

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Eliot Hurwitz, NCTPA
From: Matt Taecker, Principal
Re: Citizens Advisory Committee – Summary of Meeting #1
Date: revised - September 23, 2013

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAD) for the Highway 29 Gateway Corridor Improvement Plan project held its first meeting on December 19, 2012.

CALL TO ORDER

Attendance

Members Present:

- Chuck McMinn.
- Hans Korve.
- Debra Dommen.
- Ryan Gregory
- Peter Nissen
- John Naab
- Beth Marcus
- Nance Matson
- David Oro
- Michael Haley
- Keith Pepper
- Bill Stephens
- Anthony Quincho

Members Absent

- Michelle Benvenuto
- Andrea Biagi
- Deborah Castles
- Elizabeth Celaya
- Nicholas Monroe
- Genji Schmeder
- Jay Spangenberg
- City of Vallejo rep

Others Present:

Eliot Hurwitz – NCTPA
Kate Miller – NCTPA
Danielle Schmitz - NCTPA
Eric Whan – City of Napa
Rajeev Bhatia – Dyett& Bhatia
Steve Crosley – Fehr & Peers

Matt Taecker– Dyett& Bhatia
Sophie Martin– Dyett& Bhatia
Michael Throne – City of American Canyon
Mike Waterson – American Canyon Eagle
Les Lawson

Welcome & Introductions

Eliot Hurwitz, transportation planner and project manager for NCTPA welcomed members of the CAC. CAC members introduced themselves.

- Chuck McMinn. Chair, Napa Valley Vine Trail, and member of Napa Transit Investors.
- Hans Korve. Retired founding Principal of Korve Engineering, a firm that developed the last Highway 29 transportation plan and many other projects.
- Debra Dommen. Napa Wine Estates, Napa Chamber of Commerce, Napa Valley Vintners
- Ryan Gregory. Engineer
- Peter Nissen. Grower, Director - Napa County Farm Bureau, and industrial property owner.
- John Naab. Developer
- Beth Marcus, American Canyon Chamber of Commerce
- Nance Matson. Bicycle Committee and American Canyon resident
- David Oro. American Canyon planning commissioner and resident.
- Michael Haley. Yountville grape grower and Director, Napa Regional Parks & Open Space District.
- Keith Pepper. American Canyon resident and former planning commissioner in Oregon.
- Bill Stephens. Napa resident.
- Anthony Quicho. American Canyon planning commissioner and resident.

Hurwitz introduced Matt Taecker, Principal, Dyett & Bhatia urban planners, and the consultant team's project manager. Taecker introduced members of the consultant team who were present:

- Rajeev Bhatia, Principal-in-Charge, Dyett & Bhatia.
- Steve Crosley, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers transportation planners.
- Terry Bottomley, Principal, Bottomley Associates urban design.
- Sophie Martin, Senior Associate, Dyett & Bhatia.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND PROCESS

Jurisdictions and General Objectives

Taecker provided a brief introduction. This is an NCTPA project, funded by Caltrans. Several jurisdictions are involved, including: the Cities of American Canyon, Napa, and Vallejo; the Counties of Napa & Solano; Caltrans; and NCTPA.

General project objectives include:

- Enhancing transportation performance across all modes;
- Addressing challenges with state-of-the-art technologies and programs;
- Identifying physical design improvements;
- Developing implementation strategies; and
- Aligning recommendations with each community's aspirations for the future.

Timeline and CAC Role

Taecker provided overview of timeline and the two basic project components:

- A Vision Plan (what do you want the corridor to become); and
- An Implementation Plan (how will you attain your vision).

The CAC will play important role in shaping recommendations before they are presented to the Corridor Steering Committee (CSC), which is the decision making body for the project. The CSC is comprised of mayors, the chairs of NCTPA and Napa County supervisors, and a Caltrans regional manager. The CAC will be advising the CSC.

CAC members wondered how the CAC will interface with the CSC, and whether joint meetings are planned. Hurwitz and Taecker explained that no joint meetings are planned. Hurwitz emphasized that CAC members are encouraged to attend and participate at CSC meetings.

