

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

September 19, 2013, 3:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Botelho, Director Boch, Director De La Cruz, Director Gomez, and Director Scattini

STAFF PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Aileen Loe and Richard Rosales Caltrans District 5; Steve Wittry, Director of County Public Works Department

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Botelho called the meeting to order at 3:01 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

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

C. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lynn Overtree
San Juan Bautista, CA

Ms. Overtree proposed the idea of adding another route to the County Express transportation services that would go to Watsonville in the morning and in the evening allowing commuters to connect with transit services to Salinas, Monterey, and Santa Cruz. Ms. Overtree stated that she resides in San Juan Bautista and commutes to work in Santa Cruz. She drives to Watsonville and uses transit services from there to get to Santa Cruz. Ms. Overtree stated that she enjoys using transit because she's able to work during that time and it also lowers our impact on the traffic problems and saves us money.

Ms. Overtree stated that she was aware that there may not be enough commuters to support this route however; she wanted to bring up the idea for discussion.

Chair Botelho recommended that Ms. Overtree attend COG's next Unmet Transit Needs meeting in February 2014. He noted that this would be the time when they really look into any transit needs that are not being met. COG staff followed up with Ms. Overtree and provided a business card to link her with the COG website for more information.

D. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Rheinheimer

Ms. Rheinheimer announced that County Express will be providing free shuttle service to the San Benito County Fair October 4 – 6. Shuttle service schedules are being distributed at ticket sale locations as well as other agencies around town. Staff hopes it will be a success and they will provide a report to the Board in October or November.

Ms. Rheinheimer announced that October 9th is International Walk-to-School Day. Walking school buses help reduce traffic and it is also a great way to get kids to exercise. Staff provided a ‘Walktober Flyer’ and encouraged Board members to advertise to their constituents.

E. CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 REPORT: Loe

Ms. Loe congratulated COG on its recent award of a Transportation Planning Grant to develop a bus stop improvement plan. In addition, she congratulated COG for its partnership with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments on the Partnership Planning Grant for a corridor freight study covering US 101 from Santa Barbara County to San Benito County.

Ms. Loe announced that Caltrans will be holding an opening on the new Crazy Horse Interchange on October 14.

F. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated August 15, 2013 – Gomez
2. **APPROVE** COG Transaction Report (Financial Claims) dated July through August 2013 (Postigo)
3. **RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5
4. **APPROVE** Karen Yinger and Matt Leal to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Lezama
5. **APPROVE** Final Monterey Bay Area Complete Streets Guidebook for Inclusion in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan – Gilbert
6. **APPROVE** Cost Sharing Agreement for Preparation of the Environmental Impact Report for the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and 2014 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy for an Amount not to Exceed \$20,000 – Gilbert

There was no public comment on the Consent agenda.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez, and seconded by Director Scatiini, the Directors unanimously approved Items 1-6 from the Consent Agenda.

REGULAR AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:

7. **RECEIVE** Update on the Highway 25 Bypass Route Transfer and Relinquishment – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that earlier this month staff held a Project Development Team meeting with staff from the City of Hollister, San Benito County, and Caltrans to go over all final needs to ensure that the transfer will be completed as quickly as possible. It is anticipated that the California Transportation Commission will approve it at their first meeting in January 2014. Once it is recorded with the County Recorder, the Route will be in possession of the City.

COG staff is taking the steps needed to complete the transfer of the existing Bypass over to Caltrans. Caltrans has State Highway Operations and Protection Program funding programmed for some improvements that they will be making to the roadway.

Ms. Gilbert reported that part of Caltrans' project improvements includes the relocation of signal loop detectors to improve the performance of the signal timing. In response to several comments heard at the Board and community level, staff has initiated a project with Caltrans and the City of Hollister to make interim changes to signal timing and install GPS units on the signal mastheads that will allow the signals to connect.

Director Scattini stated that he would like someone to take care of the issue with traffic lights at Westside Boulevard and 4th Street. He noted that he has mentioned the issue to City staff on several occasions and the issue has not been addressed.

Director De La Cruz mentioned that there is an issue near Marguerite Maze school with the left turn traffic signal going east on Meridian. The issue occurs between 7 – 8 a.m.

Ms. Gilbert mentioned that part of what staff will be doing to improve the performance of the signals is conduct traffic counts at every intersection, including turning movement.

Director Gomez recommended that Director De La Cruz bring up the traffic issue during Inter-Governmental meetings because they have dedicated time to traffic enforcement around schools. In regards to the issue at Westside Boulevard, he recommended that he and Director Scattini continue bringing it up to City staff because it is a City issue.

Steve Wittry, Director of County Public Works, stated that Westside Boulevard is completely in the City's jurisdiction. He stated that the City has a maintenance contract with an outside vendor for signal maintenance. He stated that they would be the appropriate people for the City staff to contact regarding the signal issue.

