



Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District

Board Meeting

Friday, May 4, 2007

10:00 a.m.

San Marcos Activity Center

501 E. Hopkins

San Marcos, Texas

1. Call to Order

Notice was duly posted and a meeting of the Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail District was held on Friday, May 4, 2007. Chairman Covington called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Participants:

Sid Covington, Chair

Tommy Adkisson

Gloria Arriaga

Jeff Barton

Mary Briseño

Mariano Camarillo

Gerald Daugherty

Patty Eason

Fred Harless

Richard Perez

Carroll Schubert

John Thomaides

Other participants included Ross Milloy, Bill Bingham, Alison Schulze, Clif Davis and Tom Shelton.

2. Chairman and Member Comments

Council Member Patty Eason reported that the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution of support for the Rail Relocation Fund. Commissioner Jeff Barton announced that Hays County Commissioners Court will consider joining the Rail District on May 15.

Chairman Covington reported on a meeting held on May 2 to discuss the MoKan Corridor—the abandoned rail corridor that runs from Georgetown to Austin east of I-35. Mr. Covington noted that the northern portion of the MoKan corridor—from US 79 in Round Rock to Georgetown—is the route of the Austin-San Antonio commuter rail system, as adopted by the Rail District. The meeting was organized by Scott Polikov and Representative Krusee; representatives from the Rail District, TxDOT (Austin District), Capital Metro, and the cities of Austin, Georgetown, Round Rock, and Pflugerville attended. Capital Metro is planning a rail project in the MoKan corridor from the Austin airport to Georgetown, although much of the corridor is outside Capital Metro's service area. TxDOT indicated they will take the lead and contract for environmental clearance on the entire MoKan corridor. The environmental process could take up to 5 years. Mr. Covington will continue to keep the Board apprised.

3. Consider Approval of March 2 Board Meeting Minutes

Board Member Arriaga requested that Item 2 in the minutes be amended to reflect that she was appointed by Bexar County. Upon a motion by Council Member Richard Perez and second by Commissioner Jeff Barton, the March 2, 2007 meeting minutes were approved as amended.

4. Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Status of Appointments to Board, Administration of Oath of Office to Newly Appointed Board Members, and Decision on Board Member Terms

Bill Bingham reported that all 17 Board members have been appointed or reappointed to the Board, and recommended that the Board determine 1-year and 2-year terms at the next Board meeting. At that time, Mr. Bingham will present a motion and conduct a drawing so that half of the Board members are assigned 1-year terms and half assigned 2-year terms. Terms expire on February 1 in accordance with the Rail District's bylaws. The drawing will establish initial term lengths and thereafter allow for staggered 2-year terms as prescribed by the legislature.

5. Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Appointment of Executive Committee

Chairman Covington noted that the bylaws established an Executive Committee, which is appointed by the Board and may stand in for the Board as appropriate. Mr. Covington directed the Board's attention to a memo in the agenda packet that summarizes the Executive Committee's powers, duties, and composition. At the March Board meeting Mr. Covington proposed a slate of six members for the Committee, subject to Board action at the following meeting. Upon a motion by Council Member Richard Perez and second by Commissioner Jeff Barton, the Board appointed the following members to the Executive Committee: Chairman Covington, Vice-Chairman Wells, Mr. Camarillo, Council Member Kim, Council Member Perez, and Mr. Schubert.

6. Committee Report: Program Management Oversight Committee Meeting April 20, 2007

Committee Chair Mariano Camarillo directed the Board's attention to the written summary of the meeting included in the agenda packet. The Committee conducted a meeting on April 20 in four locations via conference call. The Committee considered three items:

- Carter-Burgess presented station evaluation criteria. The criteria recommended by the Committee will be presented to the Board under agenda item 7.
- The Committee authorized Ross Milloy to spend up to \$15,000 in local funds for consultant services during the current legislative session for research and analysis of alternative funding strategies related to the Rail Relocation Fund and ongoing discussions with Union Pacific.
- The Committee approved up to \$5,000 in local funds for legislative assistance during the current session.

7. Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Station Location Evaluation Criteria

Tom Shelton noted that the Program Management Oversight Committee directed Carter-Burgess to develop criteria for establishing station locations in response to questions from the District's local

ASAICRD Board Meeting

May 4, 2007

Page 3

jurisdictions. The criteria were presented to the PMO Committee on April 20, and refined based on the Committee's feedback.

Stations are an important piece of the rail system because the station is the point where riders interact with the system—it's the point of reference and recognition. Proper location is critical to the project's success. To guide the station evaluation process, policy goals should be clearly identified. On April 20, the PMO Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Board six policy goals as the goals for the overall rail system and for the station location evaluations:

- Maximize transit ridership
- Maximize development potential
- Minimize environmental impact
- Minimize capital cost
- Minimize annual operation and maintenance cost
- Minimize real estate acquisition impact

Mr. Shelton outlined the station evaluation process. To engage cities, counties and agencies in the corridor, a technical advisory committee would be convened for each city for their respective stations. Rail District staff and the consultant team would lead the effort, which is expected to take 6 months. The station evaluation process would be conducted concurrently with preliminary engineering and environmental analysis to take advantage of the public involvement element included in that phase of project development. The process could begin as early as fall of 2007.

Mr. Shelton described the general criteria that would be used to evaluate alternative sites for a given station, and directed the Board's attention to the detailed criteria included in the agenda packet. The criteria use a 5-point ranking system, and are divided into four key areas of analysis:

- Program and function
- Access and transportation
- Environment and urban design
- Real estate

Board discussion followed on who pays to develop stations, member jurisdictions' need for assistance on how to incorporate transit-oriented development in their current regulations and implement TOD in their cities, the importance of connectivity and circulation at each station to maximize ridership, and the need to educate each city on connectivity issues.

