

Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Council (SBCTAC)

MINUTES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Buellton City Council Chambers
140 West Highway 246
Buellton, CA

SBCTAC Members Present

Petra Löwen
Polly Bleavins
David Damiano (Chair)
Matt Dobberteen
Cathy Farrar
Richard Fernbaugh
Rick Hummel
Howard Kraus
Austin O'Dell
Dean Palius
Barry Stotts
Victor Suhr
Ed Zoost

ILRC
Children & Families Commission
SBMTD
County Transit
Transit User – Lompoc
City of Lompoc, COLT
LOVARC
R&D Transportation
SMAT
SYV People Helping People
Community Access Network
Transit User – South Coast
Transit User – SMAT

Others Present

Andrew Vail
Jose Perez
Melissa Streder
Ashley Payne

PathPoint
Moore & Associates
Caltrans, Planning
Community Partners

SBCAG Staff

Aubrey Spilde
Michael Powers

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Damiano called the meeting to order and initiated a round of introductions. Aubrey Spilde introduced Melissa Streder who will be taking over Pat Mickelson's position after Pat's retirement.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Damiano called for public comment and there was none. David Damiano and the committee thanked Michael Powers for his 34 years with SBCAG and presented him with a cake.

3. MINUTES

Following a motion by Cathy Farrar, seconded by Barry Stotts, with Austin O'Dell and Matt Dobberteen abstaining, the committee approved the SBCTAC minutes of November 9, 2010.

4. TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA)

A. Aubrey Spilde summarized the staff report. Regarding the fact that local and regional services to the general public provided by a single claimant cannot have separate farebox requirements, Austin O'Dell asked about SMAT and the Breeze. Aubrey explained that SMAT local fixed route service and the Breeze combined must meet 20%. They cannot have separate farebox ratios, even if Breeze serves non-urbanized areas. Austin also asked if SMAT would be exempt from farebox ratios for three years if it entirely re-vamped its service. Aubrey said the re-vamp would have to meet the complex and very specific definition of "extension of service" in the statute in order to be exempt. Matt Dobberteen asked about the impact of the Clean Air Express on SMAT's farebox and Aubrey said it is not included because it does not use TDA (Transportation Development Act) funds. Michael Powers added that using TDA funds would raise other issues such as accessibility. Matt asked if the Breeze's farebox success would benefit its funding agencies and Aubrey explained it only impacts Santa Maria because Santa Maria is the operator. Richard Fernbaugh noted Lompoc is asking its Short Range Transit Plan consultant to look at interregional services. Austin clarified that SBCAG is helping COLT by lowering the farebox and Aubrey confirmed, noting it would be discussed further under item 4B. Michael noted SBCAG staff examined the impact of the blended farebox on Lompoc with and without the Wine Country Express and it had essentially no impact, so it is likely SMAT and the Breeze would be in a similar situation. David Damiano clarified that if COLT were to not meet its farebox requirement it could lose TDA funding and Aubrey confirmed. David commented that preserving money for transit is good. Matt asked about the definition of urbanized and non-urbanized and Aubrey provided a brief explanation. Howard Kraus pointed out that (SB)MTD is listed twice in the Acronym list in Attachment 1. After asking for David's preference, Aubrey will delete MTD and keep SBMTD. Following a motion by Richard Fernbaugh, seconded by Cathy Farrar, with Austin O'Dell abstaining, the committee recommended approval of the proposed policy on the application of farebox recovery ratio standards to transit operations in Santa Barbara County.

B. Aubrey Spilde summarized the staff report. David Damiano asked when COLT started service and Aubrey said 1976. David asked about SBMTD's higher farebox requirement and Aubrey explained that is a separate issue with a different cut-off year. Looking at the graphs on page 3, Matt Dobberteen clarified COLT needs an additional 4% to meet the 20% farebox requirement and Michael Powers confirmed. Matt noted the TDA statute appears to be very confusing and Aubrey and Michael confirmed. Matt asked about legislative overhaul and David advised to be careful what you wish for. Ashley Payne asked if COLT needs more riders and Richard Fernbaugh agreed that is part of

