

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

February 20, 2020, 3:00 P.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jaime De La Cruz, Peter Hernandez, Marty Richman, Ignacio Velazquez, and Alternate César E. Flores
Ex Officio, Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5 Director

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mary Vazquez Edge

STAFF PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Don Reynolds, City of San Juan Bautista; Heather Adamson, Association of Monterey Bay Area
Governments

CALL TO ORDER:

Director Flores called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Director De La Cruz led the pledge of allegiance.

B. CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

*A motion was made by Director Botelho, and seconded by Director Richman, the Directors
acknowledged the Certificate of Posting. Vote: 4/0 motion passes.*

**C. Moment of Silence for former COG Director and City of San Juan Bautista Council Member
Tony Boch**

Director Flores asked for a moment of silence for former COG Director and City of San Juan Bautista
Council Member Tony Boch and a close friend of his who recently passed away.

D. ELECT COG Chairperson for 2020

*A motion was made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Hernandez, the Directors elected
Ignacio Velazquez as the COG Chairperson for 2020. Vote: 5/0 motion passes.*

E. ELECT COG Vice Chairperson for 2020

*A motion was made by Director Velazquez, and seconded by Director De La Cruz, the Directors elected
Peter Hernandez as the COG Vice Chairperson for 2020. Vote: 5/0*

Chair Velazquez thanked Director Flores for his leadership over the past year and expressed his condolences over the loss of his friend.

F. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

1. Delegate and Alternate to the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG)

Chair Velazquez appointed Peter Hernandez as the CALCOG Delegate and Alternate Director Cesar E. Flores as the Alternate.

2. Two Representatives to the San Benito/Santa Clara Mobility Partnership (One City of Hollister Representative and One Other Representative)

Chair Velazquez appointed himself and Peter Hernandez to the San Benito/Santa Clara Mobility Partnership

3. Representative to Speak on Behalf of COG at California Transportation Commission and Central Coast Coalition Meetings

Chair Velazquez appointed himself as the California Transportation Commission and Central Coast Coalition representative for COG.

Director Flores excused himself from the COG meeting at 3:09 p.m.

G. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chair Velazquez stated for the record that the COG Board received Joe Thompson's public comment correspondence. The correspondence was entered into public record.

Stephen Rosati

Mr. Rosati requested that at the next COG meeting, the COG Board send a letter to the Valley Transportation Authority opposing any effort to commit any redirection of funds to Transit. He provided a handout of his comments to the Board.

H. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Gilbert

Mary Gilbert welcomed Director Hernandez and Director De La Cruz to the COG Board.

Ms. Gilbert reported that the Free, select Fixed Route and Intercounty rides on public transit has gone very well. A preliminary look shows that it has had a positive impact on ridership. The ridership is much higher during those times than it was at the same time last year. Staff will be providing a full report to the COG Board at a future meeting.

Ms. Gilbert reported that Assembly member Robert Rivas hosting an Environmental Town Hall next Friday at the San Benito High School. Ms. Gilbert noted that she would be one of the speakers at the event.

I. Caltrans District 5 Report: Aileen Loe

Aileen Loe reported that the new Director of Caltrans, Toks Omishakin hosted a meeting among all Caltrans leadership and is working to establish his five priorities for the department 1) Safety 2) Modality - Integration of Modes 3) Efficiency – with resources and taxpayer dollars 4) Innovate – deliver best service to public 5) Engage – work closely with communities, local partners.

Ms. Loe stated that Caltrans would require additional time to provide a written response to some of the Boards questions from the last meeting, including a historical timeline milestone schedule for the Highway 156 Improvement project. With regards to the maintenance/drainage issue on Highway 25, they needed location information.

Director Velazquez stated that drainage/clogging is occurring along Highway 25's Sunset Drive and Airline Highway.

Ms. Loe stated that she would follow up regarding the surface treatment in the area.

Director Richman stated that he did not mind waiting for a written document on the historical timeline/schedule of delays on the Highway 156 project because he wants to be able to demonstrate it to the voters.

J. Board of Directors' Reports

Chair Velazquez stated that he would like to have the following items on the next agenda:

1. Complete update on Measure G - projected dollars coming in and how those dollars are being used, and what are the timelines. (Goal is for everyone to be very clear to move forward aggressively on Highway 25)
2. Put Ad-Hoc committee together to help with Hwy 25 & Strategic Plan (two members working with COG Executive Director, Caltrans, and Santa Clara County)
3. Letter to go out every month to our State elected officials, our Assembly Member, Senator, Governor, Congressional rep., Caltrans - asking for financial help/ help with the red tape for Hwy 25.
4. Discuss possible time change in COG meeting to allow more participation from community with plans to move forward on Hwy 25.
5. Provide overview of COG Rules

Director De La Cruz stated that the City of Hollister and stakeholders should be invited to participate with any plans to move forward on Highway 25.

