

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

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

4:00 P.M. Meeting

Gateway Cities Council of Governments
MEETING REMOTE LOCATION: VIA ZOOM

Chair - MTA Director, Whittier Councilmember – Fernando Dutra

Meeting called to order at 4:05. Meeting called to order at by MTA 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	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 Lynwood		X
13.	Kevin Jackson /Tyler Bonnano-Curley	City of Long Beach	X	
14.	Bill Pagett	Public Works Officer	X	
15.	Ed Norris	Public Works Officer		X
Total =			11	4

OTHERS PRESENT: Nancy Pfeffer, Joel Arevalos, Sandra Mora, Marisa Perez, Karen Heit, Nancy Michali, Aileen Qin - GCCOG Staff; Norman Emerson – Emerson & Associates; Michael Kodama, Eco-Rapid Transit; Michael Turner, Meghna Khanna, Raffi Hamparian, James De La Loza, David Mieger, Armineh Saint, Mark Dierking, Steven Lee – Metro; Viviana Gomez, Andrew Ross – Los Angeles County; Lisa Rapp, City of Lakewood; Gregory Farr, Caltrans; Alejandro Huerta, Enterprise Com; Shannon DeLong – City of Whittier; Christina Skacan, Nina Turner, Theresa Dau-Ngo – Port of Long Beach;

Hal Dash, Cerrell; Erin Martinez, Long Beach Transit; Lynda Bybee, LSA; Randy Chin, Keith Nakata – Resident; Natasha DeBenon, Ghirardelli Associates; Naresh Solanki, City of Cerritos.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05, Self-introductions were made by roll call. There were no public comments or amendments to the agenda.

Luke Klipp, Transportation Deputy to Supervisor Janice Hahn, announced that most of the Gateway Cities are now within the Fourth District due to redistricting. Mr. Klipp then introduced Viviana Gomez, formerly from Assemblymember Cristina Garcia's office, who will be assisting with transportation issues. Gateway COG Executive Director, Nancy Pfeffer announced that the COG hired Aileen Qin to fill the associate planner position. Ms. Qin would introduce herself at the Board Meeting. The minutes were approved by roll call.

Metro Director Fernando Dutra gave the Metro update. He began by announcing that both Long Beach College and Long Beach Transit have enrolled in the K-14 student free-fare program. He also announced that the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) will be selected for the West Santa Ana Branch (Eco-Rapid Transit) Light Rail Line (WSAB) and that there would be more on that later.

He then introduced MTA Project Manager, Armineh Saint, who gave a presentation on the Metro Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program. Ms. Saint discussed the simplification of the LIFE program from the user perspective. Metro service will resume fare collection on January 10th. In order to ease into a return of fare collection, the Metro Board is offering reduced pass prices for six months; LIFE riders will get even a steeper discount. She reviewed the new structure and announced that LIFE riders from October 15th to January 10th will receive a free 90-day pass.

Ms. Saint reviewed the history of the LIFE program. The program's origins are in the civil unrest of 1992. The program was expanded to Countywide service. She went on to talk about the distribution through food banks, assistance agencies and educational institutions. She reviewed the short-term needs program for the homeless and recently incarcerated people who may not have identification or proof of income; these people may need 4-trip vouchers or taxi vouchers.

She discussed the LIFE program improvements that make the program easier to access. Self-certification for income is allowed consistent with HUD guidelines. Walk-ins are more difficult due to the pandemic. Metro is partnering with County agencies that collect and process similar information for their own programs to also offer LIFE. Ms. Saint went over how to enroll at various locations as pop-up locations have been suspended due to the COVID outbreak. Lastly, Ms. Saint provided program contact information. Director Dutra called for questions. Lisa Patton asked if the free passes were included in the LIFE program, and how the program is funded. Ms. Saint indicated that the funding for a portion

is set aside in Measure M and a portion of Prop. C. She also reviewed the expansion of the program.

Director Dutra next introduced David Mieger and Meghna Khanna to discuss the selection of the WSAB LPA. Mr. Mieger stated that this is the first Measure M project to reach LPA selection. He reviewed the status of the funding requests and how the project is viewed by the Federal Transit Administration. Ms. Khanna reviewed the LPA recommendation. The LPA will include Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) as the ultimate terminus for the WSAB project and Alternative 3 from Artesia to Slauson as the first phase of the project along with the designation of the maintenance facility in the City of Bellflower. The recommendation also includes a separate study and environmental clearance for the northern segment from Slauson to LAUS. Ms. Khanna went into more detail on the Slauson/A Line (Blue Line) station to Artesia LPA. She described the parking facilities and the various river crossings. She went over the anticipated project schedule and the CPUC project approval, property acquisition and utility relocation work. She went over the steps for project development and the formal phases associated with the federal New Starts program.

Director Dutra called for questions and Luke Klipp commended staff on getting the project to this important milestone and that the Supervisor was interested in moving this further along. Next to speak was Long Beach Harbor Commissioner Sharon Weissman thanking Metro staff for all of the effort made in moving the project to this milestone. Director Dutra next called on Councilmember Maria Davila from South Gate who asked if the environmental should go all the way to LAUS. Ms. Khanna indicated that the Slauson north portion was currently envisioned as all underground and that there could be more work on finding a less expensive profile for that segment. Ms. Davila asked about when the downtown study would be performed. Ms. Khanna mentioned that it would start in 2022 and enter environmental in 2023. Lisa Patton complimented Metro Staff on making a difficult process understandable.

