

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
16401 Paramount Blvd.
Paramount, California
February 3, 2021**

Zoom Conference

GCCOG President Maria Davila called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

	Name	City/Agency	Present	Absent
1.	Tony Lima	Artesia	X	
2.	Cinde MacGugan-Cassidy (E)	Avalon (1 st Vice President)	X	
3.	Ali Saleh (E)	Bell (2 nd 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.	Roberto Uranga (E)	Long Beach	X	
17.	Rex Richardson	Long Beach		X
18.	Marisela Santana	Lynwood	X	
19.	Heber Marquez	Maywood	X	
20.	Angie Jimenez	Montebello	X	
21.	Margarita Rios	Norwalk	X	
22.	Vilma Cuellar Stallings	Paramount	X	
23.	Raul Elias	Pico Rivera		X
24.	Joe Angel Zamora (E)	Santa Fe Springs	X	
25.	Edward Wilson (E)	Signal Hill	X	
26.	Maria Davila (E)	South Gate (President)	X	
27.	William Davis	Vernon	X	
28.	Fernando Dutra (E)	Whittier (Immediate Past President)	X	
29.	Herlinda Chico (E)	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Hahn	X	
30.	Kimberly Ortega	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Solis	X	
31.	Sup. Holly Mitchell	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Mitchell		X
32.	Sharon Weissman	Port of Long Beach	X	
	(E) Executive Committee	Total =	24	8

ALSO PRESENT: Nancy Pfeffer, Genny Cisneros, Gilbert Saldate, Karen Heit, Joel Arevalos, Sandra Mora, Stephanie Cadena, Melani Smith – COG Staff; Ivy Tsai – COG Counsel; Thaddeus McCormack, City Manager – City of Lakewood; Norman Emerson, Emerson & Associates; Mahogany Smith-Christopher, CivicSpark; Justin Ramirez, Tyler Bonanno-Curley – City of Long Beach; Danielle Soto – AQMD; Sarah Patterson – SCAG; Julia Scalise, Constanza Pachon, Sandra Alvidrez – The Whole Child; Karen Lee – City of Artesia; Nina Turner – Port of Long Beach; David Torres – City of Montebello; Juan Sanchez, City of Bellflower; Julia Emerson – SoCalGas; Kristine Guerrero – Cal Cities; Monica Waggoner, Steven Lee – Metro; Luke Klipp – Office of Supervisor Hahn; Lisseth Flores, Alejandra Cortez – City of Bell Gardens.

Roll call was taken by GCCOG Administrative Assistant Sandra Mora. There were no amendments to the agenda. There were no public comments.

Under Matters from Staff, Executive Director Nancy Pfeffer reported that the COG staff is preparing an application for the Caltrans Strategic Transportation Planning grant program. The proposal will request \$700,000 to do an update of key elements of the COG's Strategic Transportation Plan, developed in 2015. The application is due on February 12, 2021 and awards will be announced in Spring 2021.

Director Pfeffer provided an update on the COG's Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) funding from SCAG, in the amount of \$1.3 million for projects that help cities meet their Housing Element requirements. COG staff is having challenges in finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with SCAG, as they are requiring the COG to develop a formal Purchasing and Procurement Policy and a Grants Management Policy as a condition of funding approval. The policies would establish standard procedures for the COG to use to request services from vendors. In the past the GCCOG has followed the city of Paramount's procurement policy. COG staff is meeting with SCAG staff to come to an agreement on the content of the policies. Funding will be delayed until the MOU is finalized. COG staff will return to the COG Board with the developed policies for approval.

Member Ed Wilson asked if it would be appropriate for the COG's elected representatives to be involved in communications with SCAG staff. Director Pfeffer responded that the COG is trying to resolve the issue at the staff level, but Board members will be updated if help is needed from the top level.

President Davila asked for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Member Fernando Dutra moved to approve, and it was seconded by Member Cinde Cassidy. COG Staff Mora performed a roll call, and the item was approved.

President Davila moved on to Report A, presentation on The Whole Child. Constanza Pachon, CEO of The Whole Child presented on the organization, a nonprofit providing comprehensive services to some of the most vulnerable families in Southeast LA County. The Whole Child's mission is to help families raise healthy children and have a place to call home. Family housing is the largest practice of the organization, followed by mental health services. The organization serves mostly struggling mothers, many of whom are

single parents and/or of minority groups. The services provided are critical to families as children face many challenges that impede healthy development. Pachon reported that one in six U.S. children has a treatable mental health disorder, and every 6 minutes in the U.S., an infant or toddler is removed from their home due to alleged abuse or neglect. She also noted that 37% of low-income children are at risk of child obesity.

The Whole Child aims to provide lifelong positive impacts, with services and assistance to place families in permanent housing, provide therapy for children, and provide parenthood and familial education/workshops. Pachon reported that in 2019-20, 3,700+ families were served by The Whole Child, with 8,900 people total and 4,800 of which are youth. Despite challenges, The Whole Child has been able to sustain 90% of its service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many services were moved to virtual platforms so as not to disrupt services to families, including for education and therapy programs.

Pachon reported that The Whole Child serves 23 of Gateway Cities and unincorporated areas of the County, and is currently working to expand their reach in southeast LA. This year, The Whole Child is expanding its presence in the region with a second headquarters planned in the city of Downey, and a new complex added to the Santa Fe Springs location.

Pachon noted several opportunities to expand partnerships with The Whole Child. The top areas of collaboration needed with cities are increasing housing stock for homeless families; coordination of services with social services departments within different cities; and coordination of employment services efforts with the COG itself.

President Davila asked if there have been challenges and/or less opportunities for reports of child abuse and neglect due to COVID-19 and quarantine mandates. She asked where reporting data comes from. Pachon responded that reports on these issues continue to be made, and a lot of data comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and LA County Department of Public Health. In addition to formal data, information is also gathered from therapists and school employees, who are trained to identify warning signs of neglect and abuse and can report instances.

Immediate Past President Dutra asked Pachon to expand on the Holiday Helpers program. Pachon added that the program asks members of the community to volunteer to adopt families to provide gifts, including toys, home supplies, clothes, and other necessary supplies. In 2020 the Helpers Program helped over 250 families.

Member Heber Marquez asked for recommendations for teachers and schools to help in identifying warning signs to help protect kids. Pachon said she would connect further offline with Member Marquez to inform of school programs that provide resources to train teachers.

Member Vilma Cuellar Stallings asked the reason why the City of Paramount is not serviced by The Whole Child. Pachon responded that most of the funding for the organization comes from the County and is divided across the eight Service Planning

Areas (SPA). The Whole Child is funded for SPA 7, which covers most of the Gateway Cities. Paramount is in SPA 6 and has a different mental health and/or housing provider.

Member Herlinda Chico commented that she has spoken with Director Pfeffer regarding a COG support letter for Supervisor Hahn's initiative for reassessing SPAs, including those in the Gateway cities. This could address the city's left out of The Whole Child's service area.

Member Oralía Rebollo asked about The Whole Child's communication with local school districts and outreach to cities. Pachon said the organization works very closely with school districts and had a physical presence in 36 schools prior to COVID-19. She noted that The Whole Child is always welcoming partnerships with new districts.

Member Joe Angel Zamora added that school-based systems often have specialists that work on housing and homelessness programs for children and their families and can also serve as a resource for teachers.

President Davila said Board Members will receive and file the presentation at the end of all items.

President Davila moved on to Item B. Presentation of the Micro-Transit Pilot Program. Monica Waggoner, Administrative Analyst for LA Metro presented on Metro Micro, a pilot program for an on-demand transportation service that can be requested or scheduled ahead of time. Similar to an Uber pool, it is a shared ride service that is public transit operated by Metro. Rides are currently \$1 per ride, with three different ways for booking. Options include booking through a smartphone application, a web portal, or a call center and live agent. Waggoner noted that different languages are offered.

The program launched in December 2020 with two zones – Watts/Willowbrook and LAX/Inglewood. In January, Metro added three more zones: El Monte; North Hollywood/Burbank; and Compton/Artesia. Waggoner added that Metro will be adding three more zones in June 2021 and adding a last zone in UCLA/Westwood in Fall 2021.

Waggoner reported that Metro staff is working to get the word out and is asking for cities to support outreach efforts. Metro can provide cities with digital tools, social media templates and email blasts to help promote the new service. Metro also invites members to ride and experience the service.

Member Roberto Uranga asked about the names of the zones. Waggoner said zones are named after the community they generally encompass. In the Gateway Cities, service is offered in Watts/Willowbrook and Compton/Artesia, named after the Metro station areas.

Member Elizabeth Alcantar asked if zones cover the Gateway region or just a few cities and asked how many people are expected to be in a vehicle at a time, given the pandemic. Waggoner responded that vehicles have a capped occupancy of 50%. Waggoner showed zone maps onscreen and said the Artesia/Compton zone encompasses some of the Green and Blue line. Rides can only occur within a single zone.

Waggoner noted that six zones were selected initially for the pilot, with three added later to further test out the service. Metro selected the zones considering a variety in demographics across the different areas in the County. Metro also considered equity and services in underserved communities in traditional transportation options. Metro is testing this concept as a method for increasing access to mobility.

