

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

April 16, 2015, 3:00 P.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Muenzer, Vice-Chair Boch, Director Botelho, Director Gomez, Director Velazquez
Ex Officio: Tim Gubbins, Caltrans District 5

STAFF PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Olejnik, Caltrans District 5; Sara LaBatt, EMC Research; Heather Adamson, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Muenzer 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 Gomez, and seconded by Director Boch, 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 the California Transportation Commission's Road User Charge Technical Advisory Committee will be hosting a meeting in Monterey on April 24th at the Monterey Hyatt Regency from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Ms. Gilbert stated that the meeting is open to the public and she is planning on attending.

Ms. Gilbert reported that Senate Bill 16 from Senator Jim Beall was introduced in April. The Bill proposes new funding strategies for transportation needs in California. She stated that one of the exciting provisions of the Bill is the five percent of the revenues deposited in the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account established by the bill is suppose to be set aside for counties that are newly self-help counties after July 1, 2015.

E. CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 REPORT: Gubbins

Tim Gubbins announced that the Strategic Management Plan 2015-2020 came out this week and is available online. The Strategic Management Plan is only one of the steps Caltrans has taken recently to embrace reform, transform into a modern transportation agency and better serve all Californians. Its new mission, vision, and goals encompass a larger set of outcomes around economy, livability and environment in addition to the traditional goals of improving mobility.

Regarding project updates, the San Juan Road Interchange northbound on-ramp and southbound off-ramp are now open to traffic. Cole Road is now permanently closed at the US 101, but you can access Cole Road to San Juan. Work is still occurring on the frontage road.

Caltrans continues pursuing 50 percent water reductions installing smart sprinkler systems that use less water on state property, technology that automatically adjusts to weather conditions, soil moisture or broken pipes. There may be approximately 30-50 landscaping jobs on hold until the drought is over. Recycled water is being used at San Luis Obispo to water their lawn.

Lastly, he reported on the Workers' Memorial Ceremony that was held in Sacramento this morning in honor of all of the workers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Another ceremony will be held in San Luis Obispo on April 23. He reported that Statewide there have been 183 Caltrans workers killed in the line of duty.

Director Botelho asked if there were any updates to report with regard to the Highway 156 project and any discussions with County staff.

Mr. Gubbins stated that the project remains on schedule. However, he would have to follow up and speak with the project manager, Richard Rosales with regards to any discussions that have occurred with County staff and get back to him.

Director Gomez thanked Mr. Gubbins for being in attendance at the meeting and for always having a Caltrans representative in attendance to answer questions.

F. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS:

Director Gomez encouraged the COG Board to consider taking a formal position of support for Senate Bill 16 at the next COG meeting. He stated that it was a great way to encourage the revenue for a variety of transportation issues throughout the State.

Director Botelho concurred with the recommendation made by Director Gomez. He stated that he also expressed his support for Senate Bill 16 at the RCRC meeting that he attended.

Chair Muenzer asked Heather Adamson from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) if at the next COG meeting AMBAG could provide the comprehensive presentation of future funding that was presented at the AMBAG meeting by the California Transportation Commission Director.

Director Gomez asked if staff could also include a Vehicle Miles Travelled update.

Ms. Gilbert stated that staff would place the items on the next COG agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 1. APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Special Meeting Minutes Dated March 19, 2015 – Gomez
- 2. APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated March 19, 2015 – Gomez
- 3. RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5

4. **APPROVE** Resolution No. 2015-01 ADOPTING the 2015 Title VI Program Language Assistance Plan (LAP) for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Individuals – Lezama
5. **APPROVE** City of Hollister Claim for TDA 2% Funding in the Amount of \$6,000 for Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts for the Hollister West Gateway Project – Lezama
6. **ACCEPT** the Final 2015 Public Participation Plan Prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments – Lezama
7. **APPROVE** Amendment No. 2 to the Fiscal Year 2014/2015 Overall Work Program – Gilbert
8. **ADOPT** Resolution 15-03, Allocating Low Carbon Transit Operations Funds to the San Benito County Local Transportation Authority – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert noted a typo correction to Consent Item 4. She stated that the correct number for the Resolution was No. 2015-**02**.

