

**SAN BENITO COUNTY
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

SPECIAL MEETING

June 21, 2012 2:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Emerson called the meeting to order at 2:38 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

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

TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:

- 1. RECEIVE** Report from COG Staff and **MAKE RECOMMENDATION** to the City of Hollister City Council Regarding Options for the Highway 25 Bypass Route – Rheinheimer/Gilbert

Ms. Rheinheimer provided introductory remarks including background information. Ms. Rheinheimer mentioned that she, along with Gordon Machado and Stephen Rosati, met with Caltrans Director, Malcolm Dougherty, and District 5 Acting Director, Rachel Falsetti, and California Transportation Commission staff this week. Ms. Rheinheimer requested that the Board allow Mr. Machado time to report back on the meeting that they attended.

Ms. Gilbert provided a Power-Point presentation comparing the Route transfer options

Mr. Machado reported on the meeting with Caltrans. Mr. Machado stated that the meeting overall, was a productive meeting and Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty was very receptive. He reported that the storm drain and cracks were right away taken off the table. The meeting was primarily focused on the design issue of the curve and the 55mph speed limit at the curve. Mr. Dougherty suggested that the City could possibly take less money for the state of good repair of San Benito Street and put those funds toward making improvements to the curve. Mr. Dougherty would have to go to the CTC for additional

funds as well. Mr. Dougherty stated that he would like to go back and review the As-Built documentation and set up another meeting. Mr. Machado stated that it's unfortunate that they're dealing with a time element, however, he mentioned that he and Mr. Rosati would not mind setting up another meeting with Mr. Dougherty.

Director Botelho applauded Mr. Machado and Mr. Rosati for all of their efforts in seeing the project all the way through. He noted however, that it is unfair that Caltrans does not want to spend the money to bring the existing Highway 25 up to a state of good repair, yet they expect the City to spend money on unnecessary changes to the new roadway. He stated that the City should take over both roads because there would be a lot more potential for local business.

There was discussion among the Board about the changing of the posted speed limit to 55 mph from the design speed of 45 mph. Mr. Machado reported that during the discussion with Mr. Dougherty about this issue, Mr. Dougherty suggested that the Bypass should've been designed at a higher speed.

Chair Emerson also thanked Mr. Machado and Mr. Rosati for their efforts with the project. He was pleased to hear that there appeared to be some sort of progress in meeting with Mr. Dougherty.

Director Emerson asked if it would be appropriate to go back and reduce the speed limit to 45 mph around the curve even though the traffic study shows 85% at 55 mph.

Ms. Loe stated that she was not sure, and it would take some time to evaluate what options might be available for that type of problem solving.

Mr. Machado stated that he Mr. Dougherty stated that you could not simply go back to 45 mph.

Ms. Rheinheimer noted that the curve has a posted yellow warning sign at 45 mph.

Ms. Loe stated she was pleased there was an opportunity to meet with the CTC staff and Caltrans Director. She stated that Caltrans is compiling additional information to answer some questions that were asked. Caltrans will work with COG staff and come up with best ways to move forward. Ms. Loe stated that as long as Caltrans owns any state highway they have an obligation to maintain it in a safe condition and they will continue to do that on existing Route 25. Caltrans will work with the City whether or not the highway is under their ownership.

Ms. Loe clarified that although it was suggested that Caltrans signed off on the Plans for the Bypass, they did not. She stated that the Bypass plans were developed by COG and Caltrans reviewed the As-Built Plans that were provided to them last spring. Ms. Loe stated that more information will be brought forward and they will continue to work with COG on what the best solution is.

Ms. Rheinheimer responded to Ms. Loe's comment stating that it was her understanding that Caltrans staff also reviewed the Plans as COG went through the project development; it wasn't that they only saw the As-Built Plans at the end of the project.

Ms. Loe acknowledged that Ms. Rheinheimer was correct in that there was review and comment by Caltrans. However, she mentioned that as a commenting agency, they were not the lead agency and although they made comments, it did not mean that their comments were always incorporated into the final product.

Director De La Cruz stated that he did not buy Caltrans' position for the reason that the Highway 25 Bypass was a special circumstance. Although Caltrans was not the lead agency, they knew that they were going to take ownership of the new road. He stated that knowing that Caltrans has its own set of guidelines of what they want to see on the road, they should've especially made sure to comment and sign off on all plans.

Director Botelho apologized to Ms. Loe for having to take all of the animosity and responsibility, when the previous Caltrans Director and engineers involved with the project should be the ones present.

There was discussion about what the downside of proceeding with legislation for relinquishment. Ms. Rheinheimer stated that there would not be discussion about proposed legislation until possibly October. Staff could continue discussion about proposed legislation and how it interacts with the Bypass.

Director Boch recommended continuing this item while negotiations are still going on, instead of locking themselves into something they're not certain of.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that staff would also like to provide the Board with a thorough analysis of both options and report back next month with a recommendation.

Upon a motion made by Director Boch, and seconded by Director De La Cruz, the Directors unanimously voted to continue this item to the July COG meeting.

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

ADJOURN TO REGULAR LTA MEETING JUNE 21, 2012.