

MINUTES

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Thursday, May 15, 2003

**Board of Supervisor Hearing Room
511 East Lakeside Parkway
Santa Maria, CA**

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:**

Members Present: Naomi Schwartz, Supervisor, First District; Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District (SBCAG Vice-Chair); Gail Marshall, Supervisor, Third District; Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District; Joe Centeno, Supervisor, Fifth District; Victoria Pointer, Mayor, City of Buellton; Richard Weinberg, Mayor, City of Carpinteria; Jack Hawxhurst, Mayor, City of Goleta; Sam Arca, Mayor, City of Guadalupe; Dick DeWees, Mayor, City of Lompoc; Marty Blum, Mayor of Santa Barbara; Larry Lavagnino, Mayor (SBCAG Chair), City of Santa Maria; Brian Baca, Councilmember, City of Solvang; Rich Krumholz, Deputy Director, Caltrans District 5.

Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Jim Kemp, Executive Director; Michael Powers, Deputy Director of Planning; Stephen VanDenburgh, Deputy Director of Programs; Kent Epperson, TDM Program Administrator; Debbie Barber, Public Information/Government Affairs Coordinator; Fred Luna, Program Manager; Fluor Daniel, Inc.; Ruth Garcia, Transportation Planner; Cathy Muneio, Executive Secretary; Kevin E. Ready, Sr., Senior Deputy County Counsel;

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Lavagnino thanked Supervisor Rose for chairing the last two meetings and called for the pledge of allegiance.

3. **Recess to Closed Session:**

The Board recessed into closed session at 8:32 a.m.

4. **Convene in Open Session**

When the Board reconvened at 9:20 a.m. Legal Counsel, Kevin Ready, reported that no reportable action was taken.

5. **Approval of Minutes: April 17, 2003**

Mayor Pointer moved to approve the April 17, 2003 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Marshall and carried with Mayor Lavagnino abstaining.

6. **Public Comment**

Due to technical difficulties, the Board said they would return to this item in order to hear public comments being made from the Santa Barbara Hearing Room.

7. **Approval of Consent Calendar:**

Supervisor Schwartz requested that Item 7A be pulled from the consent calendar.

A. **STIP Amendments**

Supervisor Schwartz asked what the rationale was for authorizing the Executive Director to approve administrative STIP amendments for cost increases up to \$1 million.

Mr. Kemp said the amount was based on the existing authority given to the Executive Director to approve administrative FTIP amendments. He said it allows the process to be expeditious rather than coming to the Board each time an amendment is necessary.

Supervisor Schwartz said she agreed that the principal was important but did not like the \$ 1 million limit. She said this was much too high to be approved at the Executive Director level. She asked what the past history was for approving the amendments. She stated that she was not sure there were that many projects for which they could consider a one million dollar funding increase.

Mr. Kemp stated that the \$1 million limit amount could be changed and that any time there was a potential for controversy, he would bring the item to the Board prior to approving the amendment. As an example, he indicated that a project with a cost increase funded entirely out of local funds or funds not under SBCAG's discretion could be considered an administrative amendment.

Supervisor Schwartz said it was her concern that the Board exercise its authority responsibly and that it concerned her that staff would be authorized to approve an amendment up to \$1 million.

Supervisor Centeno said he agreed with Supervisor Schwartz and that he would like to have the Executive Director contact the SBCAG Chair prior to taking any action and that a limit of \$500,000 be set instead of \$1 million.

Supervisor Schwartz moved to have the Executive Director come back to the Board at its meeting in June with a rationale for the funding threshold. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Centeno and carried unanimously.

Supervisor Marshall moved to adopt the remaining consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Schwartz and carried unanimously.

Legal Counsel, Kevin Ready, said that there were two items that had arisen subsequent to the agenda being posted that needed action prior to the next Board meeting. He said the Board would need to vote on whether to add these items to the agenda.

X-1 **Carpinteria City Council request to Support Federal Funding Earmark for Highway 101/Casitas Pass and Linden Ave. Interchange Project**

Kevin Ready explained that under the Brown Act, SBCAG can only consider taking action on an ex-agenda item if 1) the item came to the attention of the agency after posting of the agenda and 2) the item requires action by the board prior to its next meeting. He stated that the board must decide whether to add the item to the agenda before discussing it and that placing an ex-agenda item on the agenda requires a two-thirds vote by the board (9 affirmative votes).

Scott Wenz commented that he was in favor of placing this on the agenda and that the Carpinteria City Council had voted in favor of this project.

