

MINUTES

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Board of Supervisors Hearing Room
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Salud Carbajal, Supervisor, First District; Susan Rose, Supervisor, Second District; Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District; Joe Centeno (SBCAG Vice-Chair), Supervisor, Fifth District; Russ Hicks, Mayor, 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; Marty Mariscal, Councilmember, City of Santa Maria; Brian Baca, Councilmember, City of Solvang, Gregg Albright, Caltrans District 5 Representative.

Members Absent: Brooks Firestone, Supervisor, Third District.

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair DeWees 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: September 20, 2005

Supervisor Centeno moved approval of the Minutes of September 20, 2005 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Secord and carried unanimously.

EX-AGENDA ITEM

Councilmember Secord moved to add an item to recognize Councilmember Baca that occurred after the posting of the agenda to show recognition to Councilmember Baca who is leaving the area. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mariscal and carried unanimously.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Wenz with Cars are Basic urged the board not only to be the agency that distributes Measure D transportation funds, but also act as the gatekeeper over funding decisions by local agencies. He said that the Jameson Lane Bikeway was not a good use of taxpayer funds. He noted that the folks using the bikeway were bike groups for recreation and not for people traveling to work.

7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Alvarez moved to approve the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Wallis and carried unanimously.

Mayor Hicks arrived at 8:45 am.

EX AGENDA ITEM – RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

Chair DeWees read the resolution of appreciation for Brian Baca aloud.

Councilmember Baca said it had been a privilege sitting on the SBCAG Board. He said SBCAG played a very important role in the county with regards to getting Measure D renewed. He said that Measure D had greatly helped the city of Solvang and he couldn't imagine not having it. He requested that the Board be flexible in their approach on ways to put the Measure D Renewal Expenditure Plan together. Councilman Baca added that he had enjoyed his sixteen years working for the county. Boardmembers expressed appreciation for Mr. Baca's service.

8. 101 IN MOTION

Mr. Kemp explained that this was a public hearing to receive comments on the final consensus package that was approved by the TAG/SAC and the Steering Committee. He said that Bob Bramen would be presenting this item.

Chair DeWees said that the decision before the Board at this meeting would be the elements of the plan that they had been working on for the last several years, and not funding issues.

Mr. Bramen explained the 101 in Motion project began by going out into the community to solicit suggestion on ways to address congestion in the 101 corridor. The consultant team and advisory groups reviewed recommendations suggested in the past and added the new ideas offered during the initial public outreach effort – in total over 60 ideas to address 101 congestion were considered. He said they were sorted by projects that would make a major dent in congestion and smaller projects were added to compliment them. This resulted in eight alternative packages. Working through the technical review process, the alternatives were narrowed down to four packages and eventually down to the one single package of recommendations before the Board today.

Mr. Bramen explained the two major components of the stakeholder and technical advisory group recommendations were adding a lane south of Milpas and a train with various transit and carpool components to compliment them. He said that there would be a local shuttle service located at the train station to transport people to their final destinations. He noted that other elements of the package included promoting other transportation demand strategies like telecommuting, shifting work hours, reducing single vehicle occupancies, and looking into adjusting parking rates. He said that another component would be offering increased incentives to form carpools and vanpools.

Mr. Bramen explained that the projections show that in the future widening will likely be needed north of Milpas Street if funds become available, and the community supports widening in this area. However, new trends in land use decisions and travel mode shifts can forestall this need and therefore the proposed improvements are only addressing hot spot congestion locations north of Milpas.

Councilmember Secord asked if freeway widening and rail were linked together. Mr. Bramen responded that the two components were combined as a package because the congestion issues could not be resolved with just one of the large capital projects alone. It will take the full array of projects contained within the recommended package to fully solve the corridor's traffic congestion issues, especially over the long-term.

Supervisor Carbajal asked Mr. Bramen to comment on the letter received from 101.org stating that they were not opposed to rail but were very concerned that if rail was in the package that it would put the widening of Hwy 101 in jeopardy.

