

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

November 20, 2014, 3:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Gomez, Director Boch, Director Botelho, Director Muenzer, and Director Velazquez
Ex Officio: Mark McCumsey, Caltrans District 5

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy; Interim Executive Director, Mary Gilbert; Transportation Planner, Veronica Lezama; Secretary, Monica Gomez

OTHERS PRESENT:

Joe Horwedel, San Benito County Public Works; Byron Turner, San Benito County Planning; Paul Hierling, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Gomez called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

Upon a motion duly made by Director Botelho, and seconded by Director Muenzer, the Directors acknowledged the Certificate of Posting. Vote: 5/0 motion passes.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

D. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that in terms of funding legislation items that staff is following, information about the Cap and Trade funding program sources will be coming out soon. She mentioned that the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) provided a presentation on the item at its last Board meeting. She stated that she would provide more information on those funding sources at a future COG Board meeting, as some more guidelines become available.

Ms. Gilbert reported that she attended a couple of Regional Coordination meetings this week. The first was the Caltrans Interregional Strategic Transportation Plan open house in Salinas. It is a long range interregional strategic plan for transportation in California. The second meeting she attended was the Overall Work Program kick-off meeting, hosted by AMBAG. There were representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transportation Administration, as well as Caltrans Headquarters. She stated that this is usually done on an annual basis to kick off the respective work programs for the next 12-18 months.

Lastly, regarding the Local Transportation Authority, Ms. Gilbert reported that staff is looking to fill a part-time Transportation Planning Technician position. Staff held interviews this week and hopes to hire someone within the next couple weeks to help with some of the transit planning activities.

E. CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 REPORT: Gubbins

Mark McCumsey presented Caltrans Construction Projects Report. He noted that the Highway 25 Widening Project and Route Adoption project was added to the report.

Director Botelho expressed appreciation to Caltrans' San Juan Road Interchange Project Manager for calling him and answering his questions.

Director Boch stated that the San Juan Bautista City Council passed Resolution 2014-45 - Requesting a Highway Improvement Feasibility and Cost Analysis Studies for Traffic Calming and Speed Reduction Solutions at the Intersection of State Highway 156 and Monterey Street. He stated that the Resolution should be on the next COG meeting agenda.

Director Boch stated that a question came up at the San Juan City Council meeting during discussion of an approved fuel station at the corner of the Alameda and HWY 156. He stated that for some reason there is no right turn or deceleration lane eastbound before the intersection, there is an acceleration lane after the intersection. This was done during the 4 lane from 101 to the Alameda project. Director Boch stated that the traffic engineer stated at the time that it was possible that it wasn't justified at that time because there wasn't enough traffic. Director Boch asked if Caltrans would be receptive to looking into whether a deceleration lane is warranted for eastbound traffic before it gets to the stop light.

Mr. McCumsey stated that he would communicate the request and report back to the Board.

F. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated October 16, 2014 – Gomez
2. **RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5
3. **APPROVE** COG Office Closure Days from December 24, 2014 through January 2, 2015 – Gilbert

There was no public comment.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Muenzer and seconded by Chair Gomez, the Directors unanimously approved Items 1-3 from the Consent Agenda. Vote: 5/0 motion passes.

REGULAR AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:

4. San Benito County Traffic Impact Mitigation Fee Study Update – Gilbert

- a. **WAIVE** Minor and/or Inadvertent Defects in Responses to Request for Proposals # 2014-01 Submitted by Willdan Financial Services
- b. **ACCEPT** All Responses to Request for Proposals #2014-01
- c. **APPROVE** Contract with PMC for an Amount Not to Exceed \$84,936
- d. **APPROVE** Model Use Agreement with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments and Authorize the Interim Executive Director to Sign

Ms. Gilbert reported that staff released a Request for Proposals for qualified consulting firms to complete an update to the traffic impact fee study. COG received three proposals in response to the RFP. Proposal review and consultant interviews were conducted by an evaluation committee that included staff from COG, David Rubcic from the City of Hollister Engineering Department, Joe Horwedel from San Benito County Public Works, Byron Turner from San Benito County Planning Department, and John Olejnik from Caltrans. The Evaluation Committee selected PMC as the highest ranked firm and staff was able to negotiate a contract with PMC.

Ms. Gilbert stated that a copy of the final signed version of the contract was provided to the Board and copies were made available for the public as well. Ms. Gilbert noted a change to page 13 of the contract. Attachment B-1, the cost proposal form, was inadvertently left out of contract in the packet.

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy also noted for the record a correction to Item 4b changing the word “Qualifications” to Proposals.

There was no further discussion on this item or public comment.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Botelho, and seconded by Chair Gomez, the Directors unanimously approved Item 4 a-d. with the changes noted above by staff and Counsel Vote: 5/0 Motion passes.

5. RECEIVE UPDATE on State Route 25 Widening Project Development – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that at its September meeting, the COG Board directed staff to continue the work plan objectives for the project. She reported that the following items were accomplished:

- Coordination with Caltrans on the federal Environmental Impact Statement for the project: Caltrans has begun work on environmental studies and will schedule a Project Development Team meeting in the next 2-3 months.
- Stakeholder Involvement: Staff has continued communication with project stakeholders with the anticipation of holding a second meeting in January.
- Regional Coordination: Staff continued coordination discussions with AMBAG and Caltrans regarding the project. Staff also coordinated with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. On November 6th, the VTA Board of Directors committed local funding to the State Route 152 Improvement project, which includes a portion of State Route 25. VTA was anticipating state funds to match the local contribution but has received indications from the California Transportation Commission staff that additional state funding will be delayed due to other statewide project needs.

