

MINUTES

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Thursday, July 21, 2005

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

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Salud Carbajal, Supervisor, First District; Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District; Brooks Firestone, Supervisor, Third District; Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District; Joe Centeno (SBCAG Vice-Chair), Supervisor, Fifth District; Russ Hicks, Councilmember, City of Buellton; Donna Jordan, Councilmember, City of Carpinteria; Jonny Wallis, Councilmember, City of Goleta; Lupe Alvarez, Mayor, City of Guadalupe; Dick DeWees (SBCAG Chair), Mayor, City of Lompoc; Dan Secord, Councilmember, City of Santa Barbara; Bob Orach, Councilmember, City of Santa Maria; Brian Baca, Councilmember, City of Solvang; Gregg Albright, Caltrans District 5 Representative.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Jim Kemp, Executive Director; Michael Powers, Deputy Director of Planning; Stephen VanDenburgh, Deputy Director of Programming; Kent Epperson, Traffic Solutions Administrator; Gregg Hart, Public Information/Government Affairs; Cathy Muneio, Executive Secretary/Board Clerk; Kevin E. Ready, Sr., Senior Deputy County Counsel; Fred Luna, Fluor Enterprises, Inc.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair DeWees called for the pledge of allegiance.

3. **RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION**

None.

4. **RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION**

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 16, 2005**

Supervisor Centeno moved approval of the minutes for June 16, 2005 as presented. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Carbajal and approved unanimously with Councilmember Orach abstaining.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

7. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

Councilmember Secord moved approval of the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Gray and carried unanimously.

8. **TEAM BIKE CHALLENGE AWARD PRESENTATION**

Erika Lindemann presented the staff report and announced that the Coastal View News Cruisers were the winners of the Team Bike Challenge.

Mayor DeWees presented the award to Amy Orosco who accepted the award on behalf of the Coastal View News Cruisers.

Ms. Orosco said it was an honor and privilege to take part in the contest and she thanked Councilmember Jordan for encouraging their group to participate.

Councilmember Jordan said that after they formed a team from Carpinteria City Hall they went out and challenged the Coastal View newspaper staff to form a team of their own.

9. **CLEAN AIR EXPRESS OPERATOR CONTRACT**

Kent Epperson presented the staff report. He said that proposals were received from Santa Barbara Airbus, MV Transportation and American Star and that Santa Barbara Airbus ranked number one with no protests being submitted. Mr. Epperson reviewed the RFP process and changes to the two year contract. Mr. Epperson mentioned that although several evaluation criteria were used in ranking the proposals, cost was a major factor in the recommendation. Mr. Epperson mentioned that the one area of concern raised by the evaluation committee was the preventative maintenance plan submitted by Santa Barbara Airbus. Mr. Epperson explained that several provisions were added to the contract to strengthen the preventative maintenance program. Another notable change from the current contract was the new contract no longer requires the operator to pay for engine or transmission replacements. Under the existing contract, the operator had built in the cost of engine and transmission rebuilds into the hourly rate regardless of whether they were actually replaced. By removing this requirement from the contract, SBCAG will only pay for these repairs if they are needed. Traffic Solutions has included a budget line item to pay for these items if they are eventually required.

Supervisor Centeno asked if the engine or transmission didn't need to be replaced what would happen to the funds budgeted for that item.

Mr. Epperson said that any dollar amount that was not used would carry over into the future year budget.

Mr. Epperson explained that the contractor would be responsible for the day to day operation and maintenance and that SBCAG would be responsible for administering the contract and monitoring federal requirements, along with customer service, scheduling and planning. Mr. Epperson said that SBCAG is also responsible for paying for the fuel and that the fuel is purchased through the county bulk fuel purchase to gain a better price. SBCAG has also considered purchasing fuel through MTD. Purchasing fuel through MTD could save SBCAG about \$5,000 a year in fuel costs.

Supervisor Centeno asked how the dispute with Santa Barbara Airbus regarding changing of schedules was being handled.

Mr. Epperson said the new contract will include periodic reviews of the schedule and adjustments as necessary. He pointed out that the arbitration section was also removed from the contract.

Mr. Ready said that he had reviewed the arbitration clause and determined this was carried over from the APCD contract. County Counsel recommends that SBCAG adopt the County policy of not including arbitration clauses in contracts, and therefore recommended that the clause be removed from the Clean Air Express contract. This would allow for the Executive Director to make any final determinations of any claims made under the contract.

Mayor Alvarez asked what it would cost to replace a bus engine.

Mr. Epperson replied that he was not certain, however he believed an engine rebuild would be around \$17,000 to \$20,000.

Steve Maas, Manager of Strategic Planning with SBMTD, said he served on the selection committee and that the decision to recommend Santa Barbara Airbus was unanimous.

