



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FEBRUARY 28, 2003

AGENDA ITEM NO. 03-02-4-B
ACTION REQUESTED - APPROVE

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

Meeting of February 21, 2003

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Transportation Committee was called to order by Chair Joe Kellejian (North County Coastal). Other voting Committee members in attendance were Dick Murphy (City of San Diego), Mickey Cafagna (North County Inland), Art Madrid (East County), Jerry Rindone (South Bay), Ron Roberts (County of San Diego), Bob Emery (MTDB), Judy Ritter (NCTD), and Terry Johnson (San Diego County Regional Airport Authority). Also in attendance were Christy Guerin (Alternate - North County Coastal), Corky Smith (Alternate - North County Inland), Phil Monroe (Alternate - South Bay), Leon Williams (Alternate - MTDB), and ex-officio member Pedro Orso-Delgado (Caltrans).

CONSENT ITEMS (1-5)

1. PROPOSED COMMENTS ON THE AB 2766 VEHICLE REGISTRATION FUND DRAFT ALLOCATION PLAN (APPROVE)

Every two years, the Air Pollution Control Board (APCB) allocates vehicle registration fees collected under AB 2766 to fund projects and programs that reduce the air pollution caused by motor vehicles. The Memorandum of Understanding between SANDAG and APCB allows SANDAG the opportunity to review and comment on the draft vehicle registration fund allocation plan.

Action: The Transportation Committee supported the FY 2002-03 Vehicle Registration Funds Draft Allocation Plan prepared by APCB, subject to the concurrence of the SANDAG Board of Directors through approval of the Transportation Committee actions.

2. APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP - NORTH-SOUTH TRANSPORTATION FACILITY STUDY (APPOINT)

The purpose of the North-South Transportation Facility Study is to evaluate the need for and feasibility of a new or enhanced north-south transportation facility either east or west of Interstate 15 and north of SR 52. The study is scheduled to begin in Spring 2003.

Action: The Transportation Committee appointed the technical working group recommended in the staff report to assist in the study with the addition of MTDB, NCTD, and the San Dieguito River Valley Regional Open Space Park Joint Powers Authority.

3. LOS ANGELES – SAN DIEGO – SAN LUIS OBISPO RAIL CORRIDOR AGENCY (LOSSAN) BOARD ACTIONS (INFORMATION)

LOSSAN oversees intercity passenger rail service in the coastal rail corridor from San Diego to Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo and plans capital improvements that benefit intercity, commuter, and freight services. The Transportation Committee received the January 29, 2003 LOSSAN Board Actions as information.

4. 2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP): HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE/MANAGED LANE STRATEGY (INFORMATION)

In January 2003, the Transportation Committee received a report summarizing the 2030 RTP High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)/Managed Lanes strategy. The Committee requested additional information about the reasons people decide to use HOV lanes and switch from driving alone to carpooling.

Staff summarized information from the HOV Performance Program study recently completed by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Staff presented the results from the MTA telephone and license plate surveys, both of which produced results that are statistically significant. These results show that almost three-quarters of Los Angeles residents believe that the availability of HOV lanes is a strong incentive to get people to carpool. Ninety-five percent of existing transit riders stated that HOV lanes are important in their decision to use transit. Twenty-six percent of existing HOV users and two-thirds of existing transit riders indicated that they would stop carpooling or using transit if HOV lanes were not available.

Staff noted that the MTA study showed that the primary reason that people in Los Angeles carpool is to save time, followed by to save money, and companionship. There also is overwhelming support for HOV lanes, which are supported by 88 percent of all Los Angeles residents and 70 percent of solo drivers. The MTA study shows that HOV lanes also encourage people to shift from driving alone to carpooling. In Los Angeles County, 61 percent of HOV lane users previously drove alone (either in a general purpose freeway lane or on a parallel street or highway).

A Committee member asked whether HOV lanes were the best use of freeway capacity and whether freeways with HOV lanes carry more people than freeways without HOV lanes. Staff replied that the MTA study showed that on average, freeways with HOV lanes carry more people per vehicle than those without HOV lanes.

