

WCCTAC
West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes, 27 March 2009

Members Present: Maria Viramontes, Chair (Richmond); Ed Balico (Hercules); Tom Butt (Richmond); Bob Franklin (BART); Tom Hansen (WestCAT); Jeff Ritterman* (Richmond); Roy Swearingen, Vice-Chair (Pinole); Joe Wallace* (AC Transit). *Arrived after role call. *Absent:* Janet Abelson (El Cerrito), Genoveva Calloway (San Pablo), John Gioia (Contra Costa County).

Staff Present: Christina Atienza, Nancy Cuneo, Valerie Lipscomb, John Rudolph, Linda Young. Brad Beck, CCTA; Michael Rodriguez, Meyers Nave.

Location: San Pablo Council Chambers, 13831 San Pablo Avenue, San Pablo CA 94806

1. Call to Order Self-Introductions. *Chair Viramontes* convened the meeting at 8:03 a.m. All present introduced themselves.

Chair Viramontes noted that there had been a request to add an item to the agenda.

Michael Rodriguez stated that the Brown Act allows an item to be added to the agenda if the need to take immediate action arose after the original agenda had been posted. Normally a two-thirds majority is required; however, in the absence of a quorum or two-thirds members present, a unanimous vote of all present members will suffice. *Mr. Rodriguez* indicated that a motion must be put forth and a statement made that the findings are sufficient to warrant the addition of the item. He noted that the item to be included is Revisions to the Draft Transportation Plan 2035, which were released on March 25, 2009 (after the agenda was posted). *Mr. Rodriguez* noted that the need to take immediate action is based on the fact that comments related to the revised RTP are due on April 8, 2009.

2. Public Comment. There were no comments from the public.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Regarding Item #8 on the Consent Calendar, *Director Swearingen* commented that he would like to confer with the City of Pinole's Counsel and City Manager to determine the availability of *Mr. Winston Rhodes*, Pinole staff, prior to his appointment to the position of West County Representative to CCTA's Technical Coordinating Committee.

Ms. Christina Atienza, WCCTAC Executive Director, noted that the term of the existing TCC representatives expires on March 31, 2009, and that *Mr. Rhodes'* availability needs to be determined by then.

ACTION: *Director Balico* moved to adopt the Consent Calendar with the removal of *Mr. Rhodes* from the list of nominees for West County Representatives to CCTA's Technical Coordinating Committee, pending confirmation from Pinole, seconded by *Director Butt*, and carried unanimously.

3. **Approved Minutes and Summary from the January 30, 2009 Board Meeting and Meeting
Minutes and Summary from the February 27, 2009 Board Meeting;**
4. **Approved Meeting Summary of the March 12, 2009 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting;**
5. **Received Staff Reports;**
6. **Approved Use of Measure J Bus and Paratransit Enhancement Funds to Reduce Transit Funding Shortfalls;**
7. **Approved Caltrans Planning Grant Application for West County Transit Investment Strategic Plan;**
8. **Appointed Nominees for West County Representatives to CCTA's Technical Coordinating Committee;**
9. **Authorized Status of FY 2007/08 Audit and Proposed Financial Management Review;**
10. **Received Update on Taxi Safety and Accessibility Initiative;**
11. **Received Information Related to 2009 Bike-to-Work Day (BTWD); and**
12. **Authorized Letter of Support for El Cerrito's Proposition 1C TOD Application.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

13. The Greenprint Project Update

DISCUSSION/ACTION: *Chair Viramontes* moved Item #13 to the end of Discussion Items as *Mr. Lamar Turner* was not present. This item was later moved to a subsequent meeting.

14. Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility Management Project Update

ACTION: Information only.

DISCUSSION: *Ms. Atienza* introduced *Mr. Anush Nejad* of *Kimley-Horn and Associates*, the consultant retained for the I-80 ICM Project by ACCMA, the lead agency, to provide information related to the Interstate 80 Integrated Corridor Mobility Project (ICM).

Mr. Nejad distributed copies of a PowerPoint presentation, and stated that the I-80 ICM Project includes \$21M for arterial and transit improvements. The ICM Project includes expansion of the AC Transit 72 Rapid to Richmond Parkway; equipping WestCAT with Transit Signal Priority equipment for all major routes; promotion of transit usage through utilization of Changeable Message Signs; signs to direct traffic to future ferry stations; real-time travel time comparisons on freeway signage near transit; construction of Park and Ride facilities in Albany and Pinole; the installation of real-time transit information signs at BART stations and WestCAT stops; and

a variety of arterial improvements in all affected jurisdictions.

