

Caltrans External Advisory Liaison (CEAL) Committee Meeting  
Thursday April 30, 2009 – Meeting Minutes

- **Action Items Noted in Bold**

Meeting commenced at 9:30 am, committee members in attendance were:

Pedro Orso Delgado – Caltrans District 11 Director  
Bill Figge – Caltrans District 11 Planning Deputy Director  
Paul Brown – San Diego Unified Port District  
Mario Ingrasci – Compact  
Gary Knight – San Diego North Economic Development Council  
Milt Phegley – UCSD Government and Community Relations  
Elyse Lowe – Move San Diego  
Carmen Sandoval – San Diego Chamber of Commerce  
Craig Scott – Automobile Club of Southern California  
Nan Valerio – League of Women Voters

Pedro began by discussing some of the recent effects of the recent Swine Flu outbreak; Mexican officials have asked to cancel some meetings due to cross-border travel advisories and potential quarantine conditions. Pedro has inquired about procedures for closing down various Caltrans buildings should that become necessary, and the potential impacts on state business.

Some countries such as Argentina are not accepting travelers from Mexico, but that is not expected at the local ports of entry; however some cruise lines have announced they will not stop in Mexico but will be diverting to San Diego instead; the city should be prepared to handle the added influx of tourists.

Carmen mentioned that she had read that 36,000 people die from other forms of the flu already each year in the US.

Pedro also discussed the recent San Diego Union Tribune editorial on access for the proposed Jamul Indian Village on State Route 94 (April 26, 2009). Was apparently written prior to consulting Caltrans first, and a letter of response is being written to the paper. After much negotiation the tribe has agreed to several concessions that Caltrans has been seeking for 4 years, including completing environmental studies.

A fatality on SR-67 was also discussed which occurred about 2 weeks ago and received a lot of press, in which some cars were street racing and resulted in a head on collision with an oncoming motorist. Caltrans has done many safety improvements on 67 including grinding rumble strips, putting up dynamic speed signs, generating a safety PR campaign, etc. They are also studying median barrier rails but these can create their own types of problems, including cutting off cross street access (there are about 70 access points on this section of SR-67), barrier collisions and eliminating passing lanes. Caltrans will be updating the Sandag Transportation Committee on this issue at the next meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Milt asked about police enforcement on SR-67, and Pedro responded that CHP is enhancing enforcement, particularly for speed violations, and that 90% of the tickets issued have been to Ramona residents. They feel that “the word is getting around.” Caltrans approach to problem areas is Education, Engineering & Enforcement, although this section of 67 actually has accident rates that are within statewide averages for similar sections of highways.

Mario suggested that temporary concrete barrier rails be tried first before permanent ones are installed, and Pedro replied that this is being looked at. He noted that temporary concrete barriers (“K-Rail”) can move after being struck and must be pinned down to the pavement.

Pedro announced that Sandag is applying to the US Congressional Transportation Committee for demonstration project funding and that Caltrans is providing support for these applications. Potential projects include auxiliary lanes on SR-78 between I-15 and Nordahl, revising the SR-78/Barham/Woodland interchange, and improvements at 5/805. Funding for such projects would come in the form of earmarks to the federal transportation reauthorization bill.

- **Gary Knight said that he could talk with Gary Gallegos and Brian Bilbray’s office about getting these demo projects included in the reauthorization bill.**

Gary also brought up the issue of “falling cement” at the I-5/Oceanside Blvd under crossing; Pedro said that this came from a prior median closure pour, and that some repairs were done by Caltrans during a mid-day traffic closure; that a “sounding” was done to evaluate the condition of the bridge concrete and that it appeared to be in very good condition; and that additional repair work to replace the bridge joints and some of the reinforcing steel was going ahead at this location.

Emergency lane closures were discussed for such things as fallen trees, wild fires, etc. Pedro said that usually much planning goes into detours, (i.e., collaborating with local agencies, no two consecutive ramps supposed to be closed, etc.) but sometimes detour messages can be confusing, especially to non-locals.

- **If anyone encounters a confusing local detour situation, feel free to send Pedro an email informing him about it.**

Bill said that the federal economic stimulus package contained much less transportation money than everyone had hoped for, and that the region was competing for discretionary funding for Intercity Rail, Ports, and High Speed Rail.