Director Hernandez stated that he would provide an update under the corresponding item on the agenda regarding the California Transportation Commission meeting he and Executive Director Mary Gilbert attended.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **APPROVE** Council of Governments Draft Meeting Minutes Dated December 19, 2019 – Gomez
2. **RECEIVE** Construction Projects Report – Caltrans District 5
3. **REAPPOINT** Clay Kempf, Esther Alva, and Pauline Valdivia to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council – Valentine

4. **APPROVE** and Authorize the Executive Director to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) Defining Roles and Responsibilities Associated with the Administration of the Assembly Bill 101 Housing Planning and Production Grant Program Upon Determination of the Final Allocation Amount – Gilbert
5. **Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Draft Overall Work Program – Lezama**
 - a. **RECEIVE** Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Draft Overall Work Program, which includes Planning Activities to be Performed by the Council of Governments; and
 - b. **AUTHORIZE** Submittal of Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Draft Overall Work Program to the California Department of Transportation for Comment.

There was no public comment on the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Director Richman, and seconded by Director Hernandez, the Directors approved Consent Agenda Items 1-5, with an abstention from Director De La Cruz on Item 1. Vote: 4/0 motion passes.

REGULAR AGENDA

3:00 P.M. Public Hearing (Or As Soon Thereafter As the Matter May Be Heard)

6. **2020 Unmet Transit Needs Hearing – Lezama**
 - a. **RECEIVE** Presentation on Unmet Transit Needs
 - b. **OPEN** Public Hearing
 - c. **CLOSE** Public Hearing

Veronica Lezama provided a PowerPoint presentation on the 2019 Draft Unmet Transit Needs Report and answered questions from the Board.

Chair Velazquez inquired about service to the dialysis center out of town and what will happen once the new center opens up in town.

Director De La Cruz stated that he was grateful that a dialysis center would be opening in town and that staff should provide outreach to inform the public about the service to the future center.

Ms. Lezama stated that Local Transportation Authority currently provides transportation to the dialysis centers in Gilroy and Morgan Hill. Staff would be coordinating with the new dialysis center to provide transportation to their location once they open.

Director Hernandez inquired about the Dial-A-Ride service.

Ms. Lezama provided an overview of Dial-A-Ride services.

Ms. Lezama recommended that the COG Board open the public hearing to receive comments on the 2020 Unmet Transit Needs Hearing. Following public comments, the Board will close the public hearing. The public comment period will conclude March 3, 2020.

Chair Velazquez opened the public hearing at 3:35 p.m.

Public Comment:

Ann Curry

Ms. Curry stated she had been using County Express Dial-A-Ride for a few years now. She stated that drivers seemed rushed to meet the times posted on the Fixed route schedules and that the posted time schedules should be redone. Fixed route schedule does not provide enough time for passengers with mobility issues to board the bus. If they have bags, instead of using the lift to load their bags, passengers with walkers have to load their bags on the bus instead of allowing the use of the lift. Drivers work 12 hour days and have to be back at the yard by 6 p.m. and with two drivers in the evening or split days so drivers don't have to work 12-hours a day. Consider split days 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., and 1-7 p.m. to allow later service for rides to movies or other activities. If a person calls to request same day service by noon, by 1p.m. already booked for the day. Buses pick up regular riders first, then non-regular riders don't get picked up until 9 a.m. During the schoolyear they do a lot of the pick-ups and drop-offs for the schools so there are no buses available for Dial-A-Ride during those times. They should consider having a bus dedicated for Dial-A-Ride. She also stated that more benches are needed at bus stops near grocery stores.

Chair Velazquez closed the public hearing at 3:39 p.m.

In regards to the public comment concern about not providing enough time for passengers to board the bus, Director Richman recommended staff conduct a study and go out with a stop-watch to get estimated time it typically takes for passengers to get on and off the bus, especially for those who may have mobility issues. Director De La Cruz concurred with the recommendation.

7. 2022-2045 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan Goals – Lezama

- a. RECEIVE** a Presentation on the 2022-2045 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan Update; and
- b. COMMENT** and **APPROVE** the Draft Goals for Inclusion in the Draft 2022-2045 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan – Gilbert

Veronica Lezama provided a Power-point presentation on the San Benito Regional Transportation Plan Goals. She stated that COG staff was seeking feedback from the COG Board on the draft goals for inclusion in the draft 2022-2045 San Benito Regional Transportation Plan.

Director Hernandez asked for clarification regarding the Economic Vitality goal. He asked if the transportation system would include people living in unincorporated areas or for those who don't have transportation to places such as Pinnacles.

Ms. Lezama stated that the goal is to raise the region's standard of living by enhancing the performance of the transportation system. Pursue suitable and flexible funding to maintain and improve the system. She said that COG is a member of the County and City's Development Review Committee. As new development comes before the County and City, staff looks at the transportation component to ensure that there is access to that development, whether it's pedestrian, bike paths, or roadway access.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Richman, the Directors approved Item 7a, b. Vote: 4/0 motion passes.