Mr. Nejad expressed the desire of ACCMA to work with WCCTAC, CCTA, and all other affected agencies to document ownership and management of the system components and decision-making, in terms of who sets the policies and guidelines for operation of the system, so that all of the relevant agencies are involved. Documentation of the Standard Operating Procedures will be formalized in an MOU that will be reviewed by WCCTAC and other agencies.

Director Butt said that the I-80 ICM project is a tunnel-vision approach to solving large land-use and transportation problems. *Director Butt* noted that the ICM project promotes urban sprawl by effectively increasing freeway capacity, expediting movement from Point A to Point B, and incentivizing continued use of single occupant vehicles in lieu of mass transit. *Director Butt* stated that in order to make a difference, freeway capacity should be reduced by restricting a lane to buses only.

Ms. Atienza noted that the project should address the issue of induced travel demand because increased VMT is inconsistent with SB 375. She noted that the benefits of the I-80 ICM project are traffic safety through uniformity of speed and resultant reduction in congestion: this provides environmental benefits through a reduction in vehicle emissions. *Ms. Atienza* noted that increasing capacity will benefit transit because cars and buses travel on the same facilities. She noted that the project is an \$80M to \$90M project. This amount of funding is not sufficient to solve the greater land-use transportation integration issue.

Director Swearingen commented that the installation of HOV lanes on I-80 as a result of Measure C did nothing to reduce congestion. He commented that people generally commute from outlying areas because the cost of living in those areas is less than in the inner areas. He commented that reducing capacity will only increase emissions. *Director Swearingen* voiced approval for the proposed improvements to the I-80 corridor and stated that he would like to see the HOV lane requirements reduced to two persons instead of the existing requirement of three persons.

Director Franklin suggested that the I-80 ICM Project should examine impacts and distribute funds proportionally to the most-impacted jurisdictions as part of a phasing process.

Chair Viramontes commented that the only way to make the I-80 ICM project feasible for the long-term interests of the region is by considering the current proposals as Phase One of a multi-phase project; otherwise it is not fair to the local agencies. *Chair Viramontes* requested that her stated concerns be brought back to ACCMA. *Mr. Nejad* responded by stating that the ICM TAC has requested the development of a financially unconstrained solution that could include ITS, transit enhancements, and other infrastructure improvements to add to the existing project.

Director Butt asked if this is an Action item. *Ms. Atienza* answered that the item is for Information only. The project is fully funded and will move forward.

Director Butt requested a motion that WCCTAC write a letter to ACCMA and tell ACCMA that WCCTAC has serious concerns with the lack of attention to the consequences the ICM project will have on land-use, and that WCCTAC needs assurances that this project will not increase

greenhouse gas emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled.

Ms. Atienza noted that she has asked ACCMA to examine the potential for induced demand. She noted that an EIS will be issued with regard to the ICM project, and WCCTAC may comment on the EIS. *Mr. Nejad* stated that ACCMA is preparing an EIS that will examine induced demand and air quality issues, for review and comment. The document will be ready for public comment in June or July 2009.

15. Comments on the Draft Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and Draft EIR

ACTION: *Chair Viramontes* moved to forward the comments from *Fehr & Peers* and *WCCTAC Staff and Board* to CCTA. The comments note that even if all of the improvements in the CTP are implemented, there will still be a ten-fold increase in traffic congestion, and that land-use and environmental issues should be addressed as matters of policy in the Plan. The motion was seconded by *Director Swearingen*, and carried with one nay from *Director Butt*.

DISCUSSION: *Ms. Atienza* noted that the CTP provides policy and investment guidance for CCTA as required by Measure J. The primary goals of the CTP are to enhance the movement of goods and people on highways and arterial roads; manage the impacts of growth to sustain Contra Costa's economy and preserve its environment; expand safe, convenient and affordable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle; and maintain the transportation system. *Ms. Atienza* summarized general comments related to the CTP.

Ms. Atienza introduced *Ms. Yvetteh Ortiz*, Engineering Manager for the City of El Cerrito, to present comments on behalf of the City of El Cerrito. *Ms. Ortiz* highlighted three areas in which the City of Cerrito believes that the CTP can be improved – strengthening investments in transit, exercising environmental leadership, and developing Operations and Maintenance funding plans for such projects as the I-80 ICM and the San Pablo Avenue portion of the East Bay SMART Corridors Program.

