

MEETING SUMMARY

San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority Community Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

CAC ATTENDEES: Supervisor Michael Kerns/Sonoma County, Diane Howard/Redwood City City Council, Ed Balico/Hercules City Council, Pedro Gonzalez/South San Francisco City Council, Kathy Hartzell/Larkspur City Council, Paul Albritton/Sausalito City Council, Allan Maris/Albany City Council, Arne Simonsen/Antioch City Council, Barbara Heller/San Rafael City Council, Peter Hillier/City of Berkeley, Bill Seelinger/San Francisco, Kevin Rose for Supervisor Mark Church, San Mateo County

MEETING DATE: June 16, 2004

FROM: Veronica Sanchez, Manager, and Karen Shelver, Assistant, WTA Community and Government Relations

DATE: June 25, 2004

—→ **NEXT MEETING:** November 10, 2004 – 10am-12pm, Location TBD, SF CA

The Community Advisory Committee held its meeting on June 16, 2004 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. The meeting began at 10:00 am.

1. Call to Order and Motion to Approve Minutes of January 14, 2004 CAC Meeting

The minutes were approved unanimously with one correction requested by Mr. Ed Balico (Hercules) correction on page 1, section: "Mr. Ed Balico represents Hercules not South San Francisco." There was no abstention or opposition.

2. Informational Presentation: New Routes

Mr. Steve Castleberry (WTA) gave a PowerPoint Presentation on New Routes: Terminal Design, Planning and Environmental Studies. The presentation included review of the funding status and timelines of routes with identifiable funding funded sources (RM2, local sales tax measures). The Implementation Schedule at the end of the presentation also provides timeframes for preliminary studies and future work on routes that do not have identifiable funding sources.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Bill Seelinger (San Francisco) asked if the WTA is working with Muni to improve service to the Ferry Building. Mr. Castleberry answered that the WTA intends to work with the Port of San Francisco and other transit agencies to provide better service to and from the Ferry Building for commuters but that coordination with Muni has not yet begun.

Mr. Allan Maris (Albany) asked if an Environmental Review would be done in Berkeley. Mr. Castleberry said there would be and indicated that we would allow two years for the EIR process. He explained the schedule by stating that terminal design could take one year and construction another year and a half. He clarified that the particular Implementation Schedule in the presentation only goes out five years for each funded route. There is incentive to try to advance the services because funding the projects does not escalate over time.

Mr. Paul Albritton (Sausalito) asked if TransLink would be part of the fare service. Mr. Castleberry responded that the assumption is that by the time the new services are up and running, all modes of transit will likely be on the TransLink system.

Mr. Seelinger asked for clarification on the schedule pertaining to commuter versus recreational ferry routes. Mr. Castleberry responded that the commuter service would go primarily to the Ferry Building while recreational services remain at Piers 39 and 41.

3. Informational Presentation: Funding

Ms. Veronica Sanchez (WTA) gave a PowerPoint Presentation on Funding: RM2, Local Sales Tax Renewals, Federal Funding. The presentation included information about transit and congestion relief projects funded in RM2 for rail, buses, ferries and highway improvements.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Supervisor Mike Kerns (Sonoma) commented that if SMART does not put a sales tax measure on the ballot in November, is it likely that a measure would not go until 2006. Sonoma is considering putting a sales tax measure on the November ballot for its own transportation needs. He asked if it would be helpful to put aside funding for ferry service. Ms. Sanchez answered that it is crucial to seize any opportunity to set aside funding, especially for operating costs. She added that there are two other sales tax measures in the North Bay that are headed for the November ballot. One is the Marin County sales tax measure, which is focused on local transit services and there is no money for ferry service. Solano County is currently putting their expenditure plan together. Last year, San Francisco approved Proposition K setting aside new sales tax set revenue for enhancements to ferry facilities at the Ferry Building.

Chair Howard commented that the Measure A reauthorization was approved by the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) and the Transportation Authority in San Mateo County. She added that of the twenty councils who voted on the measure, there were only four "no" votes by council members so far.

Mr. Maris asked what the strategy is to get Congress to act on an exemption for RM2 operating funding. Ms. Sanchez responded that the WTA has made every effort to broaden its political support with the Republican leadership with the help of maritime unions. The WTA has encouraged its sister transit agencies to do the same with their vendors, business and labor partners. She explained that Senator Boxer is on the Conference Committee and will be instrumental in attempting to get the toll exemption included in the Tea bill. Mr. Pedro Gonzalez (South San Francisco) requested the WTA 's help in drafting a sample letter to Senator Boxer seeking her support. Ms. Sanchez encouraged members to do so and offered to do a sample letter.

4. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION: Wake & Rafting Birds

Ms. Mary Frances Culnane (WTA) gave a PowerPoint Presentation on Wake and Rafting Birds.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Albritton asked what piqued your interest in studying wake and wave issues.

Ms. Culnane answered that our current vessel performance specifications are not adequate. By researching current wakes in the Bay and comparing same to potential new wakes created by new ferries via computer modeling the WTA would possess the knowledge to compose a stronger wake standard for the Vessel Performance Specifications. Mr. Castleberry added that the Washington State Ferry has dealt with this issue before on the Rich Passage lawsuit where an extensive review was conducted.

Ms. Teri Shore (Bluewater Network) asked why the Rich Passage passenger only service was discontinued. Mr. Castleberry responded that a consent decree was put into place to slow down boating speed. Once the boats slowed down, the service became less competitive with existing car ferry service.

Mr. Maris asked what the status of the fuel cell ferryboat. Ms. Culnane answered that the WTA's Board of Directors was petitioned early last year by a group requesting that a technical panel be convened to further study the fuel cell technology prior to moving forward with the project. This panel has met a couple of times over the past year and probably have one more meeting prior to confirming that the fuel cell technology is the right course to follow. Mr. Castleberry added that the initial funding received was for one vessel. Since there is currently no market for ferry service on Treasure Island, there would be no funds to operate that vessel yet.

Chair Howard requested an update on the wake issues for the next CAC meeting.

5. Status Report on Community Outreach

Ms. Heidi Machen (WTA) gave an informational update on the WTA's community outreach efforts over the past several months and announced the following

- A) In July, Vallejo Baylink will bring its **new 350-passenger ferry into service, adding a third boat to its fleet.**
- B) The WTA launched its **new website**, which features fact sheets on proposed new routes, general information about the WTA, suggestions for fun trips on ferries fact sheets and current routes and schedules (website homepage printout attached).

- C) The WTA will sponsor a series of free ferryboat rides scheduled for this fall. She described the success of the two-demonstration ferryboat rides held in February from Redwood City and South San Francisco to the San Francisco Ferry Building Farmers Market. She provided a list of proposed dates and origins the rides. All the rides would be headed for the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market on a Sunday morning (draft schedule attached).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Albritton suggested adding a link to the 511.org travel information site.

Ms. Barbara Heller (Larkspur) asked if there is a prohibition on the number of elected officials who may accept the invitation to take the free ferryboat rides. Ms. Machen responded that because the rides are free to the public, this would not be a problem since public officials would not be treated differently.

Ms. Okasaki (MTC) requested reminders by email as the rides occur. Ms. Machen commented that there would be plenty of opportunities this summer to advertise the demonstration boat rides.

6. Informational Presentation

Ms. Mary Frances Culnane gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the Regional Maritime Contingency Plan.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Chair Howard asked if, when the plan is funded, would there be an opportunity to ask for a mock drill and ask cities to participate in the event of a disaster. Ms. Culnane answered that almost all regional transit agencies currently participate in tabletop exercises coordinated by MTC; and, furthermore, MTC is coordinating an actual drill in October of this year. Municipalities as well as ferry operators are encouraged to participate.

Ms. Okasaki added that MTC has formed a committee that will manage the drill and exercise planning effort, including hiring a facilitator for in-kind, interactive meetings for the purpose of identifying goals. She further said that any funds raised for these efforts would be paid only to the facilitator.

Ms. Okasaki asked if all operators would report to her. Ms. Culnane responded that the plan calls for the WTA to act as the single point of contact for information to and from the Regional Maritime Contingency Plan participants and MTC.

Supervisor Kerns asked if there are controls on private vessels, in marinas around the Bay, that may factor in and if the Coast Guard would control them as well. Ms. Culnane answered that the Coast Guard does have complete control of the vessel traffic and anticipates that unlike the 9/11 situation where boats rushed to assist, the Coast Guard may implement a tighter control on what vessels it allows to ply the waters of the Bay to assist in an emergency situation.

Mr. Jim Slusarz (California Office of Emergency Services) commented that the Golden Gate Safety Network held two terrorist response exercises, one that concluded at SBC Park and one at the Golden Gate Bridge. MTC is also sponsoring this type of group exercise so that all operators are on the same page.

7. NEXT STEPS

Ms. Sanchez suggested changing the location of the next CAC meeting in order to facilitate a walking tour of the ferry facilities next to the Ferry Building used by existing operators.

Ms. Heller asked about the funding release dates of RM2 funds for Port Sonoma. Mr. Castleberry responded that much has been done already on Marin/Sonoma rail development and that the WTA will work with SMART to identify technical studies that have not been done by SMART.

Mr. Albritton asked if a consultant has been selected for the Port Sonoma study. Mr. Castleberry answered that one has not yet been selected for this study but that environmental review firms have been short-listed and are ready to proceed when RM2 funds become available.

Mr. Seelinger, referring to the bar graph in the WTA brochure, asked if the projection of number of riders per year referring to a cumulative effect rather than a cumulative number. Mr. Castleberry responded that the number was a cumulative number for ridership in the year 2000.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Jim Swindler (Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transit District) commented that the Golden Gate Ferry Service schedule is changing in July to reflect the addition of two new high-speed ferries on the Larkspur daily service. He further said that all trips with the exception of one service will be maintained and that there is one group that wants to slow service, so the District is working with labor groups to run slower service in order to meet that request as well as allow for more bikes onboard, in addition to other benefits.

Chair Howard adjourned the meeting at 11:50 p.m.

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