- **Bill suggested that Paul stay engaged in competing for some of the Economic Stimulus package discretionary spending for port projects. The process is fairly accelerated and projects must be put forward in 60 – 90 days.**

Except for the State Highway Operation and Protection Plan (SHOPP), the transportation trust fund is virtually empty. Despite this lack of funding, the country needs \$250 billion each year for the next 5 years to meet the demand for transportation capital improvement projects.

Pedro went through a power point presentation on The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), scope of funding and how they are expecting funds to be distributed.

In general, all our regional stakeholders should continue to lobby for federal transportation reauthorization funding. Congressman Jim Oberstar [House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee] is known for wanting to move ahead aggressively, while Senator Barbara Boxer [Senate Transportation, Public Works and Environment Committees] has more of a “go slower and get it right” attitude.

Pedro said that bids will soon be opening on the first local economic stimulus project, SR-905 Unit 1B, which included \$75 million in stimulus funding. This will be either the first or third stimulus project in the state, depending on how you count it. Right now we have 9 qualified bidders for the project, which will build the second half of SR-905 from La Media Rd. to SR-805. This will complete the 905 freeway between the POE and SR-805. Note: the 905 project was one of the projects that was caught up in the bond deficit problem several months ago.

Bill said that a new bill has been passed to distribute FHWA funds directly to local regions outside of the normal CTC process; this should save processing time.

Pedro continued with some discussion of the SR-905 project, saying that 1 million cubic yards of earth have been moved already to elevate the road and build huge drainage detention facilities. International water treaties are at play here, and major existing water flow patterns must be maintained.

Regarding other pending economic stimulus projects, Pedro said that District 11 expects to break ground on the 805/Carroll Canyon extension in October of this year, with SR-76 middle project soon to follow (Melrose Dr. to South Mission Rd.). Bill mentioned that the final SR-76 east alignment (from South Mission Rd to I-15) hasn't been selected yet, and Gary noted that Fallbrook and Vista feed SR-76; and Bill said that Riverside also feeds the SR-76 corridor.

Joel Haven stopped by to discuss the new auxiliary lane project on SB 805 south of SR-54; this will include some economic stimulus funding, and was advertised for construction on May 4<sup>th</sup>; they expect to break ground in July or August. Some bridge widening at Bonita Ave. is part of the project.

- **Elyse asked if there was a fact sheet available for the proposed pedestrian elevator project at the Grossmont trolley station; the answer was no and that it was a Sandag project.**

Elyse mentioned that she will be moderating a Smart Growth Forum at La Mesa Community Center tonight at around 5 pm.

Bill said that the new federal transportation reauthorization bill will be called “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, or MAP 21. He also said that the current gas tax fund is virtually broke right now, due to factors such as driving being down, the greater use of ethanol in fuel mixtures, hybrids getting better gas mileage, no tax increases for inflation, etc. Operations and Maintenance are funded but that’s about it. SAFETEA-LU had \$244 billion for 2005 - 2009, but we now need that much every year for the next five years. President Obama has already said “No” to any new VMT tax proposals.

Bill also said that other states are looking at replicating SB 375 [Steinberg: builds on AB 32 and ties land use decisions to greenhouse gas reductions]. There are also efforts underway to reduce and streamline 106 different federal transportation funding programs. There is a desire to create more regional direct funding avenues, similar to how California has done it.

Mario asked how individuals could track legislative efforts and activities; Bill said that they could monitor congressional committee chair websites (Oberstar, Boxer). He also said that congress may extend the existing transportation bill beyond the current year – they will know more as we get closer to October.

Elyse mentioned that many east coast transit agencies are \$100’s of millions in the hole, while we are “only” \$50-60 million in the hole; over the long term we should prepare for lower subsidies by creating more efficient systems and routes, using more BRT, etc.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

- **The next CEAL Committee meetings are planned for July 15 and October 21**  
Possible future meeting topics included:

Gary - Status/update on I-5

Carmen – Caltrans or other statewide sustainability projects, i.e. green buildings (solar power, LED lights, demo projects, etc.), green roadways (low energy street lights, water conservation, recycled materials, etc.)