Another Committee member asked staff to explain what employer-offered incentives include. Staff replied that these incentives are intended to support alternatives to driving alone, and may include such incentives as free parking for carpoolers or cash subsidies to use transit, carpool, or vanpool. The Committee member stated that the private sector needs to support these types of incentives to help address the peak period traffic caused by employees commuting to and from work.

Robert Hoffman stated that he did not believe the MTA survey results. Instead of time savings, he believes that smoothness of flow is the primary reason people use HOV lanes.

Walt Brewer distributed a handout. He believes that his analysis of a Ventura County example shows that a freeway without HOV lanes can carry more people than a freeway with HOV lanes. He recommended abandoning HOV lanes and replacing them with HOV priority at freeway ramp meters.

Staff stated that the bottom line was that an HOV system encourages people to shift from driving alone to carpooling or using transit, which results in fewer vehicles on the road and more efficient use of the transportation system.

A Transportation Committee member suggested opening the existing I-15 HOV lanes to all vehicles for a one-week demonstration to determine whether traffic on the I-15 corridor would flow better. Another Committee member disagreed with Mr. Brewer's recommendation regarding ramp metering. He stated that the freeways could be operated at free flow, but would result in extensive vehicles queues at the ramp meters onto city streets. This is a fundamental policy and operational decision that has not yet been made.

Another Committee member voiced support for the HOV system, because it is the framework in the 2030 RTP for moving people faster and more efficiently on public transit.

5. 2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP): DRAFT AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS (INFORMATION)

Federal law requires that SANDAG and the U.S. Department of Transportation make a determination that the 2030 RTP Revenue Constrained Plan conforms to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality. The draft air quality conformity analysis for the 2030 RTP was issued for public review on February 12, 2003 and is posted on SANDAG's Web site. The 30-day public comment period on the draft analysis ends on March 14, 2003. The SANDAG Board of Directors will be asked to certify the 2030 RTP Final Environmental Impact Report, to make a finding of conformity of the 2030 Revenue Constrained Plan and the 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan, and to adopt the Final 2030 RTP at its March 28, 2003 meeting.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

There were no public comments or communications.

REPORTS

7. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS (APPROVE)

Staff stated that the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) reauthorization process has begun. The region's congressional and senatorial delegation requested the San Diego region's list of high priority projects for the new "TEA-3." In cooperation with Caltrans, MTDB, and NCTD staff, a list of potential projects for federal discretionary funding has been developed and discussed with the delegation's staff. Because TEA-3 is expected to cover FY 2004 to FY 2009, the focus is on projects included in the first 10 years of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Staff distributed a handout summarizing the key transportation project evaluation criteria contained in the Reauthorization Questionnaire developed by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Key project criteria categories include high regional priority, project benefits, and project readiness and deliverability.

Staff indicated that the projects that received the most support by delegation staff were the major corridor projects that cut across district boundaries. It also is important to note that the federal transportation discretionary funding requests are just one piece of the overall regional funding picture, which also includes other federal funds and future state and local transportation funding opportunities. The list of federal requests is staff's initial proposal, which is subject to change based on Transportation Committee discussions.

Yehudi Gaffen, North Embarcadero Alliance, provided a presentation on a proposed intermodal center for the North Embarcadero redevelopment area. The North Embarcadero revitalization is a joint effort of the Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), the City of San Diego, the County of San Diego, the San Diego Unified Port District, and the U.S. Navy. Mr. Gaffen requested including the \$60 million intermodal center in the region's list of federal funding requests. He believes that there will be a separate category of TEA-3 funding for intermodal projects, and therefore, the proposed intermodal center would not compete directly with the region's other high priority projects. He stated that if there is no separate category for intermodal funding, then the request would be withdrawn.

A Committee member asked if staff had evaluated the proposed intermodal center against the established project evaluation criteria. Staff replied that only a cursory evaluation had been conducted. The project meets some, but not all of the criteria, and does not compete well with the major transportation corridor projects proposed.

Supervisor Roberts, County of San Diego, stated that the County is a member of the North Embarcadero Alliance. While the County feels that the intermodal center is a good project, it is not its highest priority, and there is a concern that requesting funding for this project – even from a separate discretionary source – may lessen the chances of receiving funds for higher priority projects.

