

Public Works Committee

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the WRCOG Public Works Committee was called to order by Chair Stuart McKibben at 2:00 p.m. on April 13, 2023.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McKibben led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

- City of Beaumont - Jeff Hart*
- City of Calimesa - Michael Thornton
- City of Corona - Rosalva Ureno*
- City of Hemet - Noah Rau
- City of Jurupa Valley - Octavio Duran*
- City of Lake Elsinore - Yu Tagai
- City of Menifee - Nick Fidler
- City of Moreno Valley - Melissa Walker
- City of Murrieta - Bob Moehling
- City of Norco - Sam Nelson
- City of Riverside - Gil Hernandez
- City of San Jacinto - Stuart McKibbin (Chair)
- City of Temecula - Patrick Thomas*
- County of Riverside - Mark Lancaster*
- March Joint Powers Authority - Lauren Sotelo
- Riverside County Transportation Commission - Jenny Chan
- Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) - Mauricio Alvarez

*Arrived after Roll Call

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR – (Murrieta / City of Riverside) 15 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Items 5.A - 5.C were approved.

A. Summary Minutes from the February 9, 2023, Public Works Committee Meeting

Action:

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the February 9, 2023, Public Works Committee meeting.

B. Western Riverside County Clean Cities Coalition Activities Update

Action:

1. Received and filed.

C. 2022 Fee Comparison Analysis Update - Final Report

Action:

1. Received and filed.

6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. TUMF Nexus Study Activities Update

Darren Henderson from Freeway Operations and Advanced Traffic Management reported that the TUMF Nexus Study is currently being updated, which uses data from SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). TUMF Nexus Study Consultant, GHD, has completed the initial modeling work which included an update of the RIVCOM model to reflect the roadway network that was in place at the end of 2021. Results of the model runs will be used to screen network requests received from local jurisdictions to establish nexus for project inclusion in the Program.

Unit costs for highway projects were previously updated based on the most recent Caltrans bid prices and local agency bid prices; some of those costs have almost doubled. GHD has also verified that the changes made to RIVCOM do not impact the overall performance of the model through a review of the model calibration and validation criteria. GHD will use the updated list of TUMF network requests and then verify that each of the requested projects meets applicable criteria.

Committee member Mark Lancaster asked how SB9, adding units to an existing property, is factored into the model.

Mr. Henderson replied that it was not necessarily factored into the model, but SB9 and other bills that have been passed will be addressed along the process, and will make recommendations on how to satisfy those requirements.

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, stated that SB9 allows by-right subdivision. Staff believe that SB9 does not fundamentally affect the forecasts. SCAG conducts household level forecasts based on population estimates adopted by the Department of Finance, which forecasts the County's growth in the next 20 years regardless of the dwelling type. Also, SB9 does not apply to large areas of the County because the census department has changed the definition of what is considered "urban". Finally, the Agency's development patterns are not conducive to SB9 development, as developers do not care for subdividing lots since 90% of residential permits are pulled by large publicly-traded companies such as KB Homes. As of now, SB9 does not affect the demographic forecasts, but things might change, which is why Nexus studies are conducted.

A question was asked if the fees are going to double, if all else is equal.

Mr. Henderson replied that GHD is going to be very stringent on applying the selection criteria for projects that are included in the Program, as well as other things to do as part of the update to help offset the effect of the unit costs.

A question was asked when the fees will be determined, and if there are significant increases, can WRCOG consider phasing those increases over a few years.

Mr. Gray stated that in the past, there has almost always been phasing when implementing new increases. The WRCOG Executive Committee will take two actions: approve the Nexus study, and implement the fees. The Executive Committee can reject the Nexus, or only adopt a certain percentage of the fees. Outreach will be done with Committee members, City Managers, County Supervisor boards, or whomever, to make sure everyone understands the process.

Mr. Henderson clarified that if the Executive Committee was to reduce the fee identified in the Nexus, it would affect how the fee is implemented, and require member agencies to demonstrate how it will cover the lost revenue. It is expected that the fee will go up substantially since the unit costs have doubled, but GHD will work to keep the increase as modest as possible. The final Nexus is expected to be completed by fall of 2023.