CONDITIONS, ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Community Character & Transportation Conditions

Taecker provided a brief "tour" of the corridor using maps and photographs. He made the point that different abutting uses and conditions may argue for different highway configurations.

Crosley described existing "PM peak" traffic and "levels of service" (LOS). He noted the segments where there is unacceptable congestion. Data presented is several years old, but traffic volumes have stayed steady or dropped in that time period throughout the region.

Several CAC committee members expressed frustration that more data had not been provided, and felt that a "vision" could not be recommended by the CAC in the absence of data. Various CAC members asked for actual traffic counts at selected locations along the corridor and also data off the corridor and any analysis available to help understand the source and destination of the traffic (e.g. how much is through traffic versus local sourced or

destination traffic). Taecker noted that an analysis using available data will be forthcoming and before the next CAC meeting, as much information as possible will be provide.

Bhatia and Taecker asked CAC members to make specific requests for information with an email to Hurwitz.

Kate Miller, Executive Director of NCTPA, noted that Travel Behavior studies will be beginning soon but that results will not be available in time for this project. As better information becomes available, the recommendations from this project will be adjusted. Several members of the CAC felt uncomfortable ending the Visioning process before these studies were completed.

Taecker also added that the CAC process will be iterative: a general idea of what the CAC wants will help the team know what to analyze, and that the Vision Plan adopted early next year will really be a draft vision that will be revised as modeling results and other analysis becomes available.

Crosley then described planned improvements along the corridor, such as a flyover at the Highway 29's intersections with Highway 221 and at Highway 12. A flyover is a grade separated "left turn" that dramatically enhances intersection performance. Crosley also noted that the project will make recommendations relating to transit, bicycle trails, and pedestrian paths and environments.

Issues and Concerns

Regarding transportation performance, CAC members expressed concerns and offered ideas. Comments during this part of the meeting include the following.

- Improve efficiencies with signal timing;
- Have center lanes change directions depending on time of day;
- To get Caltrans to make needed changes, it's important that all of the jurisdictions come together and agree to a unified vision.

Hurwitz noted that Caltrans will be at the table during this process.

ROADWAY TYPES

Bottomley, the urban design consultant, introduced basic roadway types that can all handle high volumes of traffic but that function differently. Roadways affect abutting uses, sometimes as a detriment and sometimes as a positive asset. Roadways can also define a community's character to a substantial degree.

Bottomley introduced four basic roadway types, but noted that there can be many related variations.

- **Rural Highways** are a highway type that is already in place along much of the corridor, and generally offer views into open space. Local roads and pedestrian/bicycle paths may parallel but are generally separated from Rural Highways.
- **Boulevards** are multi-modal with inner through lanes, and outer lanes with slower traffic. Inner lanes are designed to move thru-traffic efficiently. Outer lanes provide vehicle access and on-street parking to abutting uses, and help create pedestrian- and bike-friendly routes that parallel traffic.
- **Parkways** provide traffic lanes, as well as pedestrian and bike routes that parallel traffic. Parkways use distance, landscaping, and other features to “buffer,” or separate, parallel routes *and* abutting uses from traffic.
- **Grade-Separated Highways** provide through traffic lanes that are unencumbered by cross traffic by all modes. Thru lanes are not connected to local access roads or surrounding uses except via urban interchanges. Over- or under-crossings accommodate cross traffic.

Several CAC members were concerned about selecting from these categories and thought it premature in the absence of data. Bottomley noted that each of the highway types can be designed to carry traffic volumes characteristic of Highway 29. Crosley (transportation consultant) noted that boulevards can carry less traffic, but that there are many other aspects of a highway that affect performance, such as signal timing, left turns, pedestrian bridges, etc. Crosley thought that none of the highway types should be dismissed, but a lot of thinking will need to go into how to make things work.