There was no public comment.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez and seconded by Director Botelho, the Directors approved Items 1-8 from the Consent Agenda, with the noted correction to Item 4. Vote: 5/0 motion passes.

REGULAR AGENDA
TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:

9. **RECEIVE** Presentation on Results of 2015 Voter Survey – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert introduced Sara LaBatt from EMC Research. Ms. LaBatt provided a Power-Point presentation on the results of the telephone survey of San Benito County voters.

Ms. LaBatt presented the following key findings:

- Voters recognize the need for investment in transportation: Nearly 80% believe there is a need for additional transportation funding for San Benito County.
- Support for a transportation sales tax is above two-thirds: Three-quarters of voters support a half-cent sales tax to fund a range of county transportation improvements including road repair, Highway 25 widening, improved transit, and bike and pedestrian safety.
- With many voters concerned about raising taxes and trusting local governments with tax money, the measure should include strong accountability provisions and a focused plan.

Director Gomez inquired if other tax measures were used in the survey such as a full cent, quarter-cent, etc.

Ms. LaBatt stated that they focused only on the half-cent tax measure for transportation.

Ms. LaBatt reported that there was no difference in support between *likely* June and *likely* November 2016 voters. She stated that their advice to the Board would be to consider being ready to move on the June election if possible.

Ms. LaBatt ended her presentation with the following conclusions:

- Results of this survey support the county moving forward with the next steps toward a potential 2016 transportation sales tax measure
- The measure's expenditure plan should include a diverse set of projects and programs to support transportation improvements throughout the county

Overall, the COG Board was pleased with the survey results. They were surprised with the number of voters in support of a sales tax measure.

Chair Muenzer stated that the survey was based on a half-cent sales tax, but asked if EMC Research would be able to correlate what raising the sales tax to one-cent or three quarter-cent would do to the approval rating results.

Ms. LaBatt stated that going above the half-cent sales tax would risk reducing the support they demonstrated from the survey results. She also mentioned that if the Board decides to continue down the road towards 2016 for any future measure, it would be very likely that they would want to conduct a future poll to ask more explicit questions about the design that has been chosen and the amount as well. She stated that this survey focused on Highway 25 project vs. multiple projects, not an amount.

There was discussion about each COG Board member going back to their respective jurisdictions to discuss a possible tax measure and how it should be structured. The Board stated that they need more information from the County, City of Hollister, and the City of San Juan Bautista so that they can clearly understand where they are with their respective road assessments.

Ms. Gilbert stated that the County just had a County Roads assessment done recently, but she was not aware if the City of Hollister or San Juan Bautista had an updated road assessment.

Director Gomez and Director Velazquez stated that they have been requesting a City Roads assessment from City staff but they have not received the information.

Director Gomez stated that EMC Research did a great job with conducting the survey and now the COG Board needs to have a discussion about which projects they would be able to afford with a potential half-cent sales tax.

Director Boch agreed with their comments. He stated that over the last few years the City of San Juan Bautista has only been focusing on what they can do with the funds that were available such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He stated that they would have to check with the City Manager to see if it would be possible to complete a roads assessment for San Juan Bautista.

Director Botelho stated that he spoke with the County CAO about possibly having a discussion with Santa Cruz County because they had already gone through the process of hiring a consultant to put together a sales tax measure in 2016.

Director Velazquez stated that the City is going to have to figure out what roads need to be included, but he would prefer hiring a consultant to complete their roads assessment.

Director Gomez stated that each agency would make its own determination about which roads need improvement in their respective jurisdictions. Ultimately, what the Board will have to decide is how they will divide the proportions out to the projects such as Highway 25, road maintenance, new infrastructure, etc.

