

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of October 31, 2023

COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS

- Item 4: Consent Calendar - all items approved unanimously:
 - 4.a - Approval of Minutes of the CAC Meeting of 10/3/23
 - Mike Swire asked that the following be added to his comments in Item 4.e (Managed Lanes North of I-380). According to Mr. Swire:
 - Transportation is responsible for 60% of greenhouse gas emissions in SM County and Highway 101 is the busiest road in the County.
 - Widening the 101 will increase the number of crashes vs. residents who walk and bike in neighborhoods adjacent to onramps to Highway 101.
 - The widening option will cost considerably more than other options
 - Per an informal poll of Nextdoor members in the central area of San Mateo County, the respondents do not believe that widening has reduced congestion on 101 and it was a waste of money.
 - Widening the highway adjacent to low income, communities of color could be considered an inequitable.
 - Giuliani Carlini said that his vote on 4.d was No, not Abstain. Staff will update the minutes accordingly.
 - 4.b - Approval of 2024 TA CAC Meeting Calendar
 - 4.c - **TA Board Item 5.b** - Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending September 30, 2023
 - 4.d - **TA Board Item 5.c** - Acceptance of Measure A & Measure W Semi-Annual Program Status Report for January to June 2023
- Item 8 - TA Board Item 11.b - Acceptance of Quarterly Investment Report and Fixed Income Market Review and Outlook - Approved unanimously
 - Peter Ohtaki asked, regarding the Net Operating Losses line item, whether SMCTA will hold the bonds through maturity and thus avoid these realized losses. Public Trust Advisors said that usually this was the case.
- Item 9 - TA Board Item 11.c - Programming and Allocation of Measure A Grade Separation Category Funds for the Broadway Grade Separation Project in the City of Burlingame
 - Mr. Swire asked whether the project would change the recently implemented bike lane and traffic calming changes on California Drive. Caltrain staff said that California Drive would not change due to the project.

- Gus Mattammal asked how they will select a contractor and whether the process would be transparent. Staff said that Caltrain will lead the procurement process. The selection committee will include representatives from Caltrain, the City of Burlingame, and the TA. This will be a closed-door meeting but the decision will be made on publicly available scoring criteria and the decision will be published. In addition, if pricing cannot be agreed upon with the preferred vendor, an alternate contractor can still be brought in by rebidding the construction project.
- Mr. Ohtaki asked, given the large cost of this project relative to the total money available for grade separations, whether the TA had reached out to other cities considering grade separations. Staff has told other cities that money will be tight.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Item 5 - TA Board Item 5.a - Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of October 5, 2023
- Item 6 - TA Board Item 10.a - 2023 Highway Program Call for Projects Draft Recommendations
 - Nheeda Enriquez asked about the process for receiving presentations on projects to learn more about them . Staff said that, like the Managed Lanes project, moving from Tier 1 (Planning, Project Initiation, and Environmental phases) to Tier 2 (Design, ROW, and Construction phases), they could start bringing all projects back to the CAC and Board prior to allocating funds for design work. This is the critical decision point for the CAC and Board when deciding to whether to keep funding projects after the environmental work is completed and impacts of alternatives are understood.
 - Sandra Lang asked for clarification on the tiers and approval process. Staff clarified that they would add decision points, allowing them to incorporate new information. The TA can reserve/program money but still choose not to allocate/release it.
 - Mr. Swire asked for clarification on how this intermediary step is different from the current process. Staff clarified that this new step would allow the CAC and Board to make a separate decision on funding of the design phase based on additional info.
 - Ivan Bucio asked how the TA could improve projects. Staff said that they will ensure that projects incorporate best practices into project design.
 - Chair Barbara Arietta said that it didn't seem fair that Pacifica's Manor Drive project would not get funding. Staff said that the project could ultimately get funded, but that the current environmental and design timelines did not fit in this funding cycle. Staff also said that Pacifica staff could improve their application and offered to work with the Chair to provide feedback.

- Mr. Carlini asked what would happen if the Board chose not to allocate the Managed Lanes project if they do not approve of the recommended option. based the conditional award to require a future presentation from the project team once the environmental phase is completed. Staff said that in the event the Board decides not to fund the project at that meeting, the Board could de-program the project, request additional information, or revise the preferred alternative to respond to Board concerns and be reconsidered at a later date for an allocation.
- Vice Chair John Fox praised the staff presentation and asked what factors led to the decision to recommend more than the original \$100M .that was advertised. Staff said that based on a majority of the funding being proposed to be award to one project (almost \$80M to US 101/Woodside Interchange) there was a desire to help newer projects in earlier phases progress. Staff said that they have done this in the past and didn't advertise that there may be additional funding available so that applicants still submitted good applications.
- Ms. Enriquez asked whether they had more applicants than expected. Staff said that the number of applicants who submitted projects for earlier phases of work which is often less costly than later construction phases. This wound up being helpful as they would be able to fund up to 50% of the largest project (Woodside.) and help new multimodal complete streets highway arterial projects get started.
- Ms. Lang asked about the equity criteria used, especially in areas south of Half Moon Bay. Staff said that they consider whether the application is located in an equity priority area as well as whether the project has other qualitative benefits to other equity populations like seniors, transit dependent households, children, agricultural workers, and more.
- Mr. Swire said to consider getting rid of the geographic criteria for equity given that this may/not tell the full story. Staff said that this criterion is useful to understand whether a project could qualify for other external funding opportunities at the regional, state, and federal funding levels to leverage the TA's investments.
- Mr. Carlini said that Caltrans is starting to look at a holistic/regional transformation of El Camino Real and that it was important for the TA to look beyond smaller, isolated projects. Staff said that they are working with all cities to move in this direction and are already coordinating with Caltrans.
- Mr. Carlini said that \$135M is a lot of money and that 85% of it was going to the three largest projects. He urged the TA to encourage smaller projects as a little money can go a long way. Staff said that many of the larger projects have been in the pipeline for some time and are eligible for Measure A while many of the new, smaller complete streets highway arterial projects would only be eligible for Measure W.

- Item 7 - TA Board Item 11.a - US 101 Express Lanes: Quarterly Update on Variable Rate Bonds and Operations

- Mr. Mattammal asked for clarification on the \$600K in the waterfall slide. Staff said that this was a set aside for the equity program.
- Mr. Carlini asked for a definition of capitalized interest. Staff said that this was a pot of money set aside from bond proceeds to cover interest and other debt service expenses over the first three years post bond issuance. Staff said that they are on track to cover interest expenses through March 2, 2024.
- Mr. Fox remarked that revenue has been strong, especially after the pandemic.
- Mr. Ohtaki asked whether going into 2024 and 2025 there would be money set aside for principal payments starting in 2027, given revenue projections. Staff said there would be a debt service fund and after March 2, 2024, any remaining capitalized interest will be used to retire principal. The JPA is responsible for making this decision and they will likely set aside money for repayment.
- Mr. Fox asked whether there was a delta between revenue received and total amount billed. Staff said there was none (aside from those without tags, who are issued violations).
- Mr. Bucio asked whether toll, O&M, and administration costs would continue to increase. Staff said that O&M will increase with trips, but toll and admin are largely fixed costs.
- Mr. Swire said that the metrics presented do not provide a good understanding of whether the entire project (express lanes + highway widening) was achieving its primary goal of congestion relief. He said that the CAC had asked on several occasions for other metrics of this type. Staff said that the project wasn't designed to relieve congestion in the general-purpose lanes; the purpose was to give drivers the opportunity to opt out of congestion to improve travel times. Mr. Swire said that opting out of traffic was a benefit of the express lanes, but not of the widening. Staff said that the point of the widening of 101 between Whipple and 380 was to provide that express lane. Mr. Swire said that we could have added an express lane without widening 101; there were three options on the table, just as there currently are for north of 380. Staff said that we should not be discussing the merits of the proposed north of I 380 managed lanes project under this agenda item as discussion on the highway call for projects had concluded. This item is concerning the operations of the existing express lanes. Mr. Swire said that he was simply trying to understand whether the previous widening worked as another widening is now being considered. He said this is important in providing community input to the Board. Staff said that one of the primary data points they look at is whether express

lane drivers are getting the speed benefits they paid for; staff noted there are state and federal regulatory requirements related to management of speed and volume in the express lanes.

- Mr. Carlini asked for more information on how metrics changed over time. He also asked for more detail beyond averages, which don't tell the whole story. He said that knowing the speeds in express and general-purpose lanes would be helpful. He also asked for data/metrics on the congestion benefit. Staff said that they are working to develop KPI's. The Express Lane website has other metrics.

- Item 10 - TA Board Item 12 - State and Federal Legislative Update - no discussion

- Item 11 - Report of the Chair

- Chair Arietta reported that the final segment of the Cordilleras Creek Bridge Replacement Project had been successfully completed on October 15th, thereby finishing 14 hours earlier than originally scheduled for this segment alone.
- Adding this to the 9-hour early finish from the first segment shutdown, the project showed a combined savings of 23 hours in project completion.
- Citing the fact that this entire bridge replacement required the complete alternate shutdown of U S 101 lanes between Brittan Ave and Whipple Ave southbound and Holly St. and Whipple Ave northbound for two 55-hour weekends, Chair Arietta gave great praise to what a construction feat it had been.
- In utilizing this new construction approach, the process, which once would have taken up to three summer/ fall seasons to accomplish, was completed in a total of only 87 hours.
- Chair Arietta said that CALTRANS reported that the speediness of construction was partially thanks to the public, who after grappling with the traffic of the first shutdown, appeared to be better prepared this time in using the recommended detours and also utilizing public transit during the closure. This reduction of traffic on the road minimized delays, thusly, allowing the early finish.

- Item 12 - Report from Staff - no discussion

- Mr. Skinner introduced Jessica Manzi as the TA's new Director, Project Delivery. Ms. Manzi noted she is looking forward to working on multi-modal projects throughout the County.

- Item 13 - Member Comments / Requests

- Karen Kuklin welcomed Jessica Manzi to SMCTA and thanked Mr. Skinner and Mr. Gilster for filling this gap previously.

- Ms. Enriquez asked for info on the upcoming autonomous vehicles meeting. Staff will circulate the details.
 - Mr. Carlini lauded the recently installed protected bike lanes in South San Francisco, but that outside of this area it was still dangerous for people on bikes. He lauded former Caltrans staff Jeanie Ward Waller for following science and the law in her op ed in the Chronicle.
 - Chair Arietta said that MTC would be holding a presentation on next generation freeways in early November.
 - Mr. Swire said that MTC was doing good work in closing the Bay Trail gaps, but that bike and pedestrian access to the Bay Trail was unsafe in many areas. This should be a priority for SMCTA. Staff said that this might align with the 101 study that is starting. He also provided more details on Ms. Ward Waller's allegations that Caltrans was misusing maintenance funds to finance a highway widening on I-80.
 - Ms. Lang welcomed Ms. Manzi and thanked staff for their answers to all of the questions. She said that it was great seeing a project completed near Burlingame Train Station.
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- Item 14 - Next Meeting is 12/5/23

 - Item 15 - Adjourn