



MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION COMMITTEE (TCC)

David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA
Thursday, April 26, 2012, 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Blackerby called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM

ROLL CALL:

TCC MEMBERS

Hillary Blackerby
Mark Bradley
Keith Coffman-Grey
Edward France
Susan Horne
David Tabor

Attendance

Present
Present
Present
Excused
Present
Present

CITY STAFF PRESENT :

Browning Allen, Transportation Manager
Robert J. Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
Kim Thaler-Strange, Administrative Specialist

LIAISONS PRESENT

Cathy Murillo, Council Liaison
Deborah Schwartz, Planning Commission Liaison

OTHERS PRESENT

Cynthia Boche, Assistant Planning Manager, MTD
David Damiano, Manager of Transit Development &
Community Relations, MTD

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None.

There has been a switch in the order of the minutes. Traffic solutions will go before the MTD reports and the MTD Presentations

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Chair Blackerby called the meeting to order at 6:01

Public Comment:

Ralph Fertig: A coffee shop has opened on Canon Perdido. The owners, Aaron and Kim, found a way to have double parking via a bike corral. The corral will accommodate 8-12 bicycles, and has had an enthusiastic response. Bike Corrals are being installed around the country, and provide several benefits including a clear view of storefronts. Look forward to SB taking advantage. Mr. Fertig also distributed a flyer showing an overall increase in the amount of people taking alternative transportation to work.

Roy Martinez and Henry Andrews, Residents of Lou Dillon Court, had concerns relating to non-resident parking in the cul-de-sac. There is crime in the area and some illegal activity. There is very little light. They would like to see some sort of residential parking program.

Browning. Allen, Transportation Manager, informed Mr. Martinez that he could talk to Brandon Beaudette, Parking Resources Specialist, at the Downtown Parking Division to walk through the process.

Ana Rico lives on Salinas. She cannot walk on Salinas, due to speeding cars. Salinas and Cacique is particularly dangerous to pedestrians. There are a lot of children that cross that intersection. She mentioned a creek near the roundabout that had no sidewalk nearby. This is at the roundabout on Salinas, approaching APS.

Theresa Alvarez, a member of the Eastside community asked for safety measures on Salinas Street, around Cleveland School, due to speeding cars.

Maria Delgado has a disabled child, and would like a ramp on South Salinas Street to make it easier for him to get onto the bus. Also, the red curb near where the bus stops is very faded. Speeding cars impede the view of the school bus.

Eva Inbar – COAST working on the eastside walks. She expresses appreciation for the attention that is on Milpas Street, but sees more problems on the Eastside. She submitted reports in September 2011 and November 2011, and wrote a letter in October 2011 about these problems. She has not had a response regarding the transportation issues. Jim Dewey, Facilities Manager, has been great with the streetlights.

Joel Schwimmer – Just moved to the Eastside, near Quinientos. Drivers go way too fast on Salinas and Milpas. There are no stop signs on the cross streets so drivers treat the streets like a highway and tend to honk horns and get upset if there are pedestrians. Education is needed.

Ana Munoz – spoke about the eastside community, specifically at Soledad and Mason. There are several schools in that area. Speeding is a problem and nighttime visibility is horrible. People are afraid to drive for fear of hitting someone. There are not a lot of stop signs near Gutierrez, Cota, and Haley Streets. Please look into this.

Elizabeth Buenaventura – De La Guerra and Cacique are not safe. There are no streetlights, and drivers can't see. Children get hit. It is not safe to ride a bike to buy groceries, or go to work. She would like to see more lights at night, more speed limit signs and more community awareness and education. Mr. Allen pointed out that there are Safe Routes to School Projects in the works, and Mr. Dewey is aware of the street light issues.

Ms. Blackerby requested that staff put safety issues on Salinas Street on a future agenda, and would like to see a more holistic approach to the Eastside issues – how do we make it safer ?

CONSENT CALENDAR:

2. Approval of Minutes from the March 26, 2012 meeting where a TCC quorum was present.

Mr. Coffman-Grey said that the minutes were excellent. Mr. Tabor mentioned the error in the date on the first page, and on page 9, under Kasey Kilgore's comments, she might have meant Roosevelt or McKinley School and not Washington School.

Motion: Approve the Minutes from the March 22, 2012, meeting.

Motion made to approve the minutes by, Mr. Coffman-Grey seconded by Mr. Tabor

Ayes: 5 Noes: Abstain 0 Absent: 1

REPORTS

3. Traffic Solutions

Kent Epperson, Director of SBCAG Traffic Solutions, distributed Cyclemaynia information. Invite everyone to attend the Cyclemaynia kickoff with the bicycle fashion show.

