

**CORONADO TUNNEL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, July 12, 2007**

**Police Facility, 700 Orange Avenue
Community Meeting Room**

Minutes

1. ROLL CALL:

Attendees: Sut Clark, Lou Smith, Art Osborne, Steve Clarey, Bill Huck, Margaret Pimpo and Darrell Sarich

Absent: Al Ovrom (City Council representative); Jim Benson

City Staff: Ed Walton and Danielle Spahn

Consultant: Brian Pearson, PB Americas, Inc. (PB)

2. MINUTES: Mr. Clarey requested a correction to the June 7, 2007 Special Meeting Minutes. He was unable to attend that meeting and sent an email to communicate his comments on the Draft Financial Strategy Report. The body of the email was made part of the minutes, but the attachment to his email was not. The minutes were approved as amended with the inclusion of the attachment as a part of the official June 7, 2007 minutes.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: There was general discussion about the proposal to illuminate the bridge at night.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Update:

1. Project Report and Environmental Document (PR/ED):

- Status of Technical Reports – Engineering/Environmental – Mr. Pearson reported that all of the environmental technical reports are out for review and all the engineering technical reports, except for the financial document and Risk Management Plan (a Caltrans document), are in. They've received about one-third of the comments, except none from the Navy. All of the information needed for the Project Report is largely complete, so PB will deliver the draft PR and draft screen check of the ED to the City in August. A staff report, but not the PR/ED, will go to Council on September 7. The Council won't be asked to concur; this will be just to let them know the documents are being released to Caltrans and the Navy. It will be a year before the ED will be released to the public.

- Status of August Newsletter – The original intent had been to go to the City Council for concurrence with the draft PR and ED, but this would have put those documents in the public domain. Caltrans had concerns about the public seeing them before they did, so it was decided not to do that. For that reason, the newsletter’s cover story is being modified. It was to have been about the reader-friendly document, but it won’t be available to the public until spring. The new cover story will be a summary of the progress on the project. The inside will have articles about the final alternatives, the financial strategy report, the new portals and what the traffic studies show. There will also be an article on the reader-friendly document and another will report on other tunnels under study or already in progress. There will be a focus on the use of tunnels due to a lack of ground space to move traffic and there will be an article on the USS Carl Vinson. By the next CTC meeting, there should be a fairly final draft. Southwest Strategies will come to that meeting to discuss it. The CTC members expressed interest in seeing the draft newsletter in advance of the next meeting and Mr. Pearson said he’d try to get it to them a week in advance.
- Agency Coordination – Navy/Caltrans – The Navy hired Kimley-Horn, a traffic consultant, to do an independent review of City traffic reports as part of the supplemental EIS for the homeporting of the USS Carl Vinson. A Navy attorney is working with FHWA to define what the Navy’s responsibility is as a cooperating agency for their review and comment process. PB is asking the Navy to concur on the technical reports but hasn’t received any responses from them yet. Mr. Osborne said he felt it was time to do something; reports shouldn’t sit for five years at the Navy. Mr. Pearson said the Navy keeps reminding them that when they said they needed 60 days to review and comment on documents they meant that as a minimum. He said he’s talked to some senior FHWA people and they said that’s not uncommon; they have experienced this on Navy projects. He said the Navy seems only interested in the traffic impact reports and those are the ones they are reviewing.

Mr. Clarey felt the biggest challenge is that the Navy and City traffic counts are different. Mr. Pearson said that Kimley-Horn has been asked to determine whether they support the numbers in the traffic reports. He said that both Caltrans and SANDAG have concurred on the PB reports which were based on SANDAG modeling. Mr. Clarey said we have an intolerable situation today; how do we make the Navy feel a sense of ownership for the situation? If we can do this, they’ll feel a need to contribute. Mr. Smith suggested reminding them of the partnership and that the situation is unacceptable to the City today. Mr. Huck wondered how often these concerns are communicated to the City’s legislators – the project needs to be constantly reinforced. Mr. Clarey replied that PMA has been retained and they’re in communication with the various delegations. Susan Davis remains committed and there’s fairly regular dialog. He urged thinking not what traffic will be in the future, but what it is today. Mr. Osborne believes that the Navy thinks the problem will be solved with the Third Street Gate, but it’s not. Mr. Huck wondered whether the City should generate a report or an issue paper in six or eight weeks that says “now that the gate is open we still have a problem.” Mr. Clarey said the Navy is looking to get funding identified for a base access road; maybe a letter like the one Mr. Huck has suggested could be sent after then. This issue will be placed on the September agenda.

