SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE WORKSHOP
MEETING OF NOVEMBER 3, 2008
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Spering called the Planning Committee meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. Other members in attendance were Commissioners Chu, Glover, Haggerty, Halsted, Kinsey, Lempert, Sartipi, Worth, and Yeager. Others in attendance were CMA Directors Robert McCleary, Dennis Fay, Dianne Steinhauser, John Ristow, Daryl Halls, and Suzanne Smith. Mr. Jim Bourgart from Business, Transportation and Housing was also in attendance.

Public Comment:

Commissioner Spering called for public comment first. The following people representing a community group called Genesis spoke on their commitment to the fair treatment of the citizens of the communities who depend on bus service to and from their jobs: Assistant Bishop Steven Charleston, Carl Anthony, Gabrielle Miller, Sylvia Darensburg, Betty Wharton, and Scott Denman.

Mr. Bob Planthold stated that he does not see commitments to fund transit with HOT revenues, but rather just mention of transit, which is not persuasive.

MOVING FORWARD FROM THE HOT NETWORK PRINCIPLES: a) Introduction to HOT Lanes Video

Mr. Andrew Fremier introduced a 4-minute video, prepared by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, which shows how a HOT lane would work.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Mr. Fremier presented a PowerPoint presentation, which updated the committee on the progress made since the Commission approved inclusion of the Regional HOT Network and the principles in the Transportation 2035 Plan. He discussed the issue of "Why a Regional HOT Network?".

There are five primary objectives: 1) more effectively manage the region's freeways; 2) provide an efficient, effective, consistent, and seamless system for users of the network, 3) provide benefits to travelers within each corridor commensurate with the revenues collected in that corridor, 4) implement the Express/HOT Lane Network in the Bay Area using a rapid delivery approach that takes advantage of the existing highway right-of-way, and 5) toll revenue collected from the HOT network will be used to operate the HOT network.

He stated that the implementation process includes: 1) Collaboration and Cooperation - to accomplish the objectives requires collaboration and cooperation. He noted that staff developed an executive management group that is made up of all the CMAs Executive Directors, Caltrans District staff and CHP Golden Gate Division staff. They meet monthly to try to advance items forward; 2) Corridor-Based Focus and Implementation – utilize a corridor-based structure that recognizes commute-sheds and geographic communities of interest as the most effective and user-responsive models for Bay Area Express/HOT Lane facilities implementation; 3)

Reinvestment within the Corridor – recognize that popular, political and legislative support will rest on demonstrating that the revenues collected in a corridor benefit travelers in the corridor through a variety of mechanisms; 4) Corridor Investment Plans – developed by stakeholder agencies within the corridor, will direct investment of revenues to capital and operating programs serving the corridor; 5) Simple System – include consistent geometric design, consistent signage, safe and simple operations, common technology, and common marketing, logo and terminology; 6) Toll Collection – BATA is responsible, and 7) Financing – may include using the state owned toll bridge enterprise as a financing pledge to construct the network.

Mr. Fremier presented four questions for discussion: 1) Can Toll Bridge Policy Oversight Committee model adequately protect corridor interests? 2) If not, what alternative model delivers benefits to users?, 3) Should corridors be defined as crossing county borders?, and 4) What information is needed to agree on balance between HOT network completion and corridor investments?

Mr. Jim Bourgart commented that the State has an enormous interest in this project. He stated that HOT lanes have the opportunity to manage the system for maximum efficiency, and inject an element of pricing into the system. HOT lanes represent a direct user fee, which is distinct from the current system, which does not have a direct user fee except for bridge tolls. HOT lanes generate needed revenue; they provide an option that people otherwise would not have - it's a time savings as well as a reliable trip. Lastly, he commented on partnerships and stated that in order to make this a success, there has to be a lot of collaboration.

Mr. John Ristow, Santa Clara County CMA, updated the committee on the Silicon Valley Express Lanes Program, which requires them to use BATA as the toll collection agency. It also specifies collaboration with Caltrans and CHP. He stated that the revenues must be reinvested in the corridor collected, and must be used for HOV facilities and the improvement of transit service. He also noted that of the 380 miles of HOV lanes today, Silicon Valley has approximately 180 miles. He summarized Santa Clara's first demonstration project, which is a HOT Connector at the SR 237 and the I-880 intersection, with a cost estimate of $5m. He noted that the timeline for this project puts it in place in approximately 1 year. He summarized the SR 85 Express Lanes, which has some potential for 2-lane HOT lane segments. The timeline for this project is to open in 2012, with a cost estimate of $47 - $97m. Lastly, he summarized the US 101 Express Lanes, which has potential for a 2-lane HOT corridor. The timeline for this project will open in 2013, with a cost estimate of $125 - $425m. Mr. Ristow stated that this will go for approval to the VTA Board in December 2008. Final design for the projects will be in early 2009. The SR 237/I880 express lanes will become operational in 2010, SR 85 in 2012, and US 101 in 2013. They will develop corridor investment plans in mid 2009, and approve them in early 2010.

Commissioner Lempert stated the importance of the network being a regional network. Mr. Ristow stated that they have been doing preliminary work to hopefully extend into San Mateo as a partnership so it would follow the same ideas of a network.