Director Dutra asked about any fatal flaws with the project such as potential right-of-way (ROW) issues. Ms. Khanna mentioned the ROW for the maintenance facility was essentially settled but that there are potential issues with the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) ROW. UP is willing to work with Metro on this subject. Bell Councilmember Ali Saleh asked for the breakdown on the two project segments and their dates. He asked why the project does not start from LAUS south. Ms. Khanna said the project is to provide construction from the south northward. The northern portion is the least cost effective and requires additional planning and engineering.

Director Dutra asked about the use of Public/Private Partnerships (P3). James de la Loza, Metro Chief Planning Officer, explained that the environmental must be completed prior to engaging the private sector. Director Dutra called for a Motion to receive and file which was made by Maria Davila and seconded by Luke Klipp. A joint Motion was made to receive and file reports A & B.

Director Dutra made a presentation on the WSAB Advocacy Plan. The plan began with the specifics of the program, including the project cost increase and estimated \$5 billion shortfall. He reviewed the recommended LPA proposal. He reviewed the funding proposal and the assumed state and federal funding contributions that are not currently secured. He went on to review the chronology and the expected milestones for the future. He talked about advancing the Phase 2 portion of the project.

Dutra reviewed the Gateway Cities and Eco-Rapid Transit JPA support of the project and the recent current agreement on the line implementation.

He reviewed the 11 action items in the advocacy plan. These items are:

- 1) Distribute letter to the Governor, Speaker, and Senate Pro Tempore (cc: LA County delegation) regarding the importance of the WSAB as part of the 2022 state budget deliberations (completed).
- 2) Request COG Board Members and City Managers to identify business, education, health care, labor, non-profit, environmental justice and other community stakeholders who can offer support for WSAB (will be called “stakeholders” in this document).
- 3) Gateway Cities COG staff will develop and distribute WSAB sample letter of support and talking points to COG Board Members, City Managers, and stakeholders to be used at the Metro Planning and Programming Committee and Board meetings.
- 4) Gateway Cities COG staff will develop and launch a WSAB Outreach Communications Toolkit to be used by COG Board Members, City Managers, and stakeholders, including content and graphics for posts.
- 5) Hold a press conference before January 27 Metro Board meeting to demonstrate support for the project.
- 6) Working with the Eco-Rapid Transit JPA and the City Managers WSAB TAC, launch an effort to reach and engage youth in the Gateway Cities area.
- 7) Hold a competition to identify a WSAB #hashtag and youth social media “influencers.”
- 8) COG staff will draft letters for the COG Board to submit to Federal and State elected officials for key decision milestones related to funding including, but not limited to federal and state sources.
- 9) Host a roundtable discussion on WSAB federal and state funding with federal, state, and local elected officials.
- 10) Plan advocacy meetings with leaders in Sacramento and Washington D.C. in Spring 2022, to follow-up on the action items outlined in communications to federal and state officials. COG staff will prepare talking points for these trips

11) Any additional ideas?

COG Executive Director Nancy Pfeffer agreed to be the point of contact for more information. Director Dutra called for and received a vote approving the WSAB Advocacy Plan.

Director Dutra introduced Raffi Hamparian, Metro Federal Legislative Affairs manager, who complimented the Advocacy Plan. Mr. Hamparian emphasized the need for unity in promoting the project. Mr. Hamparian said the upcoming FTA Justice 40 program will be incorporated into the CIG program and application. Mr. Hamparian mentioned that WSAB will make a great Justice 40 applicant. Mr. Hamparian mentioned that Congress passed a continuing resolution which postponed the increased funding allocation. The Feds issue a notice of funding for mega projects that will provide an additional funding opportunities. Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins is carefully reviewing these programs for funding. Lastly, the Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg will be looking at supply chain issues. On his next trip the alignment might be reviewed by the Secretary. Mr. Hamparian indicated that Metro faces a loss with the retirement of Congressman Lucille Roybal-Allard who in the past has assisted MTA with receiving funding. Mr. Hamparian suggested that the GCCOG elected representatives go to Washington DC in March with the APTA and Chamber groups to promote the project. Director Dutra asked what can COG people do to support the funding effort and promote WSAB for Justice 40. Mr. Hamparian encouraged the COG to have Heather Repenning open a channel to the COGs to support all programs (not just WSAB).

Director Dutra called on Michael Turner, Metro State Affairs Manager, to discuss the state budget surplus, which could provide a significant portion of the funding gap in the WSAB plan. Mr. Turner mentioned a potential \$500 million cut out for freight infrastructure. There is a possibility for the Governor's budget to be released in January. Mr. Turner announced that the PEPR/13C issued has been stayed by the courts and federal funding will continue to flow to Metro. He also announced that David Kim will be leaving his position as California State Secretary of Transportation to return to Virginia.

Director Dutra introduced Lisa Rapp, Director of Public Works – City of Lakewood, to give the MTA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) report. Ms. Rapp went over the workshops that are ongoing for state active transportation grants. She also reviewed the release of the scoping program for the Sepulveda Tunnel project. There was a review of the LINK-LAUS project and the \$950 million Phase 1 project. This project will use the Construction Management Project Management process that brings on the contractor from the beginning. Phase 2 involves raising the concourse and raising all the tracks to accommodate additional passenger areas. The Vermont Transit corridor project was reviewed for a BRT with future potential light and heavy rail possibilities.

Director Dutra requested and received a roll call vote recommending the COG Board approve signing on to support Metro's "golden opportunity" letter.

There were no matters from Committee members and the meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.