2. Funding:

- Final Financial Strategy Report – June 19 City Council Meeting – Mr. Pearson said that Councilmember Monroe was not pleased that toll revenue and a possible parcel tax were in the report; however, when the ED goes out to public review it must include all potential funding sources and financial options. When this goes out next summer for public feedback, a new Council will be seated. If the current Council had vetoed some of the strategies in this report, the new Council could not go back and reconsider everything. However, the City Council Financial Policy Guidelines will state that the current Council's position is that they do not support toll funds or a parcel tax. Mr. Clarey noted that projects like this do not operate without a revenue stream and that stream is tolls. Mr. Pearson said that if any CTC member wanted a final version of the Financial Strategy report they can contact Nancy Reynolds or Danielle Spahn.

Mr. Huck brought up public/private partnerships – to not discuss this concerns him. What's the purpose of assembling people [indicating the CTC], having them work for years and not listening to them? Mr. Clark mentioned that he had not had a chance to speak at the Council meeting when the Financial Strategy Report was being discussed. The City should give residents a chance to say if they're willing to come up with some money of their own. Then when they say "what are you going to do about traffic?" the CTC can say "we can't do it without local money and you didn't want to do it." Mr. Huck wondered if the CTC should request an opportunity to speak to the Council. He's afraid that four years down the line the federal consultant will say "did you tell them you couldn't expect much money from the Navy, etc.? How do you expect to pay for this?" It's like an elephant in the room that no one sees. There is a new tool out there that's only been available for the last 18 months – public/private ventures, with toll revenues as a way to fund it. Mrs. Pimpo noted that tolls would help with cross traffic, which is a problem these days. Mr. Pearson said there's no way to fund this project without tolls.

Mr. Clarey asked if now is the time to sit down with the Mayor and discuss this; if the outcome is negative, maybe we need to fold our tent. Mr. Huck felt that it's important to the community that this be discussed. Mrs. Pimpo suggested inviting the Mayor to a CTC meeting. Mr. Clarey felt the Financial Strategy Report needs some expository treatment of tolls and user fees in the State of California, as was done on the TOT. Take the emotion out. Mr. Pearson said that the driving issue of this project is how to pay for it and he agrees that some additional information from the CTC would be helpful to the public when they review the ED. The Financial Strategy Report tried to get away from discussing implementing mechanisms; that would be a second step. Mr. Clarey observed that user fees are a fact of life; over 90 percent of bridges in California have a toll. Mr. Huck offered to take responsibility for putting together a draft report on tolls. He suggested maybe meeting with Al Ovrom in September to get his take and then meet with the Mayor. Mr. Walton informed the CTC that Frank Tierney spoke at a Council meeting saying he wants to raise the TOT for the hospital.

B. Reports and Discussion from Commission Members or Staff on Current Issues:

1. Status of Third Street Gate Project: The gate opened on Monday. More signs are needed because people are still trying to make left-hand turns. Mr. Osborne noted that there are bushes obscuring sight distance; it might be a good idea to make the intersection a three-way stop until the light is installed. Mr. Walton said the signals are at least nine months out. These lights will contain video detection traffic counters. Until the lights are installed, the Navy has committed to having traffic control people at both intersections. Mr. Osborne said that buses are not going onto the base and Mr. Walton said he'd check with MTS.
 2. Congestion Relief Working Group (CRWG) Project: The City Council approved the bulb-outs' design and location at five intersections. The City will hold public meetings with the neighborhoods and will visit residents at the actual locations of the bulb-outs. There won't be any shrubbery at the bulb-outs because Caltrans has concerns about sight lines.
 3. General Information Update: None.
- C. Future Meeting Schedule: The next meeting will be Thursday, August 9, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. in the Police Department Community Room. Mr. Clarey will be unable to attend.
5. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting concluded at 5:40 p.m.

Approved:

Jackson S. Clark, Chairman