

MINUTES

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Thursday, January 15, 2004

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 (SBCAG Chair); Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District (SBCAG Vice-Chair); Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District; Joe Centeno, Supervisor, Fifth District; Bill Traylor, Mayor, City of Buellton; Richard Weinberg, Mayor, City of Carpinteria; Jack Hawxhurst, Councilmember, City of Goleta; Sam Arca, Mayor, City of Guadalupe; Dick DeWees, Mayor, City of Lompoc; Dan Secord, Councilmember, City of Santa Barbara; Larry Lavagnino, Mayor, City of Santa Maria; David Smyser, Councilmember, City of Solvang (arrived 9:30 a.m.); Greg Albright, District 5 Representative.

Members Absent: Gail Marshall, Supervisor, Third District.

Staff Members Present: Jim Kemp, Executive Director; Michael Powers, Deputy Director of Planning; Stephen VanDenburgh, Deputy Director of Programs; Ruth Garcia, Transportation Planner II; Cathy Muneio, Board Clerk; Kevin E. Ready, Sr., Senior Deputy County Counsel.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Schwartz called for the pledge of allegiance.

3. RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

No closed session was held.

4. CONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: DECEMBER 18, 2003

A motion was made by Mayor Lavagnino approve the minutes of December 18, 2003. The motion was seconded by Mayor Weinberg with Mayor Arca, Mayor Traylor, Supervisor Centeno and Councilmember Secord abstaining.

Chair Schwartz requested that staff follow-up with the meeting with other agencies to coordinate construction projects.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Gray reported on the LOSSAN/Coast Rail Coordinating Council Committee meeting she had attended. She said she learned that the California Transportation Commission was not the entity making decisions where funds go, but rather the Finance Department was the department directing where monies were being distributed. Supervisor Gray also reported on the success of the Pacific Surfliner and the Coast Starlight. She noted that Pacific Surfliner service may be expanded. She suggested consideration be given to establishing a rail subcommittee. Supervisor Schwartz requested that Supervisor Gray be apprised of Highway 101 In Motion meetings involving rail. Supervisor Rose advocated for additional service and Mayor Weinberg stressed the need for improved safety measures.

7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Arca said he would be abstaining from 7B – FTA Section 5311 Program of Projects.

Mayor Weinberg requested to speak to item 7D – Program Management Services Contract. He asked whether page two referred to changing employment from a half-time position to a full-time position. Mr. Kemp responded that it did.

Supervisor Schwartz asked to speak to item 7A – Regional Travel Model. She asked how this was coordinated with other GIS models. Mr. Powers responded that there were a lot of different scales and that the RIGS project was broader than the SBCAG travel model and it did not focus on transportation. He noted that the County has a larger emphasis on land use than SBCAG does. He stated it was not the intent to do the same work as other models and that there would be a potential for data sharing. He reported that there would be a presentation on the travel model made at the March meeting.

Supervisor Schwartz said she would not be attending the March meeting and asked if Mayor DeWees could chair that meeting.

A motion was made by Mayor Weinberg, seconded by Mayor Lavagnino and unanimously carried to approve Items 7A, C and D on the consent calendar.

A motion was made by Mayor Lavagnino, seconded by Mayor Weinberg and carried with Mayor Arca abstaining to approve Item 7B.

8. CALTRANS DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Albright stated that he had been spending most of his time working on earthquake damage and the Sacramento budget issue. He said Supervisor Gray was correct in stating that the Department of Finance was the driving force behind the amount of funding that Caltrans would receive for projects.

Mr. Albright stated that the Caltrans project status report stood as presented. He did however note that a safety project was due to begin construction on Hwy 101 in Santa Maria to place a concrete barrier in the median.

Supervisor Schwartz asked Mr. Albright if he could suggest a way to give SBCAG a voice in Sacramento regarding transportation priorities and funding or whether we should just continue to receive the news and respond to it. She also asked Mr. Albright to explain how the Proposition 42 revenues for transportation projects could be diverted by the administration and the legislature. She stated her concern was that when the Measure D renewal goes out to the voters its success will depend on the public's confidence.