Mariano Camarillo, PMO Committee Chair, stated that the Committee makes a motion that the Board approve the policy goals and evaluation criteria presented by Mr. Shelton, and that the evaluation process be conducted concurrent with preliminary engineering. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Presentation on Results of Financial and Economic Benefits Study

Chairman Covington introduced the item by noting that the Financial and Economic Benefits Study was done at the request of the Transportation Commission and provided another opportunity to peer review the project's benefits and validate the District's previous studies.

ASAICRD Board Meeting

May 4, 2007

Page 4

Clif Davis stated that the Financial and Economic Benefits Study is the third economic study conducted by the District and is the most comprehensive study to date on benefits to the region, the State, and Union Pacific Railroad. The key finding of the study is that the aggregate local-regional-state benefit is \$3.2 billion over 18 years (2012-2030). In the context of the project's capital and operating costs—\$1 billion from 2012 to 2030—the project provides a 3-to-1 return. For every dollar spent on the project, the region and State can expect a \$3 return in economic benefits.

Mr. Davis presented the study results, which quantified financial benefits to the users of the regional transportation system (reduced congestion delay, fuel cost savings), financial benefits to the State of Texas (savings in highway construction and maintenance, air quality benefit, avoidance of accidents), financial benefits to freight railroads (savings in travel time), and economic development benefits to the region and the State (increases in gross state product, personal income, property values, taxable sales, and local, regional and state tax revenues).

- Costs savings to the region and the State (2012-2030): \$1.3 billion
- Economic benefit to Union Pacific (2012-2030): \$38 million - \$104 million
- Economic benefits to the region and the State (2012-2030): \$16 billion - \$17 billion total tax base impact, and \$1.8 billion total tax revenue impact.

Board members stated that the project's benefits aren't being promoted and communicated aggressively enough. District staff and the consultant team can promote the project on a technical level, but each Board member needs to be engaged and initiate talks with policy makers in their jurisdiction to ensure that the decision makers are well informed. Board members noted that the construction cost of \$380 million for two additional highway lanes on I-35 seems too low given the cost of recently completed projects and AASHTO's estimate of \$40 million per mile for urban highways. Mr. Davis stated that the estimate was conservatively low and does not include interchanges and additional right-of-way, but he will review the costs with Mr. Milloy.

9. Financial Report

Ross Milloy directed the Board's attention to two financial reports in the agenda packet: the check reconciliation report and the 2nd quarter statement.

10. Legislative Update

Ross Milloy reported on the current legislative session, saying that funding for rail relocation would be difficult to achieve in the existing legislative environment. Senator Wentworth and Representative Ruth McClendon are both working to help get financing for the rail relocation fund. Mr. Milloy is also pursuing funding for rail relocation from the Texas Emissions Reduction Program. In the next 2-3 weeks Board members may be asked to contact legislators to express support for the Rail Relocation Fund, and Mr. Milloy urged members to respond.

11. Other Business

A. Status Report on Meetings with Member and Local Jurisdictions

Alison Schulze directed the Board's attention to the summary of questions and comments from local jurisdictions' senior staff, which is included in the agenda packet, and to the

ASAICRD Board Meeting

May 4, 2007

Page 5

handout—a report card on meetings to date, financial support, and action needed. Staff and the consultant team have made progress: 16 meetings with policy boards and 9 meetings to-date with senior staff. In addition, the District is attracting new members—Hays County and the City of New Braunfels will consider joining the District in May. The public and the policy makers support the project, but that support isn't being communicated to the jurisdictions' senior staff. Rail District staff needs help and support from the Board to advance the cause. Of the 16 jurisdictions, only four have shown a willingness to support the project financially. Staff needs the Board's help to turn the "undecideds" into "yeses" in terms of financial support.

Board discussion followed. Local jurisdictions need specific information on cost sharing, rather than a range of costs; and they need to know which year local funds are needed and what year service will start. The Rail District needs to identify the exact amount needed from each jurisdiction and when it's needed. Local jurisdictions also need to balance competing priorities within limited budgets. The Board suggested staff and the consultant team call each Board member to brief them on the meeting held with their staff.

B. 2007 Texas Transportation Forum, July 18-20

The Texas Transportation Forum will be held in Austin on July 18-20. It would be useful for Board members to attend. Board members can contact staff for registration information.

C. Amtrak and Talgo Trains, Seattle, August 2007

Amtrak and Talgo (a Spanish rail car manufacturer) are going to invite the Board to visit Seattle in August to demonstrate the Sounder passenger rail system and Talgo's higher-speed rail car. When specific dates become available, Mr. Milloy will distribute the information to Board members.

12. Public Comment

Mr. Jerry Roane spoke on TriTrack, a personal monorail system. TriTrack could be built faster and cheaper and would provide faster service than conventional commuter rail trains. TriTrack is an elevated system supported by pipes every 60 feet, so environmental clearance would probably be waived. Each car seats 4 people and travels at 180 mph. TriTrack is new technology and not currently in use in the U.S. Texas Transportation Institute is conducting a study on TriTrack that should be complete by September. Chairman Covington asked Mr. Roane to send information on TriTrack to Alison Schulze—in particular, the TTI study—for distribution to the Board.

13. Adjourn

Chairman Covington announced that the next Board meeting would be on June 1 at AACOG in San Antonio. Mr. Covington thanked Board members and the audience for their attendance and participation. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.