Member Rebollo commented that if Metro is looking for underserved areas with low accessibility, southeast LA is the area to look at as there is no accessibility in this part of the region. Waggoner responded that staff is hoping the pilot works well and the Metro Board looks to expand to more areas, particularly in southeast LA. At this point, Metro is hoping to get the word out and increase service as that will be critical to success.

Member Herlinda Chico followed up on previous comments regarding the zones and their reach. She noted the naming leads to confusion and asked if Long Beach is in the Artesia/Compton zone. Waggoner responded that the zone stops short of Long Beach, and the names of the zones are for the Metro's Compton/Artesia transit stations and do not follow city boundaries. Member Chico asked for Metro to consider appropriate language for the names as the current zones do not follow traditional boundaries.

Member Sean Ashton asked about equity for the Southeast LA area, and when the Metro Board expects to review results and decide on expanding. Waggoner responded that the pilot term is 3 years, and the project has established checkpoints for review throughout. While there will be ongoing evaluation, and fare may change and zones may be altered as results start coming in, the ultimate date is after 3 years, by when the Metro Board will decide if it will become a permanent service offering.

Member Ashton added that it would be helpful for Metro Micro to provide service in areas that do not have rail or transit nearby. The service could provide connection to rail/transit that otherwise would be inaccessible. Waggoner noted that these connections are being tested in other zones, though not in the Gateway cities. She added that zones must be small to capture trips that people are willing to replace, or willing to add, to their itinerary.

Immediate Past President Dutra asked about the process for making changes to include more southeast LA communities that are not able to take advantage of transportation services. He also added that efficient services should be predictable and suggested aligning future zones with future transportation models, such as light rail.

Waggoner responded that with existing zones, tweaks may be made to boundaries and service hours at the operation/staff levels. However, the process of adding new zones has not been established yet. She noted that the planning process for this project took four years of work, including the identification of the zones for the concept. Metro hopes to begin working on the process for adding new zones in the future, keeping in mind the Crenshaw line that is opening, and considering travel connections for the 2028 Olympics. Staff will be looking at aligning the service with current and future offerings.

Director Pfeffer said Metro Micro underscored the importance of getting light rail projects built on time and on schedule, as accessibility is really important to our communities. She asked how Metro will determine success and what metrics will be looked at. She also asked how agencies can partner with Metro as zones continue operating and as new ones are added. Director Pfeffer also invited Waggoner to present at the Transportation Committee.

Waggoner responded that Metro built primary metrics into program, looking at how the service improves accessibility and experience, especially for disadvantaged communities. Staff is still working on other specific measures, and this will be an ongoing evaluation. Waggoner also added that Metro Micro updates are being made monthly to the Metro Board and invited those interested to tune in there for ongoing updates.

President Davila said Board Members will receive and file the presentation at the end.

President Davila turned to Item C, the Transportation Committee Report. Justin Ramirez reported that the big news is that Metro CEO Phil Washington will be stepping down at the end of his contract in May 2021, ending a 6-year tenure. While Washington has not officially announced next steps, he said he will not be taking a new contract with Metro.

Ramirez reported that the most recent Metro Board Meeting included information on higher sales tax receipts, with the Board discussing how to best restore services that have been impacted due to COVID-19. Ramirez said Metro is looking forward to seeing increased services in communities and noted the impacts to both residents and operators from COVID.

Finally, Ramirez noted that Mayor Robert Garcia intends to keep on representing the region until his replacement is officially seated at Metro.

President Davila asked for a motion to receive and file all presentations. Member Cassidy moved and it was seconded by Member Sean Ashton. COG Staff Mora performed a roll call, and the item was approved.

Under Matters from the Board of Directors, Member Chico reported that Supervisor Hahn will bring forth, at the March Board meeting, a motion for the reevaluation of the SPA systems, which The Whole Child referred to earlier. SPAs are how the County divides up and allocates resources and designates service providers. Several of the SPA boundaries do not make sense geographically, and the SPA system was created to administer services but has not been reevaluated in the over 30 years that it has been created. Census and redistricting are evaluated every 10 years as communities and needs change, therefore Supervisor Hahn said it is really important to also reevaluate SPAs, the cities within the SPA boundaries, and ensure that resources are disseminated in an equitable manner. Member Chico said the Supervisor would love to have support from the COG on this matter. Member Chico will have a draft letter for the COG's review and approval.

There were no Matters from the President.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of February 3, 2021

Adjournment: President Davila adjourned the meeting at 7:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Pfeffer, Executive Director