

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING SUMMARY**

Friday, March 11, 2005

**Chase Palm Park Center
236 E. Cabrillo Blvd.
Santa Barbara, CA**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Members Present: Salud Carbajal, Supervisor, First District; Brooks Firestone, Supervisor, Third District; Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District; Brian Baca, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Solvang; Russ Hicks, Mayor, City of Buellton; Dan Secord, Councilman, City of Santa Barbara; Marty Mariscal, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Santa Maria; Dick DeWees, Mayor, City of Lompoc (SBCAG Chair); Jonny Wallis, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Goleta; Donna Jordan, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Carpinteria; Rich Krumholz, Ex-Officio Member, Caltrans

Members Absent: Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District; Joe Centeno, Supervisor, Fifth District (SBCAG Vice-Chair); Lupe Alvarez, Mayor, City of Guadalupe.

Staff Present: Jim Kemp, Executive Director; Stephen VanDenburgh, Deputy Director of Programming; Gregg Hart, Public Information/Government Affairs Coordinator; Cathy Muneio, Board Clerk; Kevin Ready, County Counsel

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilmember Hawxhurst asked why the Board had changed its position on placing the renewal of Measure D on the ballot from 2008 to November 2006.

Mayor DeWees said it would give SBCAG the ability to place the ballot measure on the 2008 ballot if it failed in November 2006.

Mr. Kemp said that the Board had not ruled out November 2006 in previous discussions but deferred making a commitment on a date until it could see how the county split issue would develop. He said that the Board would be discussing the date for a ballot measure later in the workshop.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Jim Kemp introduced Eileen Goodwin with Apex Strategies, the workshop facilitator, and gave a brief background on the previous workshops that were held to discuss the renewal of Measure D.

Ms. Goodwin explained the format of the workshop and asked the panel members to introduce themselves.

FIRST PANEL

Jim Moore, President of J. Moore Methods, Inc. said he had conducted a majority of sales tax public opinion polling, one of which was SBCAG's 1989 Measure D.

Pat Dellin, Acting Executive Director for the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, said her agency developed their expenditure plan for their new sales tax measure. Ms. Dellin said that their measure had failed with only 42 percent in favor. She said they would be placing this measure on the ballot for a second time.

Howard Goode, Deputy Executive Director, San Mateo County Transportation Authority, explained that their measure was due to expire in 2008 but that the measure was renewed in 2004 with a positive vote of 78 percent. He noted that two other tax measures on the ballot at the same time failed

Darren Kettle, Director of Freeway Construction with San Bernardino Associated Governments, said that he had been associated with two ballot measures, one in Riverside that passed with 70 percent and one in San Bernardino that passed with 80 percent of the vote.

Amy Worth, Chair, Contra Costa Transportation Authority and Mayor of Orinda, one of the 19 cities in Contra Costa County, introduced herself. She said their existing sales tax measure was passed in 1988 and was due to expire in 2008. She said that Contra Costa's original tax was by a simple majority but that they had never passed a measure that had required 2/3 positive vote in the county. She said the renewal of the measure passed by 71 percent of the vote.

Ms. Goodwin asked the panel to provide three ideas that would make sense to pass along to Santa Barbara County and asked that they think of the one thing that worked for their agency that would not work anywhere else.

Mayor Worth stated that you should:

1. Understand the differences and similarities in the county and get lots of thoughts from many people and then to agree to work together and put differences aside.
2. Think strategically from the beginning.
3. Develop a good expenditure plan and get extensive public involvement by stakeholder groups.

Darren Kettle said that the 2/3 vote hurdle was huge, but due to the work done by Jim Moore in polling they knew whether the measure was likely to pass or not. He said there were various differences between Riverside and San Bernardino on how the renewal was handled. Riverside was very quiet and San Bernardino was much more open to the public and in his opinion the openness was pivotal.

Howard Goode said his job was to design a plan that would solve transportation issues, and that he worked with planning directors to do that. Mr. Goode said they put a lot of work into developing a good expenditure plan.

Pat Dellin said her agency's ballot measure had failed. She said her commission had approached the task like it would any other task. Ms. Dellin said the commissioners did not listen to what the other jurisdictions had to say about the plan and was closed to what the public was saying.

Mayor Hicks arrived.

