

San Mateo County Transportation Authority
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, California
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting

December 7, 2023

Members Present: E. Beach (arrived at 5:16 pm), N. Corzo, R. Medina (Chair), M. Nagales, R. Mueller (arrived at 5:07 pm), C. Romero (Vice Chair)
(In Person)

Members Present: None
(Via Teleconference)

Members Absent: J. Mates

Staff Present: A. Chan, J. Cassman, S. van Hoften, P. Skinner, P. Gilster, J. Epstein, K. Jordan Steiner, V. Tabjulu, C. Fromson, J. Brook, D. Seamans

1. Call to Order

Chair Rico Medina called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

2. Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance

Dora Seamans, Authority Secretary, confirmed that a quorum was present. Chair Medina led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Report from Closed Session at November 2 Board Meeting

3.