

Aldaron, Inc.

Public Policy Advisors to Industry and Government

7/7/10

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jacki Bacharach
FROM: Don Camph
RE: Activities Summary, June, 2010

Measure R Highway Program

On June 25, 2010 the SBCCOG Board of Directors approved the recommendation that the team lead by Iteris, Inc. be retained to serve as Program Manager for the Measure R Highway program.

The contract was subsequently developed and has been executed. The kickoff meeting with the consulting team is tentatively scheduled for July 13, 2010.

On-Going Studies

During the month I continued to monitor two studies of interest. These studies are:

- I-405 Corridor Study (SCAG/Caltrans); and,
- La Cienega Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project Study

We are awaiting final recommendation from these studies to include as input into the Measure R Highway Implementation Plan.

L.A. Metro Blue Ribbon Committee

On June 1, 2010, the fifth meeting of L.A. Metro's Blue Ribbon Committee was held, a "collaborative group of key stakeholders representing system users, local transit operators, and community and business interests." The focus of the meeting was to:

- Discuss implications of "local return operations"¹ for the regional service concept; and,

¹ A portion of the sales tax for transit is returned directly to local jurisdictions. Many of these jurisdictions operate local transit systems with this funding and are termed "Local Return operators."

- Review draft BRC policy statement recommendations.

With respect to local return operations (LROs), the point was made that there is a large and diverse network of service providers in the region, and how critical it is to coordinate among providers. While most LROs cannot provide regional service, it was stated that collective resources can be best leveraged by considering inter-modality and connectivity in the context of the regional system.

Points that emerged from the discussion included:

- Governance Councils can take a leadership role in coordinating between cities and the regional system.
- Education for local operators or partnerships with regional agencies can help overcome communication obstacles that make it difficult for local providers to participate in TAP² and EZ Pass.

With respect to policy, the BRC discussed a variety of issues and then agreed to a set of recommendations (Attachment 1) that were characterized (not unfairly, really) by one L. A. Times reporter as a “busload of status quo.” It was stated that BRC’s policy direction would “inform staff’s efforts to establish design guidelines.” In terms of timing, it was explained that policy choices will be approved at the July Board meeting, and Metro’s Transit Service Policy will be completed in the following months. Metro does service changes in June and December of every year, so some service changes can be made soon. Larger changes will need to wait until policy guidance can be translated into service design criteria.

“30/10” Measure R Transit Program Acceleration Plan

Item 42 on the June 24, 2010 MTA Board agenda was a staff report and recommendations entitled, “Unified Cost Increase Process and Policy for Measure R Transit Projects Included in the 30/10 Initiative.” There were a number of aspects of the report that were unclear, but it appeared to potentially work to the disadvantage of the South Bay in two important respects: sequencing of projects and potential impacts on funding for the South Bay Green Line Extension that might result from cost increases on the Crenshaw – LAX line.

Accordingly, I prepared an “eleventh hour” letter from SBCCOG Chair Mitchell to MTA Chair Najarian (Attachment 2) expressing the COG’s concerns on these and related issues.

As a result of this expression of concern as well as input from other stakeholders around the County, this item was held over until the August 2010 MTA Board meeting.

² All Metro passes are now sold on TAP, a durable plastic card that can be used repeatedly. Each TAP card has an electronic chip inside; patrons just load the type of pass they want onto the card, and the chip remembers it. Then they simply “tap” your card each time they board, and the bus farebox or rail validator recognizes the pass as being valid.

SBCCOG Steering Committee Meeting

On June 14 I attended the monthly meeting of the SBCCOG Steering Committee. LA Metro staff were present to make presentations on:

- South Bay Metro Green Line Extension; and,
- The Crenshaw-LAX LRT Project.

Of particular interest was the operating plan envisioned for the Crenshaw-LAX LRT Project, according to which there will be through service from stations south of Aviation Station to both the existing Green line (in the direction of Norwalk) and the new Crenshaw line, but passengers on the Crenshaw line who wish to travel in the direction of Norwalk will be required to transfer at the new Century Blvd. station.

Washington Report

There was not much meaningful activity with respect to Federal Transportation Reauthorization and Climate Change Legislation. However, two pending EPA regulations with regard to fine diesel particulate emissions, so-called PM2.5, and greenhouse gases (CO2) may bear watching in that they could have an impact on some Measure R highway projects. In particular:

- Projects of “air quality” concern will be required to conduct “hot-spot” analyses of PM2.5 emissions and identify appropriate mitigations; and,
- The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has proposed NEPA guidance requiring CO2 construction-related emissions be analyzed at the project-level.

These regulations are pending and final rule adoption is not expected to occur until later this year.

Meetings of Note

During the month I attended a number of meetings that may be of interest:

- Caltrans District 07 Director Mike Miles: on June 9, SBCCOG Executive Director Bacharach, Deputy Director Fuentes and I met with the new Caltrans District 07 Director Mike Miles to brief him on the South Bay Measure R Program and to set the stage for a positive and collaborative relationship as we move forward.
- Borja Leon, Transportation Deputy to Mayor Villaraigosa: on June 30 I met with Mr. Leon to discuss matters of mutual interest. Mr. Leon made note of Chair Mitchell’s letter to MTA Chair Najarian, and indicated his hope that the SBCCOG and the Mayor could work together in a collaborative fashion. I briefed him on the South Bay Measure R Highway Program, and suggested that our focus on project implementation, cost control and schedule adherence

could be a model for the rest of the County. We agreed to meet again soon to continue the dialogue.

- Jay Day, Senior Consultant to Assemblywoman Bonnie Lowenthal: On June 28 I met with Mr. Day to brief him on the South Bay Measure R Highway Program and to bring him up to speed on other transportation issues of interest to the COG.