



BUILDING BETTER TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Report March 1, 2004

PRESENT: Chair David Cortese, Vice Chair Linda LeZotte, Councilmember Forrest Williams, Councilmember Cindy Chavez

STAFF: Ed Shikada, Bill Hughes, Jim Helmer, Jim Ortbal, Hans Larsen, Dan Fenton, Amit Kothari, Kelly Doyle, Kevin O'Connor, Rick Stanton, John Brazil, Yves Zsutty, Robert Salazar, CalTrans, District 4-South Bay Region Maintenance Manager

ABSENT: Vice Mayor Dando

The meeting was convened at 1:37 PM

Chair Cortese began the meeting by stating to let the record show that there is a quorum present all members are present except Members Dando and Chavez and they should arrive shortly.

a) Expansion and Improvement of Transit and Transportation Systems

1. Taxicab Service Model Report – continued from February 2, 2004 – status report

Jim Ortbal, Assistant Director, Department of Transportation, and Dan Fenton, CEO, Convention and Visitors Bureau gave a progress update on the Taxicab Regulatory and Service Model. Jim stated that more time is needed to work on some of the details, and the Taxicab Advisory Team (TAT) and staff will return in April for a final recommendation on a service model for the industry. Further, while there are differences in opinion among stakeholders, everyone has agreed to a framework for a service model that everyone may support. A joint staff/TAT recommendation will be forwarded to the committee in April. If there isn't enough consensus on the TAT, staff will forward a recommendation in April.

Dan Fenton described the needs of the various stakeholders generally being met by the TAT most recent compromises. We are structurally close, but more time is needed to work out the details.

Chair Cortese commented that staff should be forming their analysis concurrently with the ongoing talks of the TAT, just in case any of the negotiations stall in the process. Jim Ortbal concurred, and offered that the TAT already has four (4) meetings set up from now until March 19 to work out the details. If not unanimous by March 19, 2004, staff has to have an alternative recommendation. We are structuring the month of March to work with team as productively and effectively as possible.

Councilmember Williams reminded the group that several issues were raised the last time heard about the taxicab issue, and there was a constant cry for medallions. Are we coalescing toward meeting that end? Jim Ortbal responded that the framework agreed upon by the stakeholders tries to provide a framework with some characteristics of the medallion system, by allowing permits being distributed directly to drivers and allowing drivers the choice of which taxicab company they'd like to work with, while at the same time meeting the needs of other stakeholders.

Chair Cortese concluded that he appreciated everyone's respect for the Committee's time today and encouraged everyone to keep working toward solutions in the taxicab industry.

The Committee accepted the report.

b) Traffic Relief/Safe Streets

1. Traffic Calming Program and Public Education Campaign "Street Smarts"

Jim Helmer, Director, Department of Transportation, introduced Amit Kothari, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation and they gave a PowerPoint presentation on the traffic calming program including program highlights, issues, and major accomplishments, as well as the street smart highlights including local success, regional successes, and strategic direction.

Councilmember Williams expressed his thanks for the work being done on these programs and noted that this has really helped in District 2. He asked in regards to the budget, if the City would be able to continue at the level we are on or is are the programs being impacted as well.

Jim Helmer stated that in two areas 1) physical improvement – our traffic capital program is stretched for dollars, it is good that 98 % of our solutions are educational or enforcement or minor costs (signs and markings). We need to focus on using our processes for the basic solutions that will help preserve our dollars. We will have some set aside for physical improvements as we get to those points of our investigations. 2) Three positions have been frozen in the traffic

calming section for almost a year, and that has resulted in dropping from about 80 % to 75 % on our timeliness goals. We do not expect to be filling those positions next year and should be retaining at about 70 – 75 % based on the workload. We will keep an eye on things.

Vice Chair LeZotte asked that a memo be sent to Committee members listing the 31 radar site locations. Jim Helmer stated that he would do so. She then commented on the annual crash review, it says that the analysis has been expanded and that staff is currently in the process of making the short term recommendations. Will the Committee be getting an indication of what those recommendations are or will we get an overall review.

Jim Helmer stated that there used to be an annual review of all accidents, and the goal was to determine where to build new signals for the future. We have now expanded that from not only the signal aspect but the pedestrian aspect, the trails, sidewalks, stop signs, and signal lights. We will put them on your monthly report as a minor improvement and it will show that the source of the discovery by DOT staff.

