

TRANSPLAN COMMITTEE
Antioch - Brentwood - Pittsburg - Oakley and Contra Costa County

MINUTES

June 27, 2019

The special meeting of the TRANSPLAN Committee was called to order in the Tri Delta Transit Board Room, 801 Wilbur Avenue, Antioch, California by Chair Sean Wright at 6:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL / CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Juan Banales (Pittsburg), Diane Burgis (Contra Costa County), Emily Cross (Brentwood), Kerry Motts (Antioch), Kevin Romick (Oakley), Robert (Bob) Taylor (Vice Chair, Brentwood), and Sean Wright (Chair, Antioch)

ABSENT: Sarah Foster (Pittsburg), Doug Hardcastle (Oakley), and Duane Steele (Contra Costa Planning Commission)

STAFF: Jamar Stamps, Senior Planner, Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURE PLAN (TEP) DISCUSS the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) Draft Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP); provide comments and AUTHORIZE TRANSPLAN staff to transmit the Committee's final comments to CCTA prior to the July 10, 2019 CCTA Authority Board Special meeting.

Jamar Stamps presented a two-page draft comment letter on the TEP from the TRANSPLAN Committee, reviewed the comments in the draft letter one by one, and provided context based on the TAC meetings when the TEP had been discussed. He sought input from the Committee as to any changes requested for the comments and noted that the CCTA had yet to make a decision on the duration of the TEP, although the assumptions had been based on 30 years (2020 to 2050) with a level of return to source allocation at 15.2 percent.

With respect to the draft letter, Mr. Stamps presented the position the TRANSPLAN TAC had taken for each item, with support for a 30-year measure and 23 percent return to source for local street maintenance. He noted that the CCTA had considered SB1 and RM3 when recommending the return to source rate of 15 percent.

With respect to draft Policy statements, Mr. Stamps stated that the TRANSPLAN TAC did not have comments on all the policies.

Of the policies considered, the TAC had recommended that the policy with respect to the Urban Limit Line (ULL) should remain unchanged. It was recommended that the new Transit Policy be modified, where necessary, to ensure that transit operating funds be used to support all service and not just new transit service. With respect to the new Vision Zero Policy, a concept to reduce traffic deaths on roadways at some point in time, the TAC had recommended striking Exception #2 suggesting that it was too generous and wanted it removed, although if that did not happen the TAC wanted the phrase “excessively disproportionate” to be defined, phase in improvements or find a more cost effective solution. The TAC had also requested that Exception #3 be modified to strike “projected user demand” given that it would not be an effective metric to justify foregoing pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

DAVE CAMPBELL, Advocacy Director with Bike East Bay, stated they had been very involved in the process, had attended all the Regional Transportation Planning Committee (RTPC) meetings, supported the 10 percent for bike/ped projects, and supported signature projects to get the necessary two-thirds vote to approve the measure and avoid having to do this again in two years as long as it encouraged people to get out of their cars. He suggested that first mile/last mile options should help. He requested an option to get the plan to where 60 percent of the money would be directed to transit/walking/bike/alternative kinds of projects, and noted that CCTA staff had asked each RTPC to get up to 50 percent. He asked what 55 percent for transit/walking/biking would look like for East County, which he suggested would garner the necessary support to pass the measure.

Bob Taylor clarified that East County was more spread out than West County and commuters had to commute on Vasco Road and Highway 4 just to get around.

BRUCE OHLSON, representing Delta Pedalers, the bicycle club of East County, stated that automobile traffic lanes were not being built fast enough to avoid gridlock, the process to put traffic on the road was expensive, and there was a very long lead time. He recommended alternatives such as BART, bus, and bike which was where bicyclists wanted the money to be spent. He referred to the adoption of the Countywide Bicycle Pedestrian Plan and asked for a high place for bike/ped in the plan. He also recommended whenever a street was widened to add a traffic lane that a bike lane should also be added even if not called out in the countywide plan. With respect to the Vision Zero Policy, he stated that vulnerable road users wanted to see vision zero, with no exception.

JOHN BLAKE, the Director of Public Works, City of Antioch, introduced himself and stated that Antioch was falling behind on road maintenance and it was important to hit all modes of traffic. Given the need to catch up, he emphasized the importance of as much return to source as possible to be able to compete for projects.

Juan Banales supported a 23 percent return to source and emphasized the importance of return to source to Pittsburg in terms of the ability to maintain roads.

Kevin Romick reported on his request for a demonstration of the polling numbers at the next meeting and noted that while 23 percent was great fixing potholes and roads was not the priority of the public right now. He noted that Measure J would extend to 2034 and the next measure would go from 2030 to 2050, and there would be 14 years of dual funding. At this point, 15.2 percent was an average over the 30 years, and during those 14 years before Measure J ended, there would be an overlapping return to source. He added that the polling had identified what would be able to pass, and no matter the return to source percentage, if the measure was not approved there would be no additional return to source.

Bob Taylor clarified that the return to source could be used by each city at its own discretion. He commented that the CCTA Board members had indicated that the polling would not support a 23 percent return to source.

Tim Haile, CCTA, reported that CCTA had gone through some public opinion research in April and May 2019, which had played into the decision of whether or not to pursue another measure. The big topic of the focus groups was tax fatigue as well as accountability, which had been reinforced at last week's CCTA meeting where the public was concerned with the amount of taxes paid and where the money was being spent. He explained that the public felt it had voted for roads through Proposition 6 last November. The polling had sought funding for congestion relief which was the number one concern, and the plan had been crafted to focus on congestion relief to respond to what the voters were looking for. In terms of the top percentage of importance by region, the number one concern in East County was to require that the funds directly benefit local residents and commuters. The next priorities were to reduce congestion on highways and major roads; reduce congestion on I-680, I-80, and SR-24 to make commutes faster; make BART trains in Contra Costa County cleaner and safer; and synchronize traffic lights on major roads. The repair of local roads and potholes was in the top 15. He stated that no one discounted the need for local road maintenance, although there was a greater need to reduce congestion.

Kevin Romick stated that the TEP and the policies were evolving and the hope was at the next meeting to bring in what was current. He verified the TRANSPLAN Committee would have until the end of July to return comments, and comments could still be provided on specific programs and projects before reaching final consensus. He suggested there should be another meeting before the TEP was near completion.

Tim Haile stated that last week at the special CCTA Board meeting, staff had asked for input and had focused on a goal of transit and alternative modes and the CCTA had provided a goal of 50 percent on alternative modes with a desire for signature projects.

The current version had been focused on three major signature projects: State Route 4 and SR-242 Corridors and connecting the subregions of East County and Central County given that 70 percent of East County travelers were going west, which included the completion of the I-680/SR-4 Interchange; the projects at I-80; and the I-680 Corridor northbound and the SR-24 Corridor. Those three signature projects would address the most heavily used corridors in Contra Costa County. Each of those projects would be summarized in a two-page spread.

With respect to BART, Mr. Haile characterized BART as a double-edged sword. Everyone wanted cleaner, safer, more reliable BART, but everyone was wondering what was happening with all the funding that had been going to BART. He referred to the category Cleaner, Safer BART looking at station modernization, improving fare gate evasion, making sure there was frequent cleaning of the stations as well as making sure there was more enforcement at the stations and on the cars. He commented that BART called that station hardening. Working with BART, they were dealing with a maintenance of effort criteria and a system-wide plan that outlined all the improvements in Contra Costa County as well as the other improvements that would go outside the county, and a dollar-by-dollar match with a goal to develop a system-wide plan approved by the RTPCs, BART, and CCTA, and set up a reimbursement basis.

With respect to the BART Parking and Access Improvements category, Mr. Haile stated that would be dollars used at the stations while another category was specifically for East County to purchase additional e-BART cars, and dollars for access to BART to look at satellite type parking such as Park & Ride to BART.

