

**South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Infrastructure Working Group Meeting Notes – April 13, 2016**

Attachment A

Attendees: Gilbert Marquez (Carson); Stephanie Katsouleas (El Segundo); John Felix, Jun De Castro and Mike Duran (Gardena); Akbar Farokhi & Alan Leung (Hawthorne); Louis Atwell (Inglewood); Ken Rukavina (PVE); Wisam Altowaiji, Didar Khandker, Ted Semaan & Brad Lindahl (Redondo Beach); Rob Beste, IWG Chair and James Lee (Torrance); Jimmy Shih, Christine Song, Kelly Lamare, Youssef Pishdadian & Omid Ghaem (Caltrans); Josie Gutierrez, Patrick Smith, Jane White (LACODPW); Ed Alegre and Isidro Panuco (MTA); Rosemary Lackow, Buck Doyle, Steve Lantz (SBCCOG); Bill Stracker (AndersonPenna); Liz Suh (Ch2M Hill); Danielle Buzas (GPA Consulting); Alek Hovsepian, Dina Saleh, Alan Clelland (Iteris); Brian Marchetti (KOA Corp); Ken Berkman (MARSS Corp); Greg Jaquez (MNS Engineers); Juanita Martinez (NCE Inc); Dan Lukasik and Monica Castellanos (Parsons); Anissa Voyiatzes (Psomas); Lan Saadatnejadi (Program Delivery, Inc.); Rawad Hani (TranspoGroup).

Chair Rob Beste called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm.

- I. **Self-Introductions and Approval of February 17, 2016 Minutes** – Minutes approved subject to one change requested by Pat Smith, LACDPW in the South Bay Traffic Forum report: regarding the status of the Crenshaw Boulevard TTSSP project: strike “design work will start next month” and replace with: “construction contract has been awarded to Elecnor Belco Electric, Inc.”

Mr. Beste announced that the Spotlight presentations would be taken next, out of order.

- II. **Project Spotlights**

Part A: Caltrans Encroachment Permit Program Overview - Omid Ghaemi, presented for Caltrans, giving a general overview of the State Encroachment Permit process and stated the goal is to learn from each other – as understanding will help a great deal in moving projects forward. The topics covered were: geographic areas covered by permit offices (South Bay area covered by Christine Song); what projects are handled by the Encroachment Permit Office (those less than \$1 million funded by other than Caltrans); the permit process including time frame: Caltrans has 60 days to respond after an application is filed, within which Caltrans must approve, deny or ask for more information if needed; and finally the pre-application conceptual plan meeting, a significant benefit in helping to streamline the process. Mr. Ghaemi explained briefly the conceptual plan meeting which Caltrans offers to all cities, however with the following caveats: hold prior to application; plans should be minimum 95% construction ready; all categories such as signalization, hazardous materials, structures, pavement, etc. should be clearly understood, appropriate parties including Caltrans senior engineer should be present, documents should be ready and should know if a fact sheet is required for nonstandard design. Finally, it is very important that detailed notes be taken at the conceptual meeting which should serve as a guide when later going through the permit process.

Mr. Ghaemi fielded questions. To the question is there an appeal process if the city feels the direction being given does not make sense? Mr. Ghaemi responded that ultimately there is an appeal process (refer to EP manual online) but the appeal must be well founded and reasonable. It is Caltrans’ goal to reach a solution at the permit office – whereby the state standards can be achieved as well as the applicant’s objective.

To the question: is there a process for getting a waiver or modification to a standard? Mr. Ghaemi responded: yes, depending on what is being requested (waiver from either standard or advisory design) you can go through process “Securing exceptions to mandatory design standards” or “Securing exceptions to advisory design standards”. The standards are in the design manual, and the document that must be submitted with the waiver request is called a “Fact Sheet” which is a form that has much information that has to be provided: project description, existing highway characteristics, safety improvements proposed, project cost, traffic data and accident analysis, etc. This is a very tedious and cumbersome process and he advised that cities use a very experienced person to handle, as the document is highly scrutinized as it may be used in court. Much data is required to substantiate the request and above all the document must be clearly written.

To the question: how can the process be improved when the project is already in the permit process? Mr. Ghaemi offered that other than early communications and pre-applications meetings, first, Caltrans can commit that time taken by them is reasonable and will recognize urgencies with the project; and secondly it can save a lot of time, if when responding to a letter from the permit office, the applicant makes **itemized** responses that comprehensively and specifically respond to all points made by Caltrans. It is very crucial that applicants understand what is being asked of them and that they respond directly, clearly and comprehensively.

To the question: can the process be streamlined by developing a standard solution for an older urban highway such as PCH? Very

often applicants for city projects run into the problem where the Permit Office applies freeway standards that are infeasible or even ultimately deemed not required. Developing a sort of corridor standard, was suggested which would save cities the expense it takes to prepare multiple Fact Sheets for the same situation up and down the corridor. Mr. Ghaemi responded that in this matter the cities have legitimate concerns but the hands of the Permit Office are tied – this must be addressed at the State level legislatively. Communications should be directed to the Director of Transportation in Sacramento.

To the question as to whether precedence can play a role in helping to streamline where similar projects with similar Fact Sheets are involved? Mr. Ghaemi responded negative as each location has to be looked at for its own unique circumstances and facts. Mr. Ghaemi acknowledged this is a common grievance - that in the permit process often times new questions arise from the permit engineer later in the process, because something that was not initially shown in the plan but that can have a domino effect on the design needs to be newly evaluated. Although this takes a lot of time, ultimately the project result is much better which is the common goal.

In conclusion, Steve Lantz suggested that the SBCCOG activate a task force to figure out how to engage Sacramento. Interested public works directors will be contacted with an invitation to meet and further discuss this issue. Perhaps this can be coordinated for the South Bay Highway Program projects.

Project Spotlight B: South Bay Highway Program Projects Review. Dan Lukasik presented on behalf of Caltrans using slides and he highlighted the status of three Measure R funded programs related to Corridor Congestion Management which include: DCCM – Dynamic Corridor Congestion Management, which focuses on ramp/signal coordination (Meas. R 312.11); DSS – Decision Support System and AMS – Arterial Management System (together Meas. R 312. 29) and Meas. R 312.45. Under this last program, Caltrans will take the lead in integrating SBCCOG/County ramp metering and signal synchronization for congestion relief through the DSS and is a planned project.

For the DCCM program, seven South Bay corridors were evaluated for a pilot program and “corridor 2B” was selected (I110 from I-405 to Imperial Highway). Seven operational scenarios are being evaluated including major and moderate incidents on the freeway, major and moderate incidents on an arterial, incidents on both on and off-ramps, and recurrent congestion conditions. The status of deliverables: the pilot corridor has been identified and a concept of operations has been developed, MOU’s among all stakeholders have been developed, and a “before system” evaluation (data collection) has been completed.

Mr. Lucasik displayed the architecture of the DSS and AMS. Currently for DSS and AMS they are soliciting input through a questionnaire sent to cities through the SBCCOG seeking information which is due April 25. The questionnaire responses will be used to develop requirements and this includes a workshop that will be scheduled by Caltrans.

Steve Lantz emphasized that it is crucial for the cities to return their responses to the questionnaire, as there is a big investment in this program and city input is critical to its success.

Comments: from Caltrans: the two projects were originally planned for Caltrans to only do a single system synchronization but this was expanded. Caltrans emphasized that they will take the lead but need city engagement. The workshop will be very important for the cities and encouraged their participation. From LA County Public Works: will the workshop and questionnaire be sent to all the South Bay cities? Caltrans responded affirmatively.

III. Agency & Other Reports

- **SBCCOG** – Steve Lantz made the following announcements on behalf of Executive Director Bacharach: “**Travel Pal**”, a new “smart” mobility program is being developed for the South Bay that will focus on ride matching for special events; on May 11, 3-5 pm the **SBCCOG Homeless Services Committee** will meet at the COG office; regarding **Metro’s Potential Sales Tax Measure**: on April 28, 4:30 at the COG office, there will be a **Ballot Measure Workshop** prior to the COG Board meeting to discuss and develop a SBCCOG position on the measure. Several key county-wide and South Bay issues will be discussed, including: local return to be at 25% (not 16% as proposed) with no earmarks (i.e. let cities decide); what constitutes :state of good repair (2% or 5%)?; maintenance of a 20% transit operation share through the measure expiration date; completion of Measure R commitments before starting new ones; repayment of Measure R debt by the 2039 expiration date of measure; is 2% is sufficient to support ADA service and senior/disabled fare reductions? The major South Bay projects that are included in the proposed measure (from start to end) are: I-105 ExpressLane from I-605 to I-405 (in 2027-29); Green Line Extension to Crenshaw in Torrance (2031-2035); I-110 Interchange improvements (2042-44); I-110 ExpressLanes Extension to I-405 (2044-46) and the I-405 South Bay Curve Improvement (2045-47). However the SBCCOG Board has approved a position that funding for three South Bay listed projects – the new I-105 ExpressLane from I-605-I-405, the I-405/I-110 interchange improvements and the I-110 ExpressLane Extension to I-405 be eliminated from the **sub-**

