

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
16401 Paramount Blvd.
Paramount, California
May 5, 2021**

Zoom Conference

GCCOG President Maria Davila called the meeting to order at 6:02 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.	Ed Eng (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.	David Torres	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.	Gabriela Cid	LA County BOS Office of Sup. Mitchell	X	
32.	Sharon Weissman	Port of Long Beach	X	
	(E) Executive Committee	Total =	23	9

ALSO, PRESENT: Genny Cisneros, Karen Heit, Gilbert Saldate, Melani Smith, Stephanie Cadena, Joel Arevalos, Sandra Mora – COG Staff; Erica Copeland, Mahogany Smith-Christopher – CivicSpark Fellow; Thaddeus McCormack, City of Lakewood; Ivy Tsai, COG Attorney; Norman Emerson, Emerson & Associates; Danielle Soto, AQMD; Kristine Guerrero, CalCities; Karen Lee, City of Artesia; Michael Parmer, City of Avalon; Jorgel Chaves, City of Bell Gardens; Tyler Bonanno-Curley, City of Long Beach; Andres Molina, Flatiron Construction; Maria Rosales-Ramirez, Los Angeles County Sanitation District; Steven Lee, Mark Dierking – Metro; Kim Tachiki-Chin, Office of Representative Roybal-Allard; Guadalupe Camberos, Office of Supervisor Solis; Nina Turner, Christina Skacan – Port of Long Beach; Sarah Patterson, SCAG; Selene Sandoval, Kerissa Kelly-Slatten, Dr. Wilma Franco – SELA Collaborative; Joe Linton, Streetsblog; Sumi Gant, Sumire Gant Consultants; 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. President Davila announced COG Transportation Analyst Karen Heit will assist with facilitating the meeting in Director Nancy Pfeffer's absence.

Under Matters from Staff, Heit gave a reminder that there will be two Board meetings in June 2021 as the July 7th Board meeting will be moved to June 30th.

President Davila asked to approve the Consent Calendar. Metro Board Director Fernando Dutra moved to approve and it was seconded by Member Margarita Rios. COG Staff Mora performed a roll call and the item was approved.

President Davila moved on to Report A, Food Waste Recycling Presentation by Maria Rosales-Ramirez with LA County Sanitation Districts. The Sanitation District manages waste water and solid waste relating to sewage, trash and food waste, and converts waste into resources such as recycled water, energy and recycled materials. Rosales-Ramirez said there is 4,000 tons of food waste thrown out each day.

In response to Senate Bill 1383, which requires reduction of organic waste disposal, LA Sanitation has started a pilot project to produce energy from food waste. Using mostly commercial food waste from restaurants and markets, waste is broken down and decomposed through anaerobic digestion, producing natural gas as energy. Through this process the County's power plant produces 20 megawatts (MW) of energy for the grid, making food waste a direct source of energy. Rosales-Ramirez explained how any surplus biogas is able to be used as vehicle fuel at the County's fueling station in Carson.

Rosales-Ramirez said this project began as a pilot in 2018 and has expanded, now operating at 50% capacity. LA Sanitation welcomes partners in the solid waste industry, as well as cities.

Member Sharon Weissman commended the work being done to convert waste into energy. Member Weissman asked if edible food thrown away as waste could instead be separated and moved to a food bank. Rosales-Ramirez said the majority of the food received at the County facility is no longer edible, and asks those that cannot find a way to reuse or recycle food to send it to Sanitation District to be used for energy instead.

Member Sean Ashton asked if there is a way to expand this program to help with ZE and near ZE vehicles, as the state is pushing towards more zero-emission (ZE) vehicles. Rosales-Ramirez said it is a possible use of the biogas, and more research is still being done for the project.

The Board received and filed the presentation.

President Davila moved on to Report B, Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative Update by Executive Director Dr. Wilma Franco. Franco introduced her team, Selene Sandoval and Kerissa Kelly-Slatten. Sandoval introduced the mission of the organization to strengthen SELA communities, build collective power and encourage innovation to drive regional systemic change. The SELA Collaborative consists of Gateway cities and communities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Florence-Firestone, Walnut Park and Lynwood.

Franco gave an overview of the recently published SELA Agenda, a COVID-19 recovery plan developed over a 3-month period that prioritizes the SELA Region, ensures economic prosperity, and identifies investment opportunities across eight policy areas. Franco also shared on their Civic Engagement Campaign with assistance from AmeriCorps Fellows, to provide community members with information on city council meetings and encourage civic engagement. Lastly, Franco presented on their COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution project in collaboration with Supervisor Hilda Solis' office, FEMA, CalOES, local cities and elected officials. SELA was coined the epicenter of COVID-19 in the County, and the Collaborative became the lead community organizer for vaccine distribution and advocate for equitable distribution of the vaccine. Using a Mobile Clinic, SELA was able to administer 2,284 vaccines to SELA residents within five days.

Member Kimberly Ortega commended the SELA Collaborative for their work on the ground along with Supervisor Solis' staff. Franco thanked Member Ortega and Mayor Alcantar for their support in the campaigns.

The Board received and filed the presentation.

President Davila turned to Item C, Transportation Committee Report. Metro Board Director Dutra shared he is in the process of meeting with all Gateway cities with the purpose of discussing needs and goals of each city, and establishing a line of communication for any concerns related to Metro. He also shared he is conducting interviews for a Transportation Deputy, who will be engaging with Gateway communities and ensuring that they are properly represented at Metro.

Member Dutra provided an update on the West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) funding agreement amendment that was recently approved at the Metro Board meeting. An additional \$353,000 and timeline extension was approved for the COG and WSAB Corridor Cities third party administration for the environmental clearance study. Acceptance of the additional funds will be on the COG Board agenda for June 2021.

Member Dutra shared on the programming for the COVID Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), which offers funding to all 88 cities in the County, and encouraged all cities to apply. The deadline is May 28, 2021. COG staff Heit said Metro released a memo with all the details, and COG staff will re-circulate this with additional information to all cities and staff. Heit noted that there is no match requirement tied to this funding.

Member Dutra shared that Metro recently approved the designation of the WSAB Project as Metro's next priority for pursuing grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investments Grants Program. Metro also approved San Fernando's Valley corridor project as priority for FTA funding, for expedited project delivery.

Member Dutra provided updates on the Airport Metro Connector project, which will connect directly with LAX and become a key multimodal gateway to Metro systems. Member Dutra said not all funds identified are certain and this project will bear watching.

Lastly, Dutra shared on the Fareless System Initiative (FSI). The Metro Board expressed concern that the FSI demonstration is limited to Metro bus operations and does not include municipal operations, such as in Norwalk or Long Beach. Replacement funding for fares has not been clearly identified, nor the impact on the agency's stability. Although there is universal support for the FSI system, Metro wants to ensure it is fundable and sustainable. Dutra said this item will be further discussed at the next Metro Board meeting.

The Board received and filed the presentation.

President Davila turned to Item D, LA River Master Plan. Melani Smith, Director of Regional Development presented a draft comment letter for the Board's consideration. The letter addresses the County Public Works' draft Master Plan Update of the original 1996 plan. Smith noted that County staff was invited to present the plan at a recent meeting of the COG's Planning Directors Committee, with additional community organization presentations from TreePeople, Friends of the LA River and East Yards. Member cities' comments are included in the draft comment letter.

Smith summarized the issues that jump out for Gateway Cities, and how these are addressed in the comment letter under eight issue areas: Cities Identification; Plan Goals & Cities' Needs; River Corridor Land Value; Anti-Displacement & Equitable Development Policy; COG's Urban Greening Plan & Urban Tree Canopy; River Access; Park Space; and Inclusive Process & Outcomes.

Smith said it will be critical to have a proportional share of authority and voice for the future of the river, including funding as it relates to projects. She noted the potential for displacement as land values increase along the river, and the importance of having protective measures for residents. She also discussed the need for preservation and increase of job/economic opportunities, with an eye toward equity, and increase of park space with an emphasis on resiliency and eco-benefits.

In regard to the issue of cities identification, Smith said cities along the River must be specified in the Master Plan and engaged for implementation. Smith noted there is a typo in the comment letter and if the Board approves the item, the comment letter will be submitted with the revision that there are 11 Gateway Cities along the river, not 12.

Smith asked the Board to approve submitting the comment letter with the aforementioned correction. Member Sean Ashton moved to approve and it was seconded by Member Herlinda Chico. COG staff Mora took roll call and the item was approved.

There were no Matters from the Board of Directors. Under Matters from the President, President Davila appointed Member Ariel Pe to the SCAG Economic and Human Development Committee. President Davila asked for motion to ratify the appointment. Member Ashton moved and it was seconded by Member Marisela Santana. COG staff Mora took roll call and the item was approved.

Adjournment: President Davila adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Pfeffer, Executive Director