

**WCCTAC**  
**West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes, 24 September 2010**

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

**Staff Present:** Christina Atienza, Valerie Jenkins, Joanna Pallock, John Rudolph, Linda Young; Michael Rodriguez, Legal Counsel.

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

---

1. **Call to Order and Self-Introductions.** *Chair Maria Viramontes* called the meeting to order at 8:09 a.m.
2. **Public Comment.** Provided under Item #16.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**ACTION:** *Ms. Christina Atienza* withdrew Item #15 from the Consent Calendar. *Director Abelson* moved to approve Items #3-14, seconded by *Director Balico*; and passed unanimously.

3. **Minutes and Summary of July 30, 2010 Board meeting.**
4. **Summary of Sept 9, 2010 TAC Meeting.**
5. **Staff Report for Aug-Sept 2010.**
6. **Payment of Invoice Over \$10,000.**
7. **Notification of Proposed Discontinuation of AC Transit Line 74 Service from El Sobrante to Orinda BART.**
8. **Update on Paratransit Needs Assessment.**
9. **Update on SB 375 Implementation.**
10. **Update on SR 4 Corridor Management Plan.**
11. **Update on Bay Area Express Lane Network Meeting and Recommended Next Step.**
12. **Update on Student Bus Pass Program Transition to Clipper.**
13. **Approval of FY 2010-11 Claim for Additional Bus Service Enhancement (Program 19b) Funds.**
14. **Recommended FY 2010-11 Work Program Modification: Replace West County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with Complete Streets.**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

15. **Recognition and Appreciation of Mr. Darren Turner, WCCTAC's Summer Intern.**

**ACTION:** *Director Abelson* moved to approve Item #15; seconded by *Director Calloway*; and passed unanimously.

**DISCUSSION:** *Ms. Joanna Pallock* introduced *Mr. Turner*, who, through the auspices of MTC's Summer High School Internship Program, applied for and received a paid summer internship at WCCTAC, where he worked on outreach for the new Clipper card and provided assistance for the Transit Wayfinding Plan and the TDM Program. *Mr. Turner* expressed gratitude to all WCCTAC staff for their guidance and support throughout a positive experience. *Chair Viramontes* thanked *Mr. Turner* for his assistance to WCCTAC this summer.

#### **16. I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility (ICM) Update and Approval of I-80 Corridor System Management Plan (CSMP).**

**ACTION:** *Director Abelson* moved to approve the CSMP on the conditions (1) that the I-80 ICM project should have no adverse financial impacts on West County in general, and in particular local jurisdictions in West County would not bear any O&M costs associated with the project for the next 25 years; and (2) that the I-80 ICM system, as proposed, would be operated in such a manner as to ensure that any travel time savings attributable to the project will be evenly balanced between I-80 and San Pablo Avenue, so as to not delay traffic on San Pablo Avenue at the expense of moving traffic on the freeway and also to prevent any additional traffic diversion to San Pablo Avenue; seconded by *Director Balico*; and passed by roll call vote 5-2. Ayes: Abelson, Balico, Calloway, Hansen, Viramontes. Noes: Butt, Swearingen.

**DISCUSSION:** *Ms. Atienza* introduced project manager *Dr. Bijan Yarjani* from the Alameda County Transportation Commission, formerly the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, and *Ms. Susan Miller*, CCTA, who is WCCTAC's representative on the project leadership team; and mentioned *Mr. Randy Iwasaki*, CCTA Executive Director, represents WCCTAC on the project executive steering committee. *Ms. Atienza* stated that approval of the CSMP is an action item, and staff is asking the Board's approval.

*Ms. Atienza* provided information on the traffic management principles behind the proposed operation of the ICM Project, the history of the project, and the project's elements. *Ms. Atienza* explained that the project consists of an array of tools to optimize the orderly flow of traffic within the corridor by coordinating arterial and ramp signals and lane management on the freeway. The many functionalities allow for flexibility.

*Ms. Atienza* explained that the passage of Proposition 1B in November 2006 created two funding programs – the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA), and the Traffic Light Synchronization Program (TLSP). Staff from Alameda County CMA who developed the SMART Corridors Program applied to the Prop 1B programs to fund an expansion of the SMART Corridors concept. The ICM Project was awarded funding from both Prop 1B programs, as well as local project development support from Measure J and Contra Costa's share of STIP. The Richmond Parkway Transit Center component is supported in part by RM2. In 2008 project sponsors received resolutions of support for the project from all affected jurisdictions.

