

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070
Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor**

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: B. Arietta, P. Dixon (Chair), J. Fox, R. Hedges, R. Hees, C. King, A. Mader-Clark, D. Maez, D. Mensing, L. Shaine, A.Vargas, P. Young, G. Zimmerman

MEMBERS ABSENT: J. Bigelow, S. Krause

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Choy, J. Hurley, R. Lake

Chair Pat Dixon called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion (Hedges/Shaine) to approve the minutes of August 4, 2009 was passed. Barbara Arietta abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said she would be absent from the September TA Board meeting and asked the Chair to report that she endorsed the allocation of TA funding for the pedestrian bridge in Belmont.

Chair Dixon said she would report on Ms. Giorni's behalf at the TA Board meeting.

ITEMS FOR REVIEW – SEPTEMBER 3, 2009 TA BOARD AGENDA

There was no discussion on the following items:

1. Approval of Minutes of August 6, 2009 – TA Item 3a
2. Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenses for July 2009 – TA Item 3b
3. Authorize an Amendment to the Lease with Enterprise Rent-A-Car for Property Located at 345 El Camino Real in Redwood City – TA Item 3c
4. South San Francisco Ferry Funding Allocation Update – TA Item 6a
5. SamTrans Liaison Report – August 12 – TA Item 7a

Authorize Funding Agreement with the City and County Association of Governments (C/CAG) and Allocation of \$300,000 for the C/CAG Shuttle Program for Fiscal Year 2010- TA Item 10a

George Zimmerman said the agreement was amended on August 24, 2007 to incorporate an additional allocation of \$550,000 needed for FY2008. He asked where the money comes from when the TA approves an additional allocation and if it impacts other projects.

Randall Hess arrived at 4:39 p.m.

Director of TA Program Joe Hurley said the additional allocation comes from the Alternative Congestion Relief Program and has no adverse impact on other programs. He said this funding is for shuttles and past funding also included the hydrogen shuttle that operated in East Palo Alto.

A motion (Zimmerman/Maez) to recommend approval of the \$300,000 allocation to C/CAG was approved.

Authorize the Programming and Allocation of Measure A Funds from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Category in the Amount of \$596,696 to the Belmont US 101 Ralston Avenue Bicycle/Pedestrian Overcrossing Project and Amend the Capital Budget – TA Item 10b

Manager, Capital Projects Planning Melanie Choy said the allocation request is to program Measure A funding from the bicycle and pedestrian category. The TA has not issued a call for projects for any program under the new Measure A funding yet. The TA's intent is to issue a call for projects so that eligible projects can compete in the actual competitive process. The TA is working on the call for projects process but does not know when it will begin. There are circumstances that led the TA to evaluate the City of Belmont's (Belmont) proposal request in advance of this call for projects. The project is for a bicycle and pedestrian overcrossing over US 101 between O'Neill and Ralston avenues. The total project cost is \$9.5 million, which includes a one-time funding opportunity of \$4.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. The balance of funding includes state and local funding. The project is ready for construction with environmental clearance and 100 percent design. ARRA funds of \$4.5 million require a complete funding plan and construction contract awarded by December 31, 2009; the \$596,696 request by Belmont is needed to meet the ARRA imposed deadline.

John Fox arrived at 4:44 p.m.

Ms. Choy said the project is using new Measure A funds to leverage funding from other sources; seven percent is new Measure A funding and 93 percent of the funding is from other sources. Approximately \$1.8 million a year is expected to be collected for the bicycle and pedestrian funding category; this funding request of \$596,696 would leave \$1.2 million for the remaining calendar year. This project meets the intent of the 2004 Expenditure Plan and TA Strategic Plan.

Mr. Shaine asked if this overcrossing will resemble the Broadway and Monte Diablo overcrossings.

Ms. Choy introduced Belmont interim public works director, Karen Borrmann to provide project details.

Chair Dixon asked about project dates. Ms. Choy said Belmont must award a construction contract by December 31, 2009, which is prior to the TA issuing a call for projects. There is a crucial period between now and the end of December to secure the remaining funding.

Mr. Zimmerman said Oracle is directly across the freeway from the overcrossing and asked who would be using this route – bicyclists going to work?

Chair Dixon said Oracle is way to the south of this and use is for kids getting to the sport's fields adjacent to the freeway.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if the overcrossing was more for recreational purposes. Chair Dixon thought the overcrossing would tie into back roads, which also run behind Oracle.

Ms. Borrmann said, currently, the freeway crossing near Ralston Avenue does not have a bicycle lane and this overcrossing would provide access across the freeway from the Caltrain station and El Camino Real to the Bay Trail. Her understanding is that the connection it makes is directly to the Bay Trail and one can make their way from the sports complex to Oracle and other businesses. She acknowledged that it is probably not the most direct route but there are commuters who are very aggressive and ride their bicycles on El Camino Real and are willing to take their bicycles in highway environments. Bicyclists may not wish to use the crossing except during off hours when it is not being used by recreational users. She said Belmont expects that it will make a direct connection.

