

Environmental Oversight Committee

**April 2, 2008
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present:

Chair Patricia Bates, OCTA Board of Directors
Vice-Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck, Measure M Support Groups
Cathy Green, OCTA Board of Directors
Stephanie Hall, US Army Corps of Engineers
Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League
Debbie Townsend, California Wildlife Conservation Board
Sylvia Vega, Caltrans
Erinn Wilson, CA Department of Fish & Game

Committee Members Absent:

Merlin L. "Bud" Henry Jr., Taxpayers Oversight Committee
Judy McKeehan, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Adam Probolsky, Probolsky Research
Jonathan Snyder, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Orange County Transportation Authority Staff Present:

Monte Ward
Ellen Burton
Jim Sterling
Marissa Espino
Belinda Riva

Members of the Public Present:

Claire Schlotterbeck
Phil McWilliams
Ed Amador
Sherri Loveland
Jennifer Hamlin
Jane Olinger

1. Welcome

Chair Bates welcomed the committee members and called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

2. Minutes

Vice-Chair Schlotterbeck provided corrections to several small errors in the March minutes, and Chair Bates asked the committee for any further corrections. Without any further comments, the minutes were approved with corrections.

3. Presentation Items

Claire and Melanie Schlotterbeck of Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Green Vision Project and Natural Lands Acquisition Opportunities.

- As one of only 20 hot spots of biodiversity on the Earth, Southern California demonstrates a unique ecological opportunity for conservation. Orange County's existing open spaces play an important role in the regional context.
- In 2000, the regional non-profit Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP) created the Green Vision Map to document public and private protected lands and with it a wish list of properties to purchase and restore. In 2005, the 75 members that support the Green Vision Project discussed supporting OCTA's Measure M.
- With the establishment of a programmatic mitigation component in the Freeway Program, 33 of those groups became part of the coalition that ultimately supported the Measure. The coalition believes the Green Vision Map offers significant opportunities that will help secure the health of this important landscape.

Copies of the Green Vision Map and selected PowerPoint slides were distributed to Committee members. Chair Bates requested copies of the PowerPoint as well.

Monte Ward, Director of Special Projects, asked Melanie to expand on the difference between the Green Vision Project and the framework Tim Neely, Director of the County of Orange - Planning and Development Services, presented at the March meeting. In response to the presentation by Tim Neely, Melanie Schlotterbeck stressed that conservation efforts need a comprehensive vision to look at ecosystems as a whole rather than focus on a limited elevation and a single endangered species.

Monte indicated that large areas have been set aside due to negotiations from private land owners and asked Melanie to explain how the process of the Green Vision Project has accommodated those negotiations.

Melanie clarified that allocated funding would assist in the acquisition of land that has been identified in red as important or an immediate threat on the Green Vision Map. The Green Vision Project currently relies on different funding sources and Melanie foresees with the Measure M process that this would be an additional source to acquire identified lands.

Monte pointed out that the Green Vision Project represents a variety of organizations and there is not enough Measure M money to acquire all of the identified areas, but the committee looks forward to a process that is open and transparent.

Melanie Schlotterbeck responded that the members of the Green Vision Project recognize that this project is not about advocating for a particular property but rather resource-based decision making to ensure that these mitigations are appropriate.

Ellen Burton asked Monte what kind of a nexus needs to happen between the freeway program in Measure M and the mitigation, and how does that relate to prioritization.

Monte Ward responded that the nexus question is what the ad hoc working group is looking at in the resources and freeway map. The difference is that the committee can look at a larger scale at what is the impact of freeway projects and determine how to scale that to the mitigation. Monte also indicated that the mitigation does not have to be tied to a particular area but there is a different standard when dealing on the project level.

In response, Claire Schlotterbeck said that Measure M provides a local funding source and that it takes political will and expertise to find sources for funding.

Monte added that in the transportation arena, leveraging and matching funds is familiar and the benefit of working with environmental groups and resources helps in gaining better knowledge for acquisition or restoration of properties.

Sylvia Vega asked what is the zoning in some of the areas on the Green Vision Map, specifically along Cleveland National Forest and Chino Hills.

Melanie Schlotterbeck responded that the zoning depends on the area and indicated that various areas are governed by various documents such as the Foothill Trabuco Specific Plan, Silverado Modjeska Specific Plan, and the Hillside Ordinance in the General Plan of the City of Brea.