8. RECEIVE Central Coast Coalition Legislative Platform and Information on Legislative Activities – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert provided an update on the Central Coast Coalition legislative platform and legislative activities that staff attended on February 19th. She stated that staff met with top transportation officials: David Kim, Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency they talked about our priorities, invited them to our community to see our needs and projects. They also met with Brian Annis, Chief Finance Officer for the California High Speed Rail Authority and Jim Davis, Caltrans Chief Deputy Director and Tim Gubbins, Caltrans District 5 Director. They met with Mitchell Weiss, Executive Director of the California Transportation Commission and with Frank Ramirez from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

Director Richman stated that he was in support of the Central Coast Coalition as it is a good opportunity for COG to team-up and advocate for the Central Coast.

Ms. Gilbert noted that San Benito County is next in line to host the next Central Coast Coalition Town Hall meeting in 2021. The Commission, Caltrans directors, and other officials would be amongst those invited to come.

There was no public comment.

9. RECEIVE Update on the State Route 156/State Route 25 Roundabout and Proposed Alternatives – Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert provided a Power-point presentation on the Highway 25/156 Interchange Alternatives.

Staff initiated a contract with WMH Engineering to develop potential interchange designs for a short-term project delivery at the intersection in lieu of the roundabout. Staff met with representatives from Sen. Anna Caballero's office, Asm. Robert Rivas, Sen. Jim Beall, and Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin in Sacramento in February. The group discussed the preliminary proposals and staff will continue to work with the state to accelerate the delivery of an interchange project. The interchange will be reviewed as part of the Value Analysis effort to be conducted with Caltrans and local representatives in March.

Director Hernandez asked if the preliminary proposal that was discussed at the meeting was something that Caltrans was considering.

Aileen Loe stated that Caltrans is currently reviewing the proposal. They're looking at several things and will be providing a written response. She said that there is a collision concentration at the intersection, this is why it qualifies for the safety money under the State Highway Operations & Protection Program (SHOPP). They can achieve the safety benefits with a roundabout much sooner than they would be able to with an interchange which would take some years to achieve. She said they are looking at reviewing the interchange as part of the Value Analysis effort. They are also looking at some design variations with the roundabout. They are looking at some refinements to help eliminate some of the potential for crossover collisions right in the roundabout and to fit it in within the existing right of way. The goal is to deliver it to the public as soon as possible to protect the safety of the travelers and to also work with COG to expedite things as much as they can on the Highway 25 project.

Director De La Cruz stated for the record that he did not support the Roundabout project and they need to look at other options to fix and widen Highway 25.

Ms. Gilbert stated that staff initiated a contract with WMH Engineering to develop potential interchange designs for a short-term project delivery at the intersection in lieu of the roundabout. They will be discussing this some more in the Value Analysis effort.

Chair Velazquez stated that this was the reason he wanted to send letters to the State and Federal Government, to let them know that we need financial help to aggressively move towards a better solution. He asked if Caltrans has looked into the idea that was proposed, to place sensor lights that sense when a car is not slowing down so it holds the lights.

Ms. Loe stated that Caltrans has looked into a variety of options that will all be put into a comprehensive response of innovative technologies that are available.

Director De La Cruz stated that the monthly letters that will be sent out should also be sent to the City of Hollister and the Board of Supervisors to ensure that everyone is included and working together as a united front.

There was no public comment.

10. San Benito County Measure G – Gilbert

- a. RECEIVE** Update on Measure G Activities
- b. DISCUSS** Project Funding for Tier I and Tier II Projects

Ms. Gilbert provided an update on the San Benito County Measure G activities. Staff is updating revenue forecasts while matching forecasts to anticipated expenditures. The strategic plan will be presented for adoption in March 2020. The Board may consider establishing a Measure G Strategic Plan ad-hoc committee of up to two board members to assist staff in the final development of the Plan.

In late 2019, the COG Board approved goals for a value analysis of the State Route 25 Widening project. Staff is coordinating with Caltrans on the Value Analysis effort and the project kickoff is scheduled for March 10.

Chair Velazquez stated that he wanted to participate in the Value Analysis process.

There was discussion about the growth component measure passing or failing. Director Richman and Director Hernandez stated that they need to ensure that KNN Finance is looking at the growth component measure and the financial impacts it could have.

Chair Velazquez stated that the financial numbers historically are always very conservative and are based on today's numbers and what's really out there, which is all included in the modeling.

Director De La Cruz stated that he wanted to have an update on the Value Analysis in March.

Ms. Gilbert confirmed that staff would be providing an update on the Value Analysis effort to the Board in March.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Director De La Cruz, and seconded by Director Hernandez, to adjourn the COG meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m. Vote: 4/0 motion passes.

ADJOURN TO COG MEETING MARCH 19, 2020 AT 3:00 P.M.