

September 22, 2005
(For Board: October 14, 2005)



**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
AND PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE**

Honorable Board of Directors
Golden Gate Bridge, Highway
and Transportation District

Honorable Members:

A meeting of the Governmental Affairs and Public Information Committee/Committee of the Whole was held in the Board Room, Administration Building, Toll Plaza, San Francisco, California, on Thursday, September 22, 2005, at 9:25 a.m., Chair Boro presiding.

Committee Members Present (5): Chair Boro; Vice Chair Martini; Directors Eddie and Reilly; President Middlebrook (Ex Officio). Director Eddie was appointed Committee Member Pro Tem for this meeting only.

Committee Members Absent (4): Directors Dufty, Kerns, McGoldrick and Sandoval

Other Members Present (4): Directors Cochran, Eddie, Shahum and Stroeh

[On this date, there was one vacancy on the Board of Directors.]

Staff Present: Acting General Manager and District Engineer Denis J. Mulligan; Auditor-Controller Joseph M. Wire; Secretary of the District Janet S. Tarantino; Attorney David J. Miller; Deputy General Manager/Bus Division Susan C. Chiaroni; Deputy General Manager/Administration and Development Teri W. Mantony; Public Affairs Director Mary C. Currie; Marketing and Communications Director Kellee Hopper; Planning Director Alan R. Zahradnik; Executive Assistant to the General Manager Amorette Ko; Assistant Clerk of the Board Karen B. Engbretson

Visitors Present: Jeffrey Slusarz, State of California, Office of Emergency Services; David Schonbrunn, TRANSDEF

1. Status Report on State/Federal Legislation

Acting General Manager Denis Mulligan requested that Attorney David Miller report on the status of a matter of state legislation:

- Assembly Bill 1234 – Mr. Miller reported on Assembly Bill 1234 (AB 1234), a bill which the Governor is likely to sign this week. AB 1234 clarifies the rules pertaining to expense reimbursement for members of local government legislative bodies and establishes provisions for ethics training for local government officials.

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION
COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 22, 2005/PAGE 2**

He stated that AB 1234 also requires the establishment of a written travel expense reimbursement policy for the local agency. He noted that the mandatory ethics training required by AB 1234 would need to be taken every two years, beginning no later than January 1, 2007, and that such training would cover such topics as, conflict of interest laws, the Brown Act, gifts and the use of public funds.

Discussion ensued, including the following:

- Director Cochran noted that in his role as the Del Norte County Assessor, he has taken an online ethics course offered by the State of California Attorney General.

Action by the Board – None Required

2. Amend Master Ordinance 2005 Relative to Extension of Toll-Free Passage for Clean-Air Vehicles on the Golden Gate Bridge During Commute Hours

In a memorandum to Committee, Auditor-Controller Joseph Wire and General Manager Celia Kupersmith provided staff's recommendation to amend Master Ordinance 2005 regarding the expiration date of the section that allows toll-free passage for clean-air vehicles on the Golden Gate Bridge during commute hours. The report stated that the Board of Directors, by Ordinance No. 2002-09 at its December 13, 2002 meeting, approved toll-free passage for certain clean-air vehicles during commute hours, as urged by state legislation, Assembly Concurrent Resolution 213 (ACR 213). ACR 213 was authored by then-Assemblywoman Carole Migden in August 2002 in order to support the State of California's policy of promoting clean-air vehicles in California. The report also stated that currently seven state-owned bridges provide toll-free passage to clean-air vehicles during commute hours, and that with Ordinance No. 2002-09, such vehicles were also allowed toll-free passage on the Golden Gate Bridge. The report outlined the types of vehicles that are considered clean-air vehicles, as follows:

- ZEV – Zero Emission Vehicle (electric vehicle)
- SULEV – Super Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (compressed natural gas or liquid petroleum gas (propane) vehicle with very low emissions)
- ULEV – Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (compressed natural gas or liquid petroleum gas (propane) vehicles with low emissions)
- ILEV – Inherently Low Emission Vehicle (compressed natural gas or liquid petroleum gas (propane) vehicles not including gasoline-powered cars.)

The types of vehicles listed above are required to be registered with the State of California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and are issued a distinctive decal by the DMV to signify their participation in the program. The report noted that the clean-air vehicle designation does not include hybrid vehicles that use gasoline. The Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), which sets the toll policies for the state-owned bridges, allows free passage for the same designated low emission vehicles with no sunset date.