Mayor Murphy, City of San Diego, stated that the City also is a member of the Alliance, but is not advocating the inclusion of this project in the list of federal requests. The

Transportation Committee discussed whether redevelopment bonds could be issued to fund the project. It was noted that while technically possible, CCDC had already maximized its bonding capacity with other redevelopment projects, such as the downtown ballpark.

Hal Sadler, CCDC, provided a presentation on a proposed pedestrian bridge at 8th Avenue and Harbor Drive. CCDC and the City of San Diego are requesting that SANDAG include the \$7 million project in the region's list of federal transportation requests. Mr. Sadler stated that the project is part of the overall vision to link Balboa Park to San Diego Bay.

Patti Boekamp, City of San Diego, summarized the background and justification for the proposed request. While a new railroad grade crossing is not being proposed, because the Park to Bay link will involve the realignment of 8th Avenue and will affect the existing rail crossing, the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has requested that the City grade separate pedestrian and rail traffic, at a minimum.

Mayor Murphy contended that the project is of regional significance, because it serves the region's major central business district (CBD), including the expanded convention center and future downtown ballpark. He stated that the PUC had initially requested a more extensive vehicular and pedestrian overcrossing. He feels that the pedestrian bridge is a compromise that the PUC will accept, under the condition that the bridge be funded as soon as possible.

The Transportation Committee discussed other opportunities for funding the pedestrian bridge, such as the sale of naming rights or seeking demonstration funding from the carbon fiber industry. A Committee member asked if staff had evaluated the proposed pedestrian bridge against the established project evaluation criteria. Staff responded no, because specific information about the project had only been received today.

Staff suggested that the funding request could be included under the Regional Rail Grade Separation Program (Project R on Attachment 2). If the Committee did not want to commit the funding specifically to the 8th Avenue pedestrian bridge at this time, it could direct staff to develop criteria for rail grade separations and rank individual projects in the future.

Kathy Keehan, San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, requested that regional bikeway projects be included in the list of federal transportation requests. She suggested additional funding for the San Diego River Bikeway, the Oceanside-Escondido Rail Trail, the Coastal Rail Trail, the Bayshore Bikeway, and a bikeway project at the San Ysidro border crossing.

Erik Bruvold, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC), speaking on behalf of the Coalition for Sorrento Traffic Relief, stated that he supports the staff recommendation as presented. The Coalition particularly supports the I-5/Sorrento Valley and Genesee Interchanges (Project C), because it serves the biggest job center in the San Diego region. On behalf of the EDC, Mr. Bruvold also voiced his support for the 8th Avenue pedestrian bridge, because of its importance to the Centre City CBD.

Councilmember Guerin, City of Encinitas, raised concerns about the Coastal Rail Corridor Infrastructure Improvements (Project M). She was concerned that the TEA-21 reauthorization and FY 2004 appropriation requests would only fund half the costs of the Encinitas Pedestrian Crossings and Leucadia Boulevard Grade Separation Project Study Report (PSR), while the requested funding for the Encinitas Double Track would help fully fund the double tracking project. She asked why 100 percent funding for the Encinitas Pedestrian Crossings and Leucadia Boulevard Grade Separation PSR was not included.

Staff responded that the congressional staff suggested that Transit New Starts funding requests include only a portion of the total project costs. With the reauthorization, the New Starts program is expected to require a 50 percent non-federal match. The Encinitas Double Track project already has an identified non-federal match, and the \$3 million request is the remaining unfunded portion of the project. Because the Encinitas Pedestrian Crossings and Leucadia Boulevard Grade Separation PSR do not have funds identified, the original federal funding request was for 50 percent of the total costs, consistent with anticipated New Starts funding rules. Staff reiterated that the list of federal requests is a draft proposal, which may be modified by the Transportation Committee.

The Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of including additional project requests on the list. Staff reminded the Committee that, while the congressional delegation ultimately would decide which funding requests to put forward, it is important to recommend the highest priority projects for the region.

Mayor Murphy asked whether the North Coast I-5 project (Project D) included the I-5/SR 56 connectors. Staff responded yes, and that the clarification would be made both on the map and list of federal requests.

