MEETING NOTICE
AND AGENDA

JOINT MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP AND CITIES/COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Cities/County Transportation Advisory Committee and Regional Planning Technical Working Group may take action on any item appearing on this agenda.

Monday, June 20, 2005
1:30 – 3 p.m.

SANDAG, Board Room, 7th Floor
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JOINT MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP AND CITIES/COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Monday, June 20, 2005

ITEM # ACTION

1. Welcome and Introductions - Gail Goldberg, TWG Chair and Fred Luedke, CTAC Chair
   Members of the Regional Planning Technical Working Group (TWG), Cities/County Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), and Independent Transit Planning Review Peer Review Panel.

2. Public Comments/Communications
   Members of the public will have the opportunity to address the Joint Meeting of the TWG and CTAC on any issue within their jurisdiction. Speakers are limited to three minutes each.

3. Overview of the Independent Transit Planning Review (ITPR) – Dave Schumacher, SANDAG
   SANDAG staff will provide a brief overview of the Independent Transit Planning Review project and purpose of the joint meeting.

4. Discussion of ITPR Issues
   The ITPR peer review panel members are attending this meeting to obtain comments on the issues that will be addressed in the ITPR.

5. Adjournment

+ next to an agenda item indicates an attachment
INDEPENDENT TRANSIT PLANNING REVIEW – MEETING WITH PEER REVIEW PANEL

Introduction

The TransNet extension includes funding for a number of light rail transit (LRT) and bus rapid transit (BRT) projects that are identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). At the SANDAG Board’s direction, passage of the TransNet extension triggered a commitment to conduct an Independent Transit Planning Review (ITPR) of the RTP and regional transit projects to help determine the most effective and cost-efficient transit service and infrastructure plan for the region.

At the May 12, 2005 and June 2, 2005 meetings of the Technical Working Group (TWG) and Cities/County Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), respectively, an information item was presented on the ITPR study. The study process includes hiring a consultant and the formation of a Peer Review Panel (Attachment 1) of individuals from outside the San Diego region to bring expert guidance and oversight from transit industry professionals with direct implementation, operating and research experience.

As noted in the previous agenda item that was presented to TWG and CTAC, SANDAG staff is currently working with the Peer Review Panel to identify the set of issues that will be addressed in the ITPR. The Peer Review Panel members will be attending this meeting so that TWG and CTAC members may ask questions and offer their input.

Recommendation

TWG and CTAC members are asked to provide comments on the set of issues to be addressed by the ITPR.

Discussion

As noted in the May 12 and June 2 agenda items, the Peer Review Panel met for the first time on April 20-22, 2005. The focus of the panel’s work at this meeting was to review the initial issues list developed by SANDAG staff and refine it based on their observations from presentations made on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), and a tour of several corridors where light rail transit and bus rapid transit services are planned. The suggestions of the panel centered on the need for a stronger articulation of the transit/land use relationship as the starting point for defining the Regional Transit Vision. While still capturing the points
highlighted in SANDAG staff’s issues list (see Attachment 2), they defined the issue areas and framework for review of our transit plans are as follows:

1. Regional Transit Vision – The panel felt that an effective transit system emanates from an overarching land use vision and that land uses should influence the regional transit strategy, type of service, and level of service. As a result, the strategic relationship between the our regional land use and transit visions needs to be strengthened so that land use more directly guides the application of a hierarchy of transit. Transit and land use strategies within a given transit corridor should be mutually supportive, with a gradation of facility and service applications tailored to specific corridor characteristics. Given that the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) was adopted after the MOBILITY 2030 RTP, a reassessment of the RTP in light of the RCP and the panel’s comments is a logical next step in refining the transit vision and plan.

2. Problem Statements – Once the regional land use/transit vision is strengthened, the panel suggested outlining a set of problem statements to help develop guiding principles for application of a transit plan. The problem statements will help assess the trade-offs among differing strategies for transit facilities and services. The regional transit plan would be implemented to reflect the unique characteristics of our region in terms of land uses, travel corridors, and activity centers. Consideration also should be given on what non-transit factors (e.g. land use densities, parking policies) may need to be in place to achieve the double-digit peak period mode split for transit called out in MOBILITY 2030.

