

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 13, 2007

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 1:33 p.m. by Chairperson Dey in Conference Room B-104, Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), 3331 North First Street, San José, California.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Rajeev Batra
Don Dey, Chairperson
Dan Collen, Alternate
Jaime Rodriguez Alternate
Joan Jenkins
Julie Caporgno, Alternate
Jim Rowe, Alternate
Ben Tripousis
Jack Witthaus
Nancy Coss-Fitzwater, Ex-Officio
Robert Kass, Vice Chairperson
Lee Taubeneck, Ex-Officio-Caltrans

Representing

City of Santa Clara
City of Gilroy
County of Santa Clara
City of Milpitas
City of Mountain View
City of Palo Alto
City of Morgan Hill
City of San Jose
City of Sunnyvale
VTA
City of Campbell
Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans)
District 4

Members Absent

Richard Chen
John Cherbone
Jim Gustafson
Ralph Qualls Jr.
Kevin Rohani
Ed Slintak

Representing

Town of Los Altos Hills
City of Saratoga
City of Los Altos
City of Cupertino
Town of Los Gatos
City of Monte Sereno

A quorum was present.

2. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, expressed appreciation to be in attendance and participate in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting.

3. ORDERS OF THE DAY

Chairperson Dey requested that the following Agenda Items be heard at the beginning of the Regular Agenda: **Agenda Item #15.**, Receive an update on New Bus Service for January 14, 2008; and **Agenda Item #19.**, Receive an update on MTC Activities and Initiatives.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Orders of the Day were accepted.

4. Committee Staff Report

Jim Lawson, Government Affairs Manager and Staff Liaison, provided a report that highlighted the following: 1) VTA's participation at the San José Holiday Parade; 2) VTA's participation in the Stuff the Bus drive for Toys for Tots; 3) Operation of the Historic Trolleys at Downtown San José; 4) Closing of the Mitchell Block property at Downtown San José; 5) Unanimous recommendation of the City of San José City Council regarding the North Alignment of the Coyote Creek located at Santa Clara Street; 6) Implementation of the New Bus Service on January 14, 2008; 7) Introduced Menominee McCarter, new Board Assistant; 8) Letter from the State Auditor regarding the Audit of VTA; and 9) Board of Directors approved the renovation of the final section of the Guadalupe Line Light Rail platform.

Member Tripousis inquired about the timeline of the State Audit. Mr. Lawson responded that a timeline has not been established.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee Staff Report was received.

5. Chairperson's Report

There was no Chairperson's Report.

6. Reports from TAC Working Groups

- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

Bill Hough, Transportation Planner III, reported that the CIP Working Group met at the Milpitas City Hall on December 4, 2007. He noted the following updates received by the Working Group: 1) 2008 STIP Proposal; 2) Local Program Reserves; and 3) Expressway Study Process by the County of Santa Clara.

- **Systems Operations & Management (SOM) Working Group**

There was no report from the SOM Working Group.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Reports from TAC Working Groups, CIP and SOM, were received.

BUSINESS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS/GENERAL MANAGER

CONSENT AGENDA

7. Minutes of October 11, 2007

M/S/C (Tripousis/Batra) to approve the Minutes of October 11, 2007.

8. Summary Minutes of November 8, 2007

M/S/C (Tripousis/Batra) to receive and file the Summary Minutes of November 8, 2007.

9. Local Transportation Needs and Priorities of the City of Campbell

M/S/C (Tripousis/Batra) to receive a report on the Local Transportation Needs and Priorities of the City of Campbell.

10. Proactive CMP Reviewed and Approved Projects Quarterly Status Report – July through September 2007

M/S/C (Tripousis/Batra) to receive the Proactive CMP Reviewed and Approved Projects Quarterly Status Report – July through September 2007.

Alternate Member Caporgno took her seat at 1:45 p.m.

REGULAR AGENDA

15. New Bus Service for January 14, 2008

Jim Unites, Operations Planning Program Manager, provided a brief report regarding the operational aspect of the New Bus Service. His report highlighted the following: 1) Updated schedule of the New Bus Service; 2) New Bus Service sign up process for bus operators; 3) Revised transportation arrangement between VTA and SamTrans; 4) Operation of 11 new Community Buses; and 5) VTA's community outreach.

NOTE: M/S/C MEANS MOTION SECONDED AND CARRIED AND, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Bernice Alaniz, Deputy Director, Marketing and Public Affairs, provided a report on the marketing aspect of the New Bus Service. She noted that VTA's goal is to communicate service changes to its riders. To accomplish this goal, she enumerated a Comprehensive Outreach Plan that highlighted the following: 1) Trip planning sessions; 2) Creation of Public Communication Specialists; 3) Use of informative website and brochures; 4) Comprehensive television, radio and print campaign; 5) Launch of the new website; 6) Google Trip Planner; 7) Express Bus Service; and 8) Core routes in Downtown San José and East San José.