The report further stated that Ordinance No. 2002-09 included an expiration date of December 2003 for this program. Although the Board of Directors identified the toll-free clean-air vehicle program for reconsideration at recent discussions regarding the *Strategic Plan for Achieving Long-Term Financial Stability*, the Board has not taken formal action to continue the program. The report noted that continuing the current practice of allowing

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION
COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 22, 2005/PAGE 3**

toll-free passage for clean-air vehicles would result in an annual loss of revenue of approximately \$700 per month or \$8,400 per year. Given the relative low cost of this program, and in the interest of maintaining consistency with other state-owned bridges in the Bay Area, staff recommends that the Board take formal action to continue toll-free passage on the Golden Gate Bridge during commute hours for vehicles bearing the distinctive Clean-Air Vehicle decal issued by the DMV, and to amend Master Ordinance 2005 accordingly. A copy of the report, including attached copy of ACR 213, is available in the Office of the Secretary of the District and on the District's web site.

At the meeting, Joseph Wire briefly summarized the staff report.

Discussion ensued, including the following:

- President Middlebrook inquired as to whether drivers of gasoline/electric hybrid vehicles would be eligible for this program. In response, Mr. Wire clarified that such hybrid vehicles, which have become increasingly popular, would not be eligible for toll-free passage, since they do not meet the DMV's clean-air vehicle criteria.

Staff recommended, and the Committee concurred by motion made and seconded by **Directors MARTINI/EDDIE** to forward the following recommendation to the Board of Directors for its consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

The Governmental Affairs and Public Information Committee recommends that the Board of Directors authorize exemption from tolls on the Golden Gate Bridge during commute hours for vehicles bearing a distinctive "Clean-Air Vehicle" decal issued by the State of California Department of Motor Vehicles; and, amend Master Ordinance 2005 by deleting the expiration date and by adding a definition of the types of "Clean-Air Vehicles" to Section II, *Golden Gate Bridge and Approaches*, Section F., *Exemption from Tolls*, Subsection 11, to read as follows:

- "11. Vehicles, as defined by the California Air Resources Board or United States Environmental Protection Agency and as described below, bearing a distinctive "Clean-Air Vehicle" decal issued by the State of California Department of Motor Vehicles, denoting participation in the Clean-Air Vehicle Program between the hours of 5:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, excluding the following holidays: New Year's Day; Washington's Birthday (third Monday in February); Memorial Day (last Monday in May); Independence Day (July 4); Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day:
- ZEV – Zero Emission Vehicle (electric vehicle);
 - SULEV – Super Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (compressed natural gas or liquid petroleum gas (propane) vehicle with very low emissions);
 - ULEV – Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (compressed natural gas or liquid petroleum gas (propane) vehicles with low emissions; or,

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION
COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 22, 2005/PAGE 4**

- ILEV – Inherently Low Emission Vehicle (compressed natural gas or liquid petroleum gas (propane) vehicles not including gasoline-powered cars).

with the understanding that this toll-free passage does not apply to hybrid vehicles which use gasoline.”

**Action by the Board – Ordinance
NON-CONSENT CALENDAR**

AYES (5): Chair Boro; Vice Chair Martini; Directors Eddie and Reilly; President Middlebrook (Ex Officio)

NOES (0): None

ABSENT (4): Directors Dufty, Kerns, McGoldrick and Sandoval

3. Status Report from the Board Appointee on the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA)

Chair Boro, the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA) Board Appointee, provided a status report on recent activities of the WTA. The following items were provided to the Committee: Agenda for the September 13, 2005, meeting of the Administrative/Finance/Legislative Committee; Notices of Cancellation for the September 14, 2005, meetings of the Operations Committee and the Planning and Development Committee; and, Agenda of the September 19, 2005, meeting of the Planning and Development Committee. Copies are available in the Office of the District Secretary and on the District’s web site.

Chair Boro stated that the next meeting of the WTA Board of Directors will be held on September 29, 2005. He also stated that at the September 13, 2005, meeting of the Administrative/Finance/Legislative Committee, the WTA Board had discussed staffing issues, including a review of salaries of current staff in the context of salaries at comparable transit agencies. He noted that planning is underway for future ferry service to South San Francisco, with implementation of service to occur within two years.

Action by the Board – None Required

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Adjournment

All business having been concluded, the meeting was declared adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Albert J. Boro, Chair
Governmental Affairs and
Public Information Committee