



MEETING OF THE  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

September 25, 2008  
6:00 p.m.

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN  
TAM ROOM on LOBBY LEVEL  
750 LINDARO STREET  
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA

**MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Steve Kinsey, Chair  
Joan Lundstrom, City of Larkspur  
Peter Breen, Town of San Anselmo  
Charles McGlashan, Marin County Board of Supervisors  
Damon Connolly, City of San Rafael (Alternate)

Commissioner Members Absent: Carole Dillon-Knutson, City of Novato  
Alice Fredericks, Town of Tiburon  
Al Boro, City of San Rafael

Staff Members Present: Dianne Steinhauser, Executive Director  
Bill Gamlen, Project Delivery Manager  
Dan Cherrier, Associate Project Delivery Manager  
Denise Merleno, Recording Secretary

*Chair Kinsey called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.*

**1. Review of westbound I-580 to northbound Hwy. 101 Connector Project (Discussion)**

Executive Director Steinhauser stated that this meeting was called because staff is moving quickly to resolve serious scope and cost issues on this project. Staff will need to report to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in October, and given the concerns raised by the CTC on other Corridor Mobility Improvement Account projects (Prop 1B program), staff will likely need Board support and action to aid the project in going forward. The CTC could label this project as "at risk" because the Commission has been following a policy of zero tolerance for CMIA projects that are over budget, delivered late, or vary in scope from the original commitment. As a result, commissioners attending a future CTC meeting may be necessary, to assist in the explanation of the budget issues and request a time extension for delivery of this project.

In May 2007, TAM staff finalized the connector project in terms of the cost, timeline, and scope. The cost estimate was determined to be adequate at the time. Upon completing final design, the project is now being estimated at more than 40% over budget at approximately \$27-28 million.

At the September 8 TAM Executive Committee meeting, staff presented a strategy to bring costs back in line, describing what elements of the project would remain or be eliminated. While supported by the

TAM board and City of San Rafael, that strategy was met with resistance by Caltrans staff. As a result, staff is obligated to develop an alternate plan.

When funding was initially approved, the project had three main features: widen the connector; improve the sidewalks in the surrounding area; and extend the westbound Bellam Blvd off-ramp. Those features are in TAM's commitment to the CTC and staff plans to keep those features in the project. The project is supposed to be ready to go to bid by this November with construction beginning in March 2009 and concluding by July 2010.

ED Steinhauser thought that there may be a need to use some of TAM's own money to help fund this project. Lifeline and/or TDA funds are possible fund sources that could be tapped, but staff now believes that this project can be completed within the framework of funding originally allocated to this project.

Chair Kinsey asked staff to explain the issues associated with this project that have arisen since the Executive Committee meeting of September 8.

Dan Cherrier gave a brief review of the major elements of this project: 1) replace the westbound undercrossing over Bellam Blvd. which would eliminate the middle columns and push back the abutments. The existing profile on the 580 connector would need to be raised (by approximately 11 feet) on both the east and west side of the bridge over Bellam for better sight distance. 2) The auxiliary lane would extend the offramp 1300 feet. 3) Ramp metering. 4) Bicycle/ped path improvements, to approximately 12 feet under the new structure, 6-8 feet in width on Bellam Blvd. between Kerner and East Francisco Blvd. and on East Francisco Blvd. from Bellam Blvd. to Vivian Way

He noted that when costs first became an issue, staff considered eliminating the west side profile, redesign the retaining wall to cost less and to use local administration of the construction to save money. Regarding the scope, the local administration of the construction would allow the auxiliary offramp lane to become an additive item in the bid. However, after additional investigation by both staff's consultants as well as Caltrans, it was concluded that correcting the eastside profile of the 580 roadway connecting to the bridge was not as important as correcting the westside profile coming off the bridge. Also, Caltrans has not accepted the local administration of the contract.

Mr. Cherrier then described the latest concept which includes: 1) keeping the new undercrossing structure which results in better sidewalks. 2) removing the east side profile, which Caltrans is looking upon favorably and will save over \$1 million more than elimination of the west side profile.