Mr. Bramen said he did not see this as a technical issue and asked for comment by SBCAG staff.

Mr. Kemp said that there is some potential for a conflict over available funding especially because funds are limited. However, the intent was to secure funding through the renewal of Measure D so that both the train and the lane could proceed simultaneously. He said these projects would take many years to get through the planning and environmental permitting process so majority of funding would not be needed for construction for several years and that potential funding competition issues could be addressed through the issuing of bonds.

Mayor Alvarez asked what the estimated cost of the total project was.

Mr. Bramen responded that the capital costs for rail would be about \$80 million and that the widening would cost about \$400 million.

Supervisor Centeno said that he assumed the figures did not include the cost for transportation from the train station.

Mr. Bramen responded that the figure was just for the capital costs for rail and did not include any costs for connecting bus services. He said the connecting bus services could include both private and public transportation options.

Councilmember Secord asked if a work session could be held to discuss the funding issues.

Mayor DeWees suggested waiting until after November to do so.

Mr. Kemp said that what staff was requesting at this meeting was to move forward with the adoption of the plan. He said funding issues would be addressed through the action plan and that the Measure D renewal discussion will be involved in those issues as well. Mr. Kemp said that he did intend to have a work session at a future meeting once the draft plan is in place.

Councilmember Jordan requested that staff address the funding issues involved in the plan. She referenced concerns by some members of the community and Board that it may not be possible to move forward with the widening of Hwy 101 because commuter rail service was also contained in the 101 in Motion recommendations.

Mr. Kemp said that the 101 corridor congestion was affecting the economy and the safety of motorists and the 101 in Motion project was a process to develop a plan with a vision for the future for this corridor. Without a plan he said these projects could not move forward. Funding decisions will come later when the 101 in Motion action plan is developed and the Measure D Renewal Expenditure Plan is detailed.

Mayor Hicks said that the concern he heard at the South Coast Subregional Planning Committee meeting was how would the Measure D funds fit into the plan if it were adopted and that the south coast will need to look at how it is going to handle its local share of Measure D funds.

Supervisor Gray asked if there was significant objection to or resistance to widening 101 from Milpas South.

Mr. Bramen responded that this was a high priority for the public who commented throughout the process.

Mr. Kemp said that this was supported by the polling that was done for Measure D and that seventy percent of the voters said they would support widening south of Milpas and commuter rail.

Mayor DeWees said that the Board has received letters stating concerns about the costs of the operation of commuter rail and asked if there were any projections on commuter rail ridership.

Mr. Bramen responded that they projected there would be 900 people using the train each day by the year 2030.

Mr. Gregg Albright commented that the consensus recommendation was a very significant milestone for the community. The commitment of resources and hard work invested to develop a consensus on a package of solutions to address the needs of the future was a rare commodity nationwide. Mr. Albright noted that Caltrans would likely use this process as a model for other communities around the country to follow as they struggle with difficult transportation choices. The next step was to move forward with the initial work through a Project Study Report (PSR) to enable funding of the improvements and that the PSR would be available in early 2006.

Supervisor Rose said she noticed that the action plan was scheduled for the December agenda and asked if the board needs the information from Caltrans prior to that time.

Mr. Kemp said that the PSR would provide information to program dollars for the environmental review phase of the project. He said that LOSSAN had agreed to expand the scope of work in their North Strategic Plan to include how a local commuter rail service might be implemented between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties that would fit within the existing rail capacity. He explained this study was expected to take approximately six months.

Supervisor Carbajal said he would like to better understand the Uniform Transit Application (UTA) process. He said that he and Supervisor Rose had met with colleagues from the south coast and they will be putting together a meeting to move forward with trying to resolve some of the rail issues and address costs involved.

Mr. Kemp said that the UTA is the transit equivalent to a PSR. He said there is a concept study that requires additional information through the LOSSAN plan.

Chair DeWees opened up this item for public comment.

Hamid Bahadori, with the Automobile Club of Southern California, said they advocate for traffic safety improvements. He thanked the board for including the Automobile Club in the stakeholder advisory Committee meetings to address these issues and for taking the lead to develop a package of solutions to address 101 corridor traffic congestion. He said that he believed that the package is a well balanced approach and offers flexibility in implementing different components of the package individually. Mr. Bahadori said that California was headed for a crisis if the transportation system fails to grow and elected officials need to agree on some achievable goals in order to move forward in the future. He requested that the board continue their leadership by approving the package. He thanked Jim Kemp, Gregg Hart and the Board for their hard work and said he looked forward to a continued partnership.

Kalon Kelley with the Citizens Planning Association presented the board with a letter from the law firm of Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger as part of the administrative record relative to the CEQA process. He explained that CPA believed SBCAG Board action on this issue required an environmental impact report.

Eva Inbar with COAST said she supported the package that was before the board because it was balanced and multi-modal. She said it was a compromise with something for everyone. She requested SBCAG move forward with this as quickly as possible.

Scott Wenz with Cars are Basic said that they requested this study be completed five years ago and asked that commuter rail not be linked to the 101 widening.

Andy Caldwell with COLAB, said he supported Measure D but only with widening the Hwy 101. He said that the south county would not support Measure D without rail and that the north county would not support Measure D with rail. He said the widening Hwy 101 will serve all parts of the county and said that they should separate rail from the widening of Hwy 101. He said that Santa Barbara County could not support rail and a lane without help from the state and Ventura.

John Bowen, past chair for the Santa Barbara Industrial Association, and member of the SAC said they endorsed moving forward with this plan. He said widening of Hwy 101 alone would not resolve all of the congestion problems in the corridor and that implementing a commuter rail service would be difficult.

Mark Bradley with COAST stated that the original SBCAG Board direction regarding the 101 in Motion project was to widen the freeway, but if that was all that was done it would just move the bottleneck up the freeway further. He noted that the forecasts reveal that widening with rail and traffic demand management was necessary. He said that COAST was in support of the consensus package but urged that all of the elements of the package move forward together. He reminded the board that when the renewal of Measure D was polled commuter rail was one of the alternatives that the public requested.

Alex Pujo said he was supportive of the 101 in Motion recommendations and hoped that all of the elements could move forward at the same time but the smaller ones could be implemented first. Mr. Pujo said that the widening of Hwy 101 could take ten times more money than rail.

James Wagner who works at UCSB said that supported the transportation alternatives and supported commuter rail which would be accessible in a shorter period of time. He requested that the board move ahead with the rail and lane package.

The public comment period closed.

Councilmember Secord moved to approve the consensus recommendations from the Steering Committee, Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Group and initiate the preparation of an action plan. Supervisor Carbajal seconded the motion.

Supervisor Gray asked whether there was opposition from Carpinteria for a second track through Carpinteria.

Councilmember Jordan said that several years ago there was a proposal to put a siding on the Carpinteria Bluffs property but that project had been abandoned by Union Pacific and was not part of the current commuter rail proposal which would largely be using existing track.

Supervisor Gray asked Michael Powers if the plan for the coast line included double tracking. Mr. Powers replied no, just addition of more sidings, better signaling, and other improvements. Mr. Kemp explained that the preliminary analysis showed that to accommodate three trains per day it would only require construction of two new sidings, with one of the sidings located at the Padaro Lane area and the other near Oxnard.

Councilmember Wallis said she was very impressed by the 101 in Motion project's tremendous public outreach effort. She said that the community had worked very hard to bring consensus to this process and she was in support of the motion.

Councilmember Mariscal said he was a north county member of the South Coast Subregional Planning Committee and as a north county member did not feel it was his place to say that a particular element should or should not be in the plan for the south coast especially because we are looking at thirty year planning cycle. He said both the lane and train play an important role in the solution and that he would support the consensus recommendations.

Supervisor Rose said she would support the recommendation. She said that it had been a long process and one that needs to be honored and acknowledged. She said she grew up on the east coast with commuter rail that works really well and if rail was not implemented then we are not planning for the future.

Supervisor Gray said she would support the plan.

Councilmember Baca said he would support the plan and menu of options for the future. He requested that Counsel Ready comment about the letter received from the Citizens Planning Association during public comment.

Counsel Ready said that the Citizens Planning Association had been involved in this process for a number of years and said he would have hoped that the group would come forward prior to the meeting and it was something that needs to have a programmatic EIR. He said that the agency has a program EIR for the Regional Transportation Plan and that the board is deciding what projects can be put into the MTP. He said that the letter requests an EIR but that we are just studying what projects will be added to the Plan that will then have environmental review. In essence, the letter states that SBCAG would need to complete an EIR to study whether the 101 in Motion projects should be included in the MTP which will have a programmatic EIR completed. Counsel disagreed with the letter's conclusion.

Councilmember Secord asked if there were any other elements that needed to be added to the motion.

Counsel Ready said that there were not.

Mayor DeWees thanked the stakeholder committee for all of their efforts. He said this was a multifaceted approach that needed to be phased in. He said two years ago the Board said that widening would take priority, and that commuter rail was a very complicated process especially dealing with Union Pacific. He recommended meeting with members of the Ventura County Transportation Commission for support. He also said that transporting people from the rail station to their place of work would also be difficult. Mayor DeWees said it was regrettable people have staked out their positions on whether or not to support Measure D because the board and public were working together on this.

Supervisor Centeno said that when this process began the board agreed that they wanted to widen Hwy 101 and discuss alternative projects to address the congestion problem. He said that adding a lane would be difficult to market if it was not separate from the other alternatives. Supervisor Centeno said what was critical to him was to have Measure D funds for local projects and that he would like an understanding of what could be funded without dampening enthusiasm for Measure D renewal. He said that he would support the 101 in Motion recommendation but would be very attentive to how the funding issues were discussed in the future.

Councilmember Jordan said that she would support the motion and that she felt it was important to have unanimity of this plan. She stated that the experts have told the board that the plan is the best way to address the problem and that it was the board's job to move forward with the plan.

Supervisor Carbajal called for the question.

The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

9. 101/SANTA MARIA WIDENING PROJECT CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD

Gregg Albright said that the single bid received on this project was a successful bid but the cost was 40 percent over the engineer's estimate due to an increase in construction costs. He said that Caltrans sometimes will rebid the project to receive more bids, but in this case they would most likely see a cost increase if the project was rebid. He said that Caltrans was in support of the SBCAG staff recommendation that Caltrans award the contract.

Mr. Kemp said that staff concurred with the recommendation by Caltrans to award the contract. He outlined how the \$8.4 million shortfall would be funded. He noted that SBCAG's share of the shortfall is approximately \$5 million and would come from SBCAG's regional share of STIP funding. He noted that the board at a future time would need to determine if the additional funding will come from the SBCAG's increased programming capacity anticipated for the 2006 STIP cycle or from deleting some projects already programmed in the STIP. He said that many of the STIP projects have not progressed because the California Transportation Commission (CTC) has given them a low priority for allocation of STIP funding. The board may need to delete these low priority projects to provide additional funding for projects like the Santa Maria Six lane project that have experienced increased costs.

Supervisor Centeno moved to authorize the Executive Director to sign a letter recommending that Caltrans award the contract for construction of the 101/Santa Maria Six-lane Widening project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mariscal and carried unanimously.

The board took a ten minute break at 10:26 am.

10. MEASURE D RENEWAL

Mr. Kemp presented the staff report relative to developing an expenditure plan for the renewal of Measure D. Mr. Kemp reported that the poll results showed that transportation issues were the number one priority for voters in the county and that they would support the renewal of Measure D since it was an existing tax measure. Mr. Kemp said that staff had been working with an expenditure plan committee consisting of public works directors in the county. He said they had met to develop guiding principles to develop the plan. He said that the plan needs to have projects with a high enough level of support and needs to be balanced along with being financially feasible.

Mr. Kemp said that there were a number of challenges that will need to be faced as the plan moves forward. He said one was that there were not enough funds available in Measure D to fund all of the projects. He said that the board had discussed the split of Measure D funds and that there was strong support among local elected officials to keep the existing split but that the current split of 30 percent would not provide enough funding to complete the needed regional projects. The voters want to know what they are going to receive and that there is a need for flexibility as well as some level of specificity. Mr. Kemp said there needs to be some equity because there are different needs within the county. He said he hoped to present something to the board at the November meeting.

Councilmember Secord asked what other sources of funds there might be if there was no longer the 70/30 percent split. Mr. Kemp responded that road rehabilitation projects are currently funded through Measure D. Local agencies also receive gas tax revenue and Proposition 42 funds when they are available.

Dave Davis with MTD said he was representing the MTD board's position relative to the distribution of Measure D funds. He complimented Phil Demery on working with the public works directors and his follow-up to MTD concerns about the need to develop an equitable plan. He said that MTD supports the idea of local support on how the funds are distributed and also recognizes that the needs in the north county versus south coast are very different from a transit standpoint. He said that MTD is a regional transit agency consisting of five jurisdictions and that MTD has an increasing service sector and increasing role in congestion management. He requested that funds be set aside for MTD.

Supervisor Gray said that SMOOTH also serves several jurisdictions.

Eva Inbar representing Coast and SB PTA said she was very disappointed with the outreach that was done to date and was taken aback that the board might consider sticking to the old 70/30 split. She urged the board to look at the poll and safe routes to school. She said she would like to see a new Measure D formula and urged the board to keep the door open for discussion.

Paul Karp said that there isn't a feeling of defeat and that they hope to bring a couple of options to the board that will offer what the consultants feel is important and could be endorsed.

Supervisor Carbajal asked if the transit providers were being included in the discussions.

Mr. Karp said they were all represented.

Mark Bradley with COAST said that all of the counties that had their measures approved last year dedicated at least 30 percent of their funds to transit. Those that didn't pass did not have any funds dedicated to transit. He urged the board to consider thinking of a more balanced allocation of funds.

Harley Augustino of Pueblo said that people are looking for alternative transportation choices especially with the increasing cost of gas. He said that he was concerned with the current 70/30 split and that most counties were 33/33/33. He said as a bus rider MTD does a good job and that it creates problems if 70 percent goes to the local jurisdictions. He said that Measure D must be a compromise and public transit must be a part of Measure D.

Supervisor Gray asked if Mr. Augustino was requesting additional funding to go to MTD.

Mr. Augustino replied that he would like funds to go to public transit and that MTD was one agency that directs public transit but that his request applied to both the north county and south coast.

Alex Pujo said that the 33/33/33 split was discussed back in 1998 but they decided to combine the first two. He said the vote did fail in north county but got such good support on the south coast that it passed. He said that the current situation was not supported now.

Phil Demery said that the jurisdictions need to band together to make this work. He said it is not about the 70/30 percent split but about having local control so that each jurisdiction could spend their funds on whatever project they feel necessary. Mr. Demery said that in order to move forward there needs to be a positive interaction.

Councilmember Secord said that the city of Santa Barbara has been flexible with its control. He asked what the county has done with respect to using road money for transit and said it sounds like the public works directors have drawn a line in the sand with the 70/30 percent split.

Mr. Demery said that the county has been involved with MTD on the south coast and that in the past funds were offered to MTD for operations. He said that they would like to work through the Board of Supervisors for enhanced services in Isla Vista and look at additional service enhancements for the unincorporated area of the Goleta Valley.

11. 2006 STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Steve VanDenburgh presented the staff report.

Supervisor Carbajal and others requested a more detailed report be presented at another time since the lack of written information was difficult to digest.