Ms. Rheinheimer noted that the Governor has until October 13 to sign the omnibus bills and he has not gone without signing an omnibus bill. She stated that she has conversed with Brenda Weatherly from the Downtown Association with regards to possibly holding a relinquishment party sometime in March 2014, as it is a big accomplishment here locally.

There was no public comment on this item.

8. RECEIVE Presentation on the San Benito Route 156 Improvement Project – Rheinheimer

Ms. Rheinheimer provided a Power-Point presentation to the COG Board. Additionally, Richard Rosales from Caltrans and Scott Fuller, representing Save San Juan Valley presented to the Board. The presentation covered background and history of the project, litigation and settlement information, project details and next steps and timeline information.

Mr. Scott Fuller provided an overview of the terms of the Settlement Agreement between Save San Juan Valley and Caltrans. The parties agreed to the following: 1) Caltrans will construct a cable barrier in the center median between the two directions of traffic for the portion of the Project that will have a 46-foot median, generally from Mission Vineyard Road to Union Road. 2) Caltrans will support a Multi-Use Trail to be constructed where the existing Highway 156 is now. It would serve as an access road to serve local traffic on the north side of the new expressway as well as a bike and pedestrian lane. Caltrans, as part of this agreement, and in lieu of bringing the road into a state of good repair prior to the relinquishment, and if San Benito County agrees to use such funding for the purposes specified in the agreement, Caltrans will provide funds to the County in an amount equivalent to the projected cost of bringing the road into a state of good repair.

3) Parallel Route- if the former San Justo School, which is now a residence, is moved by the local community within a certain timeframe, then Caltrans will revise its design. Instead of going out into the farmland around the school, it will move the road over to be parallel with the other lane of traffic. 4) Future Consideration of Roundabouts for other projects. Caltrans shall consider roundabouts as an option for any subsequent intersection improvements at the three intersections, Alameda, Bixby, and Union Road. They did not agree to install them now, but will consider them for any intersection improvements in the future at those locations. They agreed to meet with Save San Juan Valley representatives about the roundabouts at that time and shall respond in writing to any information provided by Save San Juan Valley regarding the roundabouts.

Chair Botelho stated that roundabouts should be discussed now that the road is going to be built and not at a future date.

There was discussion about how roundabouts work and statistics on safety advantages. Board members expressed mixed reactions to roundabouts. They expressed that there is definitely an educational element to driving through roundabouts.

Richard Rosales from Caltrans provided an overview of project details and timelines. He also answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Rosales stated that Caltrans held a Project Development Team meeting last week. The team is made up of the local community, local City and County staff, COG Executive Director, Lisa Rheinheimer, Director Boch, and Scott Fuller. Mr. Rosales stated that he would like to generate a Focus Group made up of local business representative; farm operators from the local area, Director Boch also expressed interest. The purpose of the Focus Group is to be able to discuss some design concepts or changes during the development of the Project and then take their suggestions to the Project Development Team for review and possible implementation of those suggestions or changes.

Chair Botelho recommended that Dan DeVries be included in the Focus Group. He also inquired if Caltrans would consider extending the time limit to move the School.

Mr. Rosales stated that the timeframe to move the school was discussed during mediation and extensions were granted.

Ms. Rheinheimer referred to the Agreement page 3, 3.1 (b) the School shall be relocated no later than July 2014, but if Saving San Juan Valley believes in good faith that it will be able to ensure that the School is relocated within (3) months thereafter, it may request that Caltrans extend this deadline. Caltrans is under no obligation to grant any such request.

Mr. Rosales stated that in terms of timeline, the critical path on this Project is the land acquisition phase. It involves appraisal of properties, purchasing properties, and utility relocation. He noted that there are extensive utilities to relocate on this project and it is what is driving the schedule for construction in 2017.

Director Gomez inquired about the funds that are going to be given to the County for the construction of the multi-use trail. He inquired if these funds have any restrictions or will the County be able to use those funds at their own discretion.

Mr. Rosales stated that Caltrans has met with Public Works Director, Steve Wittry and Chair Botelho to discuss these funds. Caltrans would enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the County for the transfer of any funds however; more discussion between the parties is required.

Chair Botelho stated that this item still has to go back to the Board of Supervisors for discussion and to determine whether or not they would want to enter into an agreement with Caltrans.

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy stated that she believed there would have to be an agreement that would be presented to the Board for approval that would speak to the use of those funds.

Director Gomez stated that there is reason to be concerned when funds are given to the County for a specific project that the public is aware of and that project is not completed.

Steve Wittry stated that the discussions are very early on and they have not yet completed a cost analysis on what the multi use trail would cost to construct. He also mentioned that it is important to remember that by not having Caltrans put the asphalt overlay on the road, the County gets the road as is in 2017 and is responsible for the maintenance of the road. The cost of this maintenance will be taken from the settlement agreement funds.

