

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)

RAIL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

DRAFT Minutes of January 11, 2016

Transportation Agency for Monterey County

55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas

	NOV 14	JAN 15	FEB 15	MAR 15	APR 15	MAY 15	JUNE 15	AUG 15	SEP 15	NOV 15	JAN 16
F. Armenta, Dist. 1 (J. Martinez)	C	P	C	P(A)	C	P	P	C	P	P	P
J. Phillips, Dist. 2 (J. Stratton)	A	P(A)	A	P(A)	A	P(A)	P(A)	A	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)
J. Parker, Dist. 4 (K. Markey)	N	P(A)	N	P(A)	N	E	P(A)	N	P(A)	P(A)	P(A)
D. Potter, Dist. 5, Chair (K. Lee , J. Mohammadi)	C	P	C	P	C	P	P	C	P(A)	P	P(A)
B. Delgado, Marina (F. O'Connell)	E	-	E	P(A)	E	P	-	E	-	P	P
E. Smith, Monterey (R. Deal)	L	P	L	P	L	E	P	L	-	P	E
K. Craig, Salinas, Vice Chair (R. Russell , J. Serrano)	L	P	L	E	L	P	P	L	P	P(A)	P
T. Bodem, Sand City (L. Gomez)	E	P	E	-	E	P	-	E	P	P	E
R. Rubio, Seaside (I. Oglesby)	D	P	D	P	D	P	E	D	P	P	P
A. Chavez, Soledad (F. Ledesma)		P		P		P	E		P	P	P
M. Twomey, AMBAG (H. Adamson)		-		-		-	P(A)		-	-	P(A)
O. Monroy-Ochoa, Caltrans District 5		P		-		-	-		-	-	E
C. Sedoryk, MST (H. Harvath, L. Rheinheimer)		P(A)		P(A)		P(A)	-		P(A)	P(A)	P(A)
B. Sabo, Airport (R. Searle)		-		-		-	-		-	-	-
STAFF											
D. Hale, Exec. Director		P		E		P	E		P	P	P
T. Muck, Deputy Exec. Director		-		P		P	P		P	P	P
C. Watson, Principal Transp. Planner		P		P		P	P		P	P	P
A. Green, Transp. Planner		-		P		E	-		-	-	-
M. Zeller, Principal Transp. Planner		P		P		P	E		P	E	P
H. Myers, Sr. Transp. Engineer		E		P		-	-		-	P	-
V. Murillo, Asst. Transp. Planner		P		P		P	P		P	P	P
E – Excused VC – Video Conference P(A) – Alternate TC – Teleconference											

1. **QUORUM CHECK AND CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Craig called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

OTHERS PRESENT

Scott Ottmar	City of Seaside	Jerome Landesman	Salinas resident
John Wong	Salinas resident	Steve Eklund	Salinas resident
Paul Powers	Salinas resident	Eric Peterson	Salinas resident
MacGregor Eddy	<i>We Could Car Less</i> Columnist, Salinas Californian		

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Steve Eklund, Salinas resident, commented that the gas tax should be raised and should be used locally for streets and roads.

Committee Member Armenta noted that John Wong, former City of Salinas Public Works Director, was in attendance.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

M/S/C Rubio/Markey/unanimous

3.1 Approved minutes of the November 2, 2015 Rail Policy Committee meeting.

3.2 Received report on final Santa Cruz Branch Line rail transit study.

3.3 Received update on the Pajaro/Watsonville Multimodal Station project.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

4. **MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT BUS STUDY**

M/S/C Markey/Armenta/unanimous

The Committee received a proposal to use Monterey Branch Line lease revenues to contribute to a busway study by the Monterey-Salinas Transit District and recommended Board approval.

Executive Director Debbie Hale noted that this study is an important first step to help solve the congestion on Highway 1 and make use of the underutilized Monterey Branch Line Corridor.

Hunter Harvath, MST Assistant General Manager, reported that the busway study will produce a cost-benefit analysis to determine the feasibility of operational improvements, such as operating buses on the Highway 1 shoulder and in the Monterey Branch Line right-of-way, to improve regional transit service. Mr. Harvath reported that the study is expected to cost \$160,000 and MST is requesting \$65,000 of Monterey Branch Line lease revenues to fund part of the study, matching a grant application to AMBAG for federal planning funds. Mr. Harvath noted that this study would show the public that MST and TAMC are actively looking at ways to reduce congestion, and when the transportation sales tax measure passes the project can be funded locally.