Mr. Albright said he shared a deep concern about voter confidence. He said that there were \$130 million in projects in District 5 ready to go but that the funding was not there. Mr. Albright said that for the first time Caltrans was not consulted in the administration's budget decisions and that the only contact that was made to Caltrans was through the California Transportation Commission staff.

Supervisor Schwartz requested a list of the projects that would be shelved in Santa Barbara County and asked if the governor needed to make findings prior to using transportation funding for other needs.

Mr. Kemp stated that the governor does need to make findings and that if it is found that there is a financial emergency then the governor can suspend transfer of Proposition 42 funds into transportation funding.

Supervisor Centeno asked how these cuts would affect road maintenance projects.

Mr. Albright responded that the District had lost two dozen maintenance worker positions, but that safety and maintenance projects are a priority.

Councilmember Secord requested that the list of projects being shelved be reported to the Santa Barbara City Council. He said that the public needs to be prepared for the renewal of Measure D when the time comes.

Supervisor Schwartz asked if effective lobbying could help.

Mayor Lavagnino said that the cities may need to take up some of the slack and help fund projects. He explained that the city of Santa Maria is looking at paying for some of the Caltrans projects themselves and had already cleaned up the median on the highway. He asked if there was a possibility of reimbursement from Caltrans.

Mr. Albright said he didn't know but he would try and pursue that. He said that there has been discussion on using funds available in one area to keep projects alive, which he said he considers as a partnership.

Chair Schwartz said that since Item 9 was a time certain, and that the Board was waiting for someone who wanted to speak on item 10, that she would skip to Item 11.

11. **REGIONAL IMPACTS OF GROWTH STUDY**

Mr. Kemp introduced this item. He said that the ECP had recently released its Regional Impacts of Growth Study that assesses the potential affects of current planning and growth related policies in measuring the quality of life. He said that the model based projection looks 40 years into the future and tests several alternative scenarios that

would require modification of those policies. He said the model does not advocate for a particular scenario but does advocate for regional planning.

Mr. Kemp introduced Mike Brown of the Economic Community Project. Mr. Brown gave a slide presentation that focused primarily on the South Coast in Santa Barbara County.

Councilmember Hawxhurst asked how figures on the South Coast compared to state and national figures. Mr. Brown said that he had not yet compared these figures.

Mayor DeWees asked how the ECP had come up with the figure of \$71,000 for upper income levels and between \$30,000 and \$71,000 for middle income levels.

Mr. Brown said that the figures were matched up against historical data.

Mr. Brown said that there is a problem when there is an increase in jobs and not an increase in housing. He pointed out that there is an increase in traffic at all points that relate to increased commuting. He said there has been an increase to the cost of housing in the North County although the majority of the impact of commuting has been from the Ventura County with a commute of 15,000 people vs. 5,000 commuters in the North County.

Mr. Brown said that they have found that it is the middle income home seekers who cannot find housing that they want compared to jobs.

Mayor Weinberg said that it appeared that there was not much of an increase until 2000 and asked if they could find out the reason.

Mr. Brown presented a set of scenarios to look at alternative policy choices for land use in terms of the amount of land available for development and type of development and density.

Mayor Smyser arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Supervisor Schwartz asked how they determined future housing prices. Mr. Brown responded that housing was a result of the interaction of a number of variables expressed in equations such as the availability of jobs and different income levels, available land and issues as congestion gets worse that encourages people to locate to the South Coast. He stated the history of the model.

Mr. Brown said that when there is an increase in jobs compared to housing units that traffic can reach its capacity due to increase in commuting at the peak hour. He presented different scenarios that were looked at along with the results of those scenarios.

Mayor Lavagnino asked at what point the low income people will not be able to live here, and what will happen.

Mr. Brown said that a portion of the South Coast housing market would no longer be tied to a job but that there would still be middle income jobs. He said that the one thing that is not understood is what would be the maximum commute time commuters would tolerate in this area is since it varies from area to area. He pointed out that most

businesses will not be moving to the South Coast anymore unless they have a small niche area.

Supervisor Rose said that this was interesting and that since she had been working with the County she had seen a lot of people moving to the North County and noted that her great concern was losing the middle class.

Councilmember Hawxhurst said that traffic had increased at the same rate as job growth and that putting housing where there are jobs should be looked into.

Mr. Brown said that the ECP has a website where there is a link to the model. Anyone can put in different information to create different scenarios. He explained that if nothing is done on the South Coast then the North County will change. He said there would be a continuing exodus of middle income and lower income families moving to the North County and that the South Coast would attract people who do not need to work.

Supervisor Rose stated she sits on the Jobs/Housing Partnership committee and said she would invite them to come to the SBCAG board meeting to make a presentation.

Councilmember Secord asked if water capacity issues, landfill issues, etc. were taken into consideration.

Mr. Brown said there were significant areas where upgrades would be necessary and that another aspect of the study was that there can be growth in development but not in population.

9. **UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS**

In response to a late request for public comment, Supervisor Schwartz recognized Myrtle Lee Parra of Guadalupe who expressed concerns about the Guadalupe City Council deferring public comment until the end of the Council meeting. Chair Schwartz indicated that SBCAG does not address or have any authority with these local issues.

Ruth Garcia presented the staff report on the Transit Needs Assessment for 2004. She explained that a series of reports and findings must be made if all of the TDA funds are not used for transit. SBCAG is required to hold one annual public hearing, but said that SBCAG holds two, one in the north county and one on the south coast. She said that there has been an involvement by the social service transit advisory councils and that there are guidelines for membership so transit operators, transit users, and social service agencies are working together. She explained that there has been extensive outreach and stated that there were flyers advertising the public hearing and surveys inquiring as to transit needs, published in English and Spanish, distributed throughout the North County and that these items were included in the board packets. Ms. Garcia thanked COAST committee members, Jessica Sheeter and Sarah McDonald for their work in helping to distribute the surveys. Ms. Garcia said that the second public hearing will be held in Santa Barbara in February. Ms. Garcia stated that she will work with SBCTAC regarding findings from the hearings and the transit surveys and will bring back initial findings to the Board in February, with the Transit Needs Assessment Report and findings of need presented by May.

Chair Schwartz opened the public hearing:

Alex Pujo with COAST expressed his concern for the diversion of transit money for other uses in the North County. He recognized the good work of Ruth Garcia for gathering more input from social agencies. Mr. Pujo requested permanent service from Lompoc to Allan Hancock College since riders won't commit to a service that can be pulled at any time.

Mayor DeWees responded that the Lompoc to Allan Hancock route had been extended to the evening. In regards to Vandenberg Air Force Base, he said that they were trying to work out some of the security issues on the base. He also reported that routes had been added to H Street.

Barry Stotts said that he had been involved in the unmet transit needs process for several years and reviewed with the board the progress. He expressed his support for the work of the committees and staff. He said with the new transit centers all of the major buses would be meeting downtown and he hoped that the Clean Air Express would do the same. He requested that meetings be held at a time where people who have to work might be able to attend.

Renee Hoskinson, Executive Director of Community Partners in Caring thanked Ms. Garcia and Mr. Powers for their help. She said that there was one common goal and that this was to see that people get what they need. She said that their volunteer service does not duplicate COLT, SMAT or the Guadalupe Flyer but fills in the gaps. She stated that there were still unmet needs and cited an example of a volunteer driver assisting with medical transport to Los Angeles.

Kirk Spry, CEO of VTC Enterprises, said he works for a company that provides independent living skills to individuals with disabilities who are highly transit dependent. He thanked SBCAG for the progress being made through the unmet needs process.

Joyce Howerton, from the city of Lompoc, said that a majority of the TDA funding goes towards road repairs and she recognized that need. She stated however, that she also works with many non profits which don't have the funds to drive and rely heavily on public transportation. She mentioned that the Bridge House, a homeless shelter east of the city, had to be accessed by a narrow bridge that made it very dangerous to walk to at night.

Miss Howerton said that the Alan Hancock bus seemed to be a successful program but was a pilot program and requested that this become a permanent program. She said the new Lompoc to Vandenberg to Santa Maria bus will address a significant need. Her concern was that she came to the Board approximately six months ago and asked for an interim program that was estimated to cost about \$80,000 (\$10,000 from the community, \$25,000 from the County, \$25,000 from Lompoc, and \$25,000 from Santa Maria) and she hadn't heard anything about the status of that project.

Ms. Howerton encouraged the Board to hold evening meetings and suggested that possibly the Clean Air Express could transport people who needed rides to the meeting.

With the assistance of Alex Pujo acting as a translator, Jesus Estrada asked in Spanish if something couldn't be done to transport agriculture field workers to their jobs. He

stated that many go to work with more than five in a car which is against the law. He said many couldn't work due to a lack of transportation.

Pedro Lopez said he represented about 35 percent of Mixtecas in Santa Barbara County and requested that transportation services be provided for farmworkers.

The public hearing was closed.

Supervisor Schwartz asked the status of the intercommunity transit service.

Mr. Powers responded that they were compiling data to define the service and within 2-3 months would be coming to the Board with a Service Implementation Plan at which time there will be an opportunity for public input.

Supervisor Schwartz asked if it was a matter of completing the service plan and not money.

Mr. Powers stated that Ms. Howerton was advocating for local expenditures to reinstate the Social Services intercommunity service until the implementation of the intercommunity transit service. He said that his recollection was that local agencies were going to address her questions separately. SBCAG will be using CMAQ funds for the intercommunity transit service project. He explained that they will become available from existing funds or as the TEA reauthorization occurs.

Mr. Kemp explained that the Board authorized SBCAG through last year's unmet transit process to move forward with a plan for a three year pilot program, which the Board was obligated to do under a settlement agreement. He said that he is moving forward with that plan, which included using some TDA funds and applying for CMAQ funding, but that there are some unanswered questions that will be addressed through the service plan that is being prepared.

Mr. Powers said that he was working with the SBCAG technical committees and the broader North County transit advisory committee in the development of the intercommunity transit service implementation plan in conjunction with the work being done by Urbitran.

Mayor DeWees stated this was suppose to be started by summer of 2004 and it sounded like the date would slip due to the complexity of issues involved as well as funding issues. He stressed that this service must be well marketed prior to starting. If the service proves to be infeasible he did not want the community members to come back and say the reason it failed was because it was unknown. He also said he was moving ahead to provide service to the Bridge House.

Mayor Lavagnino asked that Mr. Rye speak to this issue.

Mr. Rye said he and the technical committee organized by SBCAG would be meeting with a consultant from Urbitran next Thursday and would receive a progress report at that time. He said the major problem was the procurement of vehicles and difficult logistical challenges.

Mayor Arca said he would like Mr. Watson to report on the transit service and trips added in Guadalupe. He said that the sister cities had provided support and that the city of Santa Maria has continued to assist Guadalupe with their support staff.

Mr. Watson stated that the Guadalupe Flyer was a great system running at full capacity with 45 to 50 people every hour throughout the day. He said that the demand was exceeding the supply and said he had met with the city to obtain grant matches for a larger bus.

Supervisor Schwartz asked if the survey results would be completed by the end of January.

Ms. Garcia said that at the February meeting the preliminary survey results would be presented. She explained that she was working with Jessica Scheeter and had sent additional surveys to the California Rural Legal Assistance and Employment Development Department to receive feedback from farmworkers on their transportation needs.

Supervisor Centeno said he had received a call from a reporter doing an article on the transit needs of farmworkers and said we might want to look into the private sector to concentrate specifically on farmworkers that need transportation for work.

Supervisor Schwartz asked if bus riders on the Guadalupe Flyer are going to work in the fields in Santa Maria.

Mayor Smyser asked if the agriculture employers had been involved in any discussions concerning unmet transit needs.

Ms. Garcia said they had not been involved in discussions but were distributed surveys. She said that she would followup with the agriculture employers regarding farmworker transportation.

Mayor Smyser said that Solvang had an extensive agriculture business and that these businesses might have valuable contributions to make. There were concerns that some of the agriculture needs were in very rural areas where buses would not go and he suggested that employers be contacted to see if they had any suggestions on solving this issue.

Mayor Arca asked if staff could provide the minutes in Spanish as part of the environmental justice issue. He made some concluding remarks in Spanish thanking the speakers for their input.

10. **CLEAN AIR EXPRESS OPERATOR CONTRACT**

Mr. Epperson presented the staff report. He said that currently Santa Barbara Airbus had the contract for the Clean Air Express but with a change of fleet mix and the planned service expansion it was felt that the contract should go out for bid again. He said four proposals had been received and an evaluation committee had been formed with representatives from Santa Maria, Lompoc, the County of Santa Barbara, APCD and SBCAG. Mr. Epperson explained that the evaluation was based on a combination of cost, qualifications, proposal and details on operation and maintenance. He stated that

two companies had rated considerably stronger than the other two, AmericanStar and MV Transportation. He said they had met with the top two and AmericanStar seemed the strongest contender because of the strong management team and their thorough proposal. He said they also were a very professional and very experienced company although they weren't the least expensive. Mr. Epperson said they had existing facilities in place and the transition would be an easy one.

Mayor Lavagnino questioned why the cheapest proposal was not chosen and said that it wasn't a fair way to chose.

Mr. Epperson responded that the decision had been made based 50% on cost, 20% on experience and qualifications, 15% on the operating plan, and 15% on the maintenance plan. He said that the interview panel members were not comfortable with the management team for MV Transportation. Even though it was a nationally recognized firm and had very strong corporate management structure their proposed project manager is very inexperienced and their maintenance supervisor was not identified in the proposal. Although MV Transportation has identified a potential location for the bus facilities, they do not have anything in place at this time.

Supervisor Centeno said he felt uncomfortable with not choosing to move ahead with the lowest bidder.

Supervisor Schwartz stated there were a number of speakers and she had a petition from current Clean Air Express riders stating they would like Santa Barbara Airbus to continue running the service.

Supervisor Rose asked if the choice would have been any different if the quality of service were judged and not the cost.

Mr. Epperson said he didn't know, but guessed that MV Transportation and AmericanStar would still have ranked the highest, with the Santa Barbara Airbus slightly below that. He said that Santa Barbara Airbus did not put a lot of detail or effort into their proposal.

Councilmember Secord said that currently Santa Barbara Airbus was charging \$95 per vehicle hour, but that it would be going up to \$115 per vehicle hour in the new proposal.

Mayor Arca asked if it was necessary to pick the lowest bidder.

Mr. Ready responded that there was a difference between bids and RFPs. RFPs have pre-established criteria which you can make a subjective judgment based upon those results and that you do not have to go with the lowest bid or highest score. He said that the Board could follow staff's recommendation, deny staff's recommendation and go back out and rebid it, or keep with the current contract.

Mayor Smyser asked if MV Transportation had a good training program. Mr. Epperson responded that it did.

Mayor Smyser asked if the selection committee had contacted anyone in Buellton to get a review of performance. Mr. Epperson said he believed that Scott Spaulding of SBCAG staff had contacted Solvang staff.

Eric Onnen, with the Santa Barbara Airbus, presented the history behind the contract with SBCAG and prior to that APCD. He explained that they had worked through the transfer from APCD to Traffic Solutions and had faced many challenges that had been unforeseen. He said after five years of running the program he said that the concern was price. He explained that changes in the new proposal from the previous proposal had caused a change in risk assignment and uncertainty which could cause significant risk to the operator. He said that since the assets were now much larger with the new buses, there would be an increase in risk. He also said that there had been a significant change in the major component replacement. The new operator would be responsible for replacing those items should they fail which was necessary to work into the proposal. Mr. Onnen said that there would be new routes and the uncertainty of these routes was significant.