Michael Seden-Hansen said he also served on the selection committee and that he also supported Santa Barbara Airbus as the contractor.

Councilmember Secord moved to authorize the Executive Director to execute a two-year contract with Santa Barbara Airbus to operate the Clean Air Express transit service. Supervisor Carbajal seconded the motion.

Supervisor Carbajal asked if any analysis was completed on the engines as they stood now to insure that they weren't on the verge of needing a rebuild.

Mr. Epperson said that MTD had helped with the inspection of four of the older buses, and that although there were some maintenance issues identified by MTD, to the best of his knowledge the engines and transmissions were still in good working condition.

Councilmember Secord asked if they used an oil analysis.

Mr. Epperson replied that Santa Barbara Airbus does use oil analysis to identify engine maintenance problems.

The motion carried unanimously.

10. **LOSSAN NORTH CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN**

Mr. Powers presented the staff report and then introduced Richard Dial of LOSSAN.

Mr. Dial reviewed with the board the draft LOSSAN North Corridor Strategic Plan. He said that September 16th would be the end of the public comment period at which time the findings would be incorporated into the final version. Mr. Dial also noted that June 2005 was a record year for train ridership in the corridor.

Mayor Alvarez asked that in the future ridership numbers be provided to the City of Guadalupe.

Mr. Dial responded that he would e-mail Mayor Alvarez if he noticed a dramatic increase or decrease in ridership.

Mayor Alvarez asked if there was a project priority list.

Mr. Dial said the projects were listed in order of need.

Mayor Alvarez asked if there was a funding shortfall problem.

Mr. Dial responded that Amtrak had proposed a \$1.4 billion dollar annual budget but it did not include much funding for capital projects; however, there may be an opportunity to receive federal funding from demonstration projects.

Councilmember Secord said that the Union Pacific would benefit from some of the projects and asked if anyone had discussed cost sharing with them.

Mr. Dial responded that Union Pacific owns the rail right-of-way and that they have made it clear in the past that they would not entertain discussions about increased passenger rail service at the cost of delaying freight access and schedules. However, UP did spend a significant amount of their own funds to repair last season's storm caused track damage. Mr. Dial said federal funding may become available due to the importance of goods movement in the corridor.

Councilmember Secord asked about the impact on train dispatching and control systems if additional rail service is added.

Mr. Dial said that the corridor's control systems were not state of the art and clearance for trains to advance in the northern part of the corridor comes directly from Union Pacific in Omaha, Nebraska.

Councilmember Secord asked if the Amtrak bankruptcy issue had been resolved.

Mr. Dial said he couldn't speak for Amtrak directly but he believed that discussions in congress regarding Amtrak's federal budget appropriation have been progressing toward successful resolution and he did not believe that Amtrak would be forced to cease operations.

Councilmember Secord asked if there would be enough funds left to widen the freeway if money were put into railroad.

Councilmember Orach stated from a regional standpoint, with the Santa Barbara and Goleta Amtrak Station remodels and the buildout of Nipomo, Santa Maria and Guadalupe, that Guadalupe should be included in the mix for a station upgrade.

Mr. Dial said those were the types of comments they have been trying to solicit through this process.

Supervisor Carbajal asked if there was any possibility of expediting the plan update prior to spring 2006 since this data might be helpful in decision making and with the Measure D renewal effort.

Mr. Dial said that ideally the project would be completed prior to the end of the year, but most likely would be spring 2006.

Mr. Kemp said that the modeling will be used statewide for commuter rail systems and Union Pacific was invited to participate in these efforts.

Mr. Powers said that a Commuter Rail Study was included in the 101 in Motion study and said publicity would be extensive. He emphasized that the board should have sufficient information on the costs of commuter rail for the Measure D renewal effort.

Councilmember Baca said as a geologist for the county he sees continuing problems with the Union Pacific tracks due to active landslides and tracks that are perched on eroding cliffs, and asked if there was any plan for relocating these tracks.

Mr. Dial said that this was not being looked at during the current level of analysis, but that there were several places tracks will need to be moved in order to straighten curves.

Councilmember Baca said that at some point the tracks will need to be relocated within the decade.

Mr. Dial said that those issues would be looked into.

Supervisor Firestone said that Councilmember Baca had brought up a good point and that this should be a crucial part of planning.

Councilmember Baca said that there were several places on the Union Pacific track bed where trains have to slow down in places where it is not safe.

Mr. Powers said he would forward those comments to LOSSAN.

Councilmember Jordan said she shared Supervisor Carbajal's concern about not having the document in time for the 101 in Motion decision on commuter rail. She said in reviewing the report it appears that everything is tied together.