Supervisor Gray moved to add this item to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mayor Arca. The motion failed 6-7 with Supervisors Rose, Marshall, Schwartz, Mayors Blum, Pointer, Weinberg, and Councilmember Baca opposed and Supervisors Centeno and Gray, and Mayors Arca, DeWees, Hawxhurst and Lavagnino in favor.

Mayor Weinberg explained that the reason he had voted against the Council's request was due to the Council's inaccurate information, and he was not at the City Council meeting when they approved this. If he had been in attendance he could have provided more accurate information which would have changed the council's vote.

X-2 **Request to Support Federal Funding Earmark for Funding of Space Transportation Infrastructure Grant for Transportation at Vandenberg AFB**

Kevin Ready explained that this item, to forward a timely funding request, required immediate action by the SBCAG Board.

Mayor Arca moved to add this item to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Schwartz and carried unanimously.

6. Public Comment

Scott Wenz, representing Cars are Basic, mentioned the numerous articles that had been in the newspaper regarding the MTD bus procurements. He emphatically requested an audit of both MTD records and management capabilities.

8 CalTrans District Director's Report:

Rich Krumholz, Deputy District Director, sat in for Gregg Albright. Mr. Krumholz reported that the funding reductions for transportation proposed in the May revise of the proposed 03-04 state budget were less drastic than what was proposed in January. He said that there may be more funds available than originally estimated.

Supervisor Schwartz stated that a lot of work was being done by the SBCAG Board as well as the South Coast Subregional Planning Committee to plan for the future of the 101 corridor. She said that work has been progressing on the 101 operational improvement projects approved in 1996, but that there have been some delays. She noted that the 101/Linden/Casitas Pass interchange project has had significant changes in scope and that this requires more environmental work and that the project will require an additional \$20 million in funding.

Supervisor Schwartz emphasized that these interchange improvements will not add capacity to the 101 freeway. She stated that funding has been requested by SBCAG from TEA 21 reauthorization for the 101 Implementation Plan which was a concrete step in improving the corridor.

Supervisor Schwartz said that the Summerland Ortega Hill project was the first operational improvement project going to construction and that by adding a third auxiliary lane on the 101 will improve traffic on the freeway. She expressed concerns about the delays the project will incur because of the lack of STIP funding available in the CTC's recently approved allocation plan.

Rich Krumholz stated that there had been a change in the scope of the project which was a fairly common occurrence in the development of major projects. He explained that these were not capacity improvements, but operational improvements to improve the operation of intersecting streets. He said that these projects would accommodate any future widening of the 101 corridor.

Supervisor Schwartz requested a report next month on the Ortega Hill Project and urged that Caltrans make every effort to ensure that this project would not be delayed by lack of funding.

Supervisor Centeno stated he had a conversation with Congressman Capps about the widening of the Santa Maria River Bridge. He said Ms. Capps stated she was working with SLOCOG to obtain funding for that project and asked if Mr. Krumholz knew anything about that. He said this was a very important project due to the fact that if the widening of 101 occurred through Santa Maria and the bridges were not widened, there would be a lot of congestion as a result of that.

Mr. Krumholz stated that this project was a three-way partnership between SLOCOG, SBCAG and Caltrans. He explained that the money currently programmed was just for the environmental document and that the program was in jeopardy of being delayed right now due to the revenue shortfall in the state highway account. He said that projects only programmed for environmental documents were particularly susceptible to being delayed. He noted that this was one of the projects on the TEA 21 list.

Supervisor Marshall said that last year there was discussion about the trash and other items left where the truckers pull off at the Nojoqui Pass area. She said that Caltrans had placed a chain length fence there which had now become a magnet for trash.

Mayor Weinberg asked about the dust left on Hwy 101 due to the grinding work on Hwy 101 between Milpas and Hot Springs.

Pat Mickelson with Caltrans said that the grinding had now been completed and that they were about to begin with the overlay work.

9. **Call Box Capital Replacement Project**

Fred Luna presented the staff report.

This item was opened for a public hearing.

Barry Stotts commented that the placement of the call boxes should be investigated due to their inaccessibility. Mr. Stotts said that when the call boxes were replaced he would recommend using a straight 911 cellular phone and he requested a needs assessment for the hearing impaired.

Due to no other public comment the public hearing was closed.

Supervisor Centeno supported the proposal to make the call boxes more accessible to handicapped individuals.

Mr. Kemp said that he would bring this project back to the Board for environmental approval. He requested that the Board provide staff with any input that might be helpful

10. **Unmet Transit Needs**

Ruth Garcia presented the staff report.