Chair Muenzer stated that the first thing that needs to be determined is whether or not their respective Boards want COG to pursue studying a sales tax measure to go on the ballot in 2016 for roads and transportation. He stated that Highway 25 is important to everyone and having a sales tax measure with Highway 25 being identified as a beneficiary will go a long way to getting the project on the constrained list. In addition, there is also the possibility of getting new highway funding.

After extended discussion there was consensus from the COG Board to go back to their respective agencies to see if all three agencies would be on board to move forward in support of a sales tax measure for roads and transportation.

Ms. Gilbert reported that the Board of Supervisors will be receiving this presentation on Tuesday. Staff will host another stakeholder meeting next week and will be presenting the transportation survey results to them as well. This will help with moving forward with next steps for an expenditure plan.

EMC Research will be providing the Power-point presentation to the County and Cities as well.

There was no public comment on this item.

10. RECEIVE Presentation on the Draft California Transportation Plan 2040 and **DIRECT** Staff to Provide Comments to Caltrans – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert introduced John Olejnik from Caltrans District 5. He provided a Power-Point presentation on the Draft California Transportation Plan 2040.

Mr. Olejnik reported that the California Transportation Plan (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation policy plan designed to meet the State's future transportation needs. It looks at the State's Transportation needs for the next 25 years. Caltrans prepares the CTP in response to federal (Map 21) and State (SB391) laws and requirements every five years.

Chair Muenzer inquired about Alternative 3 and whether it could be addressed in greater detail because it was his understanding that AMBAG had some concerns with it.

Mr. Olejnik stated that the alternatives worked together in layers until they reach the goal for Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG Emissions). He explained that you would not be choosing one out of the three alternatives, but rather you would begin with Alternative 1, if it doesn't work you add Alternative 2, and if it still does not work you add Alternative 3 to reach GHG Emissions.

Heather Adamson of AMBAG addressed the Board and stated that AMBAG sent a comment letter to Caltrans headquarters on the Draft CTP 2040. She clarified that AMBAG did not have issues so much with the Alternatives that were evaluated. Their concerns were more with the strategies that were in the CTP. They would like more flexibility in the strategies to meet the needs of the different type of regions around the states.

Mr. Gubbins explained that the Alternatives are to be used more as additives, only by doing all of them do you truly reach the aggressive goals in the planning effort.

Director Botelho commented on how the state comes up with ideas of "one size fits all" and he expressed concern with how the performance measures are done to reflect on the differences between rural and urban areas and their greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Gubbins stated that they may not be able to reduce the GHG Emissions in spot locations, but by increasing some of the freight that moves in and out of these farming communities and ensuring sustainability and a good rail connection instead of moving by truck does help. He stated that by balancing all of the goals together they should be able to get there.

Chair Muenzer asked for clarification regarding AMBAG's concern with some of the language in the plan about not having capacity producing projects.

Heather Adamson stated that AMBAG's concern was noted in their comment letter to Caltrans. She stated that it was with regards to page 122 under the section of strategies that says *Invest Strategically*. One of the strategies specifically said avoid funding projects that add road capacity and increase maintenance cost. AMBAG said it is not right, considering you have all of these other strategies that say increase freight movement and freight capacity. AMBAG commented that it should be rewritten to be able to provide more flexibility. It should be strategically adding road capacity where it is needed it is

not necessarily pave over the entire state, but there are a lot of gaps that need to be completed. There are widening projects in all of the counties different plans that they want to pursue, particularly for the more rural areas.

Ms. Gilbert stated that staff concurred with AMBAG's concerns. It was also discussed at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting. They stated that areas like ours need capacity increasing projects and to also maintain local control of projects and reiterate the need for funding in rural areas for transportation projects.

The COG Board directed staff to draft a comment letter primarily focusing on the comments noted by Ms. Adamson and Ms. Gilbert and submit comments prior to the April 17 deadline.