*Ms. Atienza* reviewed the elements of the project, including incident management, adaptive ramp metering, traffic and transit information, and local arterial improvements. Regarding ramp metering, *Chair Viramontes* inquired as to placement of the maximum queue detectors. *Ms.*

*Atienza* responded that local agency staff have informed the ACTC's consultant where to place the detectors. *Director Abelson* asked about instances like on Central Avenue where the ramp may be located in Richmond but the impacts are felt in El Cerrito. *Ms. Atienza* responded that there is a technical advisory committee for the project and that staffs of affected agencies should be coordinating on these issues.

In response to *Director Abelson's* concerns about the proposed improvements on Carlson Blvd in El Cerrito, *Ms. Yvetteh Ortiz*, El Cerrito Engineering Manager, explained in detail the proposed lane configurations.

Referring to page 5 of the CSMP Executive Summary, *Chair Viramontes* inquired if all of the projects listed in Table E-1 would be part of the I-80 ICM (operational) agreement. *Ms. Atienza* clarified that those projects are beyond the scope of the I-80 ICM project. *Dr. Paul Menaker*, consultant to ACTC, explained that some projects in the CSMP are short-term and others are long-term. *Chair Viramontes* asked about the coordination among such projects as the San Pablo Dam Rd Interchange and the proposed auxiliary lane to McBryde Av with the I-80 ICM Project. *Ms. Atienza* stated that the CSMP does not go into the level of detail as to include project phasing. She stated that the CSMP should be seen as an initial step; that because it responds to a Caltrans requirement, the study is freeway-centric, but that it represents a good initial effort at gathering project ideas. She further noted that as we move forward, we will necessary have to employ a multi-pronged approach to make use of funding opportunities when they arise.

*Ms. Atienza* presented the construction schedule and the upcoming milestone deliverables. There will be an Operations MOU between Caltrans and the local agencies, to precede environmental review for freeway elements. Arterial and transit improvements are categorically exempt. Public review of the environmental document is expected to occur as soon as Jan/Feb 2011, with the final environmental document expected in May 2011, along with an Incident Response Plan.

*Ms. Atienza* explained the project's expected benefits in terms of mobility, safety, air quality benefits, public perception of a more reliable freeway, and provisions for addressing back-ups on the ramps. *Ms. Atienza* said that before-and-after studies will be conducted, and fine-tuning in the field will occur to maximize gains. She further stated that in her professional opinion, the most significant benefit of the project will be to enhancing safety, in terms of fewer and less severe collisions as a result of the lane use signals and speed harmonization on the freeway. She also discussed the expected impacts of the project.

*Director Abelson* asked for clarification on item 7 in Handout 16C-1 (the I-80 ICM Frequently Asked Questions by Local Officials, which showed the projected changes in vehicle hours of delay from 2005 to 2015 with and without the project.) *Ms. Atienza* explained that what the numbers indicate is that the project would slow down the rate at which conditions on the corridor would get worse as a result of projected increases in housing and jobs, i.e. it buys us time. *Director Abelson* expressed concern that the numbers show that San Pablo Av will experience more delay in 2015 with the project, than without the project. *Director Abelson* and *Chair Viramontes* suggested, and *Ms. Atienza* confirmed, that the project can be adjusted to ensure that benefits to the freeway are balanced with benefits to San Pablo Av. *Ms. Atienza* also noted that such a requirement can be made part of the operations agreement.

*Director Butt* referenced figures on page 16C-21 of the packet that indicate that 30% of AM WB travelers on I-80 originate north of the Carquinez Bridge, while 25% are coming from I-580, primarily from Marin. *Director Butt* noted that while the project may result in benefits for those travelers, it appears that there will be little benefit to the West County communities, and further noted that such a project does not contribute to the economic development of any of West County's cities, as home buyers may choose to purchase homes in Vallejo or Fairfield instead of Richmond, if the commute travel time is minimized. *Ms. Atienza* responded that based on the analysis, the travel time savings attributable to the project would not be significant enough to create an incentive to drive if a person were otherwise considering taking transit or to influence a home-buying decision.