Kevin Romick described the reasons for and why satellite BART parking stations (BART proximate) were being considered.

Diane Burgis referred to Measure X and wanted to see results given the desire to pass the measure. She suggested that one of the components to providing BARTable, bikable, walkable would be if labor markets could be established for East County. She suggested the solutions needed to be emphasized along with the importance of local control. She wanted to advocate for something that would actually be able to pass.

Chair Wright characterized the current process as negotiating to get everyone on board; the communities, the bike community, and the like, and once that was done there would have to be a campaign to promote the measure to ensure passage. He noted that some communities would like to hold out for a tax measure of their own instead of a regional one. The City of Antioch supported a 23 percent return to source given the condition of roads. He sought the difference between a 15 and 18 percent return to source and suggested that while the voters would not know the difference and the polls would not be able to identify that level of concern, it would have to be identified from the community standpoint. He asked whether East Contra Costa would have a say over its percentage of return to source or whether everyone else would have to approve the same percentage.

Mr. Haile stated that depending on the subregion, a separate category could be set up for additional local streets and roads in a subregion as long as the dollars were available to get to that added percentage. While the CCTA Board had recommended a 15 percent return to source in the initial draft, once all the input from all the RTPCs had been submitted, there would be a discussion of how to determine the final input in August. The discussions in the subregion were considering a balance between maintenance and congestion relief. It would be up to the TRANSPLAN Committee to determine how the funds would be spent in East County.

Bob Taylor noted that the City of Brentwood's demand for road maintenance was not that great, although the infrastructure of some East County cities were older than Brentwood's.

Kevin Romick reiterated that the 15.2 percent was an average over the 30 years and for 14 years there would be 12 percent with Measure J, and there had been discussions about saving money during the years of double funding. He added that 18 percent was a compromise through the entire measure, or as a last resort there could be 23 percent over the entire measure.

On the discussion, Bob Taylor supported 18 percent, although Chair Wright did not see a difference to the voters between 15 and 18 percent and suggested that local relief could promote congestion relief.

Juan Banales suggested that even with the 23 percent option, there would still be heavy investment in all the categories and the question was a matter of allocation and money. He suggested that a 23 percent return to source would help put money back in a city's control for prioritization, would give cities more flexibility, and was tremendously needed. He encouraged that when the final product was submitted there would still be all the projects that had been identified by the poll results and there would be money for road improvements.

Chair Wright verified that there was a month to get a finalized letter and while he personally wanted to see 23 percent, he wanted a measure that would pass and he would wait to hear from the consultant as to what could be approved by the electorate.

Bob Taylor agreed and noted there had to be some compromise.

Mr. Haile advised that the CCTA Board had given direction to consider a 30-year draft TEP but depending on the input the Board could consider a 35- or 40-year measure, which would be polled. With respect to the Transit Policy, there had been frequent meetings with the transit operators and the transit operators supported the transit policy as currently written. He added that the Vision Zero Policy was being revised to take a more active approach, collect data, develop hot spots, and develop a more proactive plan to address those hot spots and incorporate vision zero in the streets and transit policies. Those policies would be brought back to CCTA's Ad Hoc Committee on July 3 to add a requirement that the local jurisdictions adopt a Vision Zero Policy, although some cities had already done so.

Bob Taylor requested that the pollster be available at the next meeting, and Mr. Haile agreed and added that information related to Measure X would also be provided at that time.

Mr. Haile also explained, when asked, that the CCTA Board would make the ultimate decision related to the percentage of return to source and whether one region or another could have different returns.

Mr. Stamps recommended deferring any action on the comment letter at this time.

The TRANSPLAN Committee determined to cancel its regularly scheduled meeting on July 11 and schedule a special meeting on July 25, 2019. It was emphasized that if Committee members could not attend that meeting their alternates should attend in their stead.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wright adjourned the meeting of the TRANSPLAN Committee at 7:40 P.M. to the special meeting on July 25, 2019 at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita L. Tucci-Smith
Minutes Clerk