Director Botelho stated that he wanted to make sure that it is understood that some communities are going to see some growth and economic development and that this plan is compatible with that. It is important to lower GHG Emissions and we should not be penalized for trying to do what is right in land use policies for our communities.

There was no public comment on this item.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Boch and seconded by Director Botelho, the Directors directed staff to submit comment letter to Caltrans. Vote: 5/0 motion passes.

11. RECEIVE Update on Potential Planning Study for the State Route 156 Corridor in San Juan Bautista – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert provided an update on this item. She stated that staff met with members of San Juan Bautista's strategic planning committee and discussed the different issues at the intersection of the Alameda and State Route 156 and what some potential improvements might be that COG could look into as part of a planning study. They went out and walked the intersection together to get a sense of what some of the issues are.

Staff is considering an option for funding of the study to be acquired through a transportation planning grant from Caltrans. The grant application cycle will likely begin in the fall. In an effort to prepare for the application process, staff is developing a scope of work.

Director Gomez asked if staff is looking at other types of funding in the meantime to try to address some of the concerns.

Ms. Gilbert stated that the scope of work would include a funding plan for any improvements that are identified, feasible and supported.

Director Boch commented that Caltrans put in a 4-lane Highway from 101 to the Alameda and did not give much consideration to the intersection or to the Monterey Street intersection as far as slowing people down. He stated that they have been really lucky to not have fatalities at those locations. He stated that any support they can get from COG, Caltrans, grants, would be appreciated.

Director Botelho concurred with Director Boch. He stated that this grant would provide improvements that are greatly needed. If they can somehow enhance the entrance of the Monterey intersection to slow down the traffic and the trucks and create an alternative entrance into San Juan Bautista would lend itself to a better future for that community. This is a good time to establish the groundwork for a future project.

Chair Muenzer stated that every part of the County is going to have to benefit from a potential sales tax measure and they will have to identify projects to do that so whatever ends of being designed as traffic

calming for San Juan Bautista would be a great project for a sales tax measure. He noted that the traffic signal at the Alameda is there because of Measure A.

Public Comment:

**Jolene Cosio, SJB
Strategic Planning Committee**

Ms. Cosio thanked Mary Gilbert and Veronica Lezama from COG for meeting and walking across the crosswalk with them. She mentioned that the signal is forty seconds long and it took them thirty-nine seconds to make it across. She noted that she did not realize that the red-hand turns at the same time as the signal changes. They had discussion about increasing the time to get across the street.

Ms. Cosio stated that per her public records request for information from Caltrans there have been 14 accidents between 2010-2012 at the Alameda, 4 more at Mission Vineyard, and 1 at Monterey, with no fatalities. They are still trying to get local statistics from the Fire Department. She mentioned they need better signage for San Juan Bautista and noted Placerville as an example. She stated that while driving through Placerville it is 40 mph and they have plenty of signage coming up to the first intersection. They have a changeable board that said cross traffic ahead, and congested intersection and flashing light. She stated that she would like to see the roundabout idea at Monterey and maybe slow traffic from both directions at Mission Vineyard.

**John Freeman, SJB
Strategic Planning Committee**

Mr. Freeman also thanked Ms. Gilbert and Ms. Lezama for meeting with them and walking across the crosswalk at the intersection of Highway 156 and the Alameda. He stated that it is a little intimidating walking across 4-lanes and a median and if you are elderly or disabled you will not make it across in time.

Mr. Freeman suggested that they move forward with short-term and long-term solutions. He stated that Ms. Cosio mentioned some of the long-term solutions flashing lights, signage, and roundabouts. Some short-term solutions could be to lengthen the crosswalk light from 40 seconds to 50-60 seconds. He stated that Ms. Gilbert talked about having a newer version of the light that has a countdown for the pedestrians and various other safety measures built into it. Lastly, he stated that since it is a Caltrans road and intersection perhaps, they could help out a little.

Ms. Gilbert commented that staff had submitted an information request to Caltrans about the crossing and there response was that currently the way it is timed is at the maximum timing for pedestrians for that intersection type and size.

