BOARD ACTIONS

September 26, 2003

WESTERN COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE AND RESOLUTION TO FORM WEST COAST CORRIDOR COALITION: Carlsbad City Councilmember Ramona Finnila presented a report on the WCOG Annual Conference held in Portland, OR in August. Directors approved a resolution to participate in the formation of a West Coast Corridor Coalition with representatives from COGs in Washington, Oregon and California to coordinate efforts to enhance goods movement and travel along the Interstate 5 corridor from Mexico to Canada. (Item #9: Staff contact, Garry Bonelli, (619) 595-5360 or gbo@sandag.org)

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (RCP): Escondido Mayor Lori Holt Pfeiler updated Directors on the public workshops held to date and key issues that have been identified. Workshop participants placed a high priority on resolving transportation and environmental issues in conjunction with addressing urban form and housing issues. Other themes that emerged were the need for additional outreach on the advantages of smart growth; the need to consider seniors in decisions regarding housing and transportation; the availability and quality of schools; timing of infrastructure in relation to new development; and the need for a comprehensive approach to local and regional issues. The draft RCP will be presented to the Board in December for distribution and public comment. The final RCP will be presented to the Board in June 2004. (Items #11 A and 11B: Staff contact, Carolina Gregor, (619) 595-5399 or cgr@sandag.org)

SPECIAL REPORT ON TRANSIT PROJECTS: With the transportation agency consolidation, SANDAG will have responsibility for various transit projects previously managed by MTDB and NCTD. Staff reported on the status of key regional projects coming under SANDAG’s purview, and provided an update on several projects still managed by MTDB and NCTD. Among the projects being transferred to SANDAG is the Mid Coast Light Rail Transit, the proposed light rail extension from Old Town to Balboa Avenue and on to University City serving University Towne Centre and UCSD. This project would provide the first LRT link north of I-8. SANDAG also is taking responsibility for development of the Bus Rapid Transit stations as part of the I-15 Managed Lanes /Bus Rapid Transit project. The first phase project will be an 8-mile facility from SR 56 north to Centre City Parkway; ultimately, the project will extend 20 miles from Kearny Mesa to Escondido. The Nobel Drive Coaster Station is another project now managed by SANDAG. Construction is scheduled to start in 2004 with the opening planned for April 2005. The Mission Valley East Trolley extension will continue to be managed by MTDB with the opening scheduled for May 2005. The San Ysidro Intermodal Transportation Center also is being managed by MTDB and will include three trolley platforms; a turnaround for buses, shuttles, and taxis; and ten new bus bays. This project is expected to open in March 2004. The Sprinter rail line will continue to be managed by NCTD with a scheduled opening in December 2005. SANDAG also is working on planning and preliminary engineering studies for three Transit First Early Action Projects: SDSU to Downtown San Diego via El Cajon Blvd and Park Blvd, a shuttle loop that will serve the University City/UCSD area; and South Bay to Downtown San Diego via Otay Ranch and the I-805 corridor. (Item #12: Staff contact Dave Schumacher, (619) 557-4565 or dsc@sandag.org)
TRANSPORTATION PROGRESS: Caltrans awarded the contract for construction of the I-15 auxiliary lane between Friars Road and I-8. Completion of the auxiliary lane is scheduled for November 2004 ... A groundbreaking ceremony was held on September 12 for the SR 125 South Tollway. This 10-mile project, scheduled for completion in September 2006, will connect the Otay Mesa, eastern Chula Vista, and Spring Valley areas with a new north-south four-lane tollway ... Construction of the trolley line’s 12th and Market station improvements as part of the East Village Stations Modifications began in late July ... The City of San Marcos continues construction of Rancho Santa Fe Road. This project is scheduled to be complete by September 2004. Rideshare Week is October 6 – 10, 2003. The Diamond Awards will be held October 1 to honor those employers across the region with outstanding commuting programs. (Item #4: Staff contact, José Nuncio, (619) 595-5619 or jnu@sandag.org)

AMENDED FY 2004 FINAL PROGRAM BUDGET: The Amended FY 2004 Final Program Budget was unanimously adopted by the Board. The budget increased from $264 million to just under $418 million. The budget includes a 275 percent increase in Federal funds, a 381 percent increase in State funds, and a 21 percent increase in local funds. The revision also reflects the increase in the number of staff members from 119 to 172.5. The transit portion of TransNet funds have been reallocated from pass-through accounts to SANDAG transit projects. (Item #13: Staff contact: Leslie Campbell, (619) 595-5340 or lca@sandag.org)

TransNet EXTENSION: At the September 12, 2003 SANDAG Policy Board meeting, Directors discussed the results from a telephone survey conducted in July of 1,200 likely voters from throughout the San Diego region about extending the existing TransNet ½ penny local transportation sales tax. Directors also discussed key issues that will need to be decided as an expenditure plan for the Extension is developed. In 1987, 53 percent of the voters passed the original 20-year TransNet program. For the existing tax to be extended, a 2/3 voter approval will be required because of changes in state law. Survey results show strong support for projects that can help reduce traffic congestion. Support for the Extension was 73 percent after a sample ballot measure question, which included examples of transportation projects, was posed to survey respondents. There also was strong support for the Bus Rapid Transit and Managed Lanes along our existing highways. Key policy issues regarding the Extension include: how the projected $9.5 billion, 30-year revenue stream should be divided among local roads, public transit, and highways; 10-year major review cycles; environmental mitigation; and an independent oversight committee. (Staff contact, Craig Scott, (619) 595-5326 or csc@sandag.org)

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING: At the September 19, 2003 Transportation Committee meeting, members received an informational report detailing funding shortfalls during the current year totaling $309 million for a number of local transportation projects. The shortfall is caused primarily by the State budget deficit and some project cost increases. Potential projects affected by the funding shortfalls are State Routes 56, 52, and 905, the Sprinter commuter rail being constructed between Oceanside and Escondido, and the Interstate 15 Managed Lanes work. Staff is proposing a range of funding strategies to keep these critical transportation projects moving forward and will report back to the committee at its October 17 meeting. (Staff contact, Jack Boda, (619) 595-5395 or jbo@sandag.org)

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