



DOWNTOWN EAST VALLEY POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

Friday, December 1, 2006

MINUTES

1. The Regular Meeting of the Downtown East Valley Policy Advisory Board (PAB) was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Vice Chairperson Campos, Lower Level Conference Room, 70 West Hedding Street, San Jose, California.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Nora Campos, Vice Chairperson
Cindy Chavez, Chairperson
Dave Cortese
Pete McHugh

Members Absent

Blanca Alvarado

A quorum was present

2. **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

There were no Public Presentation.

3. **Minutes of June 1, 2006**

M/S/C (Cortese/McHugh) to approve the Minutes of June 1, 2006.

4. **Bus Rapid Transit Alternative**

Kevin Connolly, Transportation Planning Manager and Staff Liaison, stated that the project was initially described as Enhanced Bus and Single Car Light Rail. Because the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has asked us to update the project, staff has redefined Enhanced Bus to Bus Rapid Transit. This change reflects the experiences both nationwide and in Santa Clara Valley.

Chairperson Chavez took her seat at 10:08 a.m.

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

Mr. Connolly highlighted the differences between Enhanced Bus and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). These include: 1) Travelways; 2) Terminal Points; 3) Fare collection; and 4) Scalability.

Member Cortese queried about the interface with light rail. Mr. Connolly responded that staff has yet to analyze this issue. He stated that staff will analyze the best location for a seamless transfer.

Vice Chairperson Campos inquired about when staff will come back with a more detailed analysis. Mr. Connolly stated that staff will provide more answers at the PAB's February and April 2007 meetings.

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Bus Rapid Transit Alternative Report was received.

The Agenda was taken out of order.

6. Santa Clara Alum Rock Project Revised Schedule

Mr. Connolly stated that staff is projecting a VTA Board of Directors' action by February 2008. Staff hopes to complete its analysis by April 2007 and a document submitted to FTA quickly thereafter. Staff anticipates having the final document by November 2007, a review by Advisory and Standing Committees in January 2008, and Board action by February 2008.

Vice Chairperson Campos expressed concern with the revised schedule and asked if it represented the final schedule. Mr. Connolly responded that the schedule required a revision due to FTA requirement that staff update the project. Further and he stated that staff is confident with the revised schedule.

Ms. Gonot added that the only possible delay would occur if the decision to include or exclude the 28th Street concept is not made in February.

Member McHugh expressed confusion with staff response and asked staff to provide the PAB with a schedule that takes into account the February decision date.

Chairperson Chavez added that the community outreach component could impact the schedule and requested that staff take that into consideration.

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Santa Clara Alum Rock Project Revised Schedule was received.

5. Rail Simulation Analysis for Downtown East Valley Light Rail Projects

Mr. Connolly introduced Jim Unites, Operations Planning Program Manager.

Mr. Unites highlighted the benefits of a rail simulation model. He added that VTA will contract with local consultants to complete the work.

Mr. Unites highlighted the scope of the contract and discussed the schedule.

Member Cortese inquired about whether the rail simulation will model vehicular wait times and current levels of service. Mr. Unites responded that the VTA will have to work with the cities to gather the information.

Member Cortese requested periodic status reports and asked staff to synchronize the schedule with public outreach process

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Rail Simulation Analysis for Downtown East Valley Light Rail Projects was received.

7. Transit Sustainability Policy and Service Design Guidelines

Mr. Connolly introduced Chris Augenstein, Transportation Planning Manager, who reported that the Transit Sustainability Policy and Service Design Guidelines has been reviewed by various committees throughout the fall.

Vice Chairperson Campos left the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Mr. Augenstein provided a power point presentation highlighting: 1) Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA). 2) Background, 3) Purpose, 4) TSP Structure, 5) TSP/COA Goals & Core Principles, 6) Service Design Guidelines, &) The TSP Process, 8) TSP Applications, and 9) Key Event Timeline.

Member McHugh asked if the TSP will impact the project schedule. Mr. Augenstein stated that the TSP will not impact the schedule.

Member Cortese expressed concern with the difficulty of aligning land use planning with transportation planning. Mr. Augenstein responded that staff views the TSP as another tool and will look to working with cities on projects that will impact transit improvements.

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Transit Sustainability Policy and Services Guidelines was received.

8. Santa Clara/Alum Rock Enhanced Outreach Process

Ms. Gonot stated that the outreach process will include discussion about the Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives. The meeting format will consist of a presentation about the project and the impacts (construction, environmental, economic) of both alternatives on neighborhoods. Staff intends to bring together a panel composed of representatives from cities across the nation who have constructed and implemented LRT and BRT projects. This will provide an opportunity to have real discussion on the potential impacts. Staff also intends to present visual simulations so that the public will understand how the project will look during and after construction.

Member Cortese commented that the outreach “mood” should be more of a sales pitch to encourage people to participate in the discussion.

Eileen Goodwin, VTA Consultant, referred to Member Cortese's comments that stated that at Member Cortese's request, she contacted the City of San Jose for the outreach meeting venue. She requested input and suggestion from the Committee as to their preference on the venue as well as other logistics such as getting voting preference of outreach meeting attendees.

Chairperson Chavez expressed concern about conducting the meeting in the San Jose City Hall meeting rooms as the audio in those rooms is not very good.

Member Cortese suggested using the Council Chambers and staging the panel on the floor in front of the dais.

Chairperson Chavez noted the presence of portable microphones in the Council Chambers and highlighted the challenges of simultaneous translation during the meeting. Chairperson Chavez noted her support for electronic voting and suggested that staff distribute preference cards in different languages to those who wish to write their comments and preferences.

Chairperson Chavez suggested that staff communicate and partner with different organizations such as the Business Chamber and Vietnamese Chamber and noted the importance of follow up with the attendees.

Member Cortese suggested that the preference cards/voting preferences contain an outline so the public can provide comments that are helpful to the PAB's decision-making process.

Chairperson Chavez stated her support of staff's recommendation to invite city representatives and suggested that staff also invite the BRT and LRT vendors to sit on the panel.

Mr. Lawson cautioned that inviting the vendors might not prove helpful because they would endorse their products. He suggested inviting someone with a more generalist view who would make that kind of investment in their community such as a city staff member or policy maker.

Chairperson Chavez suggested holding a raffle to encourage people to participate in the outreach meetings. Raffle prizes could include monthly transit passes or something that the attendees could use. Staff could also use local radio station to highlight the event.

Ms. Goodwin thanked the Committee for their input regarding the venue and their suggestions.

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Enhanced Outreach Process was received.

9. Draft Outreach Presentation for Community Groups

Mr. Connolly provided a brief overview on the Community Group Outreach efforts. Mr. Connolly continued that staff is currently working on developing a community project presentation, which staff will provide to the Community Groups.

Mr. Connolly provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting: 1) Project Boundaries; 2) Project History; 3) Original Project Alternatives; 4) Project Status and Schedule; 5) New Alternatives; 6) Project Update Focus; and 7) Highlights of March Community Forum.

Mr. Connolly highlighted the original Enhanced Bus Alternative and compared it to the new Bus Rapid Transit Alternate. He highlighted differences in cost, ridership, project cost, project schedule headways, and the ability to upgrade BRT to a future light rail line.

Mr. Connolly also discussed the proposed phased opening of the Single Car Light Rail and highlighted the focus of the project update that is currently underway.

Mr. Connolly mentioned that the PAB will host a community forum in March 2007 at San Jose City Hall.

Mr. Connolly provided photo simulation of various areas along the alignment.

Member Cortese suggested that staff experiment with different station designs.

Chairperson Chavez suggested that staff work with light rail officials in Portland, Oregon in the design of the light rail alternative. She also commented that the proposed height and depth of the curbs will impact the business community in the area.

Chairperson Chavez thanked VTA staff for incorporating the issues and concerns brought forth by the PAB.

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Draft Outreach Presentation for Community Groups was received.

10. Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project Status Report

Kenneth Ronsee, Design and Construction Manager, reported that the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project is proceeding on schedule. Recent project highlights include: 1) Completion of Preliminary Engineering in September 2006; 2) Scoping Meeting for Supplemental Environment Impact Report was held in September; 3) Execution of a Final Engineering contract in October 2006; 4) coordination between VTA and Eastridge Mall continues; and 5) Initial coordination between VTA and City of San Jose staff for proposed improvements along the Thompson Creek Trail.

Mr. Ronsee reported that upcoming activities for the project include: 1) January 2007 Circulation of the Draft SEIR; 2) February 2007 Public Hearing; 3) May 2007 Final EIR; 4) Forward to the May 2007 Board of Directors meeting for consideration; 5) Finalization of right-of-way documents for future real estate property acquisition; 6) Implementation of agreements with utility companies for Final Design support; and 7) Transfer of the right-of-way to support the current final engineering, future property acquisition and future utility relocation

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project Status Report was received.

11. Proposed Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2007

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the Proposed Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2007 was reviewed.

12. ADJOURNMENT

On order of Chairperson Chavez, there being no objection, the meeting adjourned at **12:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gilda M. Grozdanich, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors