

MINUTES

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Thursday, February 20, 2003

**Board of Supervisor Hearing Room
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara**

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

Members Present Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District; Gail Marshall, Supervisor, Third District (SBCAG Chair); Tom Urbanske, Supervisor, Fifth District; Russ Hicks, Councilmember, City of Buellton; Richard Weinberg, Councilmember, City of Carpinteria; Jack Hawxhurst, City of Goleta; Sam Arca, Mayor, City of Guadalupe; Dick DeWees, Mayor, City of Lompoc; Gregg Hart, Councilmember, City of Santa Barbara (arrived at 8:38 a.m.); Larry Lavagnino, Councilmember(SBCAG Vice-Chair, City of Santa Maria; Ed Andrisek, Councilmember, City of Solvang.

Members Absent Naomi Schwartz, Supervisor, First District; Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District.

Staff Members Present: Jim Kemp, Executive Director; Michael Powers, Deputy Director of Planning; Kent Epperson, TDM Program Administrator; Scott Spaulding, TDM Transit Coordinator; Ruth Garcia, Transportation Planner II, Jim Damkowitch, Transportation Planner II, Heather Diez, Transportation Program Coordinator; Debbie Barber, Public Information/Government Affairs Coordinator; Cathy Muneio, Executive Secretary; Alan Seltzer, County Counsel.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Lavagnino called for the pledge of allegiance.

3. **Recess to Closed Session:**

There were no items scheduled for closed session.

4. **Reconvene in Open Session**

5. **Approval of Minutes: January 16, 2003**

Supervisor Marshall moved approval of the minutes of January 16, 2003. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pointer and carried with Mayor Arca abstaining. Councilmember Hart was absent.

6. **Public Comment**

Tom Becker said that he had come to the Board at prior meetings to strongly object to MTD proposals and that the SBCAG Board had not taken into consideration what he had been saying. He requested that when the public comes before the Board that the Board listen to the public.

7. **Approval of Consent Calendar:**

Scott Wenz spoke to the FY 2003-04 TDA/LTF Apportionments item and the FY 2003-2004 Measure D estimates. He said he hoped that the Board would not vote for these items and would see that the taxpayer's money is spent reasonably.

Mayor Arca moved to approve the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Mayor Weinberg and carried unanimously.

8. **CalTrans District Director's Report:**

Gregg Albright presented the staff report.

Mayor Weinberg asked if the paving was complete on Hwy 101 between Milpas Street and the Ventura County Line.

Pat Mickelson with Caltrans responded that portions of the highway had been rebuilt and that the final overlay would be completed in the fall of 2003.

Councilmember Hart arrived.

Mr. Albright mentioned there was a power outage on Hwy 192 due to a tree falling and pulling the wires down. He explained that once the power lines were unraveled, Caltrans workers would remove the tree.

Mr. Albright noted that there was a change in the work being done on Hwy 246 to include a wall at the entrance of the Chumash Casino.

Supervisor Marshall said that her office had sent Caltrans an electronic list of contacts and requested that Caltrans notify these people of any hearings to discuss this matter.

Gregg Albright also mentioned in the context of the current statewide budget situation, that present programming levels were most likely going to be higher than revenue streams and that the priorities for projects would need to be reviewed by Caltrans and SBCAG.

10. **FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (FTIP) AMENDMENT**

Mr. Kemp gave a brief presentation on the request by MTD to amend their South Coast Transit Priorities projects. He indicated that the South Coast Subregional Planning Committee and staff were in support of the FTIP amendment proposed by SBMTD.

Mark Thomsen with the MTD explained the reasons for the request to modify its 2002 FTIP proposal. He explained that this request was largely due to the fact that the hybrid-electric

buses couldn't be obtained as quickly as the clean diesel buses and were more expensive to build. He said that they need to retire some of MTD's old diesel buses within 10 ½ months. He indicated that the reduction in the number of electric buses to be purchased is a result of improved battery technology and the increased cost of these buses. He stated that all of the service expansion commitments would be met except that service headways for Line 1 would need to be increased to 15 minutes.

Mr. Thomsen said that he had met with all of the members of the SBCAG Board and the APCD staff, and had received support from the City of Santa Barbara and consensus from Goleta City Council. He also said that MTD staff had met with interested members of the community. He explained that the Line 1 westside Santa Barbara route had expanded and there was a need to change from the original 30-foot bus to a 40-foot bus to handle increased ridership. He said that over 540,000 people annually connect at the transit center and that they need to retain the fifteen minute frequency for connection purposes. Mr. Thomsen stated that several services had already been implemented and that this was due in part by receiving partial funding from the cities of Carpinteria and Santa Barbara.

Mr. Thomsen stated that Supervisor Gray and Councilmember Hart had requested specifics on the first delivery date for the first group of buses and that he was submitting a letter to address those issues. He explained the timeline for the various bus orders.

Rich Unterman, Boardmember with the MTD, explained the accomplishments of the MTD in the last four years. Some of the things mentioned were the purchasing and putting on line a dozen buses, a new campus downtown and a new route in Carpinteria. He said that the buses were running 99 percent on time and that the MTD was one of the top ten bus companies in the nation. He said they have been a leader in developing the in battery-operated buses and have built a prototype of the 30-foot electric bus.

Mr. Becker stated he had gone before the Board to discuss the defects of this project in regards to the purchase of battery-electric buses. Mr. Becker read his letter to the Board. He also stated that Gary Gleason, General Manager for the MTD, had close business ties with several bus manufacturers and that this was a conflict of interest.

Chair Lavagnino stated that the concerns Mr. Becker had should be brought before the MTD Board and not the SBCAG Board.

Mr. Becker said that MTD was not going to deliver buses in 2003 because there are restraints that make it impossible. The cost has gone from \$300,000 to \$500,000 as he had warned and he urged the board to scrap this project.

Scott Wenz, CAB, explained that CAB was a non-profit organization dedicated to traffic solutions. He said that they they do not believe bicycles and buses resolve traffic issues. He said that they are not car nuts but are concerned with rapidly deteriorating roads that they are forced to drive on while funds are diverted to bicycle and bus projects. Mr. Wenz explained that 3 ½ years ago CAB started to look at MTD and that they have reported their findings to most of the cities in the South County. He stated there was the issue of \$2 million dollar in grants not accounted for. He requested suspension of all programs and strongly recommended the need for a financial audit on MTD.

Barry Siegel stated that this was a controversial project but what it boiled down to was providing better transit service to Santa Barbara and he recommended the project be approved. He expressed concerns about the delivery schedules. Mr. Siegel said that there was no contractual agreement until they are signed and that the SBCAG Board might want to once again review the project schedule when the contracts are signed and make some further decisions at that time.

Alan Seltzer, County Counsel, clarified that SBCAG's role was to decide how federal funds apportioned to the region were to be allocated for specific projects. He stated that the allegations about financial impropriety were being directed to the wrong forum. He said that the SBCAG Board could not suspend MTD's programs and that SBCAG has no authority to conduct an audit of MTD. He said it was not appropriate for SBCAG staff or legal counsel to make judgments about Mr. Gleason as he is only an employee of the MTD. He stated there were very specific rules in determining whether there was a conflict of interest and that these fall under the jurisdiction of the Fair Political Practices Commission. Mr. Seltzer said that SBCAG had qualified the project for federal funding and that no money had been spent yet and that the alleged conflict of interest goes beyond the scope of SBCAG's responsibility.

Mr. Becker said that this was relevant to SBCAG because if one of the bidders were investigated then this might delay the project indefinitely. He said that if you eliminate electric buses and go to diesel then you would eliminate the problem.

The public hearing was closed at 9:20 a.m.

Supervisor Rose asked about the MTD housing project noting that it was in her district. She said that the state had passed legislation that allows all transit districts to build housing projects and that this would require review through the County of Santa Barbara. She also asked about the staff report relative to agreements between MTD and local agencies to offset funding costs for expanded service. She asked if this was about increased contributions.

Mr. Kemp responded that the project originally proposed included cost sharing by local agencies and that to his knowledge agreements between MTD and local agencies have not yet been finalized.

Supervisor Rose asked whether this would make a difference in what was being requested with the local jurisdictions.

Mr. Kemp said he would assume this was up for negotiation between the local agencies and MTD.

Mr. Thomsen said that three agreements were specified in the 1999 FTIP. He noted there was an MOU with the City of Santa Barbara which pledged \$260,000 annual operating funds beginning January 2004 and an MOU with Carpinteria for \$13,000. Mr. Thomsen said the County of Santa Barbara submitted a dollar amount of \$154,000 and that they were trying to secure an MOU to obtain that funding.

Councilmember Hart stated that this was a unique new opportunity to fund projects. This project was designed to use CMAQ funds for capital projects for MTD and to expand transit services in the South Coast. He said that the agreements for local agency contributions would need to be revisited as a result of changes in the new services to see if they were in the best interest of the Santa Barbara residents.