Judy Ritter, NCTD, requested adding two more projects to the list – (1) the Oceanside Maintenance and Security Improvements project (\$2.4 million request in FY 2004) and (2) Oceanside-Escondido Rail Enhancements (\$90 million reauthorization request). She stated that the first funding request would allow NCTD to expand its existing center in Oceanside to handle the security for the future Oceanside-Escondido Rail line. The second project would allow for future double tracking and grade separations on the Oceanside-Escondido Rail line, which will be needed to allow for future 15-minute headways.

MTDB staff recommended including on the list a \$13.6 million request for the Joint Transportation Operations Center (JTOC), which is a project similar to NCTD's Oceanside security center.

Vice Mayor Jerry Rindone, City of Chula Vista, voiced concern that there were no South Bay projects on the list. Staff replied that several of the projects, such as the I-805 Corridor (Project E) and the three border projects (Projects S, T, and U) directly benefited the South Bay area. In addition, grade separations for the Blue Line Trolley would be eligible for funding under the Regional Rail Grade Separation Program (Project R).

The Committee discussed other potential funding sources for regional bikeway projects, such as *TransNet* and other federal sources, such as Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality

(CMAQ) funding. Staff stated that regional bikeways do not compete favorably with the major corridor projects.

Action: Subject to the concurrence of the SANDAG Board of Directors through approval of the Transportation Committee actions, the Transportation Committee approved the list of federal transportation funding requests under the multi-year TEA-21 reauthorization process and the FY 2004 annual appropriations process, with the following changes:

- Added a \$7 million FY 2004 appropriation request for the City of San Diego 8th Avenue pedestrian bridge under the Regional Rail Grade Separation Program (Project R).
- Doubled the TEA-21 reauthorization and FY 2004 appropriation requests for the Encinitas Pedestrian Crossings (from \$600,000 to \$1.2 million) and Leucadia Boulevard Grade Separation PSR (from \$100,000 to \$200,000) under the Coastal Rail Corridor Infrastructure Improvements (Project M).
- Added a \$2.4 million FY 2004 appropriation request for NCTD's Oceanside Maintenance and Security Improvements project.
- Added \$13.6 million TEA-21 reauthorization and FY 2004 appropriation requests for MTDB's JTOC project.

NCTD staff reiterated the request for including on the list the Oceanside-Escondido Rail Enhancements, which would fund future double tracking and grade separations. The Transportation Committee discussed the appropriateness of seeking funding to complete the original project as well as the future double tracking/grade separations. The Committee decided against including the Oceanside-Escondido Rail Enhancements on the list of federal requests.

The Committee discussed the need to address rail grade separations from a comprehensive, regional perspective, rather than on a case-by-case local perspective. The Committee felt it was important to develop a comprehensive regional policy to address rail grade separation requests. Staff suggested that the Committee first adopt project evaluation criteria, conduct a regional needs assessment, and then address funding requests for regional rail grade separations.

Action: The Transportation Committee directed staff to develop criteria for regional rail grade separations, including pedestrian grade separations, and return to the Committee with recommendations (the proposed FY 2004 Overall Work Program includes a project to develop criteria for regional grade separations).

8. TRANSPORTATION CONGESTION RELIEF PROGRAM: PRINCIPLES FOR ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES (APPROVE)

Staff stated that the region's state delegation asked SANDAG to identify general principles for prioritizing Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) projects in case funding cuts need to be made as a result of the state's budget crisis. No final actions have been taken by the Legislature in relation to the proposed transportation budget cuts, but in preparation for potential cuts to the TCRP, a set of principles for prioritizing projects is proposed. These principles are based on project deliverability, and include:

- Priority 1 – Projects already under construction should be completed (includes completing transit vehicle procurement processes already underway)
- Priority 2 – Projects ready-to-go within the next six months (by June 2003)
- Priority 3 – Projects ready-to-go in FY 2004 (by June 2004)
- Priority 4 – Projects not ready to go until after June 2004

Action: Subject to the concurrence of the SANDAG Board of Directors through approval of the Transportation Committee actions, the Transportation Committee approved the proposed principles for establishing TCRP project priorities to address potential funding reductions, as needed.

9. STATION CAR DEMONSTRATION PROJECT (APPOINT)

This agenda item was continued to the March 21, 2003 Transportation Committee meeting.

GARY L. GALLEGOS
Executive Director