

Coalition For a Fair Measure D (CFFMD)

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Regular noon meeting at Balboa Conference Room, 735 State St., 6th Floor.

Present: Geoff Green (Fund For SB), Olivia Uribe and David Pritchett (SBCAN), Ralph Fertig (SBBike), Robert Bernstein (Sierra Club), Sheila Khami (SB LWV), Kallon Kelly (CPA), Marc Chytilo (CLAWS), Kate Bechtel, Lee Moldaver, Dennis Story, Eva Inbar, Alex Pujo (COAST).

From Santa Maria on speaker phone: Debbie Brasket (SBCAN).

We met to discuss strategy for what may be the last opportunity to improve the Expenditure Plans. Geoff facilitated the meeting. It was his impression that SBCAG felt that the main elements of the Plan were done (as in “done deal”).

A) South Coast Expenditure Plan.

Two important issues remain: lack of substantial funding for rail, and how to assure that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are adequately funded in the local share. In addition, Ralph brought forward a proposal to re-distribute funds allocated to ped/bike and Safe Routes to School (SR2S) in the regional program.

1) Rail: Dennis outlined a budget for commuter rail Oxnard-Goleta based on two round trips per day, a reduction from three proposed in D-2006. The estimate includes train sets, other capital expenses, operation costs and Federal funds that could be leveraged (as proposed in 2006). The equipment could be leased if a 5-year minimum pilot project is put in place. To do that, and to leverage Federal funds, \$40M will be needed.

The **On Trac** plan proposed by the City of Santa Barbara Rail Committee relies on the ability to re-schedule one of the Surfliner trains run by Amtrak. Dennis researched and discussed this with several Amtrak executives, and he doubts that the re-scheduling is a real possibility.

The group agreed to support \$40M for commuter rail. Rail funding needs to be flexible. On Trac will be supported as a “baby step” towards a more complete system.

At the last Advisory Committee meeting, Dennis proposed to increase rail funding by **dipping into the 101 widening allocation** (\$140M). After all, rail will offer mitigation when two big freeway projects (Milpas/Cabrillo and Mussel Shores) get under way.

SBCAG voted to fund 101 “off the top” (before dividing revenues between North & South) but it did not specify the amount. Dennis and Alex propose to leave \$100M for 101 (still a very large amount) and split the rest between North and South, \$20M each. Marc thinks that North County representatives would rather see the money stay for the widening. It was agreed to have Alex and Marc talk to Joe Centeno to gauge North County sentiment about this proposal.

2) Conditions on the local share.

Eva, Alex and Marc have been circulating emails, forwarded to the larger group, about different proposals to assure a fair distribution of the “local share”. With the MTD deal reached at the last meeting, transit in the South Coast is already taken care of. The jurisdictions are balking at allocating percentages for ped/bike improvements, and **we do not know what percentage of the maintenance budget is currently used** for that.

Alex proposed to rely instead on definitions and clauses mandating equal maintenance of infrastructure. PW Directors claim that they are not planning to expand infrastructure, just maintain it. “Complete Streets” will come into play when major reconstruction is undertaken (up to 20% of project costs), but not under routine maintenance. There are miles of arterials in unincorporated areas that lack basic pedestrian infrastructure (“deficiencies”), and the question remains: how to fund them within the current framework.

Eva went over the amounts set aside in 2006 for alternatives compared to the current proposal. Marc stated that perhaps a set of **“priorities”** need to be stipulated for the use of Measure D funds in maintenance projects. One of these priorities could be sidewalks. Alex added that **when standard road maintenance occurs** (slurry seal, or chip seal) requiring re-stripping, **a clause in Measure D could stipulate that Class II lanes by added** where appropriate.

It was agreed that Alex, Eva (and perhaps Marc, if available) meet with PW Directors from the County, Goleta and Santa Barbara to discuss this. Kate will set the meeting.

3) Bike, Pedestrian and SR2S funds.

Ralph distributed information regarding how these funds are currently used; what was proposed in 2006, and the 2008 proposal. He is concerned that in the current plan funding for pedestrians has expanded at the expense of bikeways, and he proposes to go back to previous percentages.

Eva argued that the addition of “pedestrian” to the bike fund was to rectify a previous oversight. The rest of the group was unclear, so it was agreed to continue this conversation by email. Eva and Ralph will meet, but not kill each other.

B) North County Expenditure Plan.

Debbie shared rumors that North County reps may argue that a 50-50 revenue split was unfair because of the population shift under way. David answered that this argument was already floated and tabled when it was noted that money (sales tax revenues) flows the other way, with a marked imbalance between source and distribution.

The South Coast plan has substantially more money for interregional transit than the North County’s. The current modal share in North County is 28% for alternatives in the regional program, and 16.8% in the local share. **“Is that enough?”** That question is difficult to answer because, as mentioned earlier, nobody know what is the current use of Measure D by mode.

Alex proposed to **include TDA into Measure D-2008 discussions**. If these funds were used exclusively for transit –as they should be- this would amount to an increase of \$90M over 30 years. We could also consider a program to discontinue TDA diversion over a 10-year period.

Alex also brought up the need for Class II bikeways in places like Santa Maria, where they are sorely lacking. This could be mandated by a clause in the use of Measure D for maintenance (as discussed earlier).

Ralph added that Traffic Calming IS NOT alternative transportation –the NC definition needs to be changed.

Marc indicated that they are **“hitting a wall” at the NC meeting**, with no progress in sight. Another approach is needed, and perhaps the definitions and clauses proposed are a way to move the discussion forward.

Next steps:

- Alex & Marc will try to talk Centeno into taking the \$20M for NC.
- Kate will set up a meeting for Eva, Alex (& Marc?) with Paul Casey, Scott McGophlin and Steve Wagner about Measure D maintenance funds.
- Eva and Ralph will talk more about the perceived imbalance in Ped/Bike funding.

Calendar:

NC Advisory meeting: Wednesday, November 7.

SC Advisory meeting: Wednesday, November 7 at MTD.

CFFMD will meet on MONDAY, November 12, noon, at the Balboa Building.

Minutes by Alex Pujo