Mayor DeWees said that he would not support the purchase of electric buses and that the main problem was the deadlines. He said that if the Board decided to move forward he would suggest a motion that if deadlines are not met then funding for this project would be forfeited by MTD and distributed to other projects as determined by the SBCAG Board. Mayor DeWees said the Board had received a letter from the South Coast Transit Advisory Committee stating that MTD should be operating more frequently. He said he would support the purchase of clean diesel buses.

Mayor Hawxhurst said that most projects get oversold when funding is requested and that there are frequently subsequent changes in cost, schedule, scope, etc. He cited the 101 improvements which have increased in cost as an example. He said the MTD project was not as good a project as presented in 1999 but was still the best project that was available. He stated that a risk estimation for projects should be taken into consideration.

Councilmember Smyser reiterated several things that had been discussed at the previous Board meeting. He noted concerns even though he was in support of staff's recommendation. He noted in the long run this project will provide lower emissions and improved bus service but said that his concerns was the process for approving this project. He asked when do revisions to a CMAQ project become a new project. He said that making changes to a project after it has been approved becomes a fairness issue to all of the jurisdictions in the Santa Barbara County. He noted that SBCAG staff is currently working with the City of Solvang to re-evaluate a transit van purchase project.

Mayor Arca noted his concurrence with Mayor DeWees' concerns.

Mayor Weinberg said that the facts were that this bus service was necessary. He said that the diesel buses had been tried and that the public did not want them going down their streets and electric buses have taken the stigma out of bus ridership. Mayor Weinberg said if the objective is to get more people riding buses then this is being accomplished. He noted that we are exploring new frontiers with electric buses and that MTD has worked very hard to design a bus. Mayor Weinberg expressed full support of these buses and that a decision was needed today.

Supervisor Centeno asked what the difference in scoring and the cost of the hybrid-electric buses and the proposal before the Board for a hybrid-electric and clean diesel bus combination.

Mr. Kemp responded that the score for the original all hybrid-electric project was 84 and that the score for the hybrid-electric/diesel combination project dropped to 58.

Supervisor Centeno stated that people who need to ride buses will ride them whether they are diesel or electric and that financial implications need to be looked at. He noted his support of Mayors DeWees and Arca.

Mayor Lavagnino asked what the cost difference between clean diesel and electric buses was.

Mr. Thomsen with the MTD responded that the 30-foot battery electric buses cost \$450,000 and the clean diesel \$280,000.

Supervisor Rose said she would support staff's recommendation. She requested monthly status reports on this project to keep the Board informed.

Mr. Kemp said that MTD has been providing monthly status reports as previously requested by the SBCAG board and that staff would continue to work with MTD to provide the reports in the future.

Supervisor Rose said that reports were not comprehensive enough and that the Board needs to clearly understand the delays and adjustments on the delivery dates.

Mr. Seltzer mentioned that conflict of interest went solely to jurisdictions of interest.

Mayor Arca noted that the issue was transportation needs. He asked whether or not the project could be divided and the different buses be voted on separately.

Mr. Kemp responded that the proposal before the Board was what it is and that the Board could request a change in the project but that this would cause further delays.

Mayor Pointer asked to comment on the letter from the City of Santa Barbara concurring approval of this project. She asked if they had taken into consideration the news reports relative to Gary Gleason. She said she would be interested in evaluating a new application and for this to be put on a level playing field. She said she could not support the electric-hybrid due to unethical processes and that this should be investigated.

Supervisor Marshall said this was an unfortunate situation due to lack of communication over the years but that she did feel it was important to support the project. She noted that she did realize what Mayor Pointer was saying and that this was very discouraging and disappointing but that this was up to MTD to handle and that the SBCAG Board thus far has seen the importance of the South Coast Priorities Project. Supervisor Marshall pointed out that if the Board had more information over the years it might be less skeptical of MTD and the project. She said that MTD has a good reputation for providing service and that this project will be valuable for the whole County.

Mayor Weinberg noted that the main concern was air quality and that diesel buses emit particulates that are carcinogenic and that electric buses do not. He said that the cities of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara and Goleta are all in support of this project.

Mayor Weinberg moved to adopt the resolution approving an amendment to the 2002 FTIP modifying the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District South Coast Transit Priorities Project and Hybrid-Electric Bus Replacement/Expansion project. Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-5 with Supervisor Centeno, Mayors Arca, DeWees, Lavagnino and Pointer opposed.

The Board took a five minute break and then went to the time certain item.

9. **Unmet Transit Needs**

Mr. Powers explained the hearing process and introduced Ruth Garcia who presented the staff report.