Chair Muenzer asked if it was possible to try to get a newer version of the light that shows a countdown for pedestrians.

Ms. Gilbert stated that she would discuss with Caltrans staff to see if it is possible.

There was no further discussion.

12. RECEIVE Update on COG Staff Work Plan for Highway 25 Development and DIRECT Staff to Initiate Procurement of Consultant Services for Highway Alternatives Analysis – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that staff will be meeting with the stakeholder group next week to go over the survey results with them. She stated that there continues to be discussion at both the Board level and with the stakeholder group about what type of project will be funded if they are able to come up with the needed funds for Highway 25. Currently, Caltrans is working on completion of the Environmental document for

the route adoption alternative. There has been discussion about refining the scope of the project and looking at a smaller project that is potentially phaseable and fundable. Staff is seeking direction from the Board to move forward with pursuing consultant engineering services to identify alternative design scenarios for the Highway 25 4-Lane Widening and also to move forward with procurement of these services.

Director Botelho commented on how the project was important to everyone however, he added that he could not understand spending money on a \$350 million project that they would probably never see come to fruition. He asked Caltrans District 5 Director, Tim Gubbins if the alternative design of adding 2 lanes to the route would be acceptable by Caltrans or if would be a waste of time and money.

Mr. Gubbins stated that he did not believe it would be a waste of time and money. He stated that Caltrans is currently finishing up on the larger document which is more of a route adoption used for planning purposes. He stated that the financial aspect remains a challenge; however this would help inform going forward.

Director Botelho stated that there are so many components with the Caltrans design that are not needed such as the loop around from San Felipe Road to Hudner and the frontage roads on the other end. All that is needed are two more lanes with a barrier and to perhaps make some headway with a phase. He expressed reservation about supporting this item because he did not want to spend additional money on something to be told later down the line that it cannot be done.

Mr. Gubbins reiterated that he did not believe this would be a waste of money. He stated that there may be some phasing ideas that work very well and some that may not however, they could discuss the reasons why and how to move forward from there.

Ms. Gilbert clarified that staff would be using funds that were left over from the Highway 25 Safety Project account budget to pay for the Highway 25 alternatives analysis.

Chair Muenzer explained that this part of the process would have to occur in order to work towards a phased project.

Ms. Gilbert stated that something similar was done with the Highway 25 Safety Project. Staff got the engineering firm on board and they completed the initial study for COG. They used environmental studies that Caltrans had already completed, which is part of the study that is being done for the ultimate 4-lane, so they would be able to use the study again in this effort as well. Ms. Gilbert stated that this is an action that would have to occur in order to get a phased project in. It is also the quickest way to get it done, driving it locally and working with Caltrans. As far as a full funding commitment staff would be bringing back a contract to the board for a final decision at a future meeting.

Director Botelho repeated his question about whether or not Caltrans would approve the addition of two lanes along the existing route as previously stated.

Mr. Gubbins once again stated that there may be some phasing ideas that work well and some that do not, but he believed that this step would further it along towards COG's goal of getting Highway 25 widening done in pieces.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Velazquez, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors unanimously directed staff to move forward with initiating procurement of consultant services for Highway Alternatives Analysis. Vote 5/0 motion passes.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez, and seconded by Director Boch, the Directors unanimously continued Item 13 to the end of the LTA, and ALUC meetings. Vote: 5/0 motion passes.

Chair Muenzer moved to the LTA, and ALUC meetings at 5:04 p.m.

The COG Board convened to Closed session at 5:18 p.m.

13. Public Employee Appointment

Title: Executive Director

Authority: California Government Code section 54957

The COG Board reconvened from Closed session at 5:39 p.m.

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy stated that there was no reportable action taken under Item 13.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Velazquez, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors Unanimously adjourned the COG meeting at 5:40 p.m. Vote:5/0 motion passes.

ADJOURN TO COG MEETING MAY 21, 2015.