Mr. Gray added that the fees will reflect the projects included in the Nexus study, and if the Executive Committee wants to reduce those fees, it will affect the amount of money made available to member agencies for their projects, and may require agencies to match or contribute more.

Mr. Henderson stated that the TUMF Program operates on a full-basis fee, which calculates the total amount that needs to be generated by the Program to mitigate the impact created. The Committee may choose to adopt a program that will only mitigate a certain percentage of the costs, but only that percentage will be available to agencies for their projects.

A question was asked if Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects are still being considered to be included.

Mr. Gray confirmed that staff believes ITS should be a part of the Program. Some member agencies have completed most of the projects in the TUMF network. Agencies may receive an incentive for improving traffic flow, such as by installing adaptive traffic lights.

Mr. Gray stated he will look into the Business Round Table Initiative to see if it will affect the TUMF Fee, with a presentation on this subject on a future agenda. Staff is always on the lookout for state-level efforts to limit impact fees.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

B. WRCOG Member Agency Experience as it Relates to State & Federal Agencies in the Infrastructure, Design, and Construction Process

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, asked Committee members for input regarding their experiences when working with State and Federal agencies.

Committee member Mark Lancaster shared that he received a letter from the State regarding the Campbell Ranch interchange, and there is an extensive list of requirements to modify an interchange.

Committee member Mike Thornton stated that the City of Calimesa proposed to upgrade an interchange, but has faced many challenges based on the overwhelming inefficiencies in the process, specifically from Caltrans. The City of Calimesa is working with the County of Riverside to try to get this project built. It has had unique opportunities to obtain funding, but it has been over five years and the project has been unable to get to a point where it is ready for funding. The City of Calimesa meets with Caltrans every month; yesterday was meeting number 49. One of the frustrations has been that Caltrans changes policies on a regular basis, and if a project is not approved on a certain step, it has to go back to meet the current policy. Stormwater is another factor that is constantly being reviewed, in the PSR step, PA & ED step, and again at the PS&E, but nothing has changed. This takes several thousand dollars to conduct those assessments, only to come to the same conclusion in the first step. Additionally, in the traffic portion there are many analyses, reports, and studies required, which add up to approximately \$500k. This is money that could have been spent on infrastructure, but is now being used for this laborious Caltrans process. Costs to get through the process have essentially doubled in the last four years. The estimated cost for Caltrans approval was approximately \$4.5M to \$5M; that amount is now closer to \$10M. Committee member Thornton reached out to WRCOG for a collaborative effort with other member agencies to try to get the process changed.

Mr. Gray stated that the goal would be to understand if the actions of Caltrans are business-as-usual, or a deliberate pattern of behavior. Based on the letter received by Committee member Lancaster listed various studies and analyses. If this is a pattern, the State likely decided to not allow capacity-enhancing projects to move forward, which would affect all member agencies.

Committee member Patrick Thomas suggested getting the project defined as an operational improvement project. The City of Temecula has been working with Caltrans on an auxiliary lane and has had a good experience. Caltrans allowed the project to be processed as a streamline oversight project, and it was allowed to be built under CEQA, thus avoiding more stringent NEMA requirements.

Committee member Lancaster read the letter received from Caltrans, which stated various new requirements. He clarified that Caltrans is merely implementing the policies at the direction of the State. The process has become more onerous, longer, and more expensive, but there are people at Caltrans that can help. Committee member Lancaster agreed that the Committee and Agency could get together to talk to the Caltrans Directors, but ultimately, Caltrans does not create those policies.

Mr. Gray would like to hear from RCTC's perspective. TUMF spends a lot of money on pre-construction activities, which means that there is less money for ROW or construction. It is ok for Caltrans to change the rules or goals, as long as those goals are attainable.

Committee member Lancaster added that the Governor, State Senate and Assembly members are the ones proposing bills that are not implementable at the moment.

Mr. Gray stated that if WRCOG can do something concrete, it will; but at the moment it is uncertain of what exactly that would be. He encouraged Committee members to notify WRCOG staff of any issues and the Agency will do everything it can to help, or at least hear out member agencies' concerns.

Committee member Bob Moehling stated that the City of Murrieta had a similar experience as the City of Calimesa for an interchange that has been proposed since 2010. In 2019, the project went through the environmental process and was elevated to an EIR, which changed various aspects of the project. Also, the Fish and Wildlife agencies are asking for an overcrossing of the 215 freeway, all of which continue to delay the project and increases construction costs.

Committee member Gil Hernandez agreed that the process is cumbersome, and gave an example using the French Valley Interchange, which was proposed in 2002, and estimated to cost a total of \$75M. The first phase has been completed, and going into the second phase the project is now at over \$300M.

WRCOG staff will be sharing these comments with RCTC staff as it relates to experience working with Caltrans and will return with an update in future meetings.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

C. Confirmation of the TUMF Nexus Study Roadway Network

WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, Chris Gray, reported that the Public Works Committee previously approved a list of roadway projects to be added as TUMF-eligible projects during the TUMF Nexus Study update. The projects will be evaluated to determine if the projects meet the criteria to be added to the Nexus Study.

Committee member Patrick Thomas asked if the RCTC projects would not be included.

Mr. Gray replied that when projects receive outside funding, they remain in the Nexus Study, but a reduction is made in the amount of available funding.

Three additions were requested including:

1. Bundy Canyon Road (2 lanes/4 lanes to 6 lanes)- I-15 to Sunset (City Limits)
2. Nichols Road (2 lanes to 6 lanes)- I-15 to Lake
3. Scott Road (2 lanes to 6 lanes)- Sunset to Murrieta

A comprehensive list of all TUMF Nexus Study projects can be found on the WRCOG website. Anything that has been completed has been removed from the list, and another list of fully completed projects is being developed. All projects will be tested to see if they meet the criteria, and remove if it does not meet those criteria

Action:

1. Approved the Updated TUMF Nexus Study Roadway Network.

(Menifee / Murrieta) 17 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Item 6.C was approved.

D. TUMF Zone Revenue Forecasts for Fiscal Years 2023/2024 to 2027/2028 Transportation Improvement Program Updates

WRCOG Staff evaluated several different options to forecast TUMF revenue for the forthcoming

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) update including a 3-year and also a 5-year average. Staff recommended the use of a 5-year average which resulted in a total yearly revenue of \$26.5M across all five TUMF Zones.

Action:

1. Approved the TUMF Zone Revenue Forecasts for Fiscal Years 2023/2024 to 2027/2028 Transportation Improvement Program.

(Murrieta / County of Riverside) 16 yes; 1 no; 0 abstention. Item 6.D was approved.

7. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, reminded the Committee that the WRCOG General Assembly will be held on June 29th at 4:00 PM at Pechanga Resort Casino. The General Leadership Address will recognize Committee Chairs, so Chair McKibbin will be receiving a lovely acrylic to recognize his term as Chair. A virtual General Assembly was held in 2021, and Committee member Sam Nelson did not receive his award for his term as Public Works Committee Chair in 2021. Mr. Gray presented Committee member Nelson with his acrylic, and thanked all Committee members for attending in person.

Cameron Brown, TUMF Program Manager, is expected to be back in June or July 2023. In the meantime, Brian Piche-Cifuentes will be the contact for TUMF matters such as reimbursement agreements, invoices, credit agreements, etc. If there are any reimbursements or invoices that have not been paid, please forward them to Brian.

TUMF Zone meetings will begin in May 2023.

8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

1. Update from County Flood Control on Stormwater
2. Nexus Study updates
3. Updates to Nexus Study Roadway costs
4. Special meeting of the TUMF Public Works Committee on May 11, 2023 at 2:00 PM

9. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee member Jenny Chan stated that RCTC received 25 applications for Regional Arterial Projects, with a total ask of \$185M. The TUMF plus Measure A capacity is \$135M. The RCTC Evaluation Committee is currently reviewing applications.

Committee member Patrick Thomas offered to share an Alternative Compliance Fee Program for Stormwater.

Mr. Gray stated that new permits will be required for those in the Santa Ana Watershed.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next Public Works Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., in

WRCOG's office located at 3390 University Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 3:31 p.m.