The meeting was then opened to the public for comment.

Diane Arnoki/Jose Alvarez, Cornerstone Home, discussed the need to place a handicap accessible stop at 1451 Camino Trillado, Carpinteria, so that residents and guests from the Cornerstone Home could use the trolley service in the area. Ms. Arnold stated that the current handicap accessible stop is too far from the Home to enable ridership by the residents.

Jim Talbott, SMOOTH – CTSA and a member of NCTAC, discussed the work that NCTAC had done in preparation of and during the transit needs assessment process, and reviewed the findings of the North County SBCAG transit survey data. Mr. Talbott highlighted the expressed need for Sunday and intercommunity service and gave an overview of the work that has been done by the Intercommunity Transit Service Exploratory Committee to develop a proposal to implement an intercommunity transit service pilot program

Sue Verhasselt, Easy Lift – CTSA (SCTAC) discussed the work that SCTAC had done in preparation of and during the transit needs assessment process, and reviewed the findings of the South Coast SBCAG transit survey data. Ms. Verhasselt highlighted the expressed need for increased service frequency, later operating hours, demand response service between Carpinteria and Santa Barbara, intercommunity service between the South Coast and North County, a crosswalk on Cliff Drive for bus stop access, and a change in routing for the Crosstown Shuttle to include a bus stop on Castillo at Victoria.

Sister Janet Corcaran, Marian Medial Center stated that there are unmet transit needs in the North County and requested the following action be taken to meet those needs: Implement Sunday service in Santa Maria; weekend service for the Guadalupe Flyer, extended service hours for the Guadalupe Flyer, COLT, and SMAT systems to meet the needs of the agricultural workers, intercommunity service between Lompoc, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley, transportation to medical appointments, the use of cleaner fuel and/or electric buses by the transit agencies, and locating transit stops at “people friendly” locations.

Bill Sudman, Multiple Sclerosis Society, stated that Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties provide demand response service with a much shorter wait for service than does the South Coast area of Santa Barbara County. Mr. Sudman also discussed the disabled that need demand response service between Carpinteria and Santa Barbara. Mr. Sudman stated that funding had been appropriated in 2002 for demand response service between Carpinteria and Santa Barbara, but that service has not yet been implemented.

Jeanne Sparks, Coalition for Sustainable Transportation, discussed the COAST transit needs survey, stating that it was endorsed by Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People, Community Partners in Caring and Marian Medical Center. Ms. Sparks stated that 50% of TDA funding apportioned to North County jurisdictions goes to streets and roads projects, rather than to transit programs. Ms. Sparks noted that the cities of Solvang, Buellton and Guadalupe use almost all of their TDA funding for transit. Ms. Sparks also stated that the farebox ratio required by TDA is 20% is for urban areas and only 10% for rural areas. Because of this, there are service opportunities when using the 10% farebox ratio standard. Ms. Sparks requested the following transit service be implemented: Sunday transit service and service frequency every ½ hour in Santa Maria, Sunday transit service and extension of service hours in Lompoc, and intercommunity service between Santa Maria and Lompoc, with an extension to Buellton.

Evie Karmasin, Goleta Valley Senior Center, discussed the programs offered by the Goleta Valley Senior Center and the importance of senior citizens to have social interaction. Ms. Karmasin stated that senior citizens in the Santa Barbara area have a higher than average

suicide rate, and that providing transportation services is greater than an issue of mobility. Ms. Karmasin stated that although some seniors use MTD fixed route service, there are many barriers that inhibit fixed route transit use. Ms. Karmasin stated that she is contacted by 3 to 5 seniors a week that have some type of unmet transit need.

Corrine Bernstein, NCTAC – Senior citizen transit user representative, discussed the need for Sunday transit service in Santa Maria to enable senior citizens to attend church and to go to work. Ms. Bernstein explained that Santa Maria is not a little town, and that if the communities of Grover Beach and Arroyo Grande can successfully provide transit service on Sunday, so can the City of Santa Maria.

Missy Runnels, United Cerebral Palsy, discussed a new residential complex for the disabled - the Fairveiw Center. Ms. Runnels stated that the Center is located in Goleta and does not have access to the public transit system. Ms. Runnels requested that Line 6 on weekdays and Line 8 on weekends be redesigned to include service to the residential complex (6067 Shirrell Way).

Monique Abadia, Transit user – Santa Maria, discussed the need for Sunday transit service in Santa Maria to enable the transit dependent to get to work and to attend church services. Ms. Abadia also stated that service hours for Route 2 and 20 need to be expanded to meet the increasing demand for service in these areas.

