

# **TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**December 3, 2009**

## **MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the **TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE** held Thursday, December 3, 2009, at the Merced County Association of Governments conference room located at 369 W. 18th Street, Merced, California, was called to order by Chairman Mark Hamilton at 10:10 a.m.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mark Fachin, City of Los Banos  
John Gedney, Caltrans District 10  
Mark Hamilton, City of Merced  
Rod Ghearing, Merced County Transit  
Michael Rhodes, Merced County

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Isaac Cabrera, Merced County Planning  
Ernie Garza, City of Gustine  
Silvia Jaramillo, Merced County Planning  
Justin Hendrix, City of Atwater  
Richard Schwarz, Merced County Public Works  
City of Dos Palos  
City of Livingston  
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Jesse Brown, MCAG  
Matt Fell, MCAG  
Rich Green, MCAG  
Marjie Kirn, MCAG  
Terri Lewis, MCAG  
Ty Phimmasone, MCAG

#### **1. Introductions**

So noted.

#### **2. Oral Communication**

Chairman Hamilton asked for confirmation on what constitutes a quorum for the TPC.

Marjie Kirn responded that a quorum is a total of five TPC members, yet at least three of the five members present must represent local cities.

### **3. Minutes of the November 5, 2009 Technical Planning Committee Meeting**

Mark Fachin made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2009 Technical Planning Committee meeting.

Seconded by Michael Rhodes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **4. SB 375 Update and Implementation**

Matt Fell discussed the history of SB 375 and its impact on the next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. The next RTP document and its Environmental Impact Review (EIR) must address Green House Gas Emission (GHGE) reductions. If the RTP document cannot identify a transportation planning process (including transportation projects) where the local MPO can attain the California Air Resources Board (CARB) regional emissions targets (to be publicized in June 2010), then the MPO is required to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) plan. The SCS will not be fiscally constrained.

Matt Fell stated that there is a current discussion by at least three of the eight San Joaquin Valley MPO's for each MPO to develop and submit their own regional GHGE reduction targets to CARB. The thought is that if the MPO shows concerted effort to develop their own targets, then they would have a vested interest in GHGE reduction. Also, why should MPOs wait until GHGE targets are developed and established by CARB. Unfortunately, the smaller San Joaquin Valley (SJV) MPOs do not have the complex 4-D modeling software and processes in place at this time to develop these complex GHGE targets.

TPC consensus was reached not to have MCAG develop local GHGE targets as MCAG does not have the complex 4-D traffic modeling software in place at this time. Note the SJV Region has received \$2.5M of funding to develop and implement the 4-D traffic modeling process over the next 2-3 years. There is no need for MCAG to rush the development of GHGE reduction targets at this time as a SCS will not be required until 2012.

### **5. Highway 99 Business Plan**

Matt Fell reviewed the Highway 99 Business Plan that was first presented by Alan McCuen (retired from Caltrans District 6 – Fresno) in July 2009. Volume 2 of the Highway 99 Business Plan is new since the July 09 discussion. Volume 2 recommends a 10% set-aside of local MPO state Regional Improvement Program (RIP) shares. This set aside of RIP funding is estimated at \$200M for Merced County over 10 RIP funding cycles.

Caltrans is requesting comments or endorsement of the Highway 99 Business Plan – Volume 2.

John Gedney made a motion to recommend that MCAG Governing Board accept the Highway 99 Business Plan.

Seconded by Rod Ghearing.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **6. Oral Report – Atwater Merced Expressway Project**

Jesse Brown presented a status of the Atwater Merced Expressway Project:

- CEQA environmental clearance has been finalized;
- Project has been incorporated into the Merced County General Plan; and
- Public stakeholders meeting have occurred in the last four months that included project issues including the up and downs of state transportation funding.

The remaining question is how to pay for Phase I of this project. Phase I includes a new Interchange at Highway 99 and Bellevue Road and has a current cost estimate of \$163M (includes \$6-7M for engineering and \$6-7M for Right of Way acquisition). The CTC will need to be convinced that the engineering and R/W acquisition costs are legitimate expenditures for the Prop 1B program. Due to the economic downturn, Caltrans (Prop 1B statewide program) is currently experiencing project bids at 10-20% less than the cost estimates from one year ago. If this cost savings trend continues, the statewide Prop 1B program might have an additional \$85M - \$170M available for eligible Highway 99 projects. Phase I (Hwy 99 Interchange) of the A/M Expressway project might have an opportunity to receive funding. If there is additional Prop 1B funds available from other project cost savings, then the CTC will require a supplemental Project Study Report (PSR).

MCAG is recommending that the existing Mark Thomas consulting contract on the Atwater Merced Expressway project be amended to include the supplemental PSR tasks that are anticipated to be completed in a 5-6 month period.

Also, Caltrans has recently decided that District 10 will process a Project Initiation Document (PID) for the segment of Highway 99 through Merced. This information was shared with Merced City Manager John Bramble, this morning.

## **7. Senate Bill 83**

Marjie Kirn stated that Senate Bill 83 allows for California counties to increase vehicle license fees (up to a maximum of \$10 dollars) as a method of collecting revenue for any transportation project in the RTP. It is estimated that Merced County could generate \$1.9 M in vehicle fees for transportation projects (i.e. bike, light synchronization). Also, these vehicle license funds can be used for a local match on transportation projects.

Mark Fachin made a motion to recommend the MCAG Governing Board pursue a ballot measure to increase the vehicle registration fees under SB 83 for transportation projects.

Seconded by Michael Rhodes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**8. Draft Formal Amendment No. 14 to the 2009 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP)**

Terri Lewis highlighted the need to modify the 2009 FTIP with the addition of Caltrans state managed Highway Maintenance Lump Sum projects and their funding in FY 09/10.

Mark Fachin made a motion to recommend the MCAG Governing Board adopt Formal Amendment No. 14 to the 2009 FTIP adding the Caltrans Highway Maintenance Lump Sum projects and associated funding in FY 09/10 by Resolution No. 2009/12-17-01.

Seconded by Rod Ghearing.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**9. Unmet Transit Needs – FY 09/10**

Marjie Kirn reviewed the annual Transit Development Act (TDA) requirement for a public hearing to gather testimony on transit needs. MCAG has formal adopted definitions of what is an “Unmet Need” and what is “Reasonable to Meet”. MCAG staff and the Social Services Transit Advisory Committee (SSTAC) are recommending this year that there are no unmet needs that are reasonable to meet.

Mark Fachin commented that he attended the unmet transit needs hearings this year and he is concerned that the process is being conducted to simply fulfill state TDA requirements. He noted an ongoing, documented need (with 83 local signatures) for a reverse loop on route 14. Mark added that a lot of money is being used for transit service in Merced County, yet there is concern that transit service needs in Los Banos are not being met.

Marjie Kirn responded that MCAG had a discussion just this morning with Merced County Transit management staff on the possibility of a 3-year demonstration project for a reverse loop on route 14. This service could possibly start in July of 2010.

Mark Hamilton added that with the new Mercy Hospital to be open in May 2010, there is transit service that will be required between South Merced and North Merced.

Rod Ghearing stated that there is a discussion of a route extension on the Governing Board agenda this month.

Mark Fachin added that there is another item for Los Banos that needs to be addressed with the bus not going all the way out to the apartment complexes on the edge of town. In addition to the existing apartments, there has been another apartment complex in the same area approved by the City of Los Banos.

Rod Ghearing stated that there is a problem with the map route not extending all the way to the apartment complex(s) in the published book. A corrected map is listed on the MCT website. Rod will go back to First Transit (service contractor) and make sure that the drivers are going all the way to the apartment complexes.

Rod Ghearing stated that Larnold Jones is retiring from MCT after 35 years (combined employment years between the City of Merced and Merced County) this month and he will be looking for a replacement in that position.

Mark Fachin made a motion to recommend the MCAG Governing Board adopt Resolution No. 2009/12-17-02 with a finding of fact for FY 09/10 that there are no unmet transit needs, reasonable to meet.

Seconded by Michael Rhodes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **10. One Voice Priorities**

Candice Steelman reported that there was a change in program procedures this year from past years to establish One Voice Priorities. Prior years included open workshops. This year a One Voice Steering Committee structure was used to develop 10/11 priorities.

One Voice State Priorities:

1. Funding the Hwy 152 corridor, from I-5 to Hwy 99;
2. San Joaquin Valley prevailing wage;
3. Preserve Enterprise Zones, extend tax credits for business incubators, and include incentives for green energy;
4. Full funding / full flexibility for education under Prop. 98;
5. Make mental and dental health care more accessible; and
6. Limit cities' liability regarding the Homeless.

One Voice Federal Priorities:

1. Los Banos Bypass;
2. Campus Parkway;
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (This project is part of the previously established MCEDCO County Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)).
4. Update existing facilities to provide outdoor learning for pre-schools;
5. Expand mental health services training for medical providers; and
6. MID item (?).

In addition, it was agreed that meetings would be requested for the One Voice delegation to express their support for High Speed Rail and the hydroelectric license renewal (occurs once every 50 years) for Merced Irrigation District. This group also desires to meet with Congressman Cardoza to further investigate the possibility of establishing an economic disaster zone for the San Joaquin Valley.

## **11. FY 2010/2011 MCAG Overall Work Program Process**

Marjie Kirn discussed the annual development of the MCAG Overall Work Program (OWP). The FY 10/11 OWP work will start in July 2010. Marjie explained that there are required work elements that must be done; yet the OWP can also be modified from year to year to include optional work items. Here is a short list of suggested optional items that could be included in the OWP for next year if so directed by the Governing Board:

- SB 375 Modeling Improvement Program;
- Pedestrian Master Plan;
- Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP);
- Park n Ride Plan;
- A more robust Rideshare Program; and
- Recognition Awards Program.

Marjie Kirn stated that TPC members should forward OWP program suggestions to her by the middle of January. There will be a draft OWP FY 10/11 item on the February TPC agenda.

Provide suggestions regarding new work elements or planning tasks to be included in the MCAG Overall Work Program for FY 2010/2011.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED BY CHAIRMAN MARK HAMILTON AT 11:32 A.M.**