

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

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

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Muenzer, Vice-Chair Boch, Director Gomez, Director Botelho
Ex Officio: Brandy Rider, Caltrans District 5

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Director Velazquez

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy; Interim Executive Director, Mary Gilbert; Administrative Services Specialist Kathy Postigo; Transportation Planner, Veronica Lezama; Transportation Planner, Sean Vienna;

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mark McCumsey, Caltrans District 5;

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Muenzer called the meeting to order at 3:02 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

Upon a motion duly made by Director Boch, and seconded by Director Botelho, the Directors acknowledged the Certificate of Posting. Vote: 4/0 motion passes.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chair Muenzer stated for the record that the COG Board received Joe Thompson's public comment correspondence dated June 21, 2015 through July 5, 2015. The correspondence was entered into the public record.

Jolene Cosio of San Juan Bautista commented regarding the excessive signage (8 signs) that Caltrans installed regarding the Washington Street Bridge height. Ms. Cosio stated that the No Outlet sign is small and with all of the other signs that Caltrans put up, people are going to think that it is a highway entrance. San Juan has been asking to get signage to slow down traffic and instead they received a bunch of signage under the bridge and it doesn't make sense to Ms. Cosio.

John Freeman of San Juan Bautista and a member of the strategic planning committee of San Juan Bautista. Commented that he wanted to make sure the light at the Alameda and Hwy 156 is changed to protect pedestrian safety. Due to the fire last week on Hwy 156 he would like to see Caltrans mow the weeds, they are over three feet high, also there is no sound wall on the Northside of Hwy 156, a ten foot

sound wall could have stopped the sparks from getting to the houses.

D. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert reported that the San Juan Road Interchange Project is having a ribbon cutting on Friday at 11:30 a.m. on the grounds by the interchange.

E. CALTRANS DISTRICT 5 REPORT: Gubbins

Brandy Rider reported that Caltrans has ordered a countdown counter for the pedestrian crossing at Alameda and 156 and it should be installed at the end of the month or the beginning of next month.

Also, Caltrans' annual call for transportation planning grants is going to be coming out in early August, with an application deadline of October 30, 2015. The Highway Safety Improvement Program has an application deadline of July 31, 2015.

Director Botelho thanked Caltrans for working on the counter for the pedestrian crossing. He asked what could be done to improve the process of mowing in that area to avoid future fires.

Ms. Rider responded that Hwy156 was mowed in June, at the location of the fire it was a steep embankment and normal mowing equipment can't go down, manual labor would have to be used. There have been relationships with other cities and Cal Fire, where if there is a particular area that is flagged as a fire area they will coordinate with those particular groups on maintaining the sides of the highways. Caltrans maintenance crews are very responsive these groups in the past. Caltrans' door is always open.

Director Gomez inquired about maintenance service requests forms.

Ms. Rider said that Maintenance service request forms are on the Caltrans website and that Caltrans is very responsive to these requests, which can be tracked.

Director Boch stated that there was a fire at the intersection a month prior to the recent fire, and at that time it seems Caltrans would have noticed the need for maintenance west of the city. Director Boch stated that he is going to bring the City Council up to speed regarding the need for maintenance and what could be done.

F. BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORTS:

Director Botelho stated that shoulder maintenance it is not only a problem for Highways, but also for county roads, it has to be the right conditions to do some of this maintenance and he will be addressing it with the new RMA Director.

Director Gomez inquired about the adopt a highway program. He asked if the City of San Juan Bautista wanted to adopt the highway and do additional work that is an option.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Special Joint Meeting Minutes Dated June 18, 2015 – Gomez
2. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated June 18, 2015 – Gomez
3. **RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5
4. **APPROVE** Contract with JJACPA, Inc. for Financial Audit for Year Ending June 30, 2015 for amount not to Exceed \$15,045 – Postigo

5. **APPROVE** Cost Sharing Agreement with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments for Preparation of the Environmental Impact Report for the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy for and Amount not to Exceed \$35,000 – Gilbert
6. **EXTEND** Appointment of Mary Gilbert as COG Interim Executive Director to September 30, 2015 Contingent on Final Action by San Benito County Board of Supervisors – Gilbert
7. **Surplus Property Transfer** – Gilbert
 - a. **ADOPT** Resolution 15-06 Declaring COG-Owned Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Grant of Such Surplus Property to the City of Hollister (4/5 Vote), and
 - b. **MAKE DETERMINATION** that the Conveyance is Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Pursuant to Section 15312 of the CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations).