Member Batra requested that the New Bus Service be monitored. He commented that the City of Santa Clara continues to receive calls from concerned residents regarding the redirected bus service that used to travel along El Camino Real to Franklin Square.

Member Witthaus inquired about the distribution of New Bus Service brochures to VTA information centers in the City of Sunnyvale. Mr. Unites responded that distribution of brochures started December 2007.

Member Witthaus inquired about the VTA's community outreach. He recommended that staff work with the Neighborhood Services Coordinator of the City of Sunnyvale to communicate service changes to its residents. Ms. Alaniz responded that 50 outreach sessions were scheduled and 25 were successfully completed. She added that staff will coordinate with the Neighborhood Services Coordinator of the City of Sunnyvale.

Member Witthaus requested staff to monitor the New Bus Service in the City of Sunnyvale and recommended restoring redirected bus routes if the new service is not effective. Mr. Unites responded that the New Bus Service will be closely monitored and a quarterly update will be provided. He added that annual service adjustments will be conducted based on the performance of the New Bus Service.

Alternate Member Rodriguez expressed concern regarding the loud noise produced by bus engines and recommended training new bus operators to turn off their engines at bus stops on residential areas.

Vice Chairperson Kass commented that the Community Buses are not specifically designed for the community that it serves. Mr. Unites responded that the issue is being studied because there are geographical challenges that need to be resolved. Jim Lawson, Government Affairs Manager and Staff Liaison, explained that the priority was to adopt the Community Bus for the New Bus Service. He added that once implemented, staff will work with the affected cities to determine an identity for the Community Bus.

Ms. Alaniz requested that Committee Members provide contact information of local communities and neighborhoods for staff to effectively communicate the service changes.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee received an update on New Bus Service for January 14, 2008.

19. Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Activities and Initiatives

Member Tripousis provided a report on the Focus Program or the implementation of the Project Development Areas (PDA). He stated that the Focus Program provides an opportunity to support higher density transit-oriented development by offering regional funding.

Member Tripousis enumerated the following options as sources of funding for the Focus Program: 1) New Ten-Cent Gas Fee; 2) Portion of the existing Transportation Grants; and 3) Portion of the Regional Allocation for Local Streets and Roads Maintenance. He requested the Committee to closely monitor funds for Local Streets and Roads Maintenance and make sure that they are not used for other MTC activities.

Alternate Member Collen inquired if the Ten-Cent Gas Fee would generate positive impacts to Local Streets and Roads Maintenance. Member Tripousis responded that the Ten Cent Gas Fee would be considered as a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fee. He added that MTC is currently studying the relation of greenhouse gas reduction and road maintenance to determine if funds accumulated can be used for Local Streets and Roads Maintenance.

Member Tripousis reported that MTC's direction is to generate user fee oriented revenues. He referenced the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) meeting where congestion pricing that would generate \$34 billion a year was discussed.

Chairperson Dey made the following announcements: 1) Caltrans is soliciting projects for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP); and 2) Caltrans Traffic Light Signalization Program. He requested that staff work with different cities to determine projects that would be eligible for funding under Caltrans programs.

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, expressed concern regarding MTC's inability to determine its source of funding for its programs.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee received an update on MTC Activities and Initiatives.

11. Election Process for Advisory Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Stephen Flynn, Senior Management Analyst, explained the rules of the Subcommittee nominations. He noted the following: 1) Chairperson and Vice Chairperson each serves one term and are eligible for re-election; and 2) Only primary members are permitted to serve as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Chairperson Dey and Member Batra volunteered to serve on the Nominating Subcommittee.

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, stressed the important duties of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

M/S/C (Tripousis/Witthaus) to appoint a nominating subcommittee to identify Committee members interested in serving as the Chairperson and vice Chairperson for 2008.

12. Review and Screening of Candidate Locations for Noise Reduction Projects

Bill Hough, Transportation Planner, identified the following three-step process that would be utilized to screen the nominations and evaluate each location: 1) perform an initial “Windshield Survey” to determine if the proposed candidate location qualified based on location, land use, site characteristics, and age of development; 2) conduct a second Level Preliminary Technical Study and determine if the candidate location has merit based on a general analysis of current traffic volume, distance from roadway, topography, noise-sensitive receptor characteristics, and projected noise barrier benefits; and
3) complete final Field Measurements and Detailed Analysis.

Christina Jaworski, Environmental Planner, reported that the purpose of the Program is to identify locations that warrant Noise Barrier Summary Scope Report (NBSSR). She added that this is a Caltrans requirement to determine project’s eligibility for programming.