Committee Member Delgado asked if there are other examples of buses operating on shoulders. Mr. Harvath said that Chicago and Miami both have robust bus-on-shoulder programs that

improve regional transit service. Committee Alternate Adamson mentioned that San Diego was the first in California to pilot a successful bus-on-shoulder demonstration program, but the program was terminated due to a lack of ongoing operating funds. Mr. Harvath noted that Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties obtained legislation to allow buses to operate on the shoulder.

Vice Chair Craig asked how much money was available in the Monterey Branch Line account. Ms. Hale said that the account has approximately \$1 million.

Committee Member Delgado expressed concern that this proposal sounds like an abandonment of the long-term vision for light rail service in the Monterey Branch Line corridor in favor of bus rapid transit. Ms. Hale said that operating bus transit service on the corridor would be an interim solution that can provide evidence of ridership demand along the corridor and help make the case to obtain state or federal funding for future light rail service. Ms. Hale noted that the cost of light rail service is too high to be included in the transportation sales tax expenditure plan.

Committee Member Rubio stated that the study should consider the requirements for light rail in the corridor to ensure there would be no need to remove the busway once funding for the light rail project was made available.

MacGregor Eddy said she has done research on operating bus on shoulders and found that this type of service increases transit ridership and on-time performance.

Steve Eklund said he opposes a general sales tax increase as it hurts people who have the least, and restated his support for a gas tax increase.

5. LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Committee received and commented on the draft 2016 Legislative Program.

Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner, reported that there is now a federal transportation multi-year authorization bill known as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation, or FAST Act, and that the federal legislative program will be edited to reflect this. Ms. Watson noted that priority 7S of State legislative program will support a redefinition of disadvantaged communities for the State's cap and trade grant program to better reflect economic and rural area considerations. Executive Director Hale noted that this redefinition is an issue of interest statewide, and especially for Monterey County, as only the communities of Pajaro and East Salinas are eligible under the current definition. She noted that the current definition leaves out many of the communities that one would think of as disadvantaged.

Committee Member Delgado asked if having the definition be zipcode-based would improve the definition of disadvantaged communities. Ms. Watson said that the idea of "regional normalizing" would compare disadvantaged communities by region as opposed to statewide.

Committee Member Delgado asked about priority 13S and the Agency's priority projects. Ms. Watson noted that the priority projects are the same ones that were chosen by the Board.

Committee Member Delgado also asked if the federal reauthorization bill benefits Monterey County. Ms. Watson said that it allows for long term planning and is a slight increase in funding levels from the last bill. She noted a full report is on the January Board agenda.

6. **SALINAS RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the Salinas Rail Extension Project.

Christina Watson, Principal Transportation Planner, reported staff has been working with Caltrans on the Market Street (Highway 183) improvements proposed as part of the project, including the extension of Lincoln Avenue to provide signalized access to the Salinas station.

Committee Alternate Stratton asked what the delay would be if Caltrans insists TAMC prepare a project report for the highway improvements. Executive Director Hale said that the preparation of the project report would take about three to six months.

Vice Chair Craig asked if City of Salinas staff knew about the \$1.3 million cost of the highway improvements. Ms. Watson said that the strategy to work with Caltrans is pending, and that staff would be having discussions with the City of Salinas on next steps.

Michael Zeller, Principal Transportation Planner, reported that appraisals for acquisition of the nine parcels in the station area are complete. He noted that property owners are now getting their own appraisals.

John Wong, Salinas resident, asked how many properties have been acquired. Mr. Zeller said that two parcels have been acquired so far.

7. **COAST DAYLIGHT**

The Committee received an update on the status of the planned Coast Daylight train service between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Ms. Watson reported that the Federal Railroad Administration published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/ Record of Decision for the coast rail line corridor between Salinas and San Luis Obispo on November 20, 2015. Ms. Watson also reported that staff held a kick-off meeting with HDR for the federal environmental review of the coast rail line corridor between Salinas and San Jose. The 68-mile rail corridor between Salinas and San Jose will be reviewed for potential improvements to support two passenger rail projects, the Coast Daylight (Pacific Surfliner trains) and the Rail Extension to Monterey County (Capitol Corridor trains).

8. **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND/OR COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

None.

9. **ADJOURN**

Vice Chair Craig adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.