



MEETING NOTES

CETAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY INTEGRATED PROJECT (RCIP)

Registrar of Voters

Assembly Community Room

2724 Gateway Drive, Riverside

Tuesday, December 3, 2002

8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

CETAP Advisory Committee Attendees:

Bruce Colbert, Riverside County Property Owners Association
Joyce Deleo, Supervisor's Appointee
Frank Hall, Supervisor's Appointee
Peter Kiriakos, Sierra Club
Ameal Moore, RCTC
Anne Palatino, RTA
Robin Reeser Lowe, RCTC
Gene Rogers, WRCOG TAC
Joan Sparkman, Supervisor's Appointee
Gail Wanczuk Barton, MSHCP Advisory Chair
Borre Winckel, BIA
Helga Wolf, Supervisor's Appointee

Diane Huggett, City of Riverside
John Kain, Urban Crossroads
Jim Kinley, Murrieta
John Licata, City of Corona
Dave Miller, TransCore
Russ Napier, City of Murrieta
Craig Neustaedter, Moreno Valley
Trent Pulliam, City of Moreno Valley
Steve Smith, TransCore
Ed Studor, Riverside County TLMA
Jim Wang, Menifee
Bill Warkentin, BIA
P.H., Warmington Land Co.

Other Attendees:

Cathy Bechtel, RCTC
Stephen Brown, City of Temecula
Glen Campbell, OCTA
Stephanie Crossey, O-Reilly Public Relations
Barbara Darracy, Warmington Land Co.
Bill Davis, Menifee Valley SEDCO
Julie Gagnon, Rural Res. Policy Area E-215
Gary Green, Caltrans District 8
Janet Henderon, SCAG
Bill Holzwarth, Gresham, Savage

CALL TO ORDER

1. Robin Lowe called the meeting to order and asked for self-introductions. Public comments were postponed until the presentation on agenda item 7. A summary of comments can be found under item number 7. Item 7 was covered first, and then the committee returned to Item 2.

2. Approval of meeting notes from September/October, 2002

The meeting notes were approved with the following changes to the October meeting notes:

- A comment from Bruce Colbert should have been noted at the end of agenda item 7 which states: “Staff needs to add information to the alternatives analysis regarding mitigation that would be required for the Cajalco alternative south of Lake Mathews, so that an informed evaluation of the various alternatives can be made.”
- On page seven of the meeting notes, during the discussion on the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor, the following comment was recorded: “The BIA is supporting an alternative plan that proposes these types of expressways along SR-74, Ramona/Cajalco, and SR-79. Our analysis shows that the traffic can be accommodated in this area through the use of such a system.” This comment did not accurately reflect the BIA’s position, and Borre Winkel indicated that their position can be accurately summarized as: “The BIA supports finding transportation corridors that have the greatest transportation utility (in terms of relief to the SR-91 and SR-60 freeways for the east-west corridor) with the least community and environmental impacts.”
- Bob Burlingham from SCAG should be added to the list of attendees
- On Page 8, Gail Wanczuk Barton’s point was “this is the opportunity to step back and look at the big picture”
- Julie Gagnon lives in the Menifee Area.

3. Reports from MSHCP and General Plan Advisory Committees

Gail Wanczuk Barton, MSHCP – The MSHCP is out! The advisory committee is having its next meeting December 12th at Flood Control at 1:00p.m., followed by another meeting on December 19th at 1:30 p.m. to discuss the document. We will be talking about the extent to which the criteria originally set out for the MSHCP have been met.

Ed Studor, General Plan – We are still in the hearing process. The next hearing is tomorrow and they are getting to the point where they will be wrapping up Planning Commission recommendations. Planning staff has been meeting with commissioners to go over requests from property owners and to discuss the community centers and how those are addressed in the recommendation to the Board. I understand that there will be some modifications. The Third District will have no community centers. Several of the community centers along the I-15 will be combined. Then there is a long list of requests from property owners to be considered for approval. Tomorrow’s hearing will be carried over until the 11th with the goal being for the December 18th meeting to be the wrap-up and development of a recommendation to the Board. The Board will start their hearings in late January or early February.

Jim Henderson – The Planning Commission recommendation will be accompanied by a set of maps and sent to the Board. These maps may be available tomorrow. There will also be a staff recommendation.