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez and seconded by Director Boch, the Directors approved Items 1-7 from the Consent Agenda, as amended by staff. Vote: 3/0/1 motion passes. Director Botelho abstained from Item 1 & Item 2.

REGULAR AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION ITEMS:

8. **2015 Unmet Transit Needs Report** – Lezama
 - a. **ACCEPT** 2015 Unmet Transit Needs Report.
 - b. **ADOPT** Resolution 2015-07 Making Findings and Recommendations Regarding Unmet Transit Needs that are *Reasonable to Meet* as required by the Transportation Development Act (TDA) for Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

Ms. Lezama reported each year the Council of Governments holds annual Unmet Transit Needs hearings, providing the community an opportunity to express service needs by County Express and Specialized Transportation Services. This year COG provided two public hearings and one meeting in San Juan Bautista. COG received 38 service requests which are summarized in your packet page 19 in your Unmet Transit Needs Report. In summary the majority of the requests were classified as unmet needs “Not Reasonable to Meet”, as most of these requests are going to be incorporated in our Long Range Short Range Transit Plan that will be presented to the Board in the next few months. Once the Unmet Transit Report is approved we will forward it to Caltrans Division Mass Transit for approval.

Director Gomez asked out of those that were identified as unmet transit needs how many requests were reasonable to meet.

Ms. Lezama responded that at this time we did not find any that were reasonable to meet because they will be addressed in the Long Range Short Range Transit Plan.

Director Gomez asked if those that commented are aware of COG’s response.

Ms. Lezama replied if they left their contact information, however some chose not to.

Director Gomez asked if staff has looked into VTA line coming to San Benito County.

Ms. Gilbert confirmed that the direction was to get 168 VTA line to come to San Benito County vs a bus that is meeting County Express. Director Gomez confirmed.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Gomez and seconded by Director Botelho, the Directors unanimously approved Item 8. Vote: 4/0 motion passes.

9. RECEIVE Update on Highway 25 Widening Project Development – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert stated as requested at the last Board meeting, staff is working on the Regional Transportation Plan Amendment and should at the next meeting you should have the updated financial information and project list to review at the August meeting.

Ms. Gilbert met with the Stakeholder Group last night. At the Stakeholder meeting we talked about safety on Hwy 25. Ms. Gilbert is pursuing working with the California Highway Patrol to fund extra enforcement on Hwy 25 using Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE) funding. SAFE funds our Call Box Program for San Benito County. Each year we have a balance in the SAFE but that is carried forward annually. The Stakeholder's group was very receptive to this idea, along with getting additional safety signage on Hwy 25 similar to what was there previously to remind drivers to be careful.

Ms. Gilbert has been working with Eileen Goodwin of APEX Strategies and VTA regarding VTA pursuing a sales tax for transportation. VTA is pursuing a sales tax for transportation and is conducting a call for projects and projects to be identified in mid-October. We are hoping that the Hwy 25/101 interchange will be on the project list. Ms. Gilbert stated that John Ristow of VTA had reported that the cost of the interchange would be \$300 million, which included the widening of Hwy 101, the cost of just the interchange would be approximately \$100 million. Staff is continuing to track the Hwy 152 project with the connection with Hwy 25. VTA will be looking for political support.

Director Muenzer asked if the 25/101 interchange is a project Caltrans is looking at or is it a local project.