the problem. Another part is COLT increasing service in response to complaints and lawsuits about using TDA funds for streets and roads, which increases operating costs, can lower farebox, and can then lead to penalty reductions in TDA funds. COLT needs to increase riders and may also need to decrease service. Ashley said to let her know if there's any way she can help, noting she refers everyone to the transit system when possible. Matt noted one of the challenges is serving the unincorporated areas, which requires COLT to travel long distances to areas with low density. Ashley said her drivers may be able to help provide service to those areas. Richard said it's the demand response service that pulls down the farebox ratio. Austin O'Dell asked about the problem with the unmet transit needs process requiring increased service when the demand isn't there. Aubrey clarified that the unmet transit needs process hasn't found any unmet needs to be reasonable to meet and therefore hasn't required COLT to increase services; however, this does not prevent other parties from filing lawsuits. Richard noted Lompoc will be inviting everyone to participate in the Short Range Transit Plan update to help them gain a better understanding of the situation. David asked about ADA service bringing Lompoc's farebox down and Richard said Lompoc's ADA farebox ratio is currently about 2.5%. He said nighttime service also brings down the farebox—COLT averages 1.2 riders/bus during the last hour of service. David asked if Lompoc has carefully identified its legal requirements, noting that SBMTD and Easy Lift went through the process recently and found the service area for ADA service could be adjusted by time of day and day of week. Austin asked about the rider response to this adjustment and David said he didn't hear many complaints, but Easy Lift may have heard more. Also, much of the issue was in Carpinteria, where HELP volunteer-provided transportation can fill the gap. Following a motion by Cathy Farrar, seconded by Barry Stotts, the committee unanimously recommended approval of the Resolution to Reduce the Farebox Recovery Ratio, required under TDA, for the City of Lompoc Transit to 15% for three years.

5. OVERALL WORK PROGRAM

Michael Powers summarized the staff report. Barry Stotts noted he is working with the City of Santa Maria on Safe Routes to School and corridors that are fully accessible and also connect to bus stops. Michael said Safe Routes to School is a local and regional issue and it would also fit into the Overall Work Program (OWP). He added that although SBCAG could tie the issues into the OWP, making actual improvements would be the role of the cities. Barry asked about involving all three advisory groups (SBCTAC, TTAC (Technical Transportation Advisory Committee), and TPAC (Transportation Planning Advisory Committee)), and Michael said the regional committees shouldn't get too involved in street design and other local agency roles. Austin O'Dell asked when comments are due and Michael said the end of the year, noting the committee will have a chance to see the draft OWP in March. Dean Palius asked if the Santa Ynez Valley to Santa Maria corridor is being studied and Michael said there seems to be consensus among local agencies to move forward with providing that transit service once JARC (Job Access and Reverse Commute) grant funding is available. Matt Dobberteen asked about SBCAG's workload and Michael said it is full, noting the planning division has issued a couple of RFPs (requests for proposals) for work on the travel demand model and the airport land use plan. The programming division is working on Measure A. Matt asked if the Census data comes out next year and Michael said yes. Ashley Payne asked about Michael's replacement and Michael said SBCAG is doing a statewide recruitment and will probably post the opening in the next couple weeks. Ashley asked about Steve VanDenburgh and Michael explained Steve is his counterpart in the programming division. Michael noted Aubrey Spilde will be

the SBCTAC point of contact.

6. ELECTIONS

Austin O'Dell nominated Matt Dobberteen to serve as SBCTAC Chair for 2011 and Richard Fernbaugh seconded the nomination. Matt Dobberteen nominated Petra Löwen to serve as SBCTAC Chair and David Damiano seconded the nomination.

Howard Kraus nominated David Damiano to serve as SBCTAC Vice Chair for 2011 and Polly Bleavins seconded the nomination. Austin O'Dell nominated Dean Palius to serve as SBCTAC Vice Chair and Petra Löwen seconded the nomination.

The committee took a vote and elected Matt Dobberteen as Chair and David Damiano as Vice Chair.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Polly Bleavins announced that children from Robert Bruce Elementary School are crossing Broadway and families are getting \$70 fines for jaywalking. She asked who she should contact about a crosswalk. Austin O'Dell suggested calling Hallie Holden, Public Works Department staff, City of Santa Maria.

Matt Dobberteen announced Cuyama Transit has received an ADA-accessible, 12-passenger cutaway with room for two wheelchairs. It cost \$55,000 and took nine months to arrive. It will probably be in service for 10 years.

David Damiano announced the SBMTD Board voted to charge riders with visual impairments the same as it charges riders with other disabilities. He added that the Braille Institute did some fundraising and Santa Barbara Bank and Trust bought \$1,000 worth of passes that will be distributed through the Braille Institute.

David Damiano concluded by thanking Michael Powers for his 34 years with SBCAG and wishing him well.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date is Tuesday, February 8, 2011.

9. ADJOURN

SBCTAC adjourned.