Pete Kiriakos – It would be helpful to get the maps and recommendations on the web site as soon as they are available.

Ed Studor – There will also be a matrix showing requests for change from the public, the Planning Commission recommendation, the staff recommendation, and the GPAC recommendation.

4. Report on development projects from Riverside County TLMA

Ed Studor – SP 330 is a new proposal, part of the Highgrove area plan right near the County line off of I-215. This was just a work session. The proposal consists of 167 acres for 579 dwelling units, 51 acres of open space, 7.5 acres for a school site. Adjacent to the Spring Mountain Ranch specific plan.

SP 266 at the intersection of the I-15 and Limonite. Re-designated the commercial office to scenic highway commercial. An area of multi-family units re-designated to senior housing with a lower number of units. It was approved.

General Plan Amendment 616 is immediately adjacent to La Quinta. They want to change the zone from agriculture to 82 lots on 40 acres or ½ acre lots. It was continued.

5. Report from RCIP Steering Committee

Jim Henderson – The Community Centers concept and incentives program have been discussed. A presentation by an independent consultant was given on the incentives program, focusing on rural incentives. We have endorsed the community centers concept, with two abstentions, and the endorsement has been forwarded to the Planning Commission. The focus has been on the land use issues of the General Plan. The focus may shift toward the MSHCP and alternatives on CETAP corridors. Ed Studor gave a very good presentation on the trails system.

Ed Studor – We have a new map of the trails system. It was similar to what happened with the Circulation Element roadway system, translating hard copy maps into GIS. The map now reflects the current status of trails very well. We also have a new proposal that is part of the package going to the committee.

Dave Miller – We have a copy of the trails map here today, if anyone wants to take a look.

Robin Lowe – I abstained from the community centers letter because there is so much flux within each city right now. Representing the cities as I do, each city right now has an opinion of what a community center should look like, or that it shouldn't be there at all, so I felt I should abstain from the letter.

Peter Kiriakos – When we had the General Plan committee going, the original concept was that the cities would be cooperative and pick up the concept. I haven't seen that much of that. Do you see any trend within the cities to implement their own version of community centers?

Robin Lowe – The cities have the redevelopment agencies as a tool to create a community center. The feeling of the cities is that the County shut the cities out of the process, that they did not want our input. We have a couple supervisors that would like to create new cities under the guise of community centers. I'm just stating different cities' opinions, and one of them is not Hemet. There is a lot of resentment about how community centers came to be part of the process. We are more focused on Transit Centers as a group of cities. We are working closely with RTA for bus and Metrolink stations and using what financial tools we have available. The feeling is that these transit centers could be the beginning of a community center. To build community centers in the middle of nowhere as part of the incentives creates a lot of heartburn within the cities.

Jim Henderson – We are as a steering committee working with WRCOG to get this dialogue started.

Ed Studor – Through WRCOG we are having regular meetings with the planning directors of the cities. Some cities may actually have a similar concept; they just don't call it a community center.

6. Report on status of the Moreno Valley to San Bernardino County Corridor and Riverside County to Orange County Corridor

Ed Studor – We haven't had another meeting on the San Bernardino corridors. We are still trying to reach consensus on where to go from here, and there have been some changes in terms of elected officials. We are waiting until after the first of the year to call a policy meeting to meet with the new officials.

7. Integrated presentation of transportation issues in CETAP, General Plan, and MSHCP

Steve Smith made a brief presentation on how the CETAP corridors, General Plan, and MSHCP are inter-related. He showed slides of the following:

- General Plan Circulation Element with proposed CETAP corridors, MSHCP criteria area, and public/quasi public lands
- General Plan Circulation Element with General Plan Land Use, express transit routes, and associated transit nodes

He highlighted areas with potential MSHCP conflicts with roadways. He pointed out the proposed system of expressways, in addition to the locations of the CETAP corridors contained in the RCTC staff recommendation.

Ed Studor handed out Section 7 of the MSHCP. He noted that Section 7.1 covers the criteria and that Section 7.2 covers the process for Public/Quasi Public areas. He also pointed out a table that lists the number of conflicts and summarized that the document talks about different transportation situations in Riverside County.

Bruce Colbert asked a question regarding Alternative 7B and future widening of freeways. Steve Smith responded with a summary of Caltrans planned widening of the I-15, I-215, SR-60, and I-10. In general, all of the freeways are planned at five lanes each direction, or ten total, except the SR-60 which may have fewer lanes. Bruce then asked if the MSHCP precludes additional widening of freeways. It was noted that the MSHCP allows for additional widening within the MSHCP reserve area and that outside of reserve areas there are no constraints.

Borre Winckel, BIA – Why are we proposing the grief of the 7b/5c interchange when arterials are already planned?

Steve Smith – It is a matter of travel time and speed, not capacity. We have to take this opportunity to identify locations for freeway level facilities; otherwise we will regret it 20-30 years down the road. Freeways are harder to implement, and these aren't perfect locations, but we need to accommodate through traffic at a high level of mobility in the future.

Borre Winckel – To quote the staff “Staff recognizes that these aren't optimal”. If it is not capacity, is it time?

Steve Smith – It is a combination. Look at the issue of traveling from Banning/Beaumont to Temecula. What if there was a signal every ½ mile? 25 miles equals 50 signals, and it would take a long time to travel this corridor if were not ultimately a freeway. Alternative 7b at least provides a route for through traffic to get from SR-79 to I-215 and continue toward the I-15. An eastern bypass around Temecula is desirable, but a freeway is not supported by the City of Temecula. Planning and building freeways is harder, but this is the last opportunity we will have to establish a corridor for the long term.

Ed Studor – The traffic modeling shows a good amount of capacity east/west, but those facilities will be at capacity even *with* CETAP.

Robin Lowe – There are many deaths on the road in Winchester. The short fix was six signals. Now, with development, we have trucks and cars mixing, plus pollution. We need progress, but where is the break-even point?

Craig Neustadter – Are these the “next best thing”? These projects require vast efforts to complete and there is only so much money and personnel. If we have limited resources we have to apply them where we most need them. If you split the resources, you lower your chances of success. This committee should advocate for projects that will work best. “Next best” is really a defeat.

Robin Lowe – People bypass Moreno Valley and come through the SR-79 south on surface roads. People from all over work in San Diego and get home at 9:00pm.

Craig Neustaedter – There is a need for both North/South and East/West improvement. The staff recommendation doesn’t do either. The recommended east/west corridor just distracts resources, and Butterfield Stage road is the best option.

Frank Hall – The staff’s final recommendation should be what they feel is the best route, not what they think WE think is the best route. There is always trauma with development of a corridor. Look at the 91, at least its there. With the I-15 going through Norco, two councilmen were recalled. At least it is there. 20 years from now we’ll say the same thing, “thank God it’s there”.

Bruce Colbert –Economic health should be a big consideration. These corridors increase mobility. We should look for corridors that present the biggest time gain. The environmental issues early on precluded the most viable alternatives.

Peter Kiriakos – I think the staff has done their job well. There is not enough money for everything; we have to pick the best ones. Van Buren should be more of an option than Cajalco.

Gene Rogers – This is about congestion relief. It would be helpful if the staff analysis included a cost-benefit analysis of the staff recommended corridors.

Ameal Moore – The staff should recommend the best corridor, at least present it, then we can deal with problems later.

Robin Lowe – I was very surprised by the alternatives that were chosen. They seemed to be too politically influenced. I was disappointed. The best alternatives don’t seem to have been chosen. I would not be happy if politics influenced the technical data.

Bill Holsworth – I have written letters on the EIR. The EIR is an environmental solution. There is more deference to the MSHCP than to solving traffic problems. The public will realize this. John Kain revealed that alternative 7b would probably exacerbate traffic problems. Why spend the money? You are on a mission to solve the environmental problems.

John Licata, City of Corona – We believe any east/west corridor has to take into account Orange County, such as Cajalco to the 133/241. This provides a direct link to March Air Base. Furthermore, the SR-79 should be the north/south corridor and the 74 should be a super expressway.

Gail Wanczuk-Barton – In response to Mr. Holsworth, we have to look at the environmental impacts to permit roads. But logic shows that Cajalco should be it. Second best isn’t good enough. Is our job to look for the best transportation corridors? What really is the basis of the evaluation?