Mr. Dial said that the rail corridor is an integrated system and that improvements made anywhere along the line benefit the entire corridor. He said that improving sidings in Santa Barbara County is listed as an "immediate" project priority.

Mayor DeWees said that he did not believe this could happen before the renewal of Measure D is placed on the ballot.

Mayor Alvarez said that Guadalupe may need to upgrade the train station with additional use.

Supervisor Gray said that the North Corridor Strategic Plan was the best information she had seen from the LOSSAN agency and recommended that staff provide the plan and Mr. Dial's name to the press.

Mayor DeWees said it appeared that there may be a marketing problem with Amtrak because when he called to inquire about train tickets, Amtrak ticket reps didn't know where Lompoc was.

Mayor Hicks said that in the next 60 to 90 days 101 in Motion will select an alternative and the plan is not going to be done for a longer period of time.

Mr. Kemp said that commuter rail as part of the 101 in Motion had come up several times. He explained that the estimates that were given in LOSSAN plan were for the whole rail corridor from Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo. He said the track improvements necessary for commuter rail implementation was a subset of the capital project needs identified in the LOSSAN plan and their cost would be far less than what is included in the plan. He said that the rail cost estimate produced for 101 in Motion included construction of only a couple of sidings between Santa Barbara and Ventura County. He added the capital costs for the proposed commuter rail service, including purchase of trains and passenger cars and track and station improvements, was estimated to be less than \$80 million.

Mr. Powers said that the work for the commuter rail study was equivalent to a PSR and that this will provide sufficient information for development of the Measure D renewal expenditure plan.

Paul Klock with the Vandenberg Air Force Base asked when the track curve realignment was done would it be within the current right of ways.

Mr. Dial said that it would be outside of the current right of ways.

Supervisor Carbajal moved to receive the presentation. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rose and carried unanimously.

Councilmember Jordan asked if the spelling of Carpinteria could be corrected in the plan.

11. ROUTE 1 OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS

Fred Luna presented the staff report.

Mr. Albright complimented the whole effort.

Mayor DeWees asked if Caltrans looked at other areas that were susceptible to storm damage.

Mr. Albright responded that they look for damage to the roads immediately following rainstorms.

12. 2006 STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. VanDenburgh presented the staff report.

Councilmember Secord commented that funding was approved for the Santa Maria six-lane project which was a Level C instead of the Hwy 101 Operational Improvement projects which was a Level D. Mr. VanDenburgh said both projects would be discussed at the workshop following the board meeting.

Councilmember Wallis asked Mr. VanDenburgh to explain what the RTIP was. Mr. VanDenburgh said that SBCAG is notified of an estimate of funds available over a five year period to the County by the California Transportation Commission; SBCAG then develops a five year description of how it would like the funds spent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Powers said that the Strategic Plan, status of Amtrak funding and agreement to get Amtrak funding were discussed at the Lossan Policy Committee meeting of June 1, 2005 and he was available if board members had any questions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Kemp reported that Congress ready to enact a new federal transportation reauthorization bill to replace TEA 21. He said he would report whether this bill passed at the August 18th SBCAG board meeting.

Mr. Kemp said that now that Santa Barbara County has been designated as an attainment area that CMAQ funding will no longer be available to our region. Mr. Kemp said that Santa Barbara County was not the only region facing the loss of CMAQ funds due to attainment and that they are working at the state level to try and win support for a transitional funding program.

Mr. Kemp informed the board that a meeting between SBCAG and SLOCOG was scheduled for September 29th to be held at the Radisson Hotel in Santa Maria.

Mr. Kemp said he was planning to have the consultant team for the Measure D reauthorization at the August 18th board meeting. He said that a workshop session on the Measure D reauthorization effort would be scheduled for this meeting.

Supervisor Carbajal said he was concerned about reports he had heard that Larry Tramutola, the principal consultant for the Measure D renewal effort, had not been readily available for meetings in Santa Barbara County. He also did not believe the limited scope subcontract Tramutola had negotiated with a local firm, Terrain Consulting would be sufficient to replace Mr. Tramutola's active participation in the contract and he would like Tramutola to have a hands-on approach to the Measure D renewal project.

Mr. Kemp responded that travel expenses and time will limit the number of times that the consultant can attend meetings in Santa Barbara, but that phone conferences have been held almost daily with the team and that this has worked well. Mr. Kemp said that Larry Tramutola is planning to attend the board's August 18 workshop meeting in Santa Barbara.

Mayor DeWees said he did not think it was necessary for Tramutola to be around all of the time holding SBCAG's hand and said they were well qualified to complete this project.

CALTRANS DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Gregg Albright said there were no changes or additions to the written report. He said that paving for Highway 135 would begin Sunday night. Mr. Albright said that Caltrans was looking at options for an interim solution to the safety concern at Hwy 154 and Baseline and also looking at putting in a roundabout at that location as a permanent solution as long as they can get a strong community consensus in support of a roundabout solution.