Councilmember Williams stated that on Lean between Blossom Hill and Hayes, there have been complaints about the streets and the fact that cars continue to park on the street sweeping days and it needs to be cleaned up. What can be done? This is the main route to the Hayes Mansion and would like for it to get cleaned and look more attractive.

Jim Helmer noted that Laura Wells, Division Manager, is on top of this issue, she has been focused on that particular area.

Chair Cortese asked about the traffic calming policy requirements that new development projects be looked at and how it could link to the development review process. Chair stated that he would like to have some kind of report that periodically comes to the BBT Committee that lists the new development projects (tentative maps) referenced by Council District, with another column that states that whether or not the traffic calming division has reviewed them, and what traffic calming measures are included with the project. The report should come forward four times a year for information purposes.

Upon a motion by Vice Chair LeZotte and seconded by Councilmember Chavez, the Committee approved the report with direction to staff to roll this item forward to April and report out on a quarterly basis.

2. Review of Proposed Transportation Development Act (TDA) Grants for Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects (Transportation)

Jim Helmer introduced Hans Larsen, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation, John Brazil, Bike/Pedestrian Program Coordinator, Department of Transportation, and Yves Zsutty, Trails Coordinator, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services and they gave a PowerPoint presentation on the pedestrian and bicycle project grants including project needs and funding opportunities, summary of needs, local programs, grant funding sources, grant strategies / issues, inventory of needs & priorities, and upcoming grant recommendations.

Councilmember Chavez expressed her thanks and commented that it very helpful to see the whole list of what our options are. Would like feedback on how to create an environment that is more walkable, it doesn't feel like the grant application requirements match our needs. Is this observation accurate?

Hans agreed with Councilmember Chavez, and stated that within the VTP2030 report in terms of how much money is allocated and how the various grants are made available. He characterized the bike/ped grant being put in very small cubbyholes and hard to piece them together and get a good project done. There is some hope in that both from a regional level what MTC is allocating out of the money from Feds for transportation, livable communities, they are recommending an increase. They also have a regional bicycle program where they are recommending significant increases.

Councilmember Chavez noted that she would like to figure out how we go about rewriting the rules she explained that in San Francisco they have figured out how to do so. If the rules don't fit, they just rewrite them to make them fit. She expressed that this is something that we should begin addressing.

Chair Cortese agreed with Councilmember Chavez's comments and that CalTrans staff is taking federal grant money and deciding what the criteria should be for doling out the money, where he believes that the City should have some input on the criteria. That should be part of our legislative focus, to help get that changed.

Councilmember Chavez added that working with the tentative tract maps is very important because we changing our ability to use money that normally would go to signals to give us more flexibility for relief of traffic calming and she believes that is going in the right direction. We need to do a little more training in talking to developers and keeping consistent.

Vice Chair LeZotte asked regarding the sidewalk improvement needs inventory is this a complete list? Hans Larsen answered no, that this represents things that have come to DOT's attention and they have not surveyed the City. As calls come in DOT staff notes and tracks them. Vice Chair LeZotte then asked about the presentation slide on inventory of needs and priorities, listing 23 projects under the VTP 2030 candidate projects and then it listed the VTP priorities, she asked if those were the ones listed in the memo? Hans answered yes. She then asked if the list contains both the 23 and the priorities, and inquired about the Lawrence

Expressway. Hans stated that the Lawrence Expressway project was contained within one of the County expressway projects, so we carried it under the bike/ped improvements that are under the scope of the VTP expressway programs.

Councilmember Williams asked in regards to the Blossom Hill pedestrian safety overcrossing, is there any way we can work with CalTrans to get support for that safety issue? What he is looking for is a way to move it along to the near future; it is a huge safety issue with children from the high school walking across the railroad tracks. It is a busy intersection and unsafe. It has been on the list for 1 to 1 ½ years.

Hans stated that we could try to get a grant, although this is a \$4 million project and there are not grant programs out there for over \$1 million. We have pursued this project with the VTP 2030 and the good news is that it is in the list of 2030 priorities in the local street program. Due to the safety issue he believes our best approach would be to bring it to the VTP 2030. Hans said that he would check for Councilmember Williams if there were a way to get a loan that could be paid back over time to at least get this project done. Although if we paid for it up front with City money we could not qualify for any grants.

Chair Cortese asked about project #101 in the sidewalk improvement needs inventory, there is some work in that area that has already been done and he asked that Hans check to make sure it was not what is currently listed.