Mr. Dennis Fay, Alameda County CMA, updated the committee on the I-680 and I-580 Express Lanes. He stated that the I-680 express lanes were conceived as the Bay Area's first toll lane project, which starts at Highways 84 on the north and ends at Highway 237 on the south. The total length is 11 miles in Alameda County and 3 miles in Santa Clara County. The estimated

timeline is to open this project in 2010-2011, with a total cost of $40m. The projected revenue is $5m/year. He also commented on the I-580 Express Lane Projects, and stated that the 11-mile stretch of eastbound I-580 starts east of I-580/I-680 interchange, and ends at the base of the Altamont Pass. The 13-mile stretch of westbound I-580 starts at the base of the Altamont Pass, and ends west of I-580/I-680 interchange. The timeline for the eastbound project is estimated to open in 2010-2011, and for the westbound project it is estimated to open in 2012-2013, with a total cost of $28m. The projected revenue is just under $3.0m/yr. In closing, he stated that the revenue will pay for operating and maintaining the toll facilities, transit service in the corridors, and expanding HOV/HOT facilities in the corridors.

Commissioner Haggerty stated that he believes that it is a mistake not to include I-238 into the proposed HOT Network due to the fact that at some point more complete network would be easier to sell to the general public. He also stated that San Francisco seems to be non-existent from this program, and suggested that they be included in the HOT Network discussions. He expressed concern over the possible backlash for people that now believe that because they are paying tolls on freeways that they may no longer be interested in paying a 1/2 cent sales tax anymore for transportation projects. Mr. Fremier responded that staff is looking at I-238 in their Phase 3 study.

Mr. Steve Heminger mentioned that staff does contemplate that the HOV bypasses at the toll bridges would be part of the HOT network. He also stated that MTC's objective ultimately would be to have as connected system as possible, but there may be places, due to geographical constraints, where they can't quite connect all the dots. He noted that this is definitely still on the work plan to see if other connections can be made.

Commissioner Halsted also stated that having San Francisco, which is a generator of trips in both directions, in this governance picture would be very important.

Commissioner Yeager stated that future legislation should not take away any existing HOT lane authority already granted to counties by existing legislation.

Commissioner Lempert stated that one of the things that would be helpful to know is what money has already gone into the planning process, what the sources of that has been, what funds are going to be used for the construction, and how would staff propose funding future corridors to make all the connections.

Mr. Daryl Halls, Solano County CMA, stated that his board supports the HOT Network principles, and are in the process of constructing their first stretch of HOV on I-80. He also noted that they want to be a candidate for a HOV/HOT conversion project. He stated that he would like to have Solano County on a I-680 corridor working group, and for those who want to step up and do this, they need to get organized and start supporting the system. In closing, he stated that they should support the five demonstration projects for the two counties to move forward and try to add three of four more projects as part of any updated legislation, to provide a bigger initial system.

Mr. Bob McCleary, Contra Costa County CMA, stated that this is a complex process, and that his agency is prepared to work collaboratively with their counterparts in Alameda, Caltrans, Santa Clara, and Solano on the corridors that run through the counties. He also stated that he

doesn't think there is consensus on the model that staff is proposing. He stated that the toll revenues from both the toll corridors in Orange County, and from the Rte. 91 project well undershot the forecast, so the issue of financial planning is something that staff has to look at in great detail. He doubts that his board will support an overarching legislation to implement a comprehensive 800-mile HOT lanes network at this point in time. They are supportive of what Santa Clara and Alameda is doing, and they would probably support other demonstration projects as well.

Mr. Ristow commented that Santa Clara and Alameda are moving forward in all of the areas that are important to make a regional HOT lane come through; however, they do need to be based on corridor deployment when the corridors are defined, and with help from MTC, that they are publicly and politically acceptable, and that the technical issues are worked out.

Mr. Fay stated that a key feature of existing legislation states toll revenues generated in a particular corridor must be spend in that corridor.

Commissioner Haggerty stressed the point that this network has to move forward as a complete network otherwise it will not work.

Commissioner Sartipi stated that Caltrans supports the network as a complete system.

Commissioner Kinsey stated that it is important to know how revenues get allocated and benefit the corridor where tolls are generated. He also noted that the design criteria should be resolved so that costs and revenue estimates can be refined to assess financial feasibility.

Commissioner Chu stated that the corridors need to be properly defined to be able to move forward.

Ms. Suzanne Smith, Sonoma County CMA, stated that the goal for this program needs to be defined - is it congestion relief, is it strictly revenue generation, and where does reduction of VMT fit into it? She stated that Sonoma County just adopted a plan that seeks a reduction of VMT by 10% and they are looking at big targets as it relates to GHG emissions. She also supported Commissioner Haggerty's comments on having a complete network.

Commissioner Yeager stated that there might be other ways to finance overall corridor development rather than to take money that is generated within a corridor, and VTA would be open to ideas of borrowing money that is generated or loaning money.

In closing, Mr. Heminger commented on the next steps. He stated that networks depend, to some extent, on not only their physical manifestation being connected, but their financial underpinnings being connected. He agreed with Commissioner Chu that staff needs to figure out how to define the corridors - this is the first step. He noted that the more constrained the corridors are the more constrained the financial enterprise is and at some point saying "I want the corridor to be smaller" is saying "I don't want the network to be built as fast". He also commented on the management model, where staff gave the idea of using the toll bridge oversight committee. He noted that staff is at the point where they need to know "if not this, then what"? He also commented on the finance issue and stated that staff will be meeting with their bankers before sitting down with the CMAs and partners. This meeting will tell how much MTC

can stretch the toll enterprise to make the system work better financially. Lastly, he stated that to get this network completed will require a lot of work with Caltrans to address needed design exceptions, work with the financing team to get as strong of a financing enterprise as possible, and to work with the commission and the CMA Directors to come up with a political compromise that will give on all sides. The oversight committee will convene to discuss the outcome of this meeting.

Mr. Michael Pechner stated that this program does not address greenhouse gas reduction, and VMT needs to be addressed as well. He noted that staff needs to look at this in a regional and statewide manner to help climate change, greenhouse gases, and carbon footprint.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 12, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.