There was extensive discussion about the design of roundabouts and whether or not they are a better choice than a signalized intersection.

Mr. Rosales stated that Caltrans has already looked at roundabouts and they failed for this project. Caltrans is moving ahead with a signalized intersection. The settlement stated that Caltrans would consider future roundabouts on the corridor but not for this project.

Scott Fuller

San Juan Oaks Golf Club

Mr. Fuller stated that San Juan Oaks is in favor of this project and they want to see it happen. They are in favor of local funds being applied to this project. Mr. Fuller stated that they are in favor of the project being done in a way that respects the concerns of the stakeholders in the community as well.

Mr. Fuller stated that with regard to roundabouts failing for this project, Save San Juan Valley had their roundabout consultant look at it, when Caltrans said if failed in 2030 for the a.m. peak traffic at one movement going westbound, their consultant slightly redesigned it and it didn't fail. He stated that they had another roundabout expert look at their expert's conclusions and they agreed with them. Mr. Fuller stated at the last meeting Richard Rosales acknowledged that Caltrans' study of the roundabout at Bixby showed that it was "feasible". Mr. Fuller stated that the roundabout works at Bixby, it's just that Caltrans does not want to provide any traffic control at that intersection at this time.

Lastly, Mr. Fuller stated that the settlement did not end the community input on this project. Former Caltrans Director Krumholz assured them that even after the environmental work was done, after the project was finally approved, there would still be the opportunity for the community to have input on design. Mr. Fuller asked that COG encourage Caltrans to be transparent and open to community input on this project. The community has a big stake in this project.

Jolene Cosio

SJB Council

Ms. Cosio stated that the yellow light in San Juan Bautista was poorly placed, which is part of the reason why trucks have trouble stopping because they can not see it.

Ms. Cosio stated that the City of San Juan Bautista, COG, and the City of Hollister, all voted that roundabouts improve the acceptability of the plan. Ms. Cosio stated that there are many new improvements with roundabouts, they would work and would increase the economic situation of the County. Ms. Cosio stated that she is well aware that safety improvements are needed on Lucy Brown; however, they have never been addressed. She stated that a simple right turn lane onto Lucy Brown would address it. Ms. Cosio stated that she believes the signal at Union Road and the lack of a long enough acceleration and deceleration lane are the true problem. Ms. Cosio stated that she does not understand how residents will be able to enter the frontage road from the east. She stated that she would

like to see a GPS video to show her how to get onto the frontage road. She stated that the improvement at Union Road is paramount.

Chair Botelho closed Public Comment.

Chair Botelho stated that he would like Caltrans to include more stakeholders, especially at this point of the design phase to help address any issues that are raised. He also stated that the safety issues at Bixby Road must be addressed. Lastly, he stated that he hopes Caltrans takes another look at roundabouts.

Ms. Rheinheimer stated that staff will provide updates in a timely manner, possibly on a quarterly basis.

Director Scattini excused himself from the remainder of the meetings.

9. SELECT Preferred Vanpool Vehicle Donation Option – Lezama

Ms. Lezama reported that the Council of Governments received interest from two local non-profits (San Benito County American Legion and San Benito County Community Food Bank) interested in obtaining a van currently used under the Vanpool Program.

Ms. Lezama reported that at the last meeting, the Board directed staff to prepare some options for donating vehicles used under the Vanpool Program to local non-profits. Staff prepared four donation options. Each of the four options included an option description, financial consideration, and vehicle donation schedule.

Ms. Lezama noted a correction under Option 2 for the purchase of two new vans. It should read \$64,000.

There was brief discussion about the options.

There was no Public Comment on this item.

Upon a motion duly made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors approved the following motion: to purchase one van, apply for a grant, donate the 2002 van in reserve to the San Benito County American Legion, keep one van in reserve, and when another vehicle becomes available it may be donated to the other non-profit organization (the second vehicle would be donated at a later date if the grant is awarded). Vote 4/0 Motion passed.

Chair Botelho continued Closed session Item 10 to the conclusion of the LTA and ALUC meetings.

The COG Board convened to Closed Session at 5:05 p.m.

10. Conference with Real Property Negotiators – Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8

Property: 600 Del Monte Drive, Hollister

Agency Negotiators: Shirley Murphy, Deputy County Counsel,

Lisa Rheinheimer, Executive Director

Mary Gilbert, Transportation Planning Manager

Negotiating Parties: Leslie Mari Clark Trust

Under Negotiation: Price and Terms of Payment

COG reconvened from closed session at 5:15 p.m.

Shirley Murphy, Deputy County Counsel stated there was no reportable action taken under Conference with Real Property Negotiators – Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez, and seconded by Director Boch, the Directors unanimously adjourned the COG meeting.

ADJOURN TO COG MEETING OCTOBER 17, 2013.