Mr. Epperson Presented the Dynamic Ridesharing Project to the Downtown Parking Committee (DPC), and would like the TCC to give input. Smartride is pilot program that Traffic solutions is working on with CEC embarking He went before the DPC to inform them about the project and present options for parking incentives as part of the project. He gave a bit of background about Traffic Solutions and then presented a slide show about the Project.

Mr. France was concerned about incentives, and wanted to know what the feedback from the DPC was. He pointed out that the DPC has to manage their budget, and have concerns about downtown commerce and a side concern about downtown employees having access. Mr. Epperson replied that the DPC doesn't want to spend money; they don't like the idea of cash out of pocket. He also pointed out that Traffic Solutions is coming at this from a different angle, and that he hopes to get feedback from the TCC, and that the DPC will push the Circulation Element and free incentive. Mr. Allen indicated that they were concerned about providing free parking, and that this item would go to the DPC Operations Subcommittee and then back to the DPC.

Mr. Tabor pointed out that 101 gridlock is a disincentive, and pictured a number of spaces in the lots that would be set aside for carpool. He also commented on an article he read in Scientific American on how to increase bike ridership. allows a certain amount of freedom.

Ms. Horne wanted clarification about transit and empty seats, or if there is room for empty seats at pickup spots. She was also curious if there was any way to get further into the workplace. She also asked if pickup locations were chosen that had plenty of parking. Mr. Epperson: mention it from his understanding of busses. The concept is that there are seats you can get into – be it on a bus or empty seats in a car. Would there be empty seats on 101 Vista Coastal Express? This program gives more choices for people to get a ride. He said that he envisions advantages – even with given stops, destination can be wherever driver willing to take you. He also said that pickup points were chosen based on where the Coastal Express picks up.

Mr. Coffman Grey thought it was a great idea; it will take a lot of work to get it going. He asked about the old incentives that were offered, and shared his experiences working in retail with 40 employees who used the incentives that were offered by the City. There was a good system in place. He believes that this program is needed, and would like to see if funds can go back into the MTD 10 ride bus pass program. Mr. Epperson expressed disappointment that traffic solutions went away.

Mr. France also noted that the downtown garages take credit cards, as do the kiosks at UCSB. His partner takes the bus and the \$1.75 per ride is a disincentive.

Ms. Blackerby expressed disappointment that Blackberry phones would be left out of the interactive program. However, there is still Google transit. She is glad that there are safety checks in the system so that people feel comfortable. She did ask about incident response times. Mr. Epperson said that the sourcing is similar to Ebay. If you don't want to be matched with someone, you give them a low rating. If the person gets continual low ratings, they are flagged and out of the system.

4. MTD reports

Mr. Allen pointed out that this was an informational item for the Committee. Steve Maas was unavailable, but David Damiano, Manager of Transit Development & Community Relations was there and could take questions back to Mr. Maas.

Mr. Coffman-Grey was pleased to see an increase in ridership for February and March, and pointed out that could be a result of cruise ships arriving. He also pointed out the lag of the Crosstown Shuttle over the last year, and asked if MTD was looking at marketing efforts. Mr. Damiano indicated that it was a combination; that the cruise ships pay for additional shuttles for their passengers. He indicated that ridership is picking up downtown, but there is no budget to cover marketing. There have been reductions in service. Mr. Coffman-Grey asked about a presentation of the City's 2013 budget, which mentioned that the RDA is gone, and that when Paseo Nuevo was built, there were funds that went to MTD. What impact would there be from losing this money? Mr. Damiano said that question would be answered at the MTD board meeting on Tuesday.

Mr. Tabor mentioned that the Crosstown Shuttle ridership is related to employment rates. When employment picks up, so does ridership. He indicated that gorgeous weather helped. Mr. Damiano replied that Cynthia Boche, Assistant Planning Manager, tracks weather and makes correlation.

Deborah Schwartz, PC Liaison was interested in the Princess Cruise Line subsidy and wondered if there were details about that. Ms. Boche indicated that when the cruise lines started coming to Santa Barbara, the waterfront negotiated extra shuttles for the passengers, which was successful because the lines didn't want to pay for extra services. The Waterfront has been funding three extra shuttles, and a supervisor to keep things running. Other lines hire their own busses or shuttles. Mr. Damiano added that any resources that would increase capacity would be great.

The quarter system for MTD is based on the Fiscal Year.