Jim Moore said that when polling people initially three questions should be asked that need to have a yes reply.

1. Is transportation an important issue in the community?
2. Can you afford it?
3. Do you approve of the expenditure plan?

If all three are above 2/3 then the ballot measure most likely will pass.

Ms. Goodwin asked the panel how far ahead of the election did they start preparing.

Ms. Dellin said 18 months.

Mr. Goode said 24 months.

Mr. Kettle said 22 months.

Ms. Worth said 18 months.

Ms. Goodwin asked how the projects in the expenditure plan were chosen and who the groups were that chose them? What were the limitations?

Mr. Goode said that the focus was a group of transportation officials in the county. He said there was a survey taken by focus groups and workshops and that over a two year period there were many players that helped put together the expenditure plan. He said they went the extra step and went out to every city council to hold a workshop of what was included in the plan and then went back to the transportation authority and finalized the plan before receiving their approval.

Darren Kettle stated that a small group of staff was with the agency a long time and were chosen to work on the renewal measure since they knew what the problems were and had knowledge of the electorate. He said staff came up with a list of projects that were broken down by very distinct areas in the county and had to create six different expenditure plans throughout the county to come up with the right projects for each area.

Amy Worth said their county was divided into four subregions and that a majority of their projects were large capital projects. She explained that each local jurisdiction receives 18 percent of the funds and other countywide programs included transit, support for BART and transportation for seniors. She said the plan reflected the priorities from each subregion. The transportation authority put together and approved the plan. It was approved by all nineteen cities and by the Board of Supervisors.

Pat Dellin stated the commission approved the plan without bringing it to the public.

Ms. Goodwin asked whether the media was friend or foe.

Pat Dellin said the newspaper supported the measure but that the newspaper was not supported by the community.

Howard Goode, Darren Kettle and Amy Worth all said the press was a friend.

Eileen Goodwin suggested using the Los Angeles Times as one of the media in Santa Barbara County.

SECOND PANEL

Keith Millhouse, Councilmember for the City of Moorpark and Metrolink Board of Director, and also Honorary Chair of Measure B in Ventura County introduced himself.

Jim Earp, California Alliance for Jobs, representing the construction industry and labor groups, said he was usually involved in the process after the expenditure plan was developed.

Barry Barnes said he was a consultant that works with public agencies on the campaigns to help pass finance measures. He said he had just completed his first transportation measure in Sonoma County and that his company had 38 successful financial campaigns.

Eileen Goodwin asked how they got involved in supporting a transportation sales tax measure.

Keith Millhouse responded that Ventura County needed new resources to support its growing transportation infrastructure needs

Jim Earp stated that because his industry was a major stakeholder in transportation projects that they decided it was important to get involved in the helping to pass measures.

Barry Barnes said that he had been involved with a range from folks in the local community alerting them that they needed assistance. He said that they have run a number of successful campaigns in Sonoma County.

Amy Worth said that when her agency put together the team to develop their expenditure plan they included strategic consultants and that a labor group started the campaign process. She said there needs to be continuity between the public process team and the campaign people.

Pat Dellin said their campaign consultants didn't want to share much information.

Howard Goode stated that their campaign consultant was selected by a campaign committee about 12 months prior to their election.

Darren Kettle said his board listened to the professionals and identified a top quality team. He said it was a comfortable transition from a private campaign to a public campaign.

Eileen Goodwin asked what type of animal they were during their campaign.

Amy Worth said they were an octopus because they tried to cover the entire county.

Barry Barnes said his agency was a turtle because they were slow and put their heads down and didn't get distracted. He said most of the members had been involved in four previous campaign losses.

Keith Millhouse said they were an octa-turtle because they had to move very slowly through the process. He explained that the Sierra Club supported this campaign when it was explained to them that a slow idling vehicle in traffic is worse than improving infrastructure. He recommended letting the experts guide you.

Darren Kettle said that his agency was a racehorse that started in the rear. He said they worked during lunch hours, vacation time and evenings. He said they had a strong relationship on the campaign side.

Pat Dellin said they were a long toe salamander, an endangered species that no one has ever seen but stops all the projects.

Howard Goode said his campaign was an owl that knew exactly where it was going.

Jim Earp said they were a zoo since they were involved in seven campaigns, which was difficult to manage.

Goodwin asked about follow up polling.