*Dr. Yarjani* clarified that the project is being designed to be an integrated, balanced, equitable system, and that it is not being designed to cause more delay to the arterials in order to speed up the freeway. *Dr. Menaker* added that the TLSP components will directly benefit West County and that the safety benefits of the project in terms of reduced secondary collisions would benefit all. He further added that the numbers do not bear out diversions in travel of the sort that *Director Butt* noted. *Ms. Atienza* echoed that being able to prevent a collision on the freeway is a benefit that would accrue to everyone using the corridor and even to transit operations because traffic disperses like ants away from the freeway and onto the arterials and local streets whenever there is an incident. She further noted that smoother speeds and less stop-and-go traffic on the freeway would reap air quality benefits to West County and Alameda County in particular.

*Director Balico* noted that while it is good to alleviate congestion, the effect of the project on economic development in West County cannot be ignored. *Dr. Yarjani* agreed that transportation is intertwined with land use and therefore economic development. *Director Balico* added that WCCTAC and the cities should have the power to shut down the ICM system if it is not providing the benefits expected; otherwise, there is no sense for a city leader to adopt a system that makes congestion worse for its residents. *Ms. Atienza* noted that because the system is technology-based, it can be easily manipulated to balance out the benefits; and added that the crux should be for West County to seek provisions in the operations agreement that would not surrender complete control of the corridor to Caltrans, and instead allow traffic to be managed collaboratively with the local jurisdictions, as this would provide the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances in the future.

*Chair Viramontes* recommended that the agreement should contain these provisions: balanced benefits for the freeway and San Pablo Avenue, and in the event that cannot be accomplished and the project has adverse impacts on San Pablo Avenue, that Caltrans will pay for the cost of improvements and maintenance.

*Ms. Atienza* referenced her previous presentation to the Pinole City Council and recent conversation with *Director Abelson*, the feedback from which was that the local agencies do not have any funds to support operations & maintenance of this project, and that in the event any new revenue sources become available, such as from Measure O, that the local agencies have priorities that supersede this project. *Ms. Atienza* noted that these concerns have been conveyed to Mr. Iwasaki at CCTA, and that she has been informed by him that he is looking into whether MTC would allow using RM2 savings incurred from the I-80 EB HOV extension project as a

possible source of funding for the arterial component of the I-80 ICM's operations and maintenance costs.

*Chair Viramontes* noted that WCCTAC supported this project at the outset on the condition that the arterials and local streets would be taken care of and that impacts would be monitored; and that without those, WCCTAC would withdraw its support. *Dr. Yarjani* guaranteed that the project would not result in adverse impacts to local arterials, and that they would make sure that the operations agreement would state that if there were adverse impacts, that there would be consequences and those would be mitigated. *Director Balico* noted that "impact" should be well- and consistently defined in the agreement.

*Ms. Atienza* voiced her concern that there was limited time left to go over the CSMP. *Chair Viramontes* noted that she would like to have a couple more minutes of discussion and then for the Board to make a decision.

*Director Abelson* stated her recommended conditions of approval. First, the project should be implemented such that the percent decrease in vehicle hours of delay due to the project will be the same for San Pablo Avenue as for I-80, to ensure that San Pablo Avenue would not suffer to provide a benefit to the freeway. Second, the cities will not bear the cost of O&M for the project because the cities have no money. She added that Measure O was not designed to pay for this project's O&M costs, so it is inappropriate to even discuss using those revenues. She also noted that her understanding from Mr. Iwasaki of CCTA is that if the potential alternative O&M funding source turns out to be unavailable, that WCCTAC could withdraw its support for the project. *Ms. Atienza* affirmed that without funding for O&M, there is no project. She also added that she will be bringing the operations agreement back to the TAC and Board for review and approval. *Chair Viramontes* noted that she would like for staff to ensure that each individual city attorney also reviews the agreement prior to the Board's review, to which *Ms. Atienza* agreed.

*Director Butt* remarked that it is unfair for West County to be subject to ramp metering if those coming from Solano County would not be metered as well, especially given that almost 30 percent of the traffic comes from there. *Ms. Atienza* responded that there is a separate project to meter I-80 in Solano County, and that at staff's request to address precisely this concern, MTC has accelerated that project to move it closer to the schedule for the I-80 ICM project. She further added that the Board could, if it so desired, add a provision to the operations agreement to require that metering on I-80 in Contra Costa not be turned on until the same is turned on in Solano. *Director Butt* asked if traffic coming from Marin would be metered as well. *Ms. Atienza* responded that there are currently no plans for this, but that the metering of I-580 had been identified and preliminarily studied as part of CSMP. The preliminary study indicated that there would be excessive queuing, but she further noted that there are various alternatives that have also been identified and that could be analyzed, and this is recommended in the CSMP as a next step. She affirmed that staff understands and shares the overarching concern, and has been working towards ensuring that everyone coming into the corridor will be equitably delayed. *Director Butt* noted that he appreciates that there is an understanding of this issue, but was concerned that it had not been built into the plan; as proposed, the project essentially is asking West County to give more while everyone benefits. *Ms. Atienza* noted that the I-80 ICM project should be considered as part of the initial phasing, which is frequently necessary for projects of this magnitude.