Rich Hedges said the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), as part of their 2035 plan, did a bill for connection to the Bay Trail. He said, for far too long, the concentration has been on recreational use rather than commute biking for work. Bicyclists along Delaware Avenue and El Camino Real take their lives in their hands and there isn't a very safe bicycle plan for this on the Peninsula.

Doris Maez asked that during construction of pillars for the overcrossing in the middle of the freeway that it be done with enough space to allow for safe movement of traffic. She said there were some very dangerous traffic and highway marking issues with the pillar construction during the 3rd Avenue to Millbrae Avenue Auxiliary Lane Project. Ms. Borrmann said the project includes a detailed traffic control plan that shows what will occur on the freeway and the intent is to make a gradual transition so traffic will flow around the construction area. She said Belmont will take a look at the situation that occurred with the 3rd Avenue to Millbrae Avenue project in order to minimize those types of impacts for the Belmont overcrossing project.

Mr. Fox asked if Belmont has an existing bicycle plan. Ms. Borrmann said Belmont utilizes the C/CAG bicycle plan.

Mr. Fox asked if there is an existing bicycle route that connects to either end of the proposed overcrossing. Ms. Borrmann replied yes. The easterly side of the overcrossing will connect directly to the Bay Trail and the Belmont Sports Complex. On the westerly side, the trail comes along Ralston Avenue on the border beside Hiller Street and just slightly north and it then connects to an existing improvement that heads over to the Belmont Caltrain Station.

Mr. Fox asked if Hiller Street has two or three bike lanes; what routings are available from the Belmont Caltrain Station to the overcrossing; and is the overcrossing isolated in its connectivity to other parts of the bike network. Ms. Borrmann said there is a route along Masonic Way, which has a striped bike lane and a short transition on to Hiller Street where the bicycle path would begin.

Mr. Fox said overcrossings serve a purpose when they are part of the route network and with an isolated facility that has no way to get to either end; or an employer destination at one end; or a transportation hub on the other end, so the overcrossing really doesn't serve a transportation purpose in the way it could. Mr. Fox wanted to clarify if someone thought about how the overcrossing connects and who it serves.

Randy Hees said there have been continuing discussions over the years about poor crossings for bikes over Highway 101. There was once a proposal to put a bicycle route parallel to the Caltrain corridor. Mr. Hees said he isn't bothered that this comes before the TA call for projects because the project clearly seems to match what the TA criteria will be in many ways. He said, as was seen with the original Measure A, some of the best projects come out very early because they are driven by the cities and agencies that truly have a vision of wanting to bring something up.

Mr. Fox said when a project comes without peer review or without competitive assessment against other projects, it makes other communities feel there is favoritism. He asked if there was a way to say it is understood that there are special circumstances with this project but in the next round of funding, if a proposal comes from Belmont, it might not be considered or not thrown into the pot because Belmont received special consideration.

Mr. Hees said the overcrossing project is ready now, and in a sense, it is not able to be done through a normal process. He said that carries a great deal of weight because the project has been prepared in the absence of standard as proposed to the TA putting out a call for projects. Historically, in the original Measure A, more projects were seen upfront from people who are organized and prepared to go forward; and then there is a period where few projects are seen and staff is out meeting with public works directors trying to put in the grade separation that is in the system. Historically, the projects that come in at this phase are the ones the TA truly wants.

Ms. Choy said in looking at the call for projects the TA is looking at geographic distribution, which is one of the criteria.

Mr. Fox said he is asking about balance, not judging.

Charles King asked if the overcrossing will be covered to avoid jumping or throwing of items to the highway. Ms. Borrmann said there will be tilted fencing and the project plan has been approved by Caltrans.

Mr. Hurley said the Broadway and Monte Diablo pedestrian overcrossings were just constructed as part of the 3rd Avenue to Millbrae Avenue Auxiliary Lane Project. The fencing on these projects has a mesh on the chain link that is very small, which makes it difficult to climb or throw an object through.

Chair Dixon asked about the height of the fencing. Ms. Borrmann didn't want to speculate on this.

Public Comment

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said the fencing on the Broadway and Monte Diablo overcrossings is 10 feet tall. She said she didn't think C/CAG would be upset about how this overcrossing project is progressing because there are really big projects over the years that they have done in different segments. She asked if this was a recreational or commuter route; and said when Oracle came to the area an access lane became a freeway turn lane that became a highly dangerous place for bicycles to negotiate. She said bicyclists have been negotiating with Caltrans for the last couple of years to get this lane fixed.

A motion (Zimmerman/Arietta) to endorse the Belmont overcrossing project was approved.

Mr. Zimmerman asked that Mr. Fox's comments be presented to the TA Board in more of a regional context even if it's more for recreation than for employment because in looking at the local maps, it is totally out of context. He asked that the project be presented for what it is and actually for what it is not. He would like to TA to receive a presentation in graphic form, which shows an effective tie in with the regional Bay Trail system.