Due to technical difficulties with the remote testimony system a five minute break was called.

The public hearing was opened.

Sue Verhasselt, Chair of SBCTAC, strongly recommend that the Board vote for Option 2. She stated that although it was an off cycle year for CMAQ, the funds were available and could be applied to this project.

Jeannie Sparks, representing Coalition for Sustainable Transportation (COAST) thanked the Board and SBCAG staff for setting up the various committees and completing surveys for transit. She said that more than 1,000 surveys had been returned and showed a great need for additional transit. Ms. Sparks said she supported Option 2 and hoped to see transit in the Santa Ynez Valley.

Jessica Sheeter, Executive Director with COAST, said she supported Option 2. She said she believed that TDA funds in Santa Maria and the County should be used for transit and that this would provide transit to one-third of the population in Santa Maria and help to relieve congestion on the roads. She said this was an important first step, and to complete the picture it was essential that service should be expanded to connect to the Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Maria, Lompoc and Santa Barbara. Ms. Sheeter noted that it will take a long time to make the public aware of the new service and that it must be properly marketed.

Supervisor Gray asked about the Feb. 15, 2003 unmet needs report. She asked if Ms Sheeter was basing her comments on the vastly needed amount stated in the document.

Ms. Sheeter replied that she was.

Barry Stotts thanked SBCAG for formalizing a full committee in the North County and especially thanked Michael Powers and Ruth Garcia for completing the work and formulating what was done.

David Fortson with SBCAN advocated that SBCAG increase transit opportunities in the North County. He explained that both SBCAN and Coast have worked collaboratively and had

participated in the SBCAG transit committees. He said he was disappointed that there were not more TDA funds put towards transit in the North County, and he hoped the Board would support Option 2.

Alex Pujo stated that the areas that needed transit were the agricultural areas that cannot sustain the transit system. He explained that there was a great need to satisfy the needs of the jobs/housing balance.

Corrine Bernstein requested a bus on Sundays in Santa Maria. She said she is in desperate need for one to go to work. She asked the Board think about the elderly and raise rates if necessary to run a bus on Sundays.

Joe Rye, Transit Services Manager with the City of Santa Maria, explained that the fare box ratio for SMAT had slipped below the 20 percent mandate. He stated the city may hold a public meeting to see whether a fare increase could make Sunday service a possibility.

Sara McDonald, a Santa Maria concerned citizen, requested transit from Lompoc to Santa Maria and encouraged that the Board vote for Option 2. She said there were a lot of people in need of transit in Santa Maria and that there was a need to make the public aware of the resources available to them.

Renee Hoskinson, with Community Partners in Caring, thanked SBCTAC and Ruth Garcia. She said that as a spouse on the Vandenberg Airforce Base she does a lot of commuting back and forth and utilizes transit in Santa Maria and Lompoc all of the time. She said that having transit to Vandenberg would be a wonderful option to have. She said that Community Partners in Caring was a gap filler for individual transportation needs and there would always be a need for this program but other options were necessary.

The public hearing was closed.

Mayor DeWees expressed his gratitude for the Community Partners in Caring and Valley Haven for helping to meet this need. He asked what the ridership and cost would be per day for the new transit service. He asked if there was a point in Lompoc where people will get picked up and also asked if this was an ADA requirement.

Mr. Powers responded that they had looked at factors in context of the service plan. He said this transit service would connect with current transit centers. There would be stops at Vandenberg Village, Vandenberg AFB, Orcutt and Santa Maria. During non peak periods the service would stop at the Betteravia Center.

Mayor DeWees asked how someone who needs to get to Santa Maria Social Service and is dropped at the government center would get to the doctor from that point.

Mr. Powers responded that they would transfer at the central point at Main and Broadway or they could have other opportunities to transfer at the transit centers. He pointed out the pages that explained the service plan and the annual performance criteria in the Transit Needs Assessment.

Mayor DeWees said he was under the understanding that the national average for the performance criteria was 30 percent. He asked why the figures Ms. Garcia showed in the Plan were greater. He asked what her calculations were based on.

Ms. Garcia said she took the information from current SMOOTH social services ridership and a commuter survey conducted by Vandenberg Air Force Base. Ms. Garcia referred the Board to Appendix K of the Transit Needs Assessment and explained the methodology and calculations for the service implementation plan.

Mayor DeWees asked what the cost of the service would be.

Mr. Powers responded that it would be \$2.00 one way which would make it a 17% fare box ratio.

Mr. Powers pointed out that under Option 2 the commuters will get a fairly significant financial relief through the TIF, a federal program that reimburses the individual for commuter transit costs; however, the only way to determine cost and service viability is to put the service out there.