WORKSHOP RESULTS AND DIRECTION OF VISION PLAN

Workshop Results

Taecker describe the format for two community workshops that were held in November. The workshops were focused on getting a sense of participants’ preferences. One aspect of the exercise had participants indicate which highway type they would prefer along different parts of the corridor. Using a graphic that tabulated workshop results, Taecker observed that “Boulevard” was preferred by most workshop groups along American Canyon’s commercial frontage, but that “Parkways” with landscaped buffers seemed to be preferred where retail commercial back onto the highway and where there are industrial and office uses. “Rural Highway” was preferred through agricultural lands.

A few CAC members objected to the use of the workshop results as not being representative, or statistically significant, as the participation may be skewed towards community members with vested interests. Taecker noted that CAC members need not agree with the results, and that the results were merely a starting point and way to give the CAC something to react to as they guide the development of the Vision Plan. Several CAC members agreed that the workshop results provided a useful beginning, and urged the CAC to proceed with reviewing and reacting to the workshop results.

Hurwitz acknowledged the weaknesses of the public workshop process in general – in particular the difficulty of engaging analysis at a necessary level of depth. That’s why the CAC group is so important and why its recommendations will be clearly presented to the Steering Committee.

Concerns and Direction for Vision Plan

Taecker asked that each CAC member have an opportunity to articulate what they would like the corridor to become. To organize comments, Taecker suggested that each CAC member describe:

- What about the workshop results do you agree with?
- What about the workshop results do you disagree with?
- And what else do we need to consider?

Anthony Quicho - said that a boulevard along 29 would be important to the businesses and could also help traffic by adding lanes. Attracting more businesses, creating some more traffic which might exacerbate the problem, but it would be good for the community. As for the other transition areas, going into the county, it seems appropriate. Fully support the boulevard.

Bill Stephens – said that his impression had been that the project would focus only on transportation on the corridor (not adjacent development). Understanding the task at hand as planning a “high risk project,” it is critical to get the most critical piece to get right and *then* get down to “luxury” aspects. This character stuff seems like a luxury. It’s more important to focus on the traffic during the commute hour.

Keith Pepper – attended the American Canyon workshop; was impressed by the number that showed up. There were diverse group, residents and businesses. Safety of pedestrians is key, especially for schools and residents. Pepper endorsed “where the boulevard concept is coming from.” He also noted that American Canyon is looking to create its own character. He agreed with what a majority of workshop groups thought the character of the corridor should be. He also noted that project needs to connect with and include what Solano County is doing.

Michael Haley. The number one problem is congestion. However, any lanes that are added will fill up sooner or later. Future development needs to be factored and managing growth is related to the project. He thought that the boulevard idea sounds nice and could be beautiful. North of American Canyon, the land uses should dictate the road’s design and land uses along the corridor may not change much. Alternative forms of transportation, like bicycling and the Vine Trail, are important. Government should support alternative modes to reduce congestion.

David Oro. American Canyon is Napa County's second largest city and still growing. There were lots of good ideas at the workshop. One group split used different highway types for each side of one part of the road, with rural highway on one side and the parkway on another. He fully supports a boulevard through American Canyon, and believes that it can be done in a way that allows thru-traffic to move through quickly. He also emphasized the importance of creating "gateways" that let people know that they are entering Napa County, such as by using special landscaping. Pedestrian bridges should be considered. He said that it is important to know who the decision makers are and the power they have. The partner jurisdictions need to present a unified front to Caltrans. to "put us in the ring" for funding.

Nance Matson - agreed with the results from the workshop. She said that there was consensus on using the roadway to create a vibrant place as it passes through American Canyon. Chico has a boulevard type road called "The Esplanade." A notable feature of The Esplanade is that there are signs that say, "lights are set to 25 mph," and so people keep moving at a safe and reasonable speed. Consider this strategy. People also need to get to destinations locally.

Beth Marcus - agreed with what Pepper, Matson and Oro said. For her, congestion is important as well as safety, especially with the schools. Pedestrian crossings are very difficult and when trying to get to the bus stop. Walking to shop along the corridor can be dangerous. She also noted that the community is vulnerable during a disaster because there are no alternative routes and if the highway is closed, there is no way to get out of town. She also wants people who live along the highway to be able to get out of their driveway, because too much fast-moving traffic makes it difficult now. She agrees with the boulevard concept.

John Naab - said that transportation systems that he has seen in Kansas and Texas work well: use a four-lane freeway in the center, along outer edges provide access roads, and have all secondary cross-streets go over the freeway; i.e., the freeway portion would be at grade and the cross streets would go up and over. This would especially work at Donaldson and would eliminate the need for stop lights.

Peter Nissen - major concerns are congestion and how to treat the local-serving areas at Napa junction and American Canyon Road. Traffic is getting progressively worse in that area. Consider how to better design highway better between South Kelly and Napa Junction Road. A central challenge is how to create a corridor that meets safety needs, while still moving regional traffic. He supported idea of having special gateways to enhance community identity and telling people that they are coming into Napa County. He is not concerned about the specific highway types described, but that the highway should be aesthetically pleasing, safe, and move traffic. Gaining Caltrans's support will be critical.

Ryan Gregory - wants to examine the various proposed congestion-relief improvements planned in the corridor. Will the proposed improvements make a big difference, i.e. how much traffic could we expect to ultimately be diverted away from Hwy 29 through AC? Also, the roadway type options provided describe what things will look like but are not going to solve the traffic congestion problem. The problem is that you have multiple signals that

aren't timed and lots of cross traffic. Think of creative options – take the main street part of highway 29 and put it somewhere else. Could some signals be eliminated? Can extra Right of Way be found? And is it possible to build a frontage road?

Debra Dommen - said that the decision making process is backwards and that things “are already done.” More information is needed to make decisions. Who are the motorists and where are they going? With the boulevard, high-density examples assume that people will be willing to live along a frontage road. She did not want to be forced into something, and that the central challenge is how to solve the congestion problem, and also respect what American Canyon wants.

Hans Korve - said that highway improvements need to take care of each community along the way. He pointed out that it is important to *decide* what level of throughput is desired along each section and *then* to distribute the overall load among alternative routes – especially making best use of the newly expanded SR12 corridor to Solano including promoting additional efficiencies at the I-80 intersection in Solano. The best solution will involve making some trade-offs. Through traffic, local traffic, transit, must be considered together. More information is needed to make an intelligent decision. Ultimately the client is Caltrans and the project needs to target Caltrans. It's also critical to have Vallejo and Solano County at the table, not only to get to consensus but also for Caltrans' to buy in and fund recommendations.

Chuck McMinn - said that Caltrans has done a poor job with the corridor. He thought that American Canyon should have a beautiful downtown main street, but instead it has no sidewalks, no hiking or biking facilities, poor connections to school, etc. A partial solution may be to look at creating parallel routes, such as by improving Jameson Canyon. Much more data is needed to make this and other decisions, and to address Caltrans questions and concerns.

Follow Up

In response to CAC comments, Hurwitz offered to provide an overview of funding sources and selection process, and an overview of related transportation studies that are or are about to get underway. Taecker said that the team will try to get as much relevant data to the CAC as possible before the next meeting.

Miller cautioned CAC members about how much data can be made available. She said that some analysis efforts will follow and will not precede this project, and she noted that the consultant team's \$300,000 budget is not enough for all of the data that might be wanted. The purpose of the project is to point towards long term improvements and prioritize them. The CAC will play an important role in identifying what's important and finding the right balance among all of the ways that the highway right-of-way will be used.

Election of Chair and Co-Chair

David Oro was elected Chair, and Hans Korve was elected Co-Chair by acclamation. The Chair and Co-Chair will help shape the agenda for each meeting, help guide each meeting, and will help make presentations to the CSC.

ADJOURNMENT

Additional Comments by email

Michael Haley - I think it is a waste of time for us to talk about getting more information, we have the old information which isn't all that old, some of it from the 2010 census. New information is not available now on top of that. We all know what the problem is, congestion, and whether 29 is 4000 cars over capacity or 7000 cars over capacity really isn't going to make that much difference. We need to move forward and use the next four meetings to work with what we have.