Mr. Hedges said if carbon dioxide emissions are to be lowered, it is necessary to make it easier for people to commute by bicycle.

PROGRAM

Verbal Update on State and Federal Legislative Program

Mr. Zimmerman asked about AB 338 and AB 1158, which concern transit village developments and allowing them to have public and educational facilities. Mr. Hurley discussed this offline with Mr. Zimmerman. Mr. Hurley contacted legislative analysts and will brief the CAC on these bills at the next meeting when he receives information from the analysts.

Mr. Hedges said AB 338 (Ma) is referred to as tax increment financing, which is another way to make funds available outside of redevelopment area public funds for Transit Oriented Development. He said the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee (EDAC) of MTC has tried to tack on some language to the bill that would make it incumbent on the developers to make the housing developments accessible to stations both from inside the development and to and through the stations.

Capital Project Status Report – 4th Quarter FY2009

Mr. Zimmerman asked if the recent court ruling on High Speed Rail (HSR) will have any effect on the Project 00727 – Downtown Extension. Mr. Hurley said the TA does not know at this point but it is his understanding that HSR is moving forward and the terminus of HSR still will be the Transbay Terminal.

Mr. Zimmerman asked about Project 00676 – Grade Separation Footprint Study – 25th, 28th and 31st Avenues, and what it means in the report, “to identify feasible alternatives” in building grade separation crossings. Mr. Hurley said an example would be if there was a significant impact on a major facility, which would be considered an immovable constraint. An example might be a grade separation project that would modify the profile of the railroad, which would require tearing down Route 92.

Ms. Maez asked about the San Bruno Grade Separation Project. She said there have been no meetings on the project for three years, the process has stopped and Caltrain plans to spend the money on improving a lot of other grade crossings in the interim. She said the project is supposed to be the highest priority project coming up. She is concerned that haste makes waste and things that required community buy-in may get overlooked, changed or delayed. Mr. Hurley said what is really driving the urgency has to do with the shelf life of some Proposition 1B funding that was identified for this project. There is \$30 million of Proposition 1B money identified for the project. The money needs to be obligated by summer 2010 in order to capture the funding. The question is what the project has currently scoped out and what are the possible changes and schedule impacts associated with those changes. A lot of details are being worked out. Mr. Hurley said he can't lend a lot of specificity in terms of the scope of the project and how it may change or not change. What he currently knows is what is driving the schedule has to do with making sure that money is obligated by the summer of 2010.

Ms. Maez said when project deliberations stopped the project costs were approximately \$95 million and, in the meantime, some interim improvements have been made that were part of that project and yet the cost is now estimated at \$165 million. She said construction costs have actually gone down recently with the recession and asked if the project will include two additional tracks. Mr. Hurley said there have been modifications to the design, which have to do with HSR coming in and Caltrain is making sure whatever is done does not preclude HSR. Mr. Hurley said it is his understanding that there will be an action before the TA Board and this group next month for additional funding.

Public Comment

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, asked who is taking the lead on the San Bruno Grade Separation Project. She said a brochure was shown several months ago at a Joint Powers Board (JPB) meeting, which notes HSR is now taking credit for that being a grade separation for HSR. She said the HSR grade separation might exceed height limits and timing is a problem because this is all tied into ARRA funding. Mr. Hurley said the JPB is the lead agency on the project and there are no identified ARRA funds associated with the project but rather Proposition 1B funds.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR – PAT DIXON

There is a HSR meeting scheduled for September 12 in Palo Alto with representatives from HSR, Caltrain and other engineering endeavors to get together and understand what HSR will mean on the Peninsula. Location of the meeting is pending. Information is available at peninsularail.com.

REPORT FROM STAFF

Mr. Hurley gave an update on Jim Bigelow's recent successful surgery and hopes to see him back for the November meeting.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

April Vargas updated the CAC on the August 12 SamTrans public hearing on service changes and/or fare increases. The hearing was well attended by coastside residents who voiced their concerns about any cuts to Route 17 service. She submitted a petition signed by about 40 people

from the coastside outlining the importance of Route 17. She emphasized the lack of bus alternatives such as BART and Caltrain.

Chair Dixon attended a meeting last week and had the feeling that Route 17 would most likely not be cut but there would be changes in express service.

Ms. Arietta said coastside residents are also pushing to maintain Routes 14, DX, and CX because Highway 1 is already impacted with traffic and there would be major problems if these bus riders were back in their cars because they don't have access to BART or Caltrain. Ms. Arietta has written newspaper articles and organized petitions to raise awareness on the importance of maintaining the coastside bus routes.

Mr. Hedges said he attended the SamTrans public hearing and said people in Half Moon Bay are frightened that they will be left without a way to get to work or school. He said his neighbors would pay twice the current cost to keep the FX and suggested raising fares now to see if there is a drop in ridership until December. He said every bus line does not need to cost the same if it provides different service.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the TA CAC will be held on Tuesday, September 29, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. at 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, CA 94070.

ADJOURNMENT

5:22 p.m.