

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of January 9, 2024

Committee Actions

- Approved the reappointment of Barbara Arietta as Chair for 2024 – *approved 8-2*
 - Approved the reappointment of John Fox as Vice Chair for 2024 – *approved 7-3*
 - Approved the Consent Calendar including:
 - Minutes of the CAC Meeting of December 5, 2023 – *approved 11-0*
- Motion Regarding TA Board Items for January 11, 2024*
- Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending November 30, 2023 – *approved 11-0*
 - Acceptance of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023 – *approved 11-0*
 - Approved the addition of language to the 2024 legislative program regarding the conversion of general purpose lanes to managed lanes – *approved 8-1*
 - Adoption of 2024 Legislative Program to be amended based on staff input – *approved 9-0*

Discussion Highlights

TA Board Item 15.a Acceptance of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2023

Annie To, Director, Accounting, introduced Ahmad Gharaibeh and Joe Escobar, Partners, Eide Bailly LLP, who provided the presentation. Mr. Gharaibeh summarized the scope of the audit. Mr. Escobar discussed the auditor's and management's responsibilities, timing, and required communications. Ms. To provided a summary of the audit results. Peter Ohtaki asked if the JPA (San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority) has a separate audit, and if not, are they comfortable with the JPA's audit. Ms. To confirmed that the JPA has a separate audit, also done by Eide Bailly, which is presented to the JPA Board. Mr. Ohtaki wanted confirm that there were clean audit results. Mr. Gharaibeh confirmed there was an unmodified, clean opinion. Mr. Ohtaki asked if the TA was keeping up with the projects that are being submitted and that taxpayer funds are being used expediently. Peter Skinner, Executive Officer, Transportation Authority, said the majority of funds that the TA distributes are based on reimbursements. Karen Kuklin said that a line about accrual is missing from the presentation. Ms. To said if they do not have a definite amount, they cannot accrue it. Ms. Kuklin asked if they asked for project cash flows. Mr. Skinner said they do ask for cash flows in certain situations.

TA Board Item 12 State and Federal Legislative Update

Amy Linehan, Government and Community Affairs Officer, provided a summary of federal and state legislation and recent activity. On the federal side, she said the House and Senate are back in Washington. She said the House and Senate negotiators had agreed on spending limits for FY

2024. She said the appropriations committees need to set spending limits within their committees, but a continuing resolution may be required in March. She said President Biden would deliver his State of the Union address on March 7. She said that earmark requests would likely follow the usual schedule, starting in February. She provided leadership updates. On the state side, she the Legislature is back in Sacramento. She said the budget deficit is the largest since the Great Depression. She provided leadership updates, noting local politicians on various committees. She said two of the Brown Act bills have become two-year bills, which means they can come back this year. Mike Swire asked why transit use was suffering but streets and highways are congested. Ms. Kuklin said a lot of people are choosing not to ride BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) or Caltrain to avoid getting sick and not necessarily because of the opening of express lanes. Giuliano Carlini said there is a lot of evidence that shows when incentives are provided to drive, fewer people will use transit. Sandra Lang asked about financial reporting. Vice Chair Fox mentioned the high vacancy rate of office space in San Francisco and would be interested to see how all these factors affect transit ridership. Ivan Bucio asked when the state would have information about transportation funding. Ms. Linehan said they have to see when the Governor presents his budget on January 10.

TA Board Item 13 Adoption of 2024 Legislative Program

Ms. Linehan noted the program was in the packet. She outlined the changes to the program based on the comments submitted by the Committee, which she noted were in red font. Mr. Swire asked if there were policies regarding converting general purpose lanes to toll lanes. Mr. Skinner said that the Committee could call a motion to include that addition to the legislative program. Mr. Carlini asked if the Board could amend the program mid-year. Mr. Skinner said it was within the purview of the Board to do so. Mr. Carlini said he had heard that in the past that it is difficult to recommend conversion of a general purpose lane to an express lane. Mr. Swire said he was concerned that something could be supported by the Board, but could be negated by legislative hurdles. Vice Chair Fox said the CAC could urge the Board to consider encouraging legislative process to allow greater flexibility by the TA in the choice of multimodal and managed lanes projects within the County. As an example, the legal issues in converting general purpose lanes to managed lanes. Ms. Kuklin said that keeping things general allows Ms. Linehan and Government Affairs to move forward with legislation. Ms. Lang said she did not believe the language should be prescriptive, but a general reminder to give due consideration.

TA Board Item 14.a Safe Routes to School Program Report

Theresa Vallez-Kelly, Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator, provided the presentation. Mr. Carlini applauded the work of the program. Nheeda Enriquez asked about increasing the scope of community outreach. Ms. Vallez-Kelly said the school travel fellowship is a great platform for building relationships between the cities and schools. She also mentioned the Office of Traffic Safety, and C/CAG (City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County). Ms. Enriquez said there could be ways to accelerate the outreach and funding. Mr. Swire encouraged people to volunteer for Safe Routes to School. He said infrastructure is important for safety. Ms. Vallez-Kelly said she would provide information about the walk audit. Mr. Bucio asked if the walk audit would look for things like speed bumps. Ms. Vallez-Kelly said

that participants make recommendations. Ms. Kuklin said the terrain of the much of the County makes it difficult to walk to school.

TA Board Item 14.b Caltrain Corridor Crossing Strategy

Jill Gibson, Consultant, Kimley-Horn, provided the presentation. Mr. Carlini asked regarding the North Fair Oaks Bicycle/Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Community Connection Study if the project was still on the table. Dahlia Chazan, Deputy Chief, Caltrain Planning, said that technical challenges were identified for the North Fair Oaks crossing and the County is stepping back and reconsidering their options about how to proceed. Gus Mattammal asked what the level of confidence that they can close the funding gap. Ms. Gibson said the intention is to have a program that is realistic and use a tiered approach to define the programs' priorities and align the projects with the different federal and state funding opportunities.

Report of the Chair

There was no report.

Report From Staff

Mr. Skinner said the Executive Director's report was in the packet. He said staff had recently launched a funded project web map on the TA website and encouraged the CAC members to view it and provide staff with any comments or suggestions.

Member Comments/Requests

Mr. Carlini said the highway projects were really corridor projects, while the bike/ped projects were not. Mr. Carlini said he hoped the Board could apply the same strategy to bike/ped projects. He said the Board minutes did not fully reflect the CAC's concerns over highway widening. Ms. Enriquez asked if the letter to MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) went out regarding the merger of BART and Caltrain. Mr. Skinner confirmed that a letter was sent out from SamTrans and Caltrain, and updates on the proposed merger would be provided by the Government and Community Affairs team. Mr. Swire said there should be more discussion about the process for electing the CAC Chair, and emphasized allowing individual voices be heard while acting as a liaison to the TA Board.