*Vice-Chair Swearingen* noted he has been informed that the metering lights will go on all-green when traffic backs up excessively, but he knows from experience that in Pinole excessive back-ups already occur during the peak periods, which would mean that the metering lights would be on all-green during the commute peak, which renders the project useless or conflicted within itself. *Dr. Yarjani* noted that he did not expect this condition to occur during the entire duration of the peak period. *Vice-Chair Swearingen* responded that due to people dropping off students at the school, traffic in Pinole is backed up during at least 7 to 9 a.m., and that if this project backs up people on the freeway, it would only make matters worse in Pinole. *Dr. Yarjani* responded that the project involves 44 ramps along the corridor, and while conditions in Pinole might warrant that the metering lights be green for all four hours of the peak, metering would still work and be beneficial for the rest of the ramps along the corridor. *Chair Viramontes* noted that local agency staff are specifying the location for maximum queues at the ramps. *Vice-Chair Swearingen* responded that he understood that, but with Pinole's traffic back-ups occurring at the same time as when the freeway needs to be improved as well, metering doesn't make sense. He also noted that it would have to be proven to him that this will function in Pinole.

*Director Abelson* noted that the traffic conditions of today will not be traffic conditions of tomorrow, and that conditions are expected to get worse due to higher traffic volumes – this project effectively helps us to plan today for when things get worse in the future. She also shared that she had been informed that half of the delay is attributable to incidents. She also mentioned that in El Cerrito, the conditions are worse on the weekends as an example of conditions that are atypical and specific to jurisdictions. She noted however, that what is important is to be able to maintain local control so that the arterials do not suffer. *Vice-Chair Swearingen* noted that he is all for improvements that address congestion, but that he did not see anywhere in the project any attempt to meter freeway traffic akin to the metering lights at the bridges. *Dr. Menaker* noted that this project aims to improve the efficiency of the freeway, which should help to keep motorists from diverting onto the local streets; and also that we cannot build our way (i.e. add new capacity) out of congestion.

*Director Butt* noted that he has no quarrel with making the freeway safer, providing traveler information, etc. as those are to everyone's benefit, but raised the concern that there are impacts and inequalities that result from the project, and he does not see the project proponents take any interest in addressing those impacts and making sure that the adverse impacts are shared equally by all users, but rather are obsessed with making the freeway more efficient. He also noted that there does not seem to be interest in mitigating impacts to individual cities, mitigating the growth-inducing impacts of the project, but rather there seems to be a denial of the existence of these impacts or statements that they are outside of the scope of the project or that those would be dealt with in the future. He added that he thinks it is intellectually dishonest to do that, and expressed frustration with traffic engineering mentality.

*Director Hansen* stated he understood the concerns of the cities, and noted that the system has multiple parts. The ramp metering lights can be turned off or be all-green and there would be no air quality benefits. The flush plans put cars back onto the freeway quickly. The public safety element is critical. Local commuters who use Richmond to drive through two or three cities are not going to leave San Pablo Av, but the project will improve San Pablo Av and keep short-distance travelers out of the neighborhoods. He recommended that those who don't want the

ramp meters can have them be all-green all the time, but to proceed with the other elements of the project.

*Director Calloway* stated that she understands that this project is not about reducing traffic demand, but about technology. She noted that while there may be inequalities, what was important was to maintain local control over the system's elements to ensure that the system is responsive to local needs. She expressed that she hoped in the future that we could address the traffic demand and growth.

*Director Abelson* made a motion with these changes: the local jurisdictions would not bear the operations and maintenance costs of the project, that some other funding source would be found for that, for 25 years; and that percent increase in delay in San Pablo Avenue would be no greater than that on I-80, so that the local arterials would be providing equivalent service as the freeway. She noted that the objective of the latter change is to ensure that traffic that is already on the freeway stays on the freeway and traffic that is on San Pablo Avenue stays on San Pablo Avenue, rather than diverting back and forth as a result of the project.