3. Transit Concepts – This issue area explores the transit concepts needed to address the problem statements. While our current regional/corridor/local/community (Yellow, Red, Blue, Green) hierarchical concepts are a good start, the Peer Review Panel felt the definitions need to be refined to provide for a gradation of concepts for a wide range of corridor applications.

4. Service Type, Network, Operating Strategy – The panel suggested that we need to better define land use and service thresholds for the various transit concepts (the expanded Yellow, Red, Blue, Green hierarchy) and sharpen the definition for BRT in our region. In the current Regional Transit Vision, BRT is assumed to be equivalent to the trolley in both service and supporting facilities and amenities. By clearly defining the land use and service characteristics needed to achieve this objective, we will be able to better understand what corridors can truly support BRT. Corridors that don’t meet the thresholds may be more appropriate for other types of enhanced bus transit with BRT features.

5. Modeling – The Peer Review Panel’s discussion echoed the need identified in Issue #2 of Attachment 1, to incorporate market research insights into our ridership forecasting tools.

6. Operating Cost/Finance – The panel supported the activity identified in Attachment 1 to develop a cost model for estimating BRT operating costs, with sufficient detail to address variable and fixed operating cost items.
Based on questions and issues raised previously by the TWG and CTAC, there are several potential questions that TWG and CTAC members might want to ask the Peer Review Panel to consider, including:

1. What is the experience in other cities in North America in terms of fostering a mutual relationship between public transportation and Smart Growth?

2. How applicable are these examples to San Diego?

3. What role(s) should we expect public transportation play in meeting San Diego’s regional mobility needs? What other cities can be pointed to as good examples of what can be achieved?

4. How important are transit priority measures in creating a successful transit network? How can transit priority measures be implemented in congested arterials corridors and what are the tradeoffs? What has been the success of such efforts in terms of increasing the person carrying capacity in a corridor?

Attachments: 1. Independent Transit Planning Review Peer Review Panel
   2. Initial Issues List for Independent Transit Planning Review

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Independent Transit Planning Review
Peer Review Panel

Based on direction from the Transportation Committee, input from the American Public Transit Association, and colleagues in the field, the Peer Review Panel is comprised of following panelists:

- David Mieger, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority - Mr. Mieger is the Director of Westside Planning and has led the development of both LRT and BRT projects for the agency.

- John Bonsall, McCormick/Rankin – Mr. Bonsall is the former head of OC Transpo, the transit authority in Ottawa, Ontario, where he led development of its bus transitway system. Currently he serves as President of McCormick/Rankin, a consultant firm that has been involved in the development of a number of BRT projects throughout the world.

- Richard Feder, Pittsburgh Port Authority of Allegheny County – Mr. Feder serves as Director of Transit Planning and is involved in the planning, implementation, and operations of the agency’s extensive LRT, BRT, and exclusive busway system.

- Phil Selinger, Portland Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon – Mr. Selinger serves as Director of Project Implementation for the agency’s extensive LRT and bus system.

- Linda Cherrington, Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) - Ms. Cherrington serves as Program Manager for TTI’s Transit Mobility Program, which has been involved in several studies involving high occupancy vehicle (HOV) facilities, BRT, and value pricing; she previously served as Assistant General Manager for the Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority and Chief Executive Officer for LKC Consulting Services in Houston.

- Robert Cervero, University of California Berkeley – Dr. Cervero is professor of City and Regional Planning and is considered a leading expert in transit-oriented development, the land use and economic benefits of transit service, and transit/land use integration.
Initial Issues List for Independent Transit Planning Review  
(from February 18, 2005 Transportation Committee Meeting)

**Issue #1 - Regional Transit Vision** - The Regional Transit Vision, which is the basis of our MOBILITY 2030 plan, would be evaluated to assess the anticipated effectiveness of the hierarchy of the regional, corridor, local, and shuttle service concepts (previously referred to as Yellow/Red/Blue/Green Car concepts) in achieving our transit system and network objectives. The Independent Transit Planning Review would address the potential success of these tiered service concepts in attracting the different market segments identified by our previous market research, and how these service concepts would form an effective and efficient transit network in different parts of the region (based on land use density, land use types, and urban design).

**Issue #2 - MOBILITY 2030 Regional Transit Corridors** - The MOBILITY 2030 network and the Proposition A TransNet program of projects identifies a number of primary corridors where high-speed transit services (LRT and BRT) are planned. The Independent Transit Planning Review will review the appropriateness of these primary regional corridors based on existing/future travel demand and the roadway network.

