

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
16401 Paramount Blvd.  
Paramount, California  
April 7, 2021**

**Zoom Conference**

GCCOG President Maria Davila called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

#	Name	City/Agency	Present	Absent
1.	Tony Lima	Artesia	X	
2.	Cinde MacGugan-Cassidy (E)	Avalon (1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President)	X	
3.	Ali Saleh (E)	Bell (2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President)	X	
4.	Raymond Dunton (E)	Bellflower	X	
5.	Maria Pulido	Bell Gardens		X
6.	Naresh Solanki	Cerritos		X
7.	Oralia Rebollo (E)	Commerce	X	
8.	Emma Sharif	Compton	X	
9.	Elizabeth Alcantar	Cudahy		X
10.	Sean Ashton (E)	Downey	X	
11.	Luis Roa	Hawaiian Gardens		X
12.	Marilyn Sanabria (E)	Huntington Park	X	
13.	Cory Moss	Industry		X
14.	John Lewis (E)	La Mirada	X	
15.	Ariel Pe	Lakewood	X	
16.	Robert Garcia (E)	Long Beach		X
17.	Rex Richardson	Long Beach	X	
18.	Marisela Santana	Lynwood	X	
19.	Heber Marquez	Maywood	X	
20.	David Torres (Alt. for Kimberly Ann Cobos-Cawthorn)	Montebello	X	
21.	Vilma Cuellar Stallings	Paramount	X	
22.	Raul Elias	Pico Rivera	X	
23.	Joe Angel Zamora (E)	Santa Fe Springs	X	
24.	Edward Wilson (E)	Signal Hill	X	
25.	Maria Davila (E)	South Gate (President)	X	
26.	William Davis	Vernon	X	
27.	Fernando Dutra (E)	Whittier (Immediate Past President)	X	
28.	Herlinda Chico (E)	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Hahn		X
29.	Kimberly Ortega	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Solis	X	
30.	Sup. Holly Mitchell	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Mitchell		X
31.	Sharon Weissman	Port of Long Beach	X	
		(E) Executive Committee	<b>Total =</b>	
			<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>

ALSO, PRESENT: Nancy Pfeffer, Genny Cisneros, Gilbert Saldate, Karen Heit, Joel Arevalos, Sandra Mora, Stephanie Cadena, – COG Staff; Ivy Tsai, COG Attorney; Erica Copeland, Mahogany Smith-Christopher – CivicSpark Fellow; Norman Emerson, Emerson & Associates; Danielle Soto, AQMD; Karen Lee, City of Artesia; Michael Parmer, City of Avalon; Roger Yoh, Gloria Roberts, Hammer Sui – Caltrans; Frank Yokoyama, City of Cerritos; Andres Molina, Flatiron Construction; Danny Hom, Wally Shidler – Metro Service Council; Tyler Bonnano-Curley, City of Long Beach; Steven Lee, Mark Dierking – Metro; Patricia Camacho, Office of Nanette Diaz Barragan; Kimberlee Tachiki-Chin, Office of Lucille Roybal-Allard; Nina Turner, Christina Skacan – Port of Long Beach; Sarah Patterson, SCAG; Christina Baghdasarian, WSP.

Roll call was taken by GCCOG Administrative Assistant Joel Arevalos.

There were no amendments to the agenda. There were no public comments.

Under Matters from Staff, Executive Director Nancy Pfeffer gave a reminder that the July 7<sup>th</sup> Board meeting will be moved to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Director Pfeffer announced that on April 1<sup>st</sup>, SCAG approved funding allocations of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) relief funding to counties within the region. The funding is to support transit agencies to address impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director Pfeffer informed the Board that the COG received the MOU from SCAG for the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) funding. The funding will be used to assist cities in completing their housing elements by the state's deadline in Fall 2021.

Director Pfeffer gave an overview of items on the consent calendar, including Item U for a grammar correction of the COG's policy for sick leave for part time employees, and Item V for staff's recommendation of a position on Senator Portantino's bill for providing incentives on projects for mixed-use to residential uses. Director Pfeffer also provided an update on the Board's direction for staff upon adoption of the legislative agenda to consider development of an equity index. COG staff has begun researching and reviewing available tools, databases and models around equity.

Director Pfeffer shared the COG's new Urban Tree Canopy project webpage, which highlights the four cities we are working with under this project. While a total of 8 cities expressed interest, the work is being done for the first 4 due to limited funding. COG staff is seeking additional funding opportunities to continue this work in the remaining 4 cities.

Lastly, Director Pfeffer shared the event flyer for the COG's upcoming Affordable Housing Workshop scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup>, which will focus on funding and financing. Gateway cities' staff and elected officials are welcome to attend.

President Davila asked for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Member Marilyn Sanabria moved to approve, and it was seconded by Member Vilma Cuellar Stallings. COG Staff Arevalos performed a roll call, and the item was approved.

President Davila moved on to Report A, Remarks from SCAG President and Board Member Rex Richardson. Member Richardson presented on the Racial Equity Early Action Plan, a Framework for Internal and External Focused Actions. SCAG adopted a resolution in July 2020 affirming its commitment to meaningfully advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. SCAG further established a Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice in summer 2020, with the focus on defining equity, providing an equity inventory and framework, and developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work Plan.

In defining equity SCAG's working definition is, "as central to SCAG's work, racial equity describes the actions, policies and practices that eliminate bias and barriers that have historically and systematically marginalized communities of color, to ensure all people can be healthy, prosperous and participate fully in civic life."

Research that went into this work centered around economic vitality, public health, mobility, and environment, seen specifically through an equity lens. Member Richardson presented sample findings on regional conditions. Relating to poverty, 45% of the Hispanic population lived below 200% of the poverty line in 2018, the highest among all ethnicity/race groups in the region. Relating to Home ownership, 62% of white households own their homes, compared to 35% of black households and 43% of Hispanic/Latinx households. Additionally, Member Richardson presented that the average earnings of people of color in the US are 63% of the average earnings of whites of the same age and gender. He noted the system itself needs to be changed to be more inclusive and centered around equity.

The equity framework and early action plan is critical for ensuring work advances in this area, and the framework serves as a compass to SCAG for beginning to address equity. It includes short- and long-term actions both internally and externally and describes the need for partnerships with other organizations.

For next steps, Member Richardson said the Regional Council will consider approval of the Racial Equity Action Plan in May 2021. He further discussed the four major goals of the plan: Shift Organizational Culture; Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy, Planning; Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning; Activate and Amplify.

President Davila congratulated Member Richardson's work during his time as SCAG President. Member Sharon Weissman thanked Member Richardson for his work and expressed excitement for this work to shift into his new role with the South Coast AQMD.

Immediate Past President Fernando Dutra congratulated Member Richardson and recommended sharing the presentation with academic institutions in the region to build new connections for policymaking and planning. Member Richardson said making new connections and building partnerships is an action item under the plan, along with training, capacity building, and increasing awareness to build a culture that will shift equity away from a political lens to a professional standard.

Member Emma Sharif commended Member Richardson's presentation and said every aspect in policy and planning must be part of the change.

President Davila said all presentations would be received and filed towards the end of the meeting agenda.

President Davila moved on to Report B, Quarterly Update from Caltrans District 7. Deputy Director Gloria Roberts presented Caltrans' finalized 2024 Strategic Plan, which serves as a roadmap for improving the transportation network over the next four years. The mission and goals within the plan are focused on all people, not just transportation. It marks a shift to moving people and not just moving cars.

Roberts presented that CALSTA released the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), which builds on executive orders to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. CAPTI is a holistic framework that balances an approach of all areas of the state, acknowledges the need for a variety of solutions, and provides strategies and actions for implementing the vision for the future. Caltrans will be sending a calendar of grants for the next year and information on how CAPTI can be utilized in future grant applications.

Roberts provided an update on maintenance activities in the southeast LA region and shared the lead contact information for the GCCOG. Roberts noted that Gateway cities may also reach out to their designated ambassador with any questions or concerns.

Roger Yoh, Caltrans staff, provided a major projects update, including projects on Pacific Coast Highway, Atlantic Ave, and the I-5 interchange, with information on their percent completed and scheduled reopening of lanes and offramps. Member Oralia Rebollo asked about the bridge preservation project in the City of Commerce, which involves 24 bridges between I-605 freeway and Magic Mountain. Yoh responded that 2 of these bridges are within the COG region and need improvements for cracks on the deck to prolong the life of the structure.

Director Pfeffer asked Roberts to speak on the federal funding that came to the state for federal highway relief, and how funding allocations were decided and how much we can expect to benefit the Gateway cities. Roberts agreed to follow up with additional information and allocation figures when it becomes available.

President Davila turned to Item C, Transportation Committee Report. Metro Board Director Fernando Dutra shared updates on the recent Metro Board meeting, and shared that a transportation deputy will be hired with support from the COG and Whittier city staff.

At Metro's Board meeting, Member Dutra communicated his passion and interest for providing the southeast region a platform at Metro and ensuring that we get a fair share of funding. He provided an update on new program initiatives discussed, such as fare capping which would allow customers to pay as they go, instead of paying upfront for

daily, weekly or monthly passes. The feature would allow customers to pay the lowest price possible for travel.

Another item discussed was in relation to transit law enforcement services. Current Metro law enforcement contracts with Long Beach and other city and county police departments require additional funding to complete their contracts through 2022. The Board agreed to extend their contracts and funding and will engage the Public Safety Advisory Committee to recommend improvements. Metro Board members expressed some concern with the additional funding needed, and will continue monitoring the item.

With regard to the Fareless System Initiative, Member Dutra said that the Board issued a motion to gather more information regarding sustainability and sources of funding to backfill a potential void before implementing a demonstration.

Member Dutra shared an update on the West Santa Ana Branch project. Metro staff is currently addressing comments on the EIR/EIS from the FTA and is continuing collaborations with third parties, such as Caltrans and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Metro expects public circulation for June, with public-private partnership solicitation to follow to push the project over the finish line.