*Director Balico* asked to add to the motion the need to ensure that the project would have no adverse financial impacts on the cities. *Director Swearingen* noted that the first part of the motion already addresses the O&M costs; *Director Balico* responded that there should be no adverse impacts regardless of what they are. *Director Abelson* accepted the amendment to the motion to make the first part more general.

*Director Butt* noted that he was not going to vote for the motion because, referring to the data presented in the handout, it's going to reduce delay on the freeway and increase delay on San Pablo Avenue. *Director Abelson* and *Chair Viramontes* clarified that the motion includes an requirement that that be amended to ensure that the benefit to the freeway be the same as the benefit to San Pablo Avenue. *Director Butt* responded that there was nothing in the plan to require that. *Director Abelson* and *Chair Viramontes* replied that that's why it's being added as a condition of approval in the motion.

*Chair Viramontes* instructed staff to do a roll-call vote by city. The motion passed with five ayes and two noes. *Chair Viramontes* thanked everyone for the debate, and acknowledged that this was a difficult decision. She noted that under Measure J, West County voted to dedicate 75 cents out of every dollar to transit, and West County is still stuck carrying the burden of everyone else. She added that she understood *Director Butt*'s angst about the project.

*Dr. Yarjani* asked if the approval included the approval of the CSMP. *Chair Viramontes* and *Ms. Atienza* confirmed that it did. *Chair Viramontes* noted that the contract itself however, will have to come back for approval. *Director Abelson* added too that if at such time it is observed that things are not going well, they can withdraw their support of the project.

*Director Swearingen*, addressing the Chair, observed that West County made a decision 25 years ago under Measure C to support putting BART in East County, and lamented that now West County was still last in line for BART improvements. *Chair Viramontes* responded that East County has been paying for BART for the past 25 years and they still have no BART.

**Public Comment:** *Chair Viramontes* invited *Mr. Tony Sustak* to make his public comment, and apologized for not having called him up sooner. *Mr. Sustak* identified himself as being from Richmond. He said that the Board had actually addressed most of the principal reasons for his attending the meeting, that being that MTC is doing business-as-usual and West County is not. He also commented that while no money has yet been spent on building this project, much staff time has been invested, and lamented that this project would seek to improve freeway efficiency while AC Transit, which already provides efficiencies, is having to make drastic service cuts. He asked the Board to send a message to CCTA and MTC that this is not acceptable, and that it is racist because MTC has been strangling AC Transit all along and is now seeking to eviscerate it, which affects the working class people and people of color who use and operate the system. He thanked the Board for opposing business-as-usual. *Chair Viramontes* thanked *Mr. Sustak*.

### **STANDING ITEMS**

#### **17. Correspondence/Other Information**

##### **a. Incoming**

§ Aug. 9, Randell Iwasaki, Items Approved by the Authority on July 21, 2010

##### **b. Outgoing**

§ July 28, Ashley Nguyen, MTC, Sub-Regional Support for Richmond's Innovative Grant Application & Commitment to Pursue Additional Funding for Larger Implementation of ULRT

§ Aug. 12, Ashley Nguyen, MTC, Support for BART's Climate Initiatives Grant Proposal for Innovative Bicycle Commute Program

§ Aug. 19, Winston Rhodes, Pinole, Comments on General Plan Update Draft EIR

§ Aug. 25, Heather Fargo, CA Strategic Growth Council, Confirmation of Sub-Regional Collaboration for Richmond's Application for Form-Based Code Planning

§ Sept. 15, Telma Moreira, County, Comments on West County Health Center Mitigated Negative Declaration

##### **c. Workshops/Conferences/Events**

§ Contra Costa County Leadership Roundtable, Sept. 27 – by invitation

#### **18. WCCTAC Board and Staff Comments**

- a. Ms. Atienza announced that get-well-soon cards for the recovery of Supervisor Gayle Uilkema and Hercules City Manager Nelson Oliva were available for signing.

#### **19. Other Business.** None.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

**20.** The Board recessed to closed session to consider personnel matters pursuant to Government Code Section 54957 – Performance Evaluation – Executive Director. *Director Calloway* left before the closed session. During the closed session, *Director Butt* left and the closed session was discontinued for lack of a quorum.

**21. Closed Session Report.** None.

**22. Adjourn.** Next meeting is Friday, October 29, 2010 at 8:00 a.m.