The review will also evaluate the corridors based on the potential to attract the choice rider market and assess how well we have incorporated the results of the market research work conducted in the region in 2000 into our travel demand models for forecasting transit ridership, which were updated in 2004. The market research produced some interesting insights into the various factors that play a part in a person’s decision on whether to use public transportation (e.g. speed/flexibility, safety, and the customer experience, and how the relative importance of each differs across the various market segments). The question has been whether these factors can help us to better predict transit ridership and to identify which market segments a new BRT or LRT service would attract.

**Issue #3 - Transit Network Structure** - This issue examines the overall transit network structure in place today and that proposed in MOBILITY 2030 in terms of its effectiveness for serving the multi-center urban setting of the San Diego region (i.e., unlike cities with a single activity center in a downtown, our region is composed of a number of existing and emerging centers such as downtown, the Golden Triangle, Mission Valley, and the future East Urban Center). The trunk line/feeder bus structure along our trolley corridors today represents one operating strategy for a network structure, but is this the best network strategy for future corridors where LRT and BRT service is proposed? What other options might be considered, and what is the most practical network structure and strategy given the expected resources for transit?

**Issue #4 - Regional Transit Facilities and Operating Strategy** - MOBILITY 2030 would achieve the Regional Transit Vision through Implementation of freeway BRT, arterial BRT and LRT lines. For BRT, our plan calls for a range of facility types, including multi-modal managed lanes facilities in freeway corridors (e.g. the north I-15 corridor Managed Lanes/BRT project), dedicated transitways (e.g. South Bay BRT project in Otay Ranch), arterial transit-only lanes (e.g. Showcase project along El Cajon Blvd), and mixed flow street operations. The physical and operational design of stations, particularly the configuration of freeway BRT stations, has implications for operating strategies as well. Station proposals range from simple on-street bus stops to median guideway stations to major park-and-ride facilities connected to managed lanes by direct access ramps. The Independent Transit Planning Review would assess the applicability, effectiveness and trade-offs related to the various
transit modes and facilities proposed in our MOBILITY 2030 network corridors, and provide 
guidance on the level and type of capital and operating investment needed to create a successful 
system. This would include consideration of the effectiveness and efficiency of providing parking, 
and parking fees, at transit stations and in communities along BRT and LRT corridors. The review 
will also help evaluate the resulting operating, cost and ridership implications of the various capital 
investments and designs.

The consultant and Peer Review Panel would also help assess the feasibility of short and long-range 
strategies for implementing and operating BRT given funding availability, right-of-way needs, and 
environmental and community impacts. General guidelines and thresholds for BRT facilities, station 
spacing and service levels would also be developed.

**Issue #5 - Operating Costing/Financing** - The Regional Transit Vision envisions BRT in the 
San Diego region as providing a level of service and amenities on par with those provided by LRT 
(e.g. well-designed stations, roving security/fare inspectors, and higher end vehicles) but with the 
flexibility of a conventional bus (e.g. being able to operate on a dedicated transitway or in mixed-
street traffic). As a result, operating costs for BRT services will likely be higher than conventional bus 
services. Identifying cost categories and assumptions has been a challenge given the wide range of 
BRT services and concepts in the United States. There is also a need to provide appropriate 
comparisons to LRT operating costs to be able to assess cost-effectiveness of the various transit 
modes and service concepts.

The Independent Transit Planning Review will use experience from other cities and regions to refine 
our operating cost assumptions for both BRT and LRT, including discussion of fare levels and 
farebox recovery rates as well. In addition, we will explore the potential role that public-private 
partnerships could play in funding capital and/or operating costs of future transit services 
(e.g., businesses subsidizing a shuttle connection from an employment area to LRT/BRT stations).

**Issue #6 - Transit/Land Use Coordination** - A key element of both MOBILITY 2030 and the 
Regional Comprehensive Plan is the need for increased coordination between transit planning and 
land use development. The success of our Smart Growth Opportunity Areas strategy is dependant 
upon fostering a close relationship between future LRT/BRT services and potential areas where 
transit oriented development could occur. Several of our potential Peer Review Panelists have direct 
experience in this area that could provide valuable insights on how to translate successful practices 
elsewhere to the San Diego region.