Meeting

Staff will provide a verbal update on all activities at the meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

## Memorandum

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner, Todd Muck, Executive Director  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** **Coast Corridor Rail Project Update**

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

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

### **SUMMARY:**

Progress since the last update on the coast rail project to this Committee includes a meeting of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council Policy Committee.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The Coast Rail project capital and operation costs are under evaluation.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC) is a multi-agency advisory and planning organization focused on improving the rail corridor between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area along the California Central Coast. Members of the Council include all Regional Transportation Planning Agencies along the Central Coast – all of which have a strong interest in improving rail service and the rail infrastructure along the Central Coast’s portion of the California Coast Passenger Rail Corridor.

The Policy Committee met on February 16, 2024, in Oakland; the meeting agenda is online as a **web attachment**. Key items discussed include:

- Federal Corridor Identification and Development program
- Senate Bill 125 funding
- Transit and Intercity Rail Capital program application, including the King City station
- Return of the Intercity Passenger Rail coordination efforts, including a potential Rail Summit in San Diego in fall 2024

Alissa Guther, Transportation Planner, presented an update on the Elkhorn Slough project.

The revised 2024 meeting schedule is online as a **web attachment**. The next Policy Committee meeting is planned for May 17 in Ventura.

Staff and Committee Members will provide an update at the meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**

- [Coast Rail Coordinating Council meeting schedule and agenda](#)

**Memorandum**

**To:** Rail Policy Committee  
**From:** Christina Watson, Director of Planning  
**Meeting Date:** March 4, 2024  
**Subject:** Rail Policy Committee Elections

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**HOLD** elections for Chair and Vice Chair for 2024-26.

**SUMMARY:**

The bylaws call for the Rail Policy Committee to elect a Chair and Vice Chair in February of every even year.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

None

**DISCUSSION:**

From the Transportation Agency for Monterey County Bylaws, section 12.4:

“A Rail Policy Committee composed of TAMC Board members or their alternates from the following jurisdictions on the rail lines: Cities of Salinas, Marina, Sand City, Seaside, and Monterey, Supervisorial District 1, Supervisorial District 2, Supervisorial District 4, Supervisorial District 5 and two representatives from South Monterey County: either (a) the 3rd District County Supervisor and a voting TAMC Board member from one of the South Monterey County Cities, or (b) two voting TAMC Board members from South Monterey County Cities. In addition, the TAMC Board may appoint one at-large member from the TAMC Board, taking into account interest and expertise in rail issues. The TAMC Chair may appoint annually ex-officio members as needed.

“The Committee shall select a Chair and Vice Chair from its membership for a two-year term at the end of the February meeting of every even year, beginning in 2008. The Chair may rotate between the County Supervisors and the Cities, and/or between Salinas Valley and the Monterey Peninsula or the existing Chair may be reappointed to a new term. To be eligible to serve as the Chair or Vice Chair, the person must be a voting Agency Board Member and have served on the Rail Policy Committee for at least one year. The Rail Policy Committee advises the Transportation Agency Board on matters related to the establishment of passenger rail service in Monterey County.”

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**WEB ATTACHMENTS:**



