

TRANSPAC Meeting Summary Minutes

MEETING DATE: May 13, 2010

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT: Cindy Silva, Walnut Creek (Chair); Mark Ross, Martinez; David Durant, Pleasant Hill, CCTA Representative; Julie Pierce, Clayton, CCTA Representative

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Diana Vavrek, Pleasant Hill; John Mercurio, Concord; David Powell, Walnut Creek

STAFF PRESENT: Ray Kuzbari, Concord; Jack Hall, CCTA; Jeremy Lochirco, Walnut Creek; Erick Cheung, Martin Engelmann, CCTA; Rick Ramacier, Anne Muzzini, CCCTA; Jeremy Lochirco, Walnut Creek; John Greitzer, Contra Costa County; Tim Tucker, Martinez; Lynn Overcashier, 511 Contra Costa; Barbara Neustadter, Connie Peterson, TRANSPAC staff

MINUTES PREPARED BY: C. L. Peterson

Chair Silva convened without a quorum at 9:10 a.m. Members Durant and Pierce arrived shortly thereafter.

- 1. Convene meeting: Pledge of Allegiance/Self-Introductions - Completed**
- 2. Public Comment** – Anne Muzzini and Martin Engelmann participated in Bike to Work Day by commuting to the meeting on bicycles.
- 3. Approval of the March 11 and April 8, 2010 minutes. Durant/Pierce/Unanimous**
- 4. Consent Agenda – none**
- 5. November 2010 Ballot Measure in Contra Costa: SB 83 – Increase in Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) to fund transportation projects**

Arielle Bourgart and Hisham Noeimi of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) gave a presentation on the proposed November ballot measure that would increase the registration fee for vehicles registered in Contra Costa by \$10 a year, generating about \$8.5 million annually. An expenditure plan must be developed for these funds and must demonstrate a nexus to those that pay the fee. In April, a poll was taken to gauge voter sentiment about the fee, results of which indicated that voters held a somewhat but not overwhelmingly positive opinion. A series of stakeholder interviews was conducted as well to get additional input. Staff began working with an Advisory Committee to develop a straightforward and simple expenditure plan. Staff has had discussions about these options with WCCTAC and SWAT, and has come to TRANSPAC today to get its input. In June, CCTA's Administration and Projects Committee will review preliminary recommendations, the draft ballot language and nexus, with approval of the final expenditure plan by the Authority in July. The ballot measure must be submitted to the County by August 6.

Hisham Noeimi provided information on the options developed by the Advisory Committee at its meeting on April 23. There was general agreement on project categories where the money should go (shown on page 5-4 of the packet) including local road improvements and repair, transit for congestion relief, and bicycle and pedestrian access and safety. The Authority presented the first option to the Advisory Committee as a starting point to generate feedback. This option allocated 80% of the funds for local streets and roads, 15% for transit, and 5% for pedestrian/bicycle projects. From that, the Advisory Committee developed Option A, where more money was diverted to transit and pedestrian/bicycle projects. Option B was developed by the

Authority's consultant to serve as a middle ground. There was no consensus that any one option was the best.

In the regional discussions, WCCTAC expressed a preference for Option A, in which more funds would go to transit. SWAT proposed a fourth option that favored local streets and roads, and included a request that school bus programs be part of the eligible transit component. The proposed expenditure plan would set base minimum amounts of 50% – 10% – 5% with the remaining 35% to be used at the subregions' discretion in these categories. Because the measure doesn't include a sunset provision, this approach would allow flexibility for a region's changing needs over time. However, it could be difficult to present to the voters unless the subregions have decided in advance how to program the discretionary 35%.

A number of questions were raised concerning eligibility for specific uses. Tim Tucker asked if a portion could be used for the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Mr. Noeimi answered that funds from local streets and roads for each city could be used for NPDES permits under the local streets and roads category. Mr. Tucker asked if street light conversion to LED would be eligible. Ms. Bourgart noted that because the objective of this legislation is traffic congestion relief or traffic-caused pollution, lights would not technically be eligible. Lynn Overcashier wanted to know if Central County funds could be used to offset the cost of transit tickets used for the SchoolPool program. Member Pierce said that this was a listed use, but Ms. Bourgart noted that even if a use is listed as eligible, it must address the nexus. John Greitzer asked if the transit category included only capital expenditures or operations. Ms. Bourgart said that use for operations would be permitted.

