

CORONADO TUNNEL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, March 11, 2004
Police Facility, 700 Orange Avenue
Community Meeting Room

MINUTES

1. ROLL CALL:

Attendees: Sut Clark, Betsy Gill, Al Ovrom, Al Hollingsworth, Bill Huck and Art Osborne

Absent: Steve Clarey and Casey Tanaka (City Council representative)

City Staff: Jim Benson, Gail Brydges and Ed Walton

Consultants: Brian Pearson (Parsons Brinckerhoff) and Chris Wahl (Southwest Strategies)

2. MINUTES: The minutes of the February 12, 2004 meeting were approved unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Update

1. Project Study Report (PSR): Ms. Brydges reported that the PSR was completed and signed by Caltrans in January and has been distributed to other agencies. It is considered a project initiation document. Mr. Pearson said it is an order of magnitude jump.

2. Project Report and Environmental Documents (PR/ED): The City and Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) met with all parties at Caltrans today and Jeff Lewis of FHWA Sacramento was connected by conference call. People are looking forward to jumping in on this. There was a lot of feedback.

- Consultant Contract: Ms. Brydges said that the contract is about one day away; the City is working out some final details with PB and expects signatures next week. The Notice to Proceed is targeted for March 22.

- Scope of Work and Schedule: Mr. Pearson said a new phase has started and he distributed copies of the Scope of Services and schedule. The first step will be to revisit the Purpose and Need and maybe make some slight refinement. Then PB will put together the scoping process. This will allow the public one more opportunity, as required by CEQA and NEPA, to comment on the alternatives. Once this is done, two parallel items will commence: The Project Report (PR), which becomes the approval document for the project, and the draft

EIS/EIR which will eventually be attached to the draft PR. These are both Caltrans documents. The PR contains all the engineering information on the project. This will take three-and-a-half years. The final EIS/EIR will take about one year. FHWA approval comes in the form of a Record of Decision (ROD); this is a federal step. The state step is the Notice of Determination (NOD). Mr. Huck asked if the environmental process is structured to respond to outside stimuli that might change the direction of the project and Mr. Pearson responded no, that those things add time. Mr. Huck then asked at what point would we be able to determine if we could have three lanes instead of two and Mr. Pearson said that the PSR essentially defines the basic engineering features and has Caltrans' concurrence, so it's not likely unless we were to dramatically increase the bore size. It would be an extreme long shot.

Chris Wahl, Southwest Strategies, introduced himself. The principals in his firm have over 50 years public relations experience in San Diego County. Mr. Osborne and Mr. Hollingsworth emphasized the importance of reaching not just Coronado residents, but the region because it's a regional problem and Mr. Wahl agreed. He reviewed the goals, strategies and tactics of the public involvement program. He said the nature of this type of project when you work with state and federal agencies is very rigid. It was agreed to change "Navy focus group" under tactics to "NAVBASE Coronado." Mr. Huck suggested using the *San Diego Union Tribune* and not just the *Coronado Eagle & Journal* and Mr. Hollingsworth mentioned the *Navy Compass*. Ms. Gill was interested in hearing some feedback from the general public as to how successful outreach to date has been.

Marlys Joos, 375 D Avenue, said she is concerned about the length of the process. Story Vogel, 350 D Avenue, said he hears around town "it will never happen." People are skeptical, but he believes they are appreciative of the efforts. You need to get all those mayors and city councilmembers who wanted the tolls taken off on board. Dave Joos, 375 D Avenue, said when you have 100,000 cars coming across a body of water or canyon you have more than one major artery. If something happens on the bridge it will impact the tunnel. He hears that people are shortcutting to Imperial Beach through Coronado and feels something is needed, like a nickel snatcher. He compared the traffic situation to a clogged artery.

Mr. Clark said it's good for the Tunnel Commission to keep in mind what is being done in terms of the PR/ED and advocacy/lobbying front – they are two different arenas. Ms. Brydges explained that the City has a separate contract with a lobbying firm. Mr. Pearson said it is important to make sure that only local money is spent on educating Coronado residents, businesses, the Navy and other interested parties about the project. Federal money can be spent demonstrating to FHWA and Caltrans that the public involvement program meets all CEQA and NEPA requirements. These items will be broken out separately when invoiced so it's clear what pot of money was spent where. Mr. Osborne asked for examples of external lobbying that has been going on and Mr. Benson said that PMA

lobbies in Washington, D.C. under a contract to the City. Their current focus is on Transportation Reauthorization and locally we're working on the Transnet extension as well. Ms. Brydges reported that the tunnel now has the support of the North Island Association.

- Cooperative Agreement – Caltrans: Mr. Benson said this has basically been done with Caltrans. The City will get the attorneys to sign off.
- Lead Agency Agreement – City/FHWA/Navy/Caltrans: A draft has been prepared and now needs the attorneys to sign off.
- 3. 2004 Transportation Appropriation Bill – \$500,000 – RTIP Amendment: This will take place at SANDAG in April.
- 4. Transportation Reauthorization Bill (2004-2009) – Request for \$20 Million: Discussed above.
- 5. SANDAG Transnet Extension – \$25 Million – Construction Only: Discussed above.

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

1. Major Traffic Study (MTS): Mr. Benson said he has another draft in hand. The consultant is still working on the traffic model.
2. Semi-Diverters: Mr. Benson said the City is working on the structure of the EIR as required by the court. Ms. Gill asked if the EIR is being written with the goal of removing the semi-diverters and Mr. Benson said yes, that is the direction that has been given by the City Council.
3. Third Street Gate: The City has sent letters to Susan Davis and Dianne Feinstein trying to get the project moved into the '05 MILCON. The City has indicated to the Navy that it will lobby on its behalf provided the gate is compatible with the tunnel.
4. Congestion Relief Working Group (CRWG) Project: The City is finishing the agreement with SANDAG and Caltrans and will be ready to go with a Request for Proposals for a consultant to do the EIR.
5. Airport Committee – Joint Use of North Island: Mr. Ovrom reported that there has been a break in the MAAC leadership and the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce. He's hearing that there's more support for an airport at North Island than Miramar.

C. Future Meeting Schedule: Thursday, April 8, 2004 at 4:00 p.m.

5. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Approved:

Jackson S. Clark, Chairman