



Date: August 31, 2006
 Committee Meeting Date: September 14, 2006
 Board Meeting Date: N/A
 ACTION DISCUSSION INFO

BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: Technical Advisory Committee
 Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
 Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael T. Burns
 General Manager *Michael T. Burns*

FROM: Jim Lawson
 Government Affairs Manager *Jim Lawson*

SUBJECT: Study Session: Technical Advisory Committee Effectiveness and Relationship to Policy Advisory Committee and Board of Directors

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND:

At the June 8, 2006 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, VTA Board of Directors Chairperson Cindy Chavez addressed the Committee. She thanked TAC for all the work it had done and referred to her chairperson theme for 2006, "Full Participation, Full Information." She indicated the need for the Board to work closely with TAC as its technical expertise is very important to the future decisions that are made at VTA. She also said that she and VTA General Manager Michael Burns were concerned about improving the relationship between the Board of Directors, TAC, the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and VTA's Member Agencies, which are the 15 cities in the county and the County of Santa Clara. She also expressed her feeling that TAC was being underutilized.

Based on this, Chairperson Chavez asked TAC to provide feedback and suggestions on how the Board of Directors could better incorporate TAC's expertise into the policy making at VTA.

In response, the Committee agreed to hold a study session to analyze the issue. The goal of the study session would be for TAC members and staff to develop a written recommendation for Board of Directors consideration on how TAC can play a more vital role in interacting with and advising the Board of Directors. After evaluating the TAC Work Plan, the Committee agreed to schedule the study session for its September 14, 2006 meeting.

DISCUSSION:

To promote the effectiveness of the study session, TAC Chairperson Steve Yoshino, at the August 10, 2006 TAC meeting, requested volunteers to meet with key staff members and himself prior to the study session to develop a framework of potential topics. Those that offered to serve were Member Jack Witthaus, Alternate Member Ben Tripousis, and Vice Chairperson Don Dey. Member Jim Porter has also been requested to serve. Due to scheduling conflicts, this preparatory meeting cannot be held until September 5, 2006.

The list of topics and items to be developed at this preparatory meeting will be used as a guide for the study session and will be emailed to the Committee and publicly posted the week prior to the September 14, 2006 TAC meeting.

Prepared by: Stephen Flynn, Sr. Management Analyst

**Technical Advisory Committee
September 14, 2006 Study Session**

**TAC Effectiveness and Relationship to Board of Directors
and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)**

Issues and Factors for Consideration

- Develop a mission statement for TAC to help clarify its purpose, responsibilities, goals and relationship to Board and PAC.
 - In February 1995, during the transition period when the Congestion Management Agency (CMA) and Transit District (TD) merged to form VTA, it was recommended to the Board of Directors that the role and responsibilities of the TAC include being:
 - “...involved in major TD policy decisions and all issues that impact cities in addition to the CMA issues already under its jurisdiction (e.g. CMPs, CIPs. AB 434, development of the Subregional Deficiency Plan).”
 - “...it will keep cities apprised of major issues facing the Transit District/CMA and serve as the first step in building countywide consensus on policies even before they reach the Board.”
 - “TAC input on major policy issues is clearly desirable. However, as a practical matter, the quest for input and consensus must be balanced with a system that does not impair the efficiency of decision making with the agency. In other words, the ‘process’ itself must not bog down operations.”
- Meetings:
 - Investigate the feasibility of moving the meeting date to significantly more in advance of the PAC meetings (up to two weeks prior to PAC) to provide TAC members the ability to brief their city councils, PAC and Board members.
 - Hold one meeting per year to identify the most critical, urgent or controversial items to include on the TAC Work Plan for the Committee to consider during the upcoming year.
 - Hold study sessions as needed to provide TAC the opportunity to analyze items or issues in depth.
 - Have staff endeavor to bring items to TAC as far in advance as possible of taking them to PAC and the Board to allow TAC members to seek city council input or approval where required.

- Have staff provide a brief oral status report regularly on the incremental progress of major projects, programs and issues.
- Add to agenda reports from TAC **working groups** (Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Systems Operations & Management (SOM)).
 - On all or just selected items?
 - Have working group chairperson or VTA staff provide report?
- TAC Technical Input and Recommendations:
 - Have PAC and Board agendas or Board memo reflect how TAC voted on an item. If this is not feasible, supply a very brief supplemental report indicating TAC's vote on the item. Also, if the Committee did not approve the item or if it made material changes, identify the stated reasons for those actions.
- Have VTA increase intermediary/liaison functions with Caltrans to serve as go-between for all Member Agencies.
 - A recent example of liaison function provided on a countywide basis (for all Members Agencies) is the Litter & Landscape study.
 - Function will become more critical if Transportation Infrastructure Act bonds pass.
- Provide a written report to the Board of Directors on TAC's recommendation to increase Committee effectiveness and on how the Board can better incorporate TAC expertise into policy decisions.
 - Include for Board consideration the items identified on the TAC Work Plan as most critical, urgent or controversial.