Member Ross said that he preferred Option B, although the 10% allocated to pedestrian/bicycle was too low. He believed that a 60%-20%-20% distribution would be better. Barbara Neustadter noted that safety improvements for bikes were also eligible uses under the local streets and road category. Members Durant and Pierce stated a preference for Option B.

Chair Silva requested information about the method for distributing the money in these plans. Mr. Noeimi said that although this has not been determined, it is assumed that local streets and roads would use a formula similar to that used in Measure J. Distribution of the transit portion could be decided by the Bus Transit Coordinating Committee (BTCC). The pedestrian/bicycle portion could be used to augment the pot of money already in Measure J funding.

Member Durant commented about the diversity issue among the regions. Ideally, money would be divided among the RTPCs to enable them to choose their own plans, but this approach would be difficult to define and present to the voters in a countywide measure. In order to pass the measure, consideration must be given to what the voters are likely to support or reject, and supporting local streets and roads and transit makes the most sense.

Chair Silva said that she preferred Option A because she believes voters will approve something directly related to roads and improvements, noting that an alternative in-between might be better.

Member Durant asked Alex Evans of EMC Research to comment on how rational it would be to have a pot of money divided by the RTPCs, which in turn would set their own percentages. Mr. Evans believed that the weakness here would be in describing the measure to the voters. The difficulty is how to present a measure that leaves too much unspecified and requires voters to trust regional officials to allocate money. Mr. Evans suggested that if TRANSPAC wanted to pursue an option similar to SWAT's proposal, a minimum percentage for the three categories would need to be established, leaving the balance for regional committees to determine. Even this approach might leave too much unspecified for the voters. The remedy is for regional authorities to pre-determine what the percentage is going to be. Mr. Evans recommended not giving up on

finding a single approach. He mentioned that Alameda County's draft plan is set at 60%-25%-5%-10% (for smart corridors). Some of the road money will be set aside for bikes.

Chair Silva asked Mr. Evans to comment about some of the results of the polling data (included in the packet). Mr. Evans explained that generally on tax measures, women are usually more risk averse and are lower in support; men are more willing to spend on something they like, but have less trust in government. Chair Silva expressed concern about the "trust me" factor in some of the proposals and the difficulty there could be in communicating multiple plans to voters, especially since the polling had revealed an unwillingness of 45% of voters to say yes to a \$10 fee. A single message will be easier to move through the process. Ms. Bourgart added that there wouldn't have to be different messages in different regions, but the key would be the regional committees' ability to determine where they want to direct their flexible funds and incorporate this into the countywide picture.

Member Ross asked about the campaign message for what the \$10 will do to benefit the voters. Mr. Evans said that for the individuals polled, fixing roads and keeping the state from taking the money was paramount.

Member Pierce proposed a 70%-20%-10% allocation with the ability for local jurisdictions to contribute some of their share into to a subregional pot. She added that SWAT's 35% is confusing and too hard to pin down. The measure would be more appealing if most of the money goes to the people who are paying the fee. She noted that the people paying this fee aren't likely to support transit in areas where transit is not easily accessed or available.

Ms. Neustadter asked about procedures for reviewing and revising the expenditure plan. Ms. Bourgart said that there will be an amendment process for the expenditure plan which is yet to be determined.

Member Pierce added that if transit and pedestrian/bicycle money was put into the existing Measure J categories, there already is a regional equity split. It would still give WCCTAC what it wants and augments what it already has. Local streets and road money is written in a way such that it can facilitate transit and allows some discretion for road use. One of the concerns is that there needs to be clean and easy to message to communicate, and that kind of split may serve the purpose.

ACTION: The motion was made to support an alternative 70%-20%-10% option and allow local jurisdictions to contribute a share of their allocations into a subregional pot. **Pierce/Durant/unanimous**

The remaining agenda items will be forwarded to the June 17 or July 8 meetings.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.