regional fund and transferred to regional funding and that the funding for those projects be transferred to fund South Bay Transportation System and Mobility Improvement projects. Another key issue is the tax should have a sunset or it should be eliminated. If kept in, continue a portion of a cent (increase ¼ cent to ½ cent) indefinitely for Local Return. Mr. Lantz also reported: As a follow-up to the General Assembly, Manhattan Beach Councilwoman Amy Howorth is heading up a task force to explore creating a “**South Bay Net**” to expand or **upgrade broadband** in the South Bay and the cities will be contacted by a task force representative in the near future, seeking info such as revenue trends and a workshop will likely be scheduled; The SBCCOG has a contract with the California Energy Commission, for a 2-phase project in the City of Carson, to identify electric needs and then to build a business case for a smart grid for phase 2; The **Green Building Challenge** has 122 participants now; SCE has asked to send a speaker to the **South Bay City Manager meeting** on either May 18 or June 15; an increase of 6% of **SBCCOG member fees** is being discussed, and the **Energy Management Working Group** will be meeting April 27, 11-1 pm to discuss outdoor lighting.

- **South Bay Highway Program Administrative Changes** - Steve Lantz reported that a replacement for Marcy has been hired and the new staff person will be present at the May IWG meeting, and he also introduced a new intern, Buck Doyle who is helping him with the South Bay Highway Program.
- **South Bay Traffic Forum, LA County DPW** – Pat Smith distributed the South Bay Traffic Forum Status Report for April 2016 and highlighted that two Traffic Signal Synchronization projects have had pre-construction meetings: Lomita Boulevard @ Vermont et al, and Crenshaw from Rosecrans Boulevard to Crestridge (2007 Call). County Public Works reps present requested support at TAC in general but especially for projects in the South Bay that are behind schedule (the oldest is 2001).
- **Caltrans - Update:** Jimmy Shih reminded attendees that funding letter agreements are due. Steve Lantz explained that letters were sent out to 4 cities plus Caltrans that have South Bay Highway Program projects that were going to expire in June. Letters are needed to have a path forward to continue the funding. The letters are due to Steve by Friday April 18.
- **L. A. Metro Updates**
 - **L.A. Metro Board** - Isidro Panuco encouraged the cities with a potential project funding lapse to provide solid justifications, a path forward and any mitigations for addressing problem. Regarding the potential sales tax measure, there is a public meeting scheduled in Carson tomorrow and all are encouraged to attend and have comments ready. Steve Lantz noted that South Bay Highway project reporting has been decreased from 7 to 3 pages, and he will be distributing information to the cities by the end of the month.
 - **TAC and Streets & Freeway Subcommittee - TAC:** Ted Semaan highlighted 3 items from the April 6th TAC meeting: 1) the next TAC meeting will cover appeals and is expected to take a full day, lunch to be provided; 2) Re Metro’s Open Street Grant Program: the grant application was released last week and will be due May 12, and a workshop will be conducted April 14, at Metro’s office; and 3) Metro presented regarding the proposed Sales Tax Measure expenditure Plan. Mr. Semaan also noted that Metro presented that an existing half cent will continue after Measure R sunsets and become a full one cent. Steve Lantz noted the half cent will go until the sunset (2059/69); beyond that Metro is talking about a quarter cent that will continue indefinitely.
 - **Streets & Freeway Subcommittee:** Sam Altowaiji reported the new Metro Executive Officer, Abdul Ansari, made a very good presentation on the Highway Program and suggested inviting him to the IWG.

IV. Measure R / Sales Tax Measure Updates

- **SBCCOG Workshop RE: Proposed Sales Tax Ballot Measure** – 4/28/16 4:30 p.m. (already reported)
- Metro’s Sales Tax Measure South Bay Public Hearing – in Carson April 14th (already reported).
- **SBHP Project Progress – Financial Risk Report.** Dina Saleh thanked all the cities for sending in their Q3 reports on time.
- **Three-Month Look Ahead** (Attachment B) – Received and Filed.

- V. **Announcements & Adjournment** – Chair Beste adjourned the meeting at 1:26 pm until May 18, 2016 (Agency meeting). To include an item on the agenda, please email Steve Lantz (steve@southbaycities.org) by May 9, 2016.