Vice Chair LeZotte asked to check projects #5 & 6 as well.

Upon a motion by Vice Chair LeZotte and seconded by Councilmember Chavez, the Committee approved the report.

c) Supporting Smart Growth

1. No items

d) Regional Relationships/Funding/Policy

1. Freeway Litter Abatement Report

Jim Helmer started by stating that in the later half of 2003 there was quite a lot of interest in freeway litter and graffiti and abating those problems in our area. Led by Jim Webb in the Mayor's Office, there was a meeting called by CalTrans principals in December to work together as a community and as a County and City to improve the appearance of our freeway shoulders, median areas, off ramps, and other key gateways. Today Kevin O'Connor, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation, Robert Salazar, CalTrans, and Rick Stanton, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services are here to give the Committee a

brief update on the freeway clean-up program and what has transpired over the last few months as outlined in the report.

Councilmember Chavez thanked staff for all their efforts, as well as CalTrans staff. She stated that most complaints in her downtown district would be the on/off ramps.

Vice Chair LeZotte and Councilmember Williams stated that they have seen a significant difference in terms litter abatement and thanked staff.

A few “hot spots” noted by Committee members is in the area before 280 to City Hall, where the lightrail goes underneath 87, Ann Darling between McKee 101 overpass, the trees also need to be pruned regularly, Lick Avenue on/off 87, and 680 between Jackson and 101.

Vice Chair LeZotte asked about the Saratoga Avenue to San Tomas by Moorpark Avenue, this is part of the Blackford SNI area and the residents would like to volunteer for litter clean up. She asked if CalTrans supplies the plastic bags and train them on safety. Robert Salazar said he would be the contact to set up that up.

Jim Helmer stated that his office would coordinate getting Robert Salazar’s contact information to all Committee members.

Upon a motion by Vice Chair LeZotte and seconded by Councilmember Williams, the Committee approved the report.

2. Update on the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2030 – **continued from February 2, 2004**

Hans Larsen gave a PowerPoint presentation on the VTP 2030 including an overview on the background and schedule as well as highlighting the transit program, freeway program, expressway program, local streets priorities and other issues, the bike/ped and other programs, street maintenance funding history and status, VTP 2030 funding summary, and the major policy issues.

Chair Cortese stated that the City needs to be clearer on our delegation's position regarding the criteria for VTP 2030 funding categories, and if we are solid on the current criteria, especially on those projects that are already in the queue. The members present at the meeting concurred with the chair that it is important to stay committed to the criteria for the transit program as it is currently drafted. We must have as a working item for this Committee and agendize a formal discussion on where we are at as far as criteria, allocation of criteria to future projects, and the rewards system.

Councilmember Chavez discussed the importance of keeping money associated with projects being built within the City in San Jose if there are cost savings.

Regarding the Downtown/East Valley project the Committee stated that Neiman to Rt. 87 should be a City priority. When does San Jose voice that it is a priority to VTA? Councilmember Cortese stated that we need to be clear as a City regarding the issue of criteria because the North County cities want to open up the criteria.

There was discussion regarding the Expressway Program. Councilmember LeZotte expressed her concerns regarding the priority of the Lawrence and San Tomas Expressway projects. Hans stated that the Almaden/85 Area project was a priority for the County because it was originally a 1996 Measure B project that was unfunded and needed to be completed. Montague: 680 to 101 is environmentally cleared and has been a high priority in the County for some time. She also discussed the Local Streets program and asked why some of the projects for the City were below the line. Hans stated that VTA had capped San Jose at \$100 million and VTA drew the line there.

Hans stated that the last VTA workshop in April would essentially be the last opportunity to fine-tune the details of the plan, because then it goes to the Board for approval. Hans concurred with the Committee in regards to not changing the current criteria.

Councilmember Chavez expressed interest in creating incentives and rewards for cities that use local funds or developer contributions to fund regional transportation priorities. Hans stated that staff would work with VTA to draft policy language regarding a "rewards" system that would provide the flexibility needed by cities to be creative in financing transportation projects.

Chair Cortese asked that the specifics for the internal process be brought back to the Committee for input.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Williams and seconded by Councilmember Chavez, the Committee approved the report and asked that this item come back in April with final recommendations.

e) Oral petitions

None

f) Adjournment

The Committee was adjourned at 3:45 pm

Councilmember Dave Cortese, Chair,
Building Better Transportation Committee