Chuck McMinn – I would like to see the following data distributed before the next meeting to help us analyze the problem:

Actual traffic counts, not just LOS indicators for as many points along the corridor that this exists

The growth in those traffic counts from earlier studies of the corridor

Any projected growth in traffic counts along the corridor that we have and the rationale for the growth projections

A wider set of traffic counts to help us map a rough inflow/outflow model of the area. Critical points would be traffic:

- Coming off Highway 80 at Highway 37

- Coming N/S on Fairgrounds Drive/Flosden Road just north of 37 interchange

- Coming N/S on Flosden Road just south of American Canyon Road

- Coming N/S on Flosden Road just north of American Canyon Road

- On highway 37 just east of the 29 interchange

- On highway 37 just west of the 29 interchange

- Coming north and south on Highway 29 just south of highway 37

- Coming north and south on Highway 29 just north of highway 37

- Coming N/S on Highway 29 just south of American Canyon Road

- Coming N/S on Highway 29 just north of American Canyon Road

- Coming E/W on American Canyon Road just east of Highway 29

- Coming N/S on Highway 29 just south of Highway 12 at Jamieson Canyon

- Coming N/S on Highway 29 just north of Highway 12 at Jamieson Canyon

- Coming E/W on Jamieson Canyon just east of Highway 29

- Coming E/W on Jamieson Canyon just west of Highway 29

- Coming N/S on Soscal just off of Highway 29 near the proposed new flyover

- Coming N/S on Highway 29 just south of 12/121 turnoff to Sonoma

- Coming N/S on Highway 29 just north of 12/121 turnoff to Sonoma

With these counts we can see all the inflow and outflow points for the traffic that touch this segment of 29.

If these counts do not exist, then the cost and time required to generate this data and the equipment required

The calculated capacity of Highway 29 along the corridor

The calculated capacity of each type of alternative (rural road, boulevard, parkway and grade separated) that is being considered and the factors on which the calculation depends

Hans Korve - suggest that we get the consultant team to prepare a trip table showing future use of both sr 29 and sr 12, share 2030 projections from the Solano co traffic model, which includes Napa co., give us the amount of thru traffic going north south thru American canyon and east west thru Jameson (suggest gateways such as 680 so/ 80 east/2 east/80 west/ 37 east/ 37 west/ 29north/221west)so we get a better idea of the future traffic patterns. Also need to see the future plans for the 680/8012/12 interchange by Solano co, esp. the future Red Top interchange and the proposed realignment of 680 to tie directly into Jameson. We also need to know the traffic that will be generated locally by American canyon assuming no thru traffic so we can get a base line for the amount of traffic that must be accommodated locally. The ultimate number of lanes thru American canyon will be made of locally generated traffic and an agreed upon amount of thru traffic.

Genji Schmeder - The primary objective of transportation reform in most of the USA should be to create a multimodal system, which would provide practical choices for travelers and better economics for all involved. For SR 29 in south county, a substantial shift toward group commuting, mostly by bus but also by carpooling, would be the cheapest remedy for congestion now and far into the future. Infrastructure and system already exist for group travel, and the bus system would need greater funding only if it successfully captured a large portion of travel now being done almost entirely by private autos with few occupants.

Focusing only on improving the commuter driving experience on SR 29 would narrow our study to the most expensive, least permanent remedies. Group commuting, especially by bus, should be treated as the preferred solution to the SR 29 problem. We cannot expect overnight to change the culture of individually driving to work, but we have an opportunity to lead public opinion and future practice. If group travel doesn't become our high priority, then the effect will be the same as simply ignoring it.

Anthony Quicho - One other thing the city of AmCan can do is run a trip generation survey from each resident (through water bills). We can then do a process of elimination for the both AM and PM peak hour traffic. This should prove that most of the traffic during the peak times is regional and tourist.

DRAFT