Member Tripousis inquired about each jurisdiction’s authority to move forward with a NBSSR. Ms. Jaworski responded that each jurisdiction has authority regarding the NBSSR. She added that the Sound Barrier Program could be a way to address complaints from residents regarding freeway and expressway noise.

Member Witthaus expressed concern regarding the Sound Barrier Program and stated that the budgeted \$400,000 should be used for other programs.

Member Batra requested that a noise study be conducted at Coleman Avenue and The Alameda by I-880.

Member Tripousis expressed his support for the program. He stated that the program provides an opportunity to assess freeway and expressway noise related problems.

Vice Chairperson Kass supported Member Witthaus’ comments and noted that the funds should instead be used to improve Caltrans segments that need resurfacing.

Ms. Jaworski responded that the program is not limited to the study of noise barriers. She stated that it would also include analysis of pavements and noise mitigation.

Alternate Member Rodriguez inquired about Caltrans’ criteria for project eligibility. Ms. Jaworski responded that the Caltrans criteria for project eligibility were not included in the packet but is available for the Committee.

Alternate Member Rodriguez queried if retrofitting windows of residents may be used as an alternative to soundwall construction. John Ristow, Chief CMA Officer, responded that Federal and State funds cannot be used to retrofit windows of residents.

Ex-Officio Member Taubeneck commented that Caltrans have a Federal and State criteria for project eligibility.

Chairperson Dey expressed his appreciation to VTA for taking the lead regarding screening of candidate locations for noise reduction projects.

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, expressed concern regarding noise complaints made by residents.

M/S/C (Tripousis/Jenkins) to review and recommend that the VTA Board of Directors approve a countywide review and screening of candidate locations for noise reduction projects on freeways and expressways, and approve the use of up to \$400,00 in Congestion Management Program budget to implement the screening program.

Member Tripousis left his seat at 2:35 p.m.

13. Revised Scoring Criteria for the Local Streets & County Roads (LS&CR) Program

Marcella Rensi, Programming and Grants Manager, provided a brief background regarding the scoring criteria for LS&CR. She noted that changes to the criteria would be applied to the projects under the VTP 2035. The Proposed Planning Phase Scoring Criteria are: 1) Street Connectivity – Up to 25 Points; 2) Congestion Relief – Up to 25 Points; 3) Safety – Up to 30 Points; and 4) Transportation/Land Use Connection Interface – Up to 20 Points. The Proposed Programming Phase Scoring Criteria are: 1) Project Readiness – Up to 50 Points; 2) Environmental Phase (ENV); 3) Right-of-Way (ROW); 4) Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PSE); 5) Match – Up to 20 Points; and 6) Planning Phase Score – Up to 30 Points.

Alternate Member Rodriguez commented that an effective Programming Phase of the Scoring Criteria facilitates projects to move forward. He expressed appreciation to staff for updating the Programming Phase.

Chairperson Dey referred to Attachment D, page D2 of 2, “Match: Up to 20 Points,” and expressed concern about awarding three points for 21-24 percent of Match to Total Project Cost. He recommended lowering it down to one or two points.

Member Jenkins commented that three points is adequate for 21 to 24 percent match to total project cost. She stated that on a large scale and expensive projects, the capability of a city to provide 21 to 24 percent match to the total project cost demands a lot of work and effort.

Chairperson Dey expressed concern regarding the initial funding that would be wasted on planning a large scale project if it is unable to obtain additional funding for construction.

Alternate Member Rodriguez responded that funds are well spent on projects that undergo the Planning and Programming Phase because it is prepared to have a regional significance.

Chairperson Dey expressed concern regarding the ability of local jurisdictions to commit and obtain funding on large scale projects.

Alternate Member Rodriguez responded that it is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency to demonstrate their commitment. He stated that their project proposal should identify how they would obtain funds to complete the project.

Member Batra queried if numerous projects are competing for eligibility.

Chairperson Dey responded that there are some projects competing for eligibility and the difference between two to three points is critical.

Chairperson Dey expressed concern regarding the Planning Phase Score, located in Attachment D, page D2 of 2. He stated that the Planning Phase Score should be associated with the Match to Total Project Cost. He added that the Planning Phase Scoring is designed to move large scale projects for eligibility. He recommended the following:

Planning Phase Score: Up to 20 Points

| Planning Phase Score | Points |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 76 – 100 | 20 |
| 51 - 75 | 15 |
| 26 – 50 | 10 |
| 0 – 25 | 0 |

Member Jenkins commented that there should not be any relation between the Planning Phase Score and the Match to Total Project Cost. She explained that Planning Phase Score demonstrates that a project did well on its Planning Phase. She added that the scale of the project does not affect how it scores in the Planning Phase.

Alternate Member Rodriguez expressed support for the Proposed Programming Phase Scoring Criteria. He explained that the proposed criteria depicts the importance of the Match to Total Project Cost and the Planning Phase Score to move projects to the right direction and gives credit to the work done by sponsoring agencies.