Supervisor Marshall said that a good point made during public testimony was the low budget for marketing the service. She said you could have a pilot project that was workable but in order for it to be successful people have to know about it. She stated that the budget was not a substantial amount for marketing.

Mr. Kemp stated that in order for the service to be successful it needs to be adequately marketed. He said that the service proposal was a preliminary proposal and that did not necessarily intend that the budget be for the service. He noted that under Option 2 the Board would set aside \$375,000 in TDA funds, which would include costs for a consultant who would also develop a service and marketing plan.

Mayor Lavagnino stated that the willingness if Vandenberg Air Force Base to provide transit service on the base would help the ridership if a new intercommunity transit service were implemented.

Supervisor Centeno said that the individual jurisdictions need to reconsider how they are spending TDA funds and may want to consider using all of their TDA funds for transit.

Mayor Hawxhurst asked what was recommended by TTAC.

Mr. Kemp said that Option 2 was recommended by TTAC.

Mayor Arca said that it was necessary to improve transit as best we can even if limited by funding. He said he wanted to acknowledge Santa Maria's support by providing bus service. Mayor Arca asked Mr. Watson to describe the recent success that the Guadalupe Flyer has experienced.

Harry Watson said that when SMOOTH started service (between Guadalupe and Santa Maria), there was standing room only. They have six to seven runs daily with standing room only. He said that SMOOTH contacted NBC and offered to advertise on their buses in lieu of charging for marketing. He said he thought that this might work with the intercity services. He said that due

to funding cuts the SMOOTH social service bus has gone from four to two and are now down to about 100 riders. He said they would be going back to three round trips per day on July 1 if the funding grants go through. Mr. Watson recommended leasing buses for the intercommunity service until it is determined if the pilot project will be a success.

Mayor DeWees asked about the figures used to determine the fare box percentage stating that the figures shown in the service proposal seemed too high based on the estimated costs. Mr. Kemp stated that when calculating fare box ratio you do not include capital costs, only operating costs.

Supervisor Gray stated that she traveled from Santa Maria all of the time and that traffic seemed very light, and it would be difficult to get the ridership necessary.

Mayor DeWees said when he saw the numbers for COLT riders he took issue with COAST's ridership assumptions. He stated that in 1998 he had a ridership of 113,000 and that it had gone up 49%.

Mayor Lavagnino moved to approve the resolution (Option 2) and direct that \$375,000 from the FY 2003-04 Local Transportation Fund allocations be reserved in equal amounts from the apportionments to Lompoc, Santa Maria and Santa Barbara County. Reserved funds shall be used as local match for potential CMAQ Supervisor Centeno seconded the motion. The motion passed with Supervisors Centeno, Marshall, Rose, Schwartz, Mayors Blum, Lavagnino, Pointer, Weinberg, and Councilmember Baca in favor, and Supervisor Gray, Mayors Arca, DeWees and Hawxhurst opposed.

Supervisor Centeno moved to approve the Transit Needs Assessment report. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rose and carried unanimously.

X-2 **Request to Support Federal Funding Earmark for Funding of Space Transportation Infrastructure Grant for Transportation at Vandenberg AFB**

Supervisor Marshall commented that these were funds she was not familiar with. She said that when we request special funds from our Representatives that there may be one pot that all of these funds come from and requests may compete with each other.

Kevin Ready explained that this was a matching grant program with Space Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program money. He said that Congressman Gallegly has requested that \$10 million be appropriated for the entire United States. He explained that he had spoken with congressional staff and was encouraged to submit a request for funding. Staff is recommending that the Board approve a request for an appropriation of \$2 million from the STIMG program for local transportation infrastructure to be built or operated in support of space launch operations at VAFB in Northern Santa Barbara County and to include in the appropriation an amount of not more than \$200,000 for FAA costs to administer the grant program. He noted that, if approved, these funds could be used as a source of federal matching funds for the proposed intercommunity transit service pilot project.

Barry Stotts commented that it was very important to move forward with this and that Vandenberg was a big partner in this.

Mayor Hawxhurst asked how much would be needed to match the grant.

Kevin Ready responded that it was 50 percent.

Supervisor Centeno moved to request U.S. Representatives Lois Capps and Elton Gallegly to seek appropriation of \$2 million for the Space Transportation Infrastructure Matching Grant program as recommended by staff. The motion was seconded by Mayor Weinberg and carried unanimously.

Recess to Closed Session

The Board recessed into closed session at 11:30 a.m.

Reconvene in Open Session

When the Board reconvened at 11:37 a.m. Legal Counsel, Kevin Ready, reported that the Board authorized a settlement offer in the matter of Pierce vs. SBCAG and that the offer would be disclosed on execution of the settlement agreement.

11. **Clean Air Express Fare Increase**

Kent Epperson presented the staff report.

Mayor Arca moved to adopt the resolution to approve the increase in the Clean Air Express fare to \$130 per month effective July 1, 2003. The motion was seconded by Councilman Baca.

Supervisor Schwartz asked when this fare would be implemented and whether the riders would receive notice.

Mr. Epperson said SBCAG had distributed flyers to current subscribers regarding the fare increase and that notices had been posted in North County newspapers. He said that there would be a need to distribute another flyer prior to implementing the fare increase in July. He stated he agreed it was a steep increase but that there would be a chance for subscribers to mitigate the financial impact by buying subscriptions in advance for next year under the current \$100 per month fare if they purchase their pass prior to July. He said that this would be mentioned in the notice.

Supervisor Marshall said that she had concerns about increasing rates so significantly and asked if there wasn't something that could be done to ease the burden for the people that use this service.

Mr. Epperson said that the Board could decide to phase the fare increase, but that funding would need to be identified to cover the projected shortfall.

Mayor Weinberg said it would be easy for passengers to borrow money from a bank to purchase advance Clean Air Express passes at the \$100 rate.

Supervisor Schwartz said she thought it would be prudent to phase this increase in. She recommended that the first increase be \$15 beginning July 1 and that the second increase of \$15 be implemented six months later on January 1, 2004. She asked if there was a shortfall, what source of funds would be available.

Mr. Kemp responded that APCD would be subsidizing the Clean Air Express next year but that these funds were likely to disappear in future years. The Board, in its discretion with CMAQ funding, could use those funds to offset the loss of revenue.

Supervisor Centeno stated that an annual assessment of fares is needed.

Mayor Arca amended his motion to phase in an increase of \$15 beginning July 1 another \$15 on January 1, 2004 and included an annual assessment of fares. The amendments were also accepted by Councilman Baca. The motion carried unanimously.

12. **FY 2003-04 Proposed SBCAG Budget**

Supervisor Gray congratulated Jim Kemp and staff on doing a really great job. She said that SBCAG is now completely different agency.

Jim Kemp presented the budget. He said that this would be coming back to the Board in June for adoption. He mentioned some of the highlights of this year's budget.

Supervisor Schwartz stated that the Implementation Plan consultant contract would be coming back on the June agenda. She said she had discussions with Union Pacific and identified the key person to contact. She said if this were pursued there might be some savings to report at the June meeting.

13. **Board Meeting Schedule**

Supervisor Marshall moved to reschedule the Board retreat meeting to September 18, 2003 in Santa Maria and to cancel the July 17, 2003 SBCAG Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Arca and carried unanimously.

14. **STIP Allocation Plan**

Jim Kemp presented the staff report. He explained that due to the State's budget shortfall the STIP allocation plan was impacted on projects programmed for allocations through FY 2003-04.

He said that there were projects that would not be allocated funding unless the state budget changes. He explained the biggest concern was the Hwy 101 six-lane project in Santa Maria. Caltrans delivered this one year early and sent it to the state for an allocation request in December. He stated the same month the California Transportation Commission put the freeze on allocations. He said the project would be delayed for a substantial period of time and that finding a way to fund it would be difficult.

Supervisor Schwartz asked what Caltrans planned to do about informing the public of this.

Mr. Krumholz said he did not know to what extent Caltrans had publicized this.

Supervisor Schwartz said it was important to have good notification.

Mr. Krumholz said he would take this back to management and see what was being done on the Sacramento level.

Mayor Weinberg asked if all projects would be moved back a year.

Mr. Krumholz said that there would be a STIP fund estimate available in September to give a better picture of what the future will hold. He said until the budget was finalized they won't know what funds are available, but that it looked better now than it looked in January.

Committee Reports

None.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kemp said he was pleased to announce the appointment of Stephen VanDenburgh as Deputy Director of Programs. He stated that SBCAG was now fully staffed.

Mr. Kemp Bike Week would be the following week and he encouraged all to ride their bikes to work on May 21st. He said there would be events throughout the county to support and encourage people to ride their bikes to work.

Mr. Kemp stated that since there was not enough time during the meeting to do a call box demonstration, Sebastian Gutierrez of Comarco, would remain after the meeting to provide a demonstration.

Communications

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.