

**SAN BENITO COUNTY  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
REGULAR MEETING**

**April 19, 2012, 2:00 P.M.**

**FINAL MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chair Emerson, Director Boch, Vice-Chair Botelho, Director De La Cruz, and Director Gomez

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy; Executive Director, Lisa Rheinheimer; Transportation Planning Manager, Mary Gilbert; Administrative Services Specialist, Kathy Postigo; Transportation Planner, Veronica Lezama; Secretary, Monica Gomez

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5; Steve Wittry, Director of County Public Works

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Emerson called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

**A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

*Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors unanimously approved the Certificate of Posting.*

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

Chair Emerson stated for the record that the COG Board received Joe Thompson's public comment correspondence dated March 20, 2012 through April 19, 2012. The correspondence was entered into the public record.

**D. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Rheinheimer**

Ms. Rheinheimer reported that she and Supervisor Margie Barrios attended the Mobility Partnership meeting in Los Baños. She mentioned that there were many members of the public present, who were very concerned about the option of tolling Route 152. Ms. Rheinheimer will provide an update next month.

Ms. Rheinheimer attended a U.S. 101 Coalition Sacramento Day last week. She spoke with Bryan Kelly, who is the Business Transportation of Housing Secretary about the importance of the U.S. 101 to the State and to the Coalition which consists of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, and San Benito Counties.

Ms. Rheinheimer reported that she will be following the Governors reorganization plan. He's looking at some reorganization within the various different cabinets, specifically related to transportation. She will

provide an update if there are any changes related to transportation.

**E. CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 REPORT – Falsetti/Loe**

Aileen Loe announced that Caltrans welcomed Rachel Falsetti as the Acting District 5 Caltrans Director, while recruitment is underway for the permanent District Director. Ms. Falsetti was most recently the Division Chief for Transportation Programming and brings a lot of skill and background knowledge to the department.

Caltrans recently launched its version of QuickMap, an online mapping tool designed to make traveling through California easier. The map enables you to quickly zoom into regional areas across the state and access real-time information such as traffic congestion and incidents, lane closures, chain controls, changeable message signs and traffic speeds on state and local roads. The map is available on the Caltrans website.

Caltrans has announced a Call for Projects for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRR) Federal Funds. The Call is planned to begin April 2012 and applications are expected to be due in July 2012.

Lastly, Ms. Loe commented on the agenda item regarding the proposal of the IDistrict. Caltrans Director, Malcolm Dougherty responded to a number of legislators who brought up this issue last fall. Mr. Daugherty acknowledged the need to be more innovative and responsive to their stakeholders and customers. He also committed from the District 4 office to have a key point of contact to make the communication more effective with Santa Clara County. He acknowledged the priority projects that he was committed to and to see them through.

**F. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS:**

Director Boch attended the AMBAG meeting; however, there was nothing to report as items discussed were not applicable to the COG.

Director Botelho reported that he along with Ms. Rheinheimer attended a meeting for the Senate Subcommittee for Transportation and Housing on SB 1155. Senator Cannella provided a positive presentation and Director Botelho and Ms. Rheinheimer testified to the benefits of the Bill for San Benito County and its agricultural industry. The Bill did pass with a 5/4 vote and it moved on to the Appropriations Committee. Director Botelho stated that he will continue to work with staff to find a way to bring down the cost of the study which was estimated at \$50,000.

Director De La Cruz recommended putting in some low cost caution or stop signs at the intersection of Buena Vista Road and Westside Boulevard near Calaveras School. He stated that there is a safety concern that was brought to his attention by residents, which he went out to observe himself. He stated that the issue is at the intersection due to a conflict between kids trying to get to school and cars trying to drive from Westside Blvd. onto Buena Vista Road. He stated that something must be done before there is an accident and a child is killed. Director De La Cruz directed Ms. Rheinheimer and Mr. Wittry to report back to him next month with possible solutions.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated March 15, 2012 – Gomez
2. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Transaction Report (Financial Claims) Dated March 2012 – Postigo
3. **RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5
4. **ADOPT** Resolution 12-05 Allocating Transportation Development Act Funds for San Juan Highway Bike Lanes Project – Postigo