Ms. Rensi recommended the following changes to the Match to Total Project Cost and Planning Phase Score:

Match: Up to 25 Points

| Match to Total Project Cost | Points |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| 50% + | 25 |
| 40% - 49% | 20 |
| 30% - 39% | 15 |
| 20% - 29% | 10 |
| < 20% | Ineligible |

Planning Phase Score: Up to 25 Points

| Planning Phase Score | Points |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 76 – 100 | 25 |
| 51 - 75 | 20 |
| 26 – 50 | 15 |
| 0 – 25 | 10 |

M/S/C (Batra/Witthaus) to review and recommend that the VTA Board of Directors modify the criteria used to evaluate and select projects for the Local Streets & County Roads (LS&CR) Program as amended.

14. Caltrain Service Upgrades – Safety Improvements

Mark Robinson, Acting Chief Engineering and Construction Officer, provided a brief report that highlighted the following: 1) Safety study of the Caltrain corridor between Palo Alto and Gilroy conducted by HNTB; 2) Caltrain Service Upgrades – Safety Improvements FY 2008 and FY 2009 (Attachment A); 3) The HNTB report (Attachment B); 4) First phase – Installation of signage, roadway striping and construction of medians between opposing traffic lanes; and 5) Second phase – Pedestrian improvements.

Member Witthaus expressed concern that some of the projects conflict with what some cities identified as a safety improvement project. He recommended that staff conduct a thorough study of projects and requested that the Committee to receive more information. He requested to meet with staff to receive input from the City of Sunnyvale regarding improving the Safety Improvement Projects.

Mr. Lawson explained the importance of moving the Safety Improvement Project List forward. He added that the construction contracts for the projects will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and considered by the respective cities.

Chairperson Dey expressed concern stating that problems will be encountered on the implementation of the First Phase of work at Downtown Gilroy. He commented that implementation of the projects should be coordinated with the respective agencies. Mr. Robinson responded that staff will work with different city staff to develop strategies to implement the projects.

Alternate Member Collen commented on the concern of the County of Santa Clara regarding railroad crossings. He stated that proper coordination with different cities is essential in resolving the issues.

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, commented on public safety and suggested constructing ramps that would go over railroad tracks.

Vice Chairperson Kass left his seat at 3:13 p.m.

The Committee lost its quorum and a Committee of a Whole was declared.

Member Batra queried on the status of the Santa Clara Station Programmed Project. Mr. Lawson stated that negotiation with Caltrain is in progress and funding issues will still be determined. He added that preliminary engineering is currently being conducted and the plan is underway.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee of the Whole reviewed the Caltrain Service Upgrades – Safety Improvements Project.

Ex-Officio Member Coss-Fitzwater left her seat at 3:15 p.m.

16. Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2035 Project List Development Reminder

John Sighamony, Senior Planner, reported that VTA issued a VTP Call-for-Projects in September 2007. The due date for submittals is Friday December 14, 2007.

Chairperson Dey inquired if submission of projects could be done through e-mail. Mr. Sighamony responded “yes.”

Alternate Member Rodriguez queried regarding budget impacts to the projects under the VTP 2035. Mr. Sighamony responded that Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is reviewing both the constrained and unconstrained list of projects to address budget issues.

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, commented that staff should communicate with MTC regarding the VTP 2035.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee of the Whole received the VTP 2035 Project List Development Reminder.

Member Batra left his seat at 3:18 p.m.

17. VTP Highway Program Semi-Annual Progress Report – October 2007

John Ristow, Chief CMA Officer, reported that the VTP Highway Program Semi-Annual Progress Report provides information and status of VTA managed projects.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee of the Whole received the VTP Highway Program Semi-Annual Progress Report – October 2007.

18. Review of September 13th Joint PAC/CAC Workshop Topics and Participant's Comments, Concerns and Suggested Potential Recommendations

Chairperson Dey requested the Committee to review Attachment C, PAC and CAC Workshop Meeting Notes, and determine important issues for discussion at a future TAC meeting.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee of the Whole reviewed the September 13th PAC/CAC Workshop Topics and Participant's Comments, Concerns and Suggested Potential Recommendations.

OTHER

20. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Subcommittee Report

There was no report from the TAC Subcommittee.

21. Committee Work Plan

Stephen Flynn, Senior Management Analyst, reported that the Draft State and Federal Program Summaries was moved from January to February.

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the Committee reviewed the Committee Work Plan.

22. Announcements

Member Jenkins announced that the City of Mountain View has appointed her to head its Environmental Sustainability Program. As a result, starting January 2008, she will become an Alternate Member for Peter Skinner.

20. ADJOURNMENT

On order of Chairperson Dey, there being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Diaresco, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors