

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

4:00 P.M. Meeting

Gateway Cities Council of Governments
MEETING REMOTE LOCATION: VIA ZOOM

Chair – Metro Director, Whittier Councilmember – Fernando Dutra

Meeting called to order at 4:08. Meeting called to order by Metro Director Councilmember Fernando Dutra – City of Whittier. Roll call was taken by self-introduction.

#		City/Agency	Present	Absent
1.	Cinde MacGugan-Cassidy	COG Board President		X
2.	Ali Saleh	COG 1 st Vice President	X	
3.	Marisela Santana	Board of Directors Member Appointed by the President	x	
4.	Fernando Dutra, Chair	MTA Board of Directors	x	
5.	Emma Sharif	Board of Directors Member Appointed by the President		X
6.	Maria Davila	City of South Gate	X	
7.	Luke Klipp	Office of Sup. Hahn	X	
8.	Martin Reyes/Ben Feldman	Office of Sup. Solis	X	
9.	Lisa Patton	Transit Operator/Long Beach Transit	X	
10.	Sharon Weissman	Port of Long Beach	X	
11.	Thaddeus McCormack	CM Steering Committee, Chair	X	
12.	Ernie Hernandez	City Manager, City of Artesia		X
13.	April Walker	City of Long Beach	X	
14.	Bill Pagett	Public Works Officer	X	
15.	Ed Norris	Public Works Officer	X	
Total =			12	3

OTHERS PRESENT: Nancy Pfeffer, Genny Cisneros, Joel Arevalos, Sandra Mora, Marisa Perez, Ana Pantoja, Karen Heit, Jessica Hale - GCCOG Staff; Norman Emerson – Emerson & Associates; Michael Kodama – Eco-Rapid Transit JPA; Raffi Hamparian, Michael Cano, Jenny Cristales-Cevallos, Ivan Gonzalez, Steven Lee, Meghna Khanna, Ernesto Chaves, Mark Abbott, Mark Dierking – LA Metro; Grissel Chavez – Bell Gardens, Viviana Gomez – Office of Supervisor Janice Hahn, Martin Reyes, Office of Supervisor Hilda Solis, Nina Turner, Shana Espinoza, Christina Skacan, Theresa Dau-Ngo – Port of Long Beach; Lynda Bybee – LSA, Wally Shidler – Metro Service Council, Suzie Bravo, Bill Stracker, and two unidentified callers.

There were no public comments or amendments to the Agenda. Item C was taken out of order to accommodate Karen Heit who had to leave. There were no Matters from Staff.

The Consent Calendar was approved with a correction to the March 2022 minutes: Luke Klipp from Supervisor Janice Hahn's office asked that the minutes be changed to reflect the fact the Supervisor Hahn would be leading a delegation to Washington DC and not Luke Klipp. The minutes were approved with this amendment. Karen Heit proceeded with a report on the status of the Subregional Equity Program, or SEP. She began by giving a background on the origin of the SEP and how it came into being. She discussed how it has finally been incorporated into the Five-year financial plan and funding will be available in five-year increments. She discussed the status of the Gateway Cities Multi-year subregional Programs and the SEP funding. She went over the proposed program for the SEP programming and how the MTA would handle the subregional project nominations.

Other subregions have already allocated or plan to allocate their SEP to regional projects, mostly to cover project cost increases. The GCCOG submitted a letter in 2019 requesting the allocation of \$60 million in funding for active transportation projects (currently labeled TBD in the Measure M Expenditure Plan) and for balancing funding to cities with small populations by allocating a minimum of \$300,000 per year to each city. She also mentioned that the West Santa Ana Branch Cities may request the COG allocate some or all the funds towards meeting the 3% local contribution for rail construction. These decisions will be made by the COG after the Guidelines are adopted. Ms. Heit mentioned that some of the issues have been addressed as COG staff shared comments and concerns with MTA staff. Issues still unresolved are public participation parameters and how subregions may participate in borrowing as well as how projects flow from sponsors to the COG to MTA. A draft letter was included in the package to forward to the MTA.

Director Dutra asked when the funding would be available. Ms. Heit replied that the funding marks would be available in October of 2022 and the projects must be submitted to MTA by February of 2023. Luke Klipp related some historical context for the activation of the SEP by Mayor Garcia and by Directors Dutra and Hahn. A Motion was made and seconded and the item was approved to be forwarded to the Board for approval.

Director Dutra proceeded to give the Metro Board report overview. He began by discussing the \$50 million allocated by the Metro Board for Zero-Emission Truck Program and ZE Infrastructure. He said he was looking forward to the COG's Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations for the I-710 project as well as the recommendations from the I-710 Task Force as well as the ZE working Group. He discussed the program being developed for community colleges to train students for upcoming skilled construction jobs related to the construction of the WSAB. He also discussed Mero's new recruitment effort to assist non-English speakers into English fluency and possible bus operator jobs with the MTA.

Director Dutra discussed an event to kick-off the Fare Free program for Cerritos College students that allows students to have unlimited transit access for a small student fee. This program extends to participating K-12 and community college districts throughout the county. Metro bus is eligible as well as other participating transit agencies including Long Beach Transit. Fare revenues have been replaced by federal COVID relief funds. Maria Davila asked if East Los Angeles College was participating. A Motion was made to receive and file. Nancy Pfeffer, COG Executive Director remarked that East LA College was a participating institution. Director Dutra indicated that a notice would be developed to get the word out.

Next Director Dutra gave an update on the progress for the WSAB advocacy plan. He began with an update of March Metro Board actions including a \$13.6 million amendment to the WSP contract to finish analysis on the northern portion of the alignment, above-grade/aerial sections of the LPA and the Rio Hondo Confluence station. He went on to discuss advocacy at the state level including organizing letters for the state leadership. He thanked Senators Lena Gonzalez and Bob Archuleta as well as the Eco-Rapid Transit JPA board of Directors for showing support. He went on to discuss the federal budget and a carve out of \$1 million for planning activities for WSAB. He indicated that he would be asking for COG members support throughout this process. A Motion was made to receive and file the report.

Director Dutra introduced MTA project managers Ivan Gonzalez and Meghna Khanna to give an update on the Rio Hondo Confluence Station Feasibility Study. Mr. Gonzalez reviewed the feasibility study timeline and the expectant report due date. He discussed the contents of the study and the study goals; he also explained the context of the study with the LA River project and the WSAB environmental review. He reviewed key design challenges; the I-710 freeway, overhead utilities and freight rail bridges. The current confluence area has limited pedestrian and bicycle access. Mr. Gonzalez discussed some of the design and access challenges for the potential station. Mr. Gonzalez reviewed analysis for the two suggested station designs. Mr. Gonzalez concluded by reviewing preliminary station costs and ridership forecasts. Mr. Gonzalez requested any questions, Lisa Patton requested clarification for station access. Luke Klipp asked about the SELA cultural center and the ridership impact of that facility. The potential ridership may not have been included. Ms. Khanna said that the SCAG forecast was utilized and that should have covered the SELA Cultural Center. Mr. Gonzalez indicated that there will be an

additional opportunity to reevaluate ridership. Ms. Khanna stated that the First/Last mile access planning and work is extremely important to the access of this station. Director Dutra cautioned that the costs need to be examined carefully for the station success and utility. Councilmember Maria Davila from the City of South Gate cautioned that it was important that this project not impact the timeline for WASB implementation.

There were no further comments and Director Dutra moved on to Item E. He introduced Jenny Cristales-Cevallos from MTA to give an update on the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2. Ms. Cristales-Cevallos gave an update on project progress and the two alternatives that were studied and the ultimate selection of the Washington Blvd. alignment. She reviewed the profile of the Washington Blvd. alignment, the expenditure plan, and the project implementation schedule. There is an expectation that the project begin construction in 2029 and open for revenue service in 2035. She indicated that the project is a pillar project with the ambition of having it opened by the 2028 Olympics.

Ms. Cristales-Cevallos then turned to explaining the newly developed Initial Operating Segments (IOS). An IOS is developed for constructability purposes as well as funding. There are two IOSs; IOS-1 to Commerce and IOS-2 to Greenwood. The siting of maintenance facilities figures prominently into these IOSs. She reviewed the cost estimates for each of the IOS segments. The project team is considering activating the NEPA process (federal environmental review process) once the alignment is selected and cleared through the state environmental review process (CEQA) making the project available for federal funding. She reviewed the participation of local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and discussed their participation as partners with MTA.

She reviewed next steps including the summer release of the EIR and requested questions. Director Dutra expressed gratitude for the staff presentations here and out at the community.

The next item was a presentation on the Metro I-710 No-Build Alternative by Metro's Michael Cano and Ernesto Chaves. Mr. Cano gave a brief background on the I-710 project. He reviewed the EPA conditions that brought the project to a standstill and effectively terminated the environmental review and development of Early Action Projects. He reviewed the Metro I-710 Task Force process, including giving an overview of the Task Force participation.

Ernesto Chaves explained in detail the status of any I-710 project now that the environmental review process has been terminated. He also explained that the data used to support the selection of Alternative 5C was stale and new data would be required for any project forthcoming. He listed the projects that are environmentally cleared on their own and may proceed (soundwalls, Shoemaker Bridge). Mr. Cano reviewed the Task Force work and the strategy areas. Mr. Cano reviewed the timeline for rescinding the prior alignment determination and making the No-Build determination. This process may take six to nine months.

Director Dutra requested questions. Port of Long Beach Commissioner Sharon Weismann asked about fixing the “choke points” on the I-710 and keeping truck traffic on the freeway and out of the communities. She was concerned that federal money may be left on the table for lack of appropriate projects. Lisa Patton complimented the Metro staff on the Task Force process.

Director Dutra called upon Raffi Hamparian for a federal update. Mr. Hamparian stated that the feds had started doing an allocation run on funding to the various states from the infrastructure bill. Mr. Hamparian that the WSAB is included in the New Starts report. The White house has zeroed out earmarks but Congress may do otherwise. He reviewed some other federal funding issues and called for question.

The next speaker was Ed Norris giving the MTA TAC report. Mr. Norris gave highlights for the I-710 Zero-Emission Truck Program. Mr. Norris stated that there is a ZE Working Group, a subgroup of the I-710 Task Force and went over the availability of funding for this purpose in the Governor’s budget. Mr. Norris briefly went over VMT and how this is a factor in the environmental review of projects. He discussed how VMT relates to the MTA highway program and what VMT mitigation tools and defensible VMT reduction projects exist.

Director Dutra asked for questions. Seeing none, a motion was made to receive and file all items. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.