Mr. VanDenburgh said that the list of projects for the 2006 STIP will need to be adopted. He said the numbers that we are supposed to be working with have been consistently changing and that he was not clear what the dollar figure was that they should be working with.

Mr. Kemp said that they were trying to help the board to understand what the policy issues were.

Councilmember Jordan agreed that the information needed to be listed in the report.

Supervisor Centeno said he would like additional information and asked that this report be brought back to the board in a detailed format.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Powers reported that the LOSSAN Board had met on September 14th in Santa Barbara. The board discussed working with other rail agencies and a report on expenditures from Caltrans for triple tracking south of Los Angeles to address congestion issues. He said that the Pacific Surfliner corridor has had record growth between San Luis Obispo and San Diego and but congestion and delays were occurring due in part to freight rail growth. He said they also heard reports from the Union Pacific regarding integrating the needs of the public and private sectors.

Councilmember Mariscal asked about the coast route being a relief valve. Mr. Powers replied that any new intercity passenger or commuter rail services would have to go on the same tracks that are used for goods movement. He said that when the coast route was out of service due to storm damage the Union Pacific realized the importance of that system to address north/south freight movements. He said that the 101 in Motion studies indicated that there will need to be discussion with Union Pacific to address these issues and that there will be costs of improvements to sidings, signals, etc. to add new services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Kemp introduced the two new SBCAG planners, Sarkes Khachek and Andrew Orfila.

Mr. Kemp said that a joint board meeting with San Luis Obispo Council of Governments on September 29th was well attended and received. The background of both agencies was provided and the roles that the various agencies play were provided. There was also a discussion on projects that affected both agencies particularly Highway 166 and Hwy 1. He said that there was a clear interest from both boards that they would like to continue working together and scheduling future meetings. They also showed interest in having more robust communication in regard to projects that could affect the other region. Mr. Kemp said that they would be scheduling a meeting after the first of the year.

Mr. Kemp said that there was a meeting scheduled with the Ventura County Transportation Commission on October 26th with the South Coast Subregional Planning Committee to address the Hwy 101 corridor.

Councilmember Secord asked if anyone had read about how tracking devices could monitor the movement of cell phones along a busy highway corridor thus providing monitoring of traffic and that this information could use that data to predict congestion. He said he would send the article to the board and staff.

Supervisor Centeno asked why SBCAG was receiving funds for the Santa Maria River Bridge when it was located in San Luis Obispo County.

Mr. Kemp responded that the funds were included in SAFETEA LU as a joint project requested by San Luis Obispo County and SBCAG. He said it is viewed as a contribution by both agencies but the funds go to Caltrans. Mr. Kemp said it was important for both agencies to meet to discuss the widening of the Santa Maria River Bridge.

Mr. Alvarez thanked staff for coordinating the meeting and thanked Supervisor Gray for bringing up the subject of the traffic coming through Guadalupe.

Mr. Kemp said that several staff members attended the Focus on the Future conference for counties that have local sales tax funds. He said there were fourteen other counties considering placing sales tax measures on their ballots for 2006. He said that the availability of Proposition 42 transportation funds next year was again very tenuous. He said the State was still planning to use Indian gaming

revenues for improving the highway system. He also reported there was planning underway for a State bond measures that could provide \$11 billion for infrastructure projects including some funding for transportation. Given the State's difficult financial situation it is not clear what the funding picture will be for next year's STIP funding cycle.

CALTRANS DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Mickelson presented the District Director's report. In addition to the report she said that Highway 150 opened the previous Friday and the crew and construction company had done a heroic effort to complete that project.

Councilmember Jordan thanked Caltrans for their work on the SR 150 bridges.

Mayor DeWees announced that Highway 1 would be closing to enable crews to complete storm damage repairs. Ms. Mickelson added that it would be closed for four weeks.

Supervisor Carbajal asked what the traffic count was on Highway 150 prior to its closing. Ms. Mickelson responded that she would provide him with the estimates.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.