Sylvia also asked Melanie if those areas are slated for development. Melanie pointed out on the Green Vision Map that if the area is in red, a group is actively working on the land because it is slated for development or it is a targeted area for acquisition. Claire Schlotterbeck mentioned areas in red on the map are critical and should not be overlooked.

Chair Bates suggested that there should be a legend produced that shows already existing plans or a document that oversees development. Chair Bates thanked Claire and Melanie Schlotterbeck of FHBP for their presentation.

4. Public Information Approval

Monte Ward prefaced the public information materials as documents that would be posted on the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) website. Monte asked Marissa Espino if there were any changes or corrections to the public

information documents: Frequently Asked Questions and Timeline. Marissa indicated that there were no changes made since the last meeting in March.

The committee approved the public information materials.

Ellen Burton explained that on the OCTA website, there is a renewed Measure M section and these documents will be posted in the Environmental Mitigation Program portal and the Project X section on Environmental Cleanup. The committee can continue to upload data as it becomes available.

Monte Ward suggested that the committee would direct the public to the website rather than distributing materials via mail.

5. Ad-Hoc Working Groups Update:

A. Master Agreement Working Group

- Monte Ward indicated that this group has not had its first meeting yet but is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8th 9-11:30 a.m.

B. Impact and Mitigation Working Group

- Jim Sterling reported that the first meeting on February 25th was well attended with 10 participants. This working group intends to compile and assemble environmental and freeway project databases for analysis. The group started to define the methods that will be used for analysis, drafted a work plan, and set a meeting schedule for the next four months.
- Dan Phu presented a general description and status of all the M2 freeway projects. The Working Group distributed maps to show the sites of the freeway projects in the context of the environmental data. These maps were provided for review and comment; the group is looking for feedback before the next meeting.
- The group requested that they are provided more detailed data in the form of maps. Jim indicated that those maps would be available through an FTP site by the end of the week.

Monte Ward said that the next meeting should include reports from the groups, which will address what has been done and engage the full committee on the presentation and some of the issues. Among these issues will be what levels of direct and indirect impacts will be included, and how do we define these impacts.

Chair Bates asked if the Master Agreement Working Group would probably be in relation to the Impact and Mitigation Working Group. Monte suggested there are issues the committee can look at without integrating the two groups. The plan is to look at what San Diego has done as a starting point and then see where the Master Agreement Working Group needs to go from there. Working with OCTA Legal Counsel and firms with experience, the group will work on drafting and developing the Master Agreement.

6. Public Comments:

Phil McWilliams, Silverado Modjeska Recreation and Parks District, supports the Green Vision Project as a wonderful process, very inclusive and a good compromise. Phil also wishes to preserve the uniqueness of Orange County.

Ed Amador, Canyon Lands Conservation Fund in Silverado Canyon, worked with the Green Vision Project to find matching state, federal and local funding. Ed highlighted the opportunity to take part in conservation efforts that have been utilized in other states and throughout the Western United States.

Sherri Loveland, Orange County Interfaith Coalition for the Environment, seeks to ensure that the process of the Environmental Oversight Committee would be kept in public view, stressing the transparency of meetings and decisions open to the public.

Jennifer Hamlin, Save Banning Ranch, is looking for funding support through Measure M for acquisition of Banning Ranch in Newport Beach, CA to preserve open space and prevent future residential development of 1,750 new homes. Sylvia Vega asked if Jennifer could point out the location on the Green Vision Map and the area was outlined in red.

Jane Olinger, California Cultural Resources Preservation Alliance, would like to remind the committee that they are stewards of a historical responsibility.

Claire Schlotterbeck recognized the founder of Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks, the founder's family and Phil McWilliams, who lost his home in the October 2007 fires, present in the meeting's audience. Chair Bates gave great appreciation to the volunteers and the community of Orange County for their contribution and input.

7. Next Meeting – May 7, 2008

Chair Bates set the goal for the next meeting to define the process and stages that the committee must go through this committee to move forward. It is important for the committee to outline the layers within the OCTA committee structure and the final decision making process.

8. Committee Member Reports

No committee comments.

9. Adjournment

The committee meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.