Eric Onnen said he would like the opportunity to address some of these issues. He said he would like to have the opportunity to discuss renewal of the existing contract and to negotiate. He said that opportunity was not explored. Mr. Onnen said he would have provided significant information for staff to use to negotiate a price that accomplished their goal.

Supervisor Schwartz said it appeared there were a number of issues that needed to be discussed.

Councilmember Secord made a motion to continue this item until the February meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Weinberg and carried unanimously.

Mr. Kemp requested direction from the Board.

Supervisor Schwartz said she was not at a place to accept staff's recommendation. She requested Mr. Kemp review the Advance Calendar and let her know which meeting this should be placed on the agenda.

David Harkness, Santa Barbara Airbus driver for seven years, said that he supports continuing the contract with Santa Barbara Airbus. Supervisor Schwartz requested that he submit his comments in writing.

Robert Dockerty with American Star requested that his comments be deferred until the March meeting.

Barry Stotts said as a former rider he wanted to comment on the good hospitality of the drivers. He said if someone was missed on a pickup the drivers always made sure the passengers got back one way or another and that it was a real benefit to be able to buy four or five coupons at a time. He also requested that there be two pickups in Santa Maria.

Pete Lloyd, a driver with the Santa Barbara Airbus said he would give comments at a later date when there was more time.

Supervisor Rose asked what would happen if the financial issues were taken out of the choice. She said we have a company that has run this service for five years and that experience was important.

Mr. Kemp stated that he was concerned that the existing contract was due to expire on April 1, 2004 and he requested that the Board consider giving the Executive Director the authority to continue the contract until a new contract has been signed.

Councilmember Secord amended his motion to continue this item to March and to give the Executive Director the authority to continue the existing contract that was due to expire on April 1, 2004. Mayor Weinberg seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

12. **2004 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Mr. VanDenburgh presented the staff report on the progress to date of preparing the 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Supervisor Schwartz asked whether there was a way the state could take Measure D funds. Mr. VanDenburgh stated that if she was asking if they could take funds and use them in another area, they couldn't.

Supervisor Schwartz said she was not aware they were transferring STIP funds from the Ortega Hill Auxiliary Lane project. Mr. Kemp stated that this had been brought before the Board in October as part of the vote on the 101 Implementation Plan. The Board voted to fund the Ortega Hill project with Measure D funds so it could move forward this summer, and move the STIP funds on Ortega to the Cabrillo/Milpas/Hot Springs Operational Improvements project.

Mayor Lavagnino asked what had caused the Union Valley Parkways project to be moved out 2-3 years. Mr. VanDenburgh said that the City of Santa Maria and Caltrans were initially preparing separate environmental documents on the Parkway and interchange parts of the project, respectively, but had been directed by the Federal Highway Administration to combine the projects into one large project. The logistics of how to do this had caused the delay.

Councilmember Secord asked staff about the probability of the 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program being a reasonable document, given it relies on assumptions about funding from the State, and the impact of the State's budget crisis is still evolving. Mr. Kemp said that State funds were definitely more uncertain than federal funds, so the RTIP has uncertainties built into. Mr. VanDenburgh added that the RTIP had to be submitted to the California Transportation Commission by April 12th and that the RTIP could be impacted by budget changes.

Supervisor Gray said that she hoped that jurisdictions that use their own funding in place of State funding to construct projects would be reimbursed by the state.

13. **HIGHWAY 101 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Due to the length of the meeting, Chair Schwartz deferred a report on the 101 Implementation Plan until next month.

14. **SANTA BARBARA METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT REPORT**

Due to the length of the meeting, Chair Schwartz deferred a status report by MTD until next month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.