Chair Gomez noted he was somewhat apprehensive about participating in the discussion related to the VTA Board and the State Route 152 Improvement project as he had worked on the item through his boss's side.

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy inquired if Chair Gomez or his boss had any financial interest in the outcome of the project.

Chair Gomez stated that he did not have any financial interest in the outcome of the project.

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy stated that under the Political Reform Act Chair Gomez would not have to excuse himself from the discussion.

Director Botelho inquired if the alignment regarding Highway 152 was the same alignment that was discussed a couple years ago, which came off of San Felipe Road towards Lovers Lane area and coming across to Highway 25 near the County line.

Ms. Gilbert stated that in general the mapping was the same mapping that was discussed a few years ago. However, she stated that the idea is that once the project gets some firm footing there will be more discussions in terms of a Mobility Partnership and public discussion would happen as any plans are actually finalized for alignments.

Regarding Highway 25, Director Botelho stated that he believed it was absolutely critical that they have an understanding from Caltrans before they move forward. He stated that they need to know from Caltrans whether it is acceptable or not acceptable to add two lanes to the existing alignment from San Felipe Road on out to Highway 156 so that they could begin to analyze the cost of the project and plan accordingly moving forward.

Ms. Gilbert stated that it definitely merits a discussion with Caltrans to answer the question to the best of their ability at this point. She stated that perhaps, Caltrans project designers can provide a presentation that would be on next month's agenda. The presentation could include discussion about the existing project as proposed currently and the proposals that have been eliminated and reasons why they have been eliminated.

Director Velazquez concurred with Director Botelho's comments. He stated that he would like to see a response from Caltrans about breaking the project up into segments and simple temporary fixes. He added that he would also like to see the full picture and plans of Highway 152 and Highway 25 because although there has been discussion about it, he has never seen the plans.

Mark McCumsey stated that the Traffic Operations and Safety project was meant to be a quick fix to try to improve upon the safety as well as the operations of the current alignment. He stated that with the new Widening project they should be able to come up with some ideas and solutions.

Ms. Gilbert stated that she spoke with Caltrans regarding some of the items that Director Velazquez had mentioned at the previous meeting. One of the items was in regards to the speed limit on the roadway and whether or not it could be increased to improve the traffic flow. Caltrans stated that it was something that could be looked at, but they would like a formal request for a speed survey on the highway.

There was discussion about the Traffic Operations and Safety project. Chair Gomez stated that the biggest focus at the time was "safety". He stated that as someone who drives that roadway every single day, he feels a lot safer now than he did 4-5 years ago. He stated that the accidents that have been occurring out there would only be solved by a grade separation, which would not happen because the money is just not there for that type of a project.

Chair Gomez stated that he agreed with the comments from his fellow Directors. He stated that he would like to see Caltrans come back with some options for the Board so that they can take an informed position moving forward. He stated that he was also very pleased to see that the project is back on Caltrans radar.

Director Botelho stated that it seems apparent that ultimately the long range plan for Highway 25 is a joint project with VTA and Caltrans District 4 with 152 realignment and coming out onto Highway 101 and

making it a safer interchange. He stated that he served on the Mobility Partnership Committee a few years back until it was brought to an end by the Valley. He stated that when he attended those meetings he noticed that District 5 didn't seem to recognize the project at all. He stated that it seemed to be a VTA and District 4 project only. He stated that Highway 25 is District 5's responsibility and the project has a tremendous impact on the entire corridor. Director Botelho inquired if there was any movement to work closer with District 4 on the project to help with Highway 25 on our end.

Ms. Gilbert stated that the whole effort of the Mobility Partnership and the 152 Project went quiet up until recently. She stated that it has mostly been VTA trying to get the momentum back up for the project. She stated that in her conversations with District 5, it certainly is on the radar screen and they know that San Benito County is interested in having it completed.

Chair Gomez stated that it is interesting that the Board is starting to have these discussions about Highway 25 and at the same time VTA is gaining some momentum with Highway 152. He stated that he did not think that it's been a lack effort, it's just been a lack of a desire from COG with Highway 25 because it is back on the table. He stated that it is good that both Highway 25 and Highway 152 are coming back on the radar for both COG and VTA respectively.

Ms. Gilbert continued with the work plan objectives for the project that have been accomplished. She stated that with regards to Local Coordination and Outreach: The Interim Executive Director attended meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee and updated attendees on the status of the project and the work plan reviewed by COG. Staff also provided an update on the project at the San Benito County Business Council meeting. The County Administrative Officer has requested an update on the project at a Board of Supervisors meeting in December.

Ms. Gilbert mentioned that staff would like to schedule a Board Retreat for some time in December. This was discussed briefly back in September. The Board Retreat agenda would include the Highway 25 item. It would also be an opportunity to discuss funding in general for transportation needs in the County and other strategic visioning for the agency itself.

Chair Gomez stated that it may be better to schedule a special meeting for the Highway 25 item, since that will be a lengthy discussion. He stated that it would also be wise to engage the public.

After brief discussion there was consensus from the Board to wait until late January or February 2015 for the retreat in the event that there are changes to the COG Board.

There was no further discussion on this item or public comment.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Boch, and seconded by Director Botelho, the Directors unanimously adjourned the COG meeting at 3:34 p.m. Vote:5/0 motion passes.

ADJOURN TO COG MEETING DECEMBER 18, 2014.