Pat Dellin said the commissioners didn't want to do it. She said the reasons were different among each of the commissioners.

Eileen Goodwin asked what worked.

Jim Earp said it is ideal to have an elected official who is well respected to be the spokesperson. He said you look at the measure and look at the assets and put together the best toolbox you can. He said there are certain milestones that need to be covered. He said it also helps to have the unanimous support of the Board.

Barry Barnes said the message is important as you head down the stretch of the campaign. He reminded everyone that election starts four weeks prior to election day since that is when the absentee ballots are sent. He said you can't wait until the last week of the campaign to define the message and that the message should be developed during the pre-campaign. He said that typically voters respond to the first message and the last message. He said that the first impression can be formed early and that it is never too soon to start talking to the voters. He said the message that worked for them was potholes.

Amy Worth said they focused on geographical areas with a different message for each. She said the message starts before you ever finish the plan. She said when coming up with a voter pamphlet you need to think strategically. She also said that ballot language was extremely important.

Jim Earp said that for their message it was being able to identify the marquee projects.

Eileen Goodwin asked about the types of brochures.

Jim Earp said they used various things. They did have a late TV spot and phone calls were made.

Barry Barnes said that you need to have that extra push to put the measure over the top and drive until the next day.

Keith Millhouse suggested going out and ask the people what they want. Once you get a message keep it simple and said that what is important to one county may not be what's important to another.

Eileen Goodwin asked the panel how many times they polled.

Keith Millhouse – Once
Jim Earp – Three
Barry – Twice
Amy Worth – Twice
Darren Kettle – Once
Howard Goode – Twice

Dr. Secord asked about the milestones and asked when it was known if the campaign was dying.

Jim Earp responded you have to have a good pollster and committee from the beginning. Sit down with the committee and discuss how to get the results wanted. He said if you start to fall short and there is no way to cover that gap then you are in trouble, especially if you can't neutralize the opposition.

Keith Millhouse said you will know when the campaign dies. He said there will be times when someone has to pull back and someone needs to take over. When you do your polling make sure that the stuff that comes up can be done from a legal, realistic and technological standpoint.

Eileen Goodwin said that early milestones were effective.

6. Next Steps

Supervisor Firestone asked what options there were on an election date.

Mr. Kemp responded that the next general election would be in November 2006 and after that the next opportunity would be November 2008.

Councilmember Mariscal suggested finding out where each city council stood on this issue.

Jim Kemp said his concern was asking people to support something when they don't know what they are supporting. He said if we don't make a decision soon then there would not be enough time to place a measure on the ballot in November 2006.

Jim Kemp said that he has developed a preliminary schedule based on talking with other agencies with the same programs. He said in order to be on the November 2006 ballot an expenditure plan and ballot measure need to be to the county clerk by July 2006 and we need to get polling consultants on board right away. He said in April they would identify types of programs to place on the expenditure plan and identify the costs and scope of these projects. He said in October the meat of the work and conducting a public outreach process would be done to find out what types of projects the voters would be interested in. It would take up to November 2005 to develop a draft of the expenditure plan and then take it to the city councils and board of supervisors and bring it back to SBCAG to make the changes by Spring 2006. He said a final draft would be circulated in April and would go back to the city councils and board of supervisors for approval in May.

Chair DeWees suggested that this be brought up at the regular board meeting on Thursday, March 17.

Jim Kemp said that the technical effort was moving forward.

Stephen VanDenburgh said that we need to begin with pollsters to see whether people will support the measure.

Amy Worth said that the first piece is to put together the expenditure plan, talk to the voters and do the polling to see where you are. She said you will need to touch base with all of the elected officials in the county. She said this agency would just put together the plan.

Councilmember Mariscal said he was in support of moving forward with the poll.

Supervisor Gray said that Santa Maria, Guadalupe and the Board of Supervisors were definitely in favor of this.

Mayor Hicks said that for every city in Santa Barbara County that Measure D has been the lifeblood. He said fundamentally they need to get a consensus of whether people are supportive of Measure D and whether the structure should be changed.

Councilmember Secord asked if it would be fair to say we can do the expenditure plan and public education about Measure D without concern.

Mr. Ready replied that we could.

Councilmember Mariscal moved to proceed with the polling for renewal of Measure D. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Marsical and carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.