Chair Kinsey asked if removing the east side profile would affect the auxiliary lane and Mr. Cherrier responded that it would. At the current time, Caltrans considers the extended Bellam Boulevard off-ramp as part of the east side profile improvements. Removal of one automatically triggers the other. TAM staff is working with Caltrans on this issue.

Mr. Cherrier stated that there are a couple of options that could be employed to save the auxiliary lane and stay within budget and the time limitations for construction. One option is doing a split of the project into two projects, approved by the CTC, and building the auxiliary lane as its own project. Another is to use local advertising (sponsor). The other idea is that Caltrans could build phase 1 while staff works on the redesign plans for the next phase. This idea would allow the project to stay on schedule; this corresponds to the split project option briefly discussed.

ED Steinhauser added that using a local sponsor would move the project along quicker than using Caltrans but the costs would be about the same. Staff plans to discuss with Caltrans staff the idea of using a local sponsor even though it is widely known that they prefer to work on their own highways.

Chair Kinsey asked if it would be possible to segment out the local improvements and ED Steinhauser responded affirmatively but added that the question could arise as to why a particular segment, the bike/ped improvements is an example, is essential to the highway improvements. Caltrans staff and TAM have accepted that local facilities in the project area must be addressed, and pulling them out is not in the best interest at this time. She noted, as well, that removing the local improvements will not significantly reduce the cost of the project. The East side profile is the only element that could be removed that would lower the cost of the project so that it falls within the CMIA awarded amount.

Commissioner Lundstrom asked if eliminating the east side profile would still allow for congestion relief, and Mr. Cherrier responded that it should eliminate the same amount of congestion as projected in the original project design. At worst, it may add a travel time reduction of a couple of seconds.

Karen Nygren requested clarification regarding a statement previously made by staff that changing the west side profile was under consideration while, today, staff is discussing changing the east side profile. Mr. Cherrier said that, initially, the design team thought the west side profile would be the best element to eliminate but that after further investigation decided against it.

In response to a question from Commissioner Breen about placing yellow lights on the gantry where ramp metering lights are, or in advance to warn of slowed traffic ahead, Mr. Cherrier responded that there will be cautionary lights built into the program.

Commissioner McGlashan asked if removing the east side profile will affect the eastbound traffic and ED Steinhauser responded that it would not change existing traffic patterns.

Chair Kinsey summarized the discussion by stating that this project needs to move forward and that the auxiliary lane should be included, but would be dealt with likely as a separate project project. He added that he believes it is important to include the local improvements in this project and to stay within the construction timeframe.

He asked ED Steinhauser to explain the next steps on this issue and to confirm that staff from TAM and Caltrans are aligned as to elements that need to be changed or eliminated in order to fall back within the budget.

ED Steinhauser said while TAM and Caltrans are not in complete alignment, they are getting closer. Discussions are ongoing about removing the east side profile, including the auxiliary lane, and how quickly Caltrans staff can move to review and package this project since they want to manage the project. She added that staff would report back to the Committee at its October 13 meeting.

David Hoffman, MCBC, thanked the TAM Board and staff for striving to keep the local improvements in the project and said that it would serve a number of people who live in the Canal area.

Don Magdanz, a member of the TAM Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the San Rafael Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, said that this project is critical and stressed the importance of keeping the local improvements in this project.

Chair Kinsey said that the City of San Rafael, with support from the Board of Supervisors, is working with TAM on a request to the Marin Community Foundation for a larger initiative on community-based transportation improvements in the Canal area.

ED Steinhauser added that TAM staff has discussed an outline of what staff would like to see in the grant proposal with staff from the City of San Rafael. The City has provided support services in terms of photo renderings and technical depictions that could be added into the grant. Staff is hopeful that the grant write-up can be finalized and sent to San Rafael by the end of October.

Maureen Gaffney, ABAG and the San Francisco Bay Trail Project, thanked TAM for keeping the local improvements in the project and noted that they will be an important connector to the Bay Trail.

Commissioner Lundstrom reminded everyone that the Canal area serves as home to approximately 12,000 people which is more than the population of some of Marin's cities, so that makes it even more important to ensure the completion of these improvements.

**9. Open Time for Items Not on the Agenda**

*Seeing no others wishing to speak, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.*

DRAFT