Jim Henderson– I would like to give you a little bit of the thought process on the staff recommendation, particularly on the Alternative 1 vs. Alternative 5 scenario. It was all based upon the provisions of the Clean Water Act. We did a detailed analysis of the impacts of each alternative. The Clean Water Act says that you do that, and then you pick the one that is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative or LEDPA. So, if there is an alternative that meets the purpose and need, then you must pick that one if it is the least environmentally damaging. Clearly there is less environmental damage in Alternative 5 than there is in Alternative 1. That was the thought process. Our issue becomes how do we deal with that? There is a political perspective and the commissioners need to consider that; obviously we've heard a significant amount of interest in pursuing Alternative 1. However, there are significant procedural hurdles to overcome if that was the selected alternative. The process would be to determine the locally preferred alternative. The problem would be if that could not be aligned with the LEPDA alternative, with the agencies' concurrence. If they view the LEPDA as being different than the locally preferred alternative then we are at loggerheads. That has occurred in San Diego with very difficult results.

Ed Studor – The difference of impact is something like 7 acres vs. 70 acres. How do you reconcile that? That the 70 acres is less environmentally damaging?

Jim Henderson – Or that the practicability issues so far override that difference that you can sell it.

Gene Rogers – What about air quality? How is it weighed?

Jim Henderson – It is a consideration, but the differences between the two alternatives are less on the air quality side than on the water side.

Steve Smith – From an aquatic resource standpoint, the most serious impacts are on the Ramona Expressway side, especially from Lake Perris to the east. There is a hybrid alternative that includes the I-215 to the I-15 on the Cajalco alignment, then from the I-215 to the 79 on the 5C alignment. This avoids the more serious aquatic resource impacts and could make the Corp and EPA amenable to at least getting that portion between the I-15 and I-215 along the Cajalco alignment. Although it's difficult to read everything in the EIR/EIS, it is all laid out there in those document and if we need to get more specific with the exact impacts and how they trade off, to provide the committee the additional information, that can be done.

Ed Studor – On any of the east/west alternatives, one of the main aquatic resources is the San Jacinto River. We would be talking about new crossings with 5C. With the hybrid, you have existing structures, and the least impact of any of the alternatives.

John Kain – The issues of freeway vs. expressway. The point that I think needs to be made clear that the BIA has not been saying we do not need freeways. We took the position a year ago to look at alternative routes along the Cajalco/Ramona Expressway that dealt with some of these impact issues that are being displayed, with 1B in particular. We think you should include an alternative south of Lake Mathews; optimize these routes in the sense of the sensitive areas. Take the time, because of the transportation utility of this corridor, to really look at the design elements right now that are being dealt with in the Tier 2 level of this analysis. The modeling shows that some route in that area is, and has been historically viewed as an expressway corridor, based on studies we were all involved in 20 years ago. It has some utility here in terms of relief on the 60 through Riverside and Moreno Valley and really some far reaching benefits including the potential for some kind of connection to Orange County. So, given the preciousness of this corridor, we've been trying to input into this process, to look at the design considerations along that corridor to avoid some of the impacts that have been identified. Along the 79, Steve and I have debated for the last 18 months. I was involved in studies for WRCOG over a decade ago

studying the 79 and Ramona Expressway and what should these facilities be. We've always seen the demand. Certainly they could be freeways and it would be great. Our concern regarding the 79 is that the CETAP has never studied a viable freeway route alternative south of Scott Rd in the process. There was only one route identified, the Butterfield Stage Rd/Pourroy Rd where you have subdivisions going in and a lot of community impacts. That's a non-starter to begin with. You've seen the community reaction, which we anticipated. If we are serious about a freeway; we need to identify an alternative route in that area.

8. Public comment period

Bill Davis, Menifee valley SEDCO – I have to compliment the committee. I have really heard more good things going on today than I have in a long time. You're really thinking it over. Menifee Valley SEDCO is in the middle of one of the biggest community centers. We are trying, however long it takes, to make Menifee Valley a city. We have enough people, but don't know yet if we have enough sales tax. The only thing we ask for is that you don't saddle us with something a city can't support. The community center is that type of an obligation. You did a pretty good job of upsetting everyone with the 7b/5c corridor. Everyone is against it. 7a was going to take out an entire tract, including the one I live in. Keep up the good work, and maybe you'll see a city in Menifee someday.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am