David Fortson, Santa Barbara Community Action Network, provided an overview of the Transit Needs Assessment process and COAST's and SBCAN's outreach, surveying and research activities, including working with SBCAG staff. Mr. Fortson stated that SBCAN encourages all North County jurisdictions to spend TDA funds on transit programs and stated that SBCAN supports COAST's recommendations for implementation of transit service improvements in the North County.

Rene Hoskinson, Community Partners in Caring – Santa Maria, discussed the need for additional transit service in the North County. Ms. Hoskinson pointed out that Community Partners in Caring provides transportation services to those who have no other means, including seniors such as Corrine Bernstein, who had previously testified at the public hearing for Sunday transit service. Ms. Hoskinson stated that even with the efforts of CPC and other social service agencies, there are still unmet transit needs. Ms. Hoskinson stated that mobility aids in suicide prevention and avoids much costlier program for seniors and the chronically ill. She also discussed the improvement in the quality of life for the transit dependent when there are mobility options available.

Alex Pujo, Coalition for Sustainable Transportation, presented an overview of the report "Unmet Transit Needs in North Santa Barbara County." The focus of the presentation was the availability of TDA funds in the North County that are being used for streets and roads purposes and not transit programs.

11. **AB1012 Unobligated Balance for Cycle**

Mr. Kemp introduced Heather Diez to present the staff report.

Ms. Diez reported on the unobligated TE apportionment balances that were subject to lapsing. Staff recommendation was for the Board to approve Option 2 which would direct staff to solicit sponsor agencies to submit requests to increase TE funding for projects currently programmed.

A list of four likely candidate projects were presented and included the Santa Barbara – Shoreline Drive Park Expansion, Lompoc – Pedestrian Enhancements Phase I, Santa Maria – Airport Bikeway Connection and Santa Maria – 101 Landscaping.

Supervisor Centeno moved approval of Option 2 to approve recommendations for programming additional Transportation Enhancement funding to meet AB 1012 timely-use-of-funds requirements. The motion was seconded by Mayor Arca and carried unanimously.

12. **Clean Air Express Bus Procurement**

Mr. Kemp noted that this was on the agenda as an information item to receive Board input on proposed changes in the previously approved Clean Air Express bus procurement projects. He noted that staff would follow up on any board questions and bring this item back for board action on an FTIP amendment next month.

Scott Spaulding presented the staff report to discuss the Clean Air bus replacement/expansion. He went over the history on how SBCAG became the agency to manage the program. Scott Spaulding explained that the vehicles proposed for replacement were twenty years old and have over two million miles. He also said that there was a need for expansion due to service requests from both Lompoc and Santa Maria. CMAQ funding applications were submitted and approved in the 2002 FTIP. These bus projects were originally submitted to use CNG fuel but a request was now being submitted to change this to clean diesel. He said that this change was needed since heavy duty CNG buses are no longer in production.

Chair Lavagnino asked why this was coming before the Board for discussion when it would be reviewed when it is put before the Board for action.

Mr. Kemp responded that he was informing the Board and looking for comments from the Board that might affect this item before the board is asked to take action

Jim Kemp continued the presentation indicating that about \$400,000 in local matching funds must be provided and that SBCAG has no dedicated revenue stream for local matching funds as other transit operators do. He proposed that SBCAG enter into an agreement with a local agency to exchange \$375,000 of SBCAG's unallocated Regional Surface Transportation Program funds for a like amount of local Measure D funds. He indicated that such an exchange would provide an appropriate source and amount of local matching funds and that there were limited options available to SBCAG that would allow the project to move forward.

Supervisor Centeno was concerned that the Board was circumventing legislation and how funds were being moved around.

Mayor Hawxhurst suggested using Measure D funds for funding this project.

Mayor Arca asked if the old Clean Air buses could be given to SBCAN or COAST when replaced in helping facilitate transit needs.

Committee Reports

Mr. Powers pointed out that there was a report included in the agenda on the Coast Rail Coordinating Council meeting and the LOSSAN meeting held in January.

Supervisor Rose asked what the situation was for establishing an extra rail line in Santa Barbara County. She said she had seen proposals for additional sidings and the addition of tracks had been discussed but asked what the status was for the study of this issue.

Mr. Powers said this was included in the 101 Implementation Plan study and that there would be a broader study on rail in 18 months.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kemp said that a letter was received from the HCD approving the SBCAG's Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan.

Mr. Kemp also informed the Board that staff would be meeting next week with both state and federal officials to review the draft FY 2003-04 Overall Work Program.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.