



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SEPTEMBER 26, 2003**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 03-09- 1-C
ACTION REQUESTED - APPROVE**

SUMMARY OF THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING

Meeting of September 12, 2003

The meeting of the SANDAG Policy Development Board was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Chair Ron Morrison. Attendance was as follows:

SANDAG Board Voting Members

City of Carlsbad	Ramona Finnila, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Chula Vista	Absent
City of Coronado	Phil Monroe, Mayor Pro Tem
City of Del Mar	Crystal Crawford, Councilmember
City of El Cajon	Mark Lewis, Mayor
City of Encinitas	Christy Guerin, Councilmember
City of Escondido.....	Lori Holt Pfeiler, Mayor
City of Imperial Beach.....	Mayda Winter, Councilmember
City of La Mesa	Art Madrid, Mayor
City of Lemon Grove	Mary Sessom, Mayor
City of National City.....	Ron Morrison, Councilmember
City of Oceanside.....	Jack Feller, Councilmember
City of Poway.....	Mickey Cafagna, Mayor
City of San Diego.....	Jim Madaffer, Councilmember
City of San Marcos.....	Absent
City of Santee	Hal Ryan, Vice Mayor
City of Solana Beach	Joe Kellejian, Councilmember
City of Vista.....	Morris Vance, Mayor
County of San Diego	Greg Cox, Supervisor

Advisory Members

California Department of Transportation	Pedro Orso-Delgado, District Director
Metropolitan Transit Development Board	Leon Williams, Chairman
North San Diego County Transit Development Board	Hon. Judy Ritter, Chair
U.S. Department of Defense	Absent
San Diego Unified Port District	Absent
San Diego County Water Authority	Absent
Mexico	Absent
Imperial County	Absent

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Hoffman, a resident of San Diego, pointed out that the survey is irrelevant because the people surveyed don't have any expertise in transportation.

Jim Baross, representing the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition and the San Diego Coalition for Transportation Choices, urged the Board's support for smart growth projects in terms of non-motorized transportation, specifically bicycling and walking.

Chairman Morrison commented that the Board will not be voting today but will be using the voting system to speak. He added that today's presentation will be made by D.J. Smith, of Smith, Watts & Company, on the highlights of the recently completed public opinion survey. The survey results are related to the extension to the *TransNet* program. Following the overview of the survey, Mr. Smith will lead the Board through a discussion of the nine (9) issues that are included in the staff report. With the completion of the survey, the Board now has a solid base of information regarding the opinions of likely voters. Next the Board will need to work on the draft ordinance and the expenditure plan for the *TransNet* extension. The purpose of today's policy meeting is to provide direction to the Ad Hoc Working Group on *TransNet*.

***TransNet* EXTENSION PROCESS: PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS AND KEY ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION**

Overview of Public Opinion Survey Results

D.J. Smith, principal for Smith, Watts & Company, noted that, based on the recently completed survey results, San Diego County meets the necessary requirements to move forward with the ½ cent sales tax extension proposal for the November 2004 election. The ability to pass a sales tax measure extension at the 2/3 vote threshold is based on three fundamental issues: (1) is this a problem that the voters feel needs to be resolved and has a direct impact on their lives; (2) is there a good plan, with a solution that appears to work and is fair, balanced and visionary; and (3) are the people in charge of distributing the monies trustworthy. He added that a fourth issue is how well the current monies are being spent.

Mr. Smith noted that the number one issue in the region is traffic congestion. The public is clearly upset about that and want the issue dealt with; particularly on the state highway system. This issue doesn't need to be surveyed anymore. When people were asked about the sample ballot language, which is limited to 75 words on the ballot; the survey results were very good. The percentage of those that indicated strong support for the measure was 46%, which is a solid base of support. Those that would somewhat support the measure totaled 26%. These results demonstrate that there is already the ability to pass this measure. There needs to be a strong program, a lot of things need to be done right, and there needs to be near unanimity in the community. In order for this measure to pass, there cannot be a lot of opposition from a wide range of groups. The base of support in the San Diego region is extraordinary. The goal for passing this extension is 67%.

Another area surveyed, which is one of the biggest investments in the 2030 Mobility Plan, is Bus Rapid Transit. The respondents were presented with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), light rail (Trolley) and managed lanes concepts. Those concepts were described in some detail. Seventy-seven percent were in favor of BRT and 76% were in favor of the managed lanes concept. This indicates that those surveyed understand how they can receive some direct benefit by these projects being implemented.

Mr. Smith directed the Board members to the local project lists for their respective individual areas. He noted that during the original sales tax measure, it was decided that the TransNet resources would be allocated on projects that were not likely to compete well for future state and federal funding. Therefore, not many funds were spent on the Interstate highway system. He added that for this proposed TransNet extension to get a 2/3 vote, the region will need to focus on investments to relieve congestion, particularly on the Interstate system. Projects that have to be in the program have been identified. Mr. Smith added that he would recommend including those projects that have received 60% or higher votes from those surveyed. He is confident that a successful expenditure plan can be developed.

He concluded that his job is to provide the Board with the best recommendation possible. He feels that the public side of this process is capable of putting a program together that will yield a 2/3 vote. There also will need to be a strong private sector component to carry this message. The public needs to be informed as to what the program entails and what the benefits of the included projects will be.

Issues for Discussion

Should the TransNet extension be focused on a strategic, specific, and geographically balanced set of projects and programs focusing on congestion relief and other key issues identified in the voter opinion research?

Board members felt that the overall survey results were great and it was a good survey. They commented that the questions appeared to be generic in nature. Some questioned what percent of the TransNet funds should go to the local jurisdictions and others were concerned about whether the region will have to be specific in regards to the funding split. Additional concerns were raised that if funds are directed to specific roads, the proposed TransNet extension may not provide local jurisdictions with sufficient funding to have an adequate maintenance program.

Mr. Smith replied that there are currently six urban counties in the State of California that are considering sales tax extensions. Many questions were generic so that the results could be compared to those other areas. The number one issue of traffic congestion helps to understand what the concerns of likely voters are. He noted that the residents in San Diego are 3-4 years ahead of the curve regarding regional issues. This is a tool that the other counties don't have yet.

Mr. Smith added that he feels that a certain amount of funding should be designated to local streets and roads. He agreed that each jurisdiction should implement a maintenance effort that is meaningful. The public clearly wants the system maintained.

Should the TransNet extension include a review process to allow for mid-cycle corrections every 10 years?

Board members questioned if a 10-year review would add risk to the region regarding the timeline of the RTP and were curious how amendments would be made to a 30-year extension. Members also expressed concern on how the region can avoid being pressured into making changes to the measure every few years and what the review process would entail.

Mr. Smith replied that 10years is a good timeline to reevaluate the proposed extension because it allows flexibility to make changes. In his opinion, 5 years is too short a time period to see projects implemented, evaluate results, and determine any needed corrections to the program - especially if you have projects that could take 6 years or longer to complete. He noted that once the Board agreed on the review timeline, it wouldn't be wise to change it so that there would be some consistency in the program. Mr. Smith pointed out that the 30-year review is the most important one and mentioned that he will bring back options for the Board to consider. He added that all of the issues would be included.

Should the "maintenance of effort" requirements be strengthened and broadened in the new measure?

After Mr. Smith's explanation of the issue, there was no discussion by the members on this issue.

Should a minimum level of regional transportation impact fees be required for local jurisdictions to qualify for receipt of TransNet funds?

Board members expressed concern about imposing additional taxes on the developer community, noting that either way you look at it, developer costs are passed on to the residents.

Mr. Smith stated that every urban county is wrestling with this issue. This should be decided along with other key policy issues and the Board needs to deal with this issue straight up. He added that most voters are aware that they pay developer fees, one way or the other.

Should the TransNet extension include an environmental mitigation component based on a mitigation bank concept?

Board members commented that political leadership and staff need to spend a lot of time on this issue and need to work with environmental groups once a program is developed. The key will be what the expenditure plan will look like and whether there will be sufficient funding for environmental support. Another member reiterated the importance in developing a more comprehensive approach to this issue. Habitat is a finite resource and the region will lose a lot of value to the overall habitat system using the existing piecemeal approach. It is important that a plan be developed and now is the time to do this right. Every time a project is added, there needs to be mitigation.

Mr. Smith suggested a strong countywide effort be devoted to this issue because quality of life is a huge issue in this county. The survey numbers on quality of life issues are often higher here than in the Bay area. He mentioned that he will bring forth a sophisticated concept with options.

Should an independent citizen oversight committee be established as a way of strengthening the voter safeguard provisions of the new measure?

It was noted that meaningful taxpayer safeguards are extremely important in offering a TransNet extension proposal to the voters. The Board members strongly support this concept. The public is more sophisticated and wants to know what they'll get for their money.

Mr. Smith reiterated that the public does not have a high degree of confidence in the people that are spending their monies. If an oversight committee is handled professionally, there can be value added.

Should the TransNet program include a set aside for a smart growth incentive program including bicycle projects, pedestrian/walkable community improvements, transportation enhancements, and other projects and programs?

A board member raised concern whether the label for this smart growth incentives program is the best way to explain what jurisdictions are doing in this area. Another member noted that the current ½ cent sales tax measure allocates \$1 million to bicycle paths - what would be a comparable amount for a 30-year measure?

Mr. Smith commented that the bicycle component was important to the last TransNet tax measure. An effective incentive program would give the region flexibility to reward jurisdictions that are doing a good job at implementing smart growth projects. However, smart growth is a term that is confusing to the voters, so he recommends shying away from that term. The next step in the voter opinion research is to conduct a series of focus groups and it is important that the elected officials participate. During these focus groups, several issues will be tested with the public. Pedestrian safety, school safety and smart growth mean different things to the voters. Incentive programs would give local communities flexibility to utilize funds in creative ways.

Mr. Smith requested direction to bring back issues and options for the Board. He added that the current 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 split won't work this time. The elected officials will need to make a determination on the funding split in the expenditure plan.

What assumptions should be made in the leveraging of other local, state, and federal funds to match TransNet funding on major improvements?

Board members requested clarification on whether the decision to use GARVEE bonds would be beneficial or not.

Mr. Smith noted that historically, you had to pay as you go in respect to spending state and federal dollars. With the GARVEE bonds, the State can sell bonds backed up by future federal funds coming to the region. Using GARVEE bonds could help the region leverage more money and match other bonds backed by the local sales tax to accelerate the delivery of key projects. He noted that he will come back with options for the Board to consider that are creative and that will have some financial risk.

Should SANDAG continue to expand its public education efforts to focus on communicating the past accomplishments of the existing TransNet program and the specific project and program costs and benefits associated with the TransNet extension ballot proposal?

Board members agreed that expansion of the public education efforts should continue. They suggested that Mr. Smith come back and give Board suggestions on how to do that.

Mr. Smith noted that it would be appropriate to use mass mailing to promote the projects. The educational campaign should be comprehensive and should be done as effectively as possible. However, it could be controversial. Mr. Smith mentioned that there will be a series of six subregional focus groups to be held beginning in mid-October. After those meetings, he'll come back to the Board with specific options for the Board to consider.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Clive Richard, a San Diego resident, questioned if the San Diego area is broken into subregions or is considered a region as a whole. The vote on this issue will not be based on subregions, but a region as a whole. He also was concerned with the statement that the voters aren't wise enough to make a decision on this issue. He said that 30 years is a long time and cautioned the Board to be careful when making changes. He asked which pocket will the taxpayers take the development impact fees out of. He thought that it was important to include access to transportation in the plan. He summarized that a two-thirds vote will require a lot of information distributed to the voters in the region to convince them that there are important issues included in the proposal.

Erik Bruvold, representing the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC), reminded the Board that, over a year and one-half ago, the EDC Board unanimously voted to support a ½ cent sales tax extension on the November 2004 ballot. He concurred that a citizens oversight committee will provide confidence to voters and taxpayers that the monies will be spent efficiently and effectively. It will also be important from a private employer's standpoint as the region moves toward a formal campaign. He urged the Board to keep up the good work.

Walt Brewer, a resident of San Diego, stated that the voters have indicated in this poll where they would like to have the monies spent. He suggested that the review process include these findings and volunteered to assist on the oversight committee.

Lynne Baker, a San Diego resident, noted that only 18% of the people polled lived in apartments and/or condominiums. She read an article regarding quality of life issues to the Board entitled, "Big and Blue in the USA," and made copies available to those interested.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Morrison announced that the SR 125 Groundbreaking Ceremony will be held at 2:00 p.m. today at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista. He also announced that SANDAG is co-sponsoring a Workforce Housing 2003 Conference on Monday, September 15, 2003. He encouraged all interested Board members to sign up as soon as possible.

Councilmember Feller noted that on October 25, 2003, the Defender's of Freedom Welcome Home Parade will be going through the City of Oceanside. The festivities will begin at 10:00 a.m. It is expected that 20,000 military personnel will be participating. He encouraged all to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

GARY L. GALLEGOS
Secretary