5. **APPROVE** Letter to the City of Hollister Supporting a Bicycle Transportation Account Grant Application for a City-wide Bicycle Striping Project – Lezama
6. **APPROVE** Proclamation No. 12-01 Declaring May 7-13, 2012 as Bike Week in San Benito County – Lezama
7. **RECEIVE** the Council of Governments Draft Budget – FY 2012/13 – Postigo
8. **Sale of Surplus Vehicle to San Benito County Department of Public Works** – Lezama
  - a. **DECLARE** Vanpool Vehicle Surplus, Last Five Digits of VIN 40393; and
  - b. **AUTHORIZE** Sale of Surplus Vanpool Vehicle, Last Five Digits of 40393, for \$19,226 to the San Benito County Public Works Department, a Local Public Agency Department.
9. **Public Transportation Modernization, Improvements and Service Enhancement Account Funds** – LiOwen
  - a. **APPROVE** Authorized Agent Form for Fiscal Year 2008/2009 Until the End of the Public Transportation, Modernization, Improvements and Service Enhancement Account Program
  - b. **ADOPT** Resolution 12-06 Authorizing the Execution of Certifications and Assurances for Public Transportation, Modernization, Improvements and Service Enhancement Account Funds

Ms. Rheinheimer requested that the Board table Item 5, Continue Item 8 to the May meeting and amend Item 9 to include the revised project list (provided to the Board at the meeting) and incorporate the change into their motion.

Director Boch asked to pull Item 1 from the consent agenda. Director Botelho asked to pull Item 9 from the consent agenda..

*Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors unanimously approved Items 2-4, 6, 7.*

Director Boch noted a correction to Item 1, COG Meeting Minutes dated March 15, 2012. The correction was under Item F. Board of Directors Reports 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph 4<sup>th</sup> sentence. The sentence should read: Director Boch stated that it was interesting because the **Study** is recommending 4 lanes for Highway 152 and Highway 156

*Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Boch, the Directors unanimously approved Item 1, with the correction noted above in bold.*

Director Botelho inquired about the two large buses and how expensive they are.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that they are replacement buses for the Gavilan College run, which typically have standing room only in the mornings and afternoons. The old buses will be surplus, either auctioned off or sent to a salvage yard.

Director Botelho asked if after all is done, will some LTA monies be made available to shift back into a reserve and then be moved to use towards local roads.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that unfortunately that cannot be done because they are all capital projects.

Director De La Cruz asked if there is anything that can be done to help the City of Hollister and the County with roads and facilities such as Chappell Road, Nash Road, and Buena Vista Road. Perhaps, start looking at ideas for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that the City and County have their Capital Improvement Programs and the Board has the opportunity to review those priority projects that are needed with the available funding. Ms. Rheinheimer stated that staff could bring back a list of projects and forward them on to the City and County.

*Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Botelho, the Directors approved Item 9 with the amended project list and Director Gomez voting No. Item 9 passed 4/1.*

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:**

#### **10. DISCUSS** San Benito High School District Request for Modifications to or Closure of Nash Road to Accommodate Student Crossings – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that Director De La Cruz had requested that the COG Board of Directors consider the San Benito High School District's longstanding request for modifications to or closure of Nash Road to accommodate student crossings between Monterey Street and Homestead Avenue. Students at the high school cross the roadway several times throughout the day to access different areas of the campus.

Staff brought this item to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for discussion and input at its April 5 meeting. The Committee discussed a number of potential options for safety improvements, including the following:

- Construction of a new County road connecting West Street to San Benito Street
- Closure of Nash Road during school hours
- Changes in operation procedures at the high school, including fewer class changes requiring crossings (e.g. having freshman only on one section of campus)

Following the discussion, the TAC unanimously voted in favor of construction of a new County road connecting West Street to San Benito Street to reduce through traffic on Nash Road.

County of San Benito Public Works Director Steve Wittry provided information regarding a possible interim bypass that would allow closure of Nash Road and answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Wittry stated that a lot of what is being discussed is very conceptual in nature. One of the challenges is making sure that funding is appropriately identified for the project. There are several projects that are going on in the general vicinity. The High School has a new Master Plan that is underway and the County is working on a Regional Park that would be located behind the school. The thought process would be that the roadway would be a new roadway that would be open 24/7 on the west and south perimeter of the upper edge of the High School. The new road would then allow permanent closure of Nash Road, between Monterey Road and West Street. Mr. Wittry noted that they are looking at possibly two years before this project would actually come to fruition. In the interim, it was suggested to put in stop signs at both intersections on West Street and Monterey Street; however, it would only be a short-term fix.