Julie Morgan of *Fehr & Peers* noted that her firm's comments on the CTP EIR provide a broad, countywide analysis that is not specific to West County. The *Fehr & Peers* analysis examines the level of development that is anticipated to take place by the year 2030 as provided through ABAG's assumptions relative to population and employment growth. *Ms. Atienza* noted that even if all \$8B worth of improvements in the CTP were implemented today, the effects would still be negligible, underscoring the need for greater emphases on transit as well as transportation demand management strategies.

Director Butt said that the entire process of utilizing growth projections to generate traffic models is an obsolete methodology. He commented that the EIR neglects a thorough discussion of the fact that the county is now in a watershed moment due to measures such as AB 32 and SB 375. He noted that all of the mitigations promulgated by the CTP are related to transportation and fail to consider land-use issues as a mitigating factor. *Chair Viramontes* suggested that CCTA does not have the authority to force a city to change its land-use guidelines.

Director Butt commented that there must be some way in which to propose cooperation between those entities with transportation authority and entities with land-use authority; it would be

irresponsible not to make mention of land-use issues. *Director Balico* stated that Hercules is formulating comments on the CTP. He commented that CCTA should not be criticized for the EIR as the EIR is a separate process from the CTP. *Chair Viramontes* asked if CCTA could include alternatives for mitigation that include environmental and land-use issues.

Mr. Brad Beck, CCTA, stated that the CTP EIR does not focus on mitigation measures that are not feasible. The CCTA is not a land-use agency; the jurisdictions in the county have made it clear that CCTA that the Authority should not get involved, in a detailed way, in making land-use decisions. CCTA does, in the EIR, consider impacts on land-use and the impacts of land-use on the CTP.

Mr. Beck noted that CCTA has provided three alternatives in the EIR which include: (1) application of ICM project technology to all freeways in the county, (2) a frequent service transit network alternative, and (3) the greenhouse gas reduction alternative where CCTA assumes increased telework and increased parking costs in downtowns across the county. *Mr. Beck* commented that proposal (3) offered greatest benefits to the environment; however, he reiterated that CCTA does not have the authority to enforce such action.

Ms. Aienza stated that the discussion pertains to a larger issue than the CTP EIR, namely to a potential change to the Authority's role. She noted that CCTA does touch on land-use issues through discussions related to Transit Oriented Development and Priority Development Areas even if it does not have the authority to control these matters.

Director Wallace commented that transit should be brought to the people rather than expecting people to go to where transit already exists.

Director Ritterman commented that language that addresses the unsustainability of the projected increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled should be included in the comments to the CTP EIR.

Ms. Aienza commented that the EIR and the commenting process may serve as the catalysts by which CCTA is encouraged to rethink its approach to transportation planning.

Director Butt suggested that the current approach is akin to having one's head in the sand. He stated that while WCCTAC may not be able to change the current course of events it should draft a letter to CCTA that states that the CTP is fatally flawed and environmentally unsustainable.

Ms. Aienza stated that the CTP fulfills a requirement of Measure J and making such a comment may jeopardize the local agencies by putting them in a position of non-compliance. *Mr. Beck* commented that CCTA is required to have the CTP in place in order to extend funding through Measure J. *Chair Viramontes* stated that the CTP reflects the decisions of multiple regions of the county. The guiding document was a voter-approved restriction on land-use. She noted that \$2B (plus the match funding) in tax revenues are at stake. It has been a six-year process to get to this point: these decisions cannot be undone at this point regardless of how vehemently one may be opposed to the plan.

15.a. Revisions to the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan

ACTIONS: *Chair Viramontes* moved to add Revisions to the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan to the agenda as an emergency item, seconded by *Director Ritterman*, and carried unanimously. *Chair Viramontes* appointed *Director Butt*, *Director Hansen*, and herself to a sub-committee to review and comment on Revisions to the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan.

DISCUSSION: *Ms. Atienza* suggested that the Board nominate a sub-committee to formulate and submit responses to MTC by the April 8, 2009 deadline. She noted that the specific issue is the proposed recommendations for transit sustainability and what implications these recommendations may have.

16. 2009 Board Retreat - Date Options

DISCUSSION: *Chair Viramontes* requested a consensus on the Board Retreat dates.

Ms. Atienza stated that staff will poll the Board members to find an acceptable date for the Board Retreat.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

17. Correspondence/Other Information. None.

18. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. until the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 24, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.