Member Dutra also shared an update on the Eastside Extension phase 2 project. Metro staff has met with corridor cities and begun conceptual engineering. Formal comments have been submitted by all corridor cities.

Member Dutra shared on ongoing discussion items that cities want Metro to focus on and prioritize, including completion of the I-605 EIR and how to address advocacy for affected cities, continued construction and mitigation for phase 3, and pavement repairs.

Member Dutra announced the Transportation Committee nominations of Community Members to the Metro Gateway Cities Service Council. There were 5 candidates, and 3 were appointed as Community Members. These are Wally Shidler, Danny Horn and Justin Lawson.

Member Sean Ashton moved to ratify, and it was seconded by Cinde MacGugan-Cassidy. COG Staff Arevalos performed a roll call, and the item was approved.

President Davila turned to Item D, Homelessness Program Update. COG Homelessness Program Manager Gilbert Saldate provided an update on the monthly Homelessness TAC meeting and quarterly Committee on Homelessness. Recently the committee received an invite by Councilmember Dunton to get a tour of the Bellflower shelter. Saldate will be helping to coordinate this tour.

Saldate provided an update on Innovation Fund projects that have kicked off. The Montebello Community Assistance program, a project through the Fire Department with the City of Montebello, has begun engaging in street outreach. The feasibility study with Signal Hill is moving forward with their first steps. The City Liaison project with Maywood, Cudahy, Bell, and Commerce has begun with the liaison meeting with each city and

engaging in outreach to gain an understanding of current efforts. The project seeks to take a proactive approach in working with people who have experienced homelessness.

Saldate highlighted the Housing and Employment Program, which started in January 2021. To date, 23 individuals have been housed and 17 of these have been enrolled in the workforce development board. These individuals are from Huntington Park, Bell, Whittier, South Gate, Artesia, Bellflower, and Paramount. The program is helping to build employment skills and provide mock interviews for enrolled individuals. Saldate also reported on a new entity called First Step, which has multiple openings for individuals in their housing and employment program. Saldate commented on the success and promise of programs that provide housing with employment services.

The COG's Regional Homeless Plan is underway and recently gathered input from various stakeholders, including the chambers of commerce, faith-based community groups, and Caltrans. Key values have surfaced through these comments, including humanity, accountability, funding, and accessibility. Saldate said humanity plays a role in destigmatizing homelessness and preserving dignity and respect for individuals. He also highlighted the importance of reciprocity, in terms of each city doing its part and sharing resources and capacity. Other priorities raised through the development of the Plan include increased education, investment in homeless prevention, provision of affordable housing subsidies, reduction of zoning limitations, and development of additional programs. Saldate is planning for additional engagement events to gather input and bring a draft plan to the May 2021 Committee on Homelessness meeting to review all comments, identify prominent themes and prioritize actions for implementation. The draft plan will then be brought to the TAC in summer of 2021 for review and discussion.

Saldate provided an update on rental assistance collaborations with PATH. He noted there is a lot of funding available through the state for tenants who have not been able to pay their rent, particularly now that eviction moratoriums are up. Landlords are also able to apply. Saldate will share further information with Board members and city staff.

Saldate also provided an update on his engagement with the faith-based community, in alignment with Supervisors Solis and Mitchell's motion for working closer with these communities for combatting homelessness.

In relation to the Innovation funds, Saldate said the original deadline for grants was June 30<sup>th</sup>, however it will be extended through the end of December 2021. There has been discussion of possibly another round of innovation funding in 2022, that could provide \$5 million in funding to the COG through Measure H.

Member Margarita Rios asked how the estimated \$5 million would translate to the local level, how it would be allocated and about the timeline for disbursement. Saldate said the Homelessness TAC reviews the goals of the Homeless Initiatives and makes decisions on funding projects in the region. Saldate said all city managers and their liaisons are invited to participate in the Homelessness TAC.

Member Rios asked for an update on the Regional Homeless Plan meeting recently held, and how the discussion and results of the meeting will inform the project. Saldate responded that the input and findings from the meeting will be further reviewed and discussed at the upcoming TAC meeting to arrive at a consensus for the main priorities and themes of the plan. The final plan will be brought to the COG Board for approval.

The Board received and filed all presentation items.

Under Matters from the Board of Directors, Member Ed Wilson said that Signal Hill last year instituted a commemorative plaque recognizing rich diversity and groups, and their contributions to the community. In April 2021, Signal Hill is flying a flag in memory of the Cambodian Genocide in the US. Through this effort, the City seeks to increase awareness of the rich diversity in the community and honor their history.

Under Matters from the President, President Davila made an appointment to the SCAG Transportation Committee. She received letters from Members Sean Ashton, Blanca Pacheco, Ariel Pe, Raul Elias and Naresh Solanki. Davila appointed Blanca Pacheco from Downey. For the Gateway Cities COG Transportation Committee, President Davila appointed Member Marisela Santana.

Member Ashton moved to approve, and it was seconded by Member Wilson. COG Staff Arevalos performed a roll call, and the item was approved.

Adjournment: President Davila adjourned the meeting at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Pfeffer, Executive Director