There was discussion about putting in temporary barriers during school hours, however, it was noted that the most dangerous time is during after school events for games and dances, etc.

San Benito High School District Board Member, Ray Rodriguez commented on the need for everyone to work cooperatively on a solution. He stated that the community's most precious resource is its children and their safety.

There was discussion about whether or not the High School has attempted making changes to student schedules to minimize the use of crossing back and forth on Nash Road. However, because the school has such a large population and all of the students have mixed schedules it does not seem probable.

Mr. Wittry mentioned that the City and County understand that the Westside Boulevard project is coming in the future, however it is a minimum of 15 years away. The proposed option was seen as an interim

solution that can be built fairly inexpensively and provide multiple uses. Mr. Wittry stated that the project is estimated to cost half a million dollars, which includes the environmental work, pavement, and temporary signal.

Mr. Rodriguez thanked the County for coming up with possible solutions and added that even if it is not possible to close Nash Road, something should be done. He added that if it means putting in temporary stop signs at West Street and Monterey Road he was sure the School District would share or put up the funds for the stop signs, or he himself would commit to fundraisers to come up with the money.

Mr. Wittry stated that the next step would be to have another meeting with City, County, and High School staffs', within the next two weeks to form a plan of action. After that, a presentation would be made to the Boards' of all three agencies along with a Memorandum of Understanding, stating that all three agencies would endorse spending effort and energy to accomplish.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he was delighted with the progress that had taken place. He stated that he would like to set a goal to have temporary stop signs put in by the beginning of the school year to ensure the safety of the students and prepare the community for the future closure. Mr. Rodriguez thanked Mr. Wittry once more for his movement on the issue.

Chair Emerson stated that everyone agrees there is a problem and there seems to be a solution, however, he felt it was important when going into these negotiations to recognize that an impact was created by a decision of the School District to change how they were going to use the new buildings after the environmental studies were done. Chair Emerson stated that the City and County have a responsibility to help alleviate problems, however, he stated that whoever created that impact has to share in the solution financially.

Mr. Wittry stated that each individual Board should see a more formal report in May and will be given the opportunity to provide further direction as to how any agreements or solutions move forward.

There was no further discussion.

**11. Approve Letter to Assembly Member Gordon Regarding AB 2382 Creating the Caltrans Innovation District – Rheinheimer**

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that as reported in January, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is working on an effort to create a new Caltrans district – the Innovation District (iDistrict) to be located in San Jose. The iDistrict is envisioned to be an incubator for a new way of delivering transportation projects, ahead of time and under budget, with innovation as a key strategy for making this happen. To make this happen, Assembly Member Gordon has introduced Assembly Bill 2382.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that based on the Board's discussion in January, staff prepared a letter of support for AB 2382. Staff added into the letter a request for VTA to consider adding San Benito County into the new iDistrict.

There was no discussion or public comment on this item.

*Upon a motion duly made by Director Botelho, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors approved Item 11.*

**12. Receive Final Report on Transportation & Economic Development Survey – Gilbert**

Ms. Gilbert provided a Power-Point presentation on the Transportation & Economic Development Survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather data about San Benito County residents' occupations, transportation choices, and travel patterns. The group's goal was to gather input from residents regarding

transportation priorities. The survey also collected data on residents' occupations and incomes to market San Benito County to prospective industries looking to relocate.

Ms. Gilbert stated that the survey was completed by 275 individual residents of San Benito County. The information gathered through the survey effort will be used by staff as it develops projects and policies for the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan.

Chair Emerson asked if staff knew how many of the 275 residents that completed the survey commute to the Bay Area.

Ms. Gilbert stated that 85 individuals indicated that they commute to San Jose, with another 70 indicating "other", and 81 indicated that they commute within San Benito County.

There was brief discussion amongst Board members and staff regarding survey results.

*Upon a motion made by Director Gomez, and seconded by Director De La Cruz, the Directors unanimously voted to adjourn the COG meeting.*

**ADJOURN TO COG MEETING MAY 17, 2012.**