Supervisor Firestone commended Caltrans for looking at the use of a roundabout at that location.

Mr. Albright said that Will Kempton, the new Caltrans Director, has created performance contracts for each of Caltrans District Directors establishing specific project delivery commitments to increase Caltrans' credibility. He said that District 5 had the second largest list of projects to deliver in the entire state and that the Mr. Kempton wanted to emphasize to the public that project delivery as promised is a very high priority issue for Caltrans.

Supervisor Rose said if the funding wasn't received by the state she hoped the individual district directors would not be held responsible.

Supervisor Centeno conveyed his appreciation for the road work off of Hwy 166 near Cuyama. He also expressed concern about safety issues on Hwy 166 near the high school. He suggested that Caltrans look at lowering the speed limit to 45 mph and placing some left turn lanes in at the high school.

Mr. Albright responded that he would get back to Supervisor Centeno relative to his concerns.

Supervisor Gray thanked Caltrans for paving improvements to Hwy 135.

Supervisor Centeno said he would like to send a letter to Caltrans headquarters in Sacramento expressing his appreciation for Mr. Albright's performance as District Director.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Kemp said that copies of local newspaper articles were included in the board packet that reflected that SBCAG was taking on additional responsibilities.

The board recessed at 10:53 a.m. for ten minutes.

BOARD WORKSHOP

The board reconvened at 11:02 a.m. to a workshop session to discuss improvement projects planned for the Highway 101 corridor.

Mr. Kemp presented the staff report and then turned it over to Fred Luna.

101/Santa Maria Six Lane

Mayor Hicks asked if the new sound wall in the northbound direction was going to be placed in front of the newly constructed commercial space at that location. He was concerned the wall would cut off visibility of the business to highway traffic.

Mr. Albright said that a sound wall would not be placed in front of commercial businesses.

101/Ortega Hill Auxiliary Lane

Mayor DeWees asked if this project was consistent with the widening of Highway 101.

Mr. Luna responded that it was.

Supervisor Carbajal asked if the Tynan Group was under contract for this project. He said that he had not been contacted by them and it was important to coordinate with the county since there were several projects being worked on at the same time.

Mr. Luna responded that it is understood that things need to be coordinated with the county.

Mr. Albright said that Caltrans has made lighting changes and a maintenance agreement has been signed with Santa Barbara County.

Supervisor Rose asked what the construction time frame was.

Mr. Luna responded that there would be nine to ten months of construction.

101/MILPAS TO HOT SPRINGS OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

Mayor Alvarez asked what happens if there are funding shortfalls.

Mr. Luna said that the project had a certain amount programmed for the right-of-way and SBCAG is committed to fund the right of way portions and any changes would need to be approved by the Board.

Supervisor Carbajal said that his constituents were having some concerns about the closure of the off ramp at Cabrillo Blvd. He requested monitoring to show traffic redirection.

Mr. Kemp said that monitoring of traffic is planned for this project. He noted that the environmental assessment showed a small impact from the off ramp closure due to its light use.

Supervisor Carbajal said hr was concerned about impacts to Coast Village Road and other streets.

Mr. Albright said Caltrans would do post construction traffic monitoring.

Rob Miller with Caltrans said he had been meeting with the Montecito Association.

Mr. Luna said he was trying to find the best way to monitor this work and meet with interested parties. He noted that he had a little over a year to complete the right-of-way acquisition and the project will be constructed over four phases with each project taking approximately a year to complete. He explained that all lanes on Hwy 101 would be open during construction but that there would be some extended ramp closures. He said they have informed the community about the construction impacts.

101/LINDEN TO CASITAS PASS

Councilmember Secord asked if this project would be integrated with 101 in Motion.

Mr. Kemp responded that all operational improvements were consistent with a future widening project.

Councilmember Secord asked how many bridges were involved.

Mr. VanDenburgh responded there were approximately thirty bridges in the corridor.

Mr. Kemp said that if you compare the Santa Maria six-lane project with the Hwy 101 Operational improvements in Santa Barbara the Santa Maria project will cost \$22 million for seven miles and the Santa Barbara project will cost \$50 million for one mile.

Supervisor Firestone said the community response was a function of cost.

Mr. Kemp said due to complexity the corridor is very constrained and anything that is done will impact properties.

Barry Siegel complimented Caltrans and SBCAG on the south coast projects. He recommended that SBCAG look at discussing the near term, low cost, easy to implement projects. Mr. Siegel expressed concern about traffic impacts. He reminded the Board that the Ortega Hill project would be constructed during the Measure D renewal period.

Supervisor Carbajal said that this was a great presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.