Ms. Rider responded Caltrans is very much interested in this project in terms of capacity on Hwy 101 between San Benito County and Santa Clara County.

Director Muenzer asked next month with the Plan will the cost and the schedule of impact fees be included?

Ms. Gilbert stated yes next month's agenda will have a traffic impact fee update.

No public comment.

10. RECEIVE Update on Work Plan for Potential Transportation Sales Tax Measure in the 2016 Election and **DIRECT STAFF** as needed – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert stated she brought the Sales Tax Measure to the Stakeholder group last night. She stated that she received good feedback and potential outreach in the coming months. During the months of September thru October they will be working on projects to put on the expenditure list.

Director Botelho asked you will be working on gathering a list of potential projects that will be county wide, and besides the Stakeholder group what other sources are you going to use to identify projects.

Ms. Gilbert answered projects in our Regional Transportation Plan are the starting point, along with cities and county public works departments and Caltrans also. We would also want to include transit and bike and pedestrian projects.

Director Botelho commented that there is a project in Aromas that he would like to be included and inquired how the Sales Tax Measure would be split. He also stated that we need to be realistic when we start planning and what we are going to put on the ground.

Director Muenzer stated that we need to sooner than later decide how we are going to allocate it.

Ms. Gilbert stated that sometimes it is better to be a little more general when the expenditure plan is written, and Identify projects and project areas as the needs may change over time.

Director Gomez commented that he felt that we shouldn't necessarily be committed to a list of projects but perhaps have 25% allocated to Hwy 25 congestion then the remaining 75% allocated to the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista and San Benito County.

Director Botelho said we need to be on the same page and fairly quickly decide how it should be allocated. Another way to allocate the Sales Tax would be road miles or artery miles.

Director Boch feels that with the sales tax we need to tell the people exactly what we are going to use the sales tax for.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jess Delgadillo of Hollister stated that we need to focus on tourism and using the VTA and the county transit to get to Pinnacles, Thousand Trails, Bolado Park, San Juan Bautista Mission, and the Historical Park, need to try to bring people this way.

Director Muenzer suggested that Mr. Delgadillo be included in our Stakeholder group. Mr. Delgadillo state he would like to be a part of it. Ms. Gilbert will be contacting him.

11. RECEIVE Information from Caltrans on the State Route 129 Realignment Project – Gilbert

Ms. Rider spoke on the Hwy 129 realignment, Caltrans SHOPP project, with the objective of reducing the frequency and severity of collisions on Hwy 129 .4 miles west of Old Chittenden Road to .1 mile east of Chittenden underpass. The project is expected to go into construction this fall with completing in spring of 2016. There will be four stages of construction. Caltrans is anticipating a five-day full closure toward the end of the project. Will keep San Benito informed on the schedule of the construction.

Director Botelho thanked Caltrans for addressing this very dangerous road. The opening of the San Juan Road interchange should relieve some of the congestion on Hwy 101. His concern was that Cannon Road is being used by commuter traffic. He would like to detour construction traffic going on Cannon Road to a rural county road.

Director Boch asked is the taking out the curve under the bridge?

Ms. Rider stated it improve the alignment of the curve.

Director Muenzer ask if Caltrans has noticed a decrease in truck traffic on Hwy 129 with the opening of the San Juan Road Interchange.

Ms. Rider stated that it is early to tell, Caltrans is expecting to see some improvement on truck traffic on Hwy 129, but once we start getting the truck traffic data we are hoping to see some decrease.

The COG Board convened to Closed session at 4:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

12. Public Employee Appointment

Title: Executive Director

Authority: California Government Code section 54957

The COG Board reconvened from Closed session at 4:22 p.m.

Deputy County Counsel, Shirley Murphy stated that there was no reportable action taken under Item 12.

Upon a motion duly made by Director Botelho, and seconded by Director Gomez, the Directors Unanimously adjourned the COG meeting at 4:24 p.m. Vote:4/0 motion passes.

ADJOURN TO COG MEETING AUGUST 20, 2015.