5. Changes to service

Ms. Boche and Mr. Damiano gave a presentation of the proposed service changes for Fiscal Year 2013. MTD has a projected deficit of \$900,000. This is not as bad as anticipated; however, the sales tax increase does not make up the shortfall. The fuel contract is a major factor in the deficit; the new contract will charge at least \$1.00 more per gallon. The service union contract is set to expire in June.

Mr. Allen reminded the Committee that lines 1 and 2 are mitigation measures for the Granada Garage. MTD Measure A funding is based on sales tax revenues.

Mr. Damiano said that as sales tax revenues declined, so did the money that MTD received. Ms. Blackerby pointed out that the intent of the mitigation was agreed upon regardless of the sales tax. Mr. Damiano indicated that issue should go to the Board, and Mr. Allen pointed out that it was a risk MTD was willing to take when they became direct recipients of Measure A.

Mr. Tabor believed there was a magic number on the back of the quarterly report indicating how many trips were being generated by the Garage project. Mr. Allen confirmed that as long as the number doesn't drop below 985 riders it would be alright.

The Committee brought up concerns cited in letters from the Riviera Association and the Towbes Group regarding the Line 22 and the reopening of the El Encanto Hotel and the concerns about the guests and employees who would be using the corridor. There was a concern about the new housing project for Cottage Hospital at the former St. Francis campus. They wanted to know if the service to that area would come back if it were taken away, and if there was a way to generate interest or see if there was a need.

Mr. Damiano pointed out that when the El Encanto was opened, MTD was servicing the area and the hope was that the employees would use the line. It didn't happen. The former St. Francis site will be providing its own shuttle for employees. Mr. Allen pointed out that part of the Conditions of Approval for the El Encanto was the requirement to have a bus pass program.

The Committee also brought up the issues of bigger busses for bigger crowds, or using vans or smaller busses, and the fact that there are empty busses driving around town. Mr. Damiano indicated that the cost of operating small bus is the same as the large bus. There is not much of a savings with smaller busses. He discussed the articulated bus which will be used on the 15X, and the bid to buy more busses which will save some operator cost.

Ms. Boche responded to concerns about people being left behind due to a crowded bus. She said that there a lot of routes with 10 and 15 minute headways, and though MTD receives irate letters from students because of the inability to get on a bus, there is no budget to put more busses out there. She also said that all students pay for a bus pass as part of their student fees. Mr. Damiano said that fees are related to the cash fare, so if the fare was raised, the fees would be as well. In the summer, fewer services are run, and Line 16 does not run.

There was concern about lines 1 and 2 because the City has an agreement about the Granada Garage. It is the Committee's hope that the board does not take this route, because it goes against the original proposal for the Granada. Also, although Line 22 has low ridership, there is a concern that if it disappears, the hotel will be unable to go ahead with the mitigation condition of its agreement. This is something needs to be looked at seriously. Mr. Allen said that if it is eliminated, staff will see what can be done.

Ms. Schwartz indicated that there will be competing pressures when it comes to eliminating Line 22. There are complaints that the residential areas around the El Encanto are becoming congested; and that the El Encanto reopens, if there are no mitigation measures for employees, there will be more congestion on APS. Currently, Lasuen Road gets a lot of traffic from the workers at Riviera Park Complex. A resolution for El Encanto needs to be brainstormed, and perhaps a public-private partnership can be formed.

Another point that was made that shuttles drive through that area when the Christmas lights come on at the Mission and the Riviera Park Complex, and the various houses. At one point, there was a push for attractions to promote the route, which would suffer if the route went away. This is an area that presents a challenge and needs a solution; stakeholders should be more actively involved in that solution.

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Mr. Damiano said that MTD was working on a bid to the bus companies for the articulated bus; ideally MTD could use a piggyback option, but they won't know if that can happen until they go through the RFP process. They would like to have them in time for the next school year. Mr. France expressed interest in LED displays at various hubs at the Transit Center and City College, and UCSB.

Ms. Boche reminded the Committee and staff that the MTD Board Meeting will be on Tuesday, May 1, at 8:30 a.m. at the MTD offices at 550 Olive Street. People can call 963-3364 ext. 555 with comments and questions. All the information is also on the website at www.sbmtd.gov.

Before closing the meeting, Ms. Blackerby asked about something that came up in public comment – the bike corral on Canon Perdido. Could that be put on a future agenda? Mr. Allen said that it may have to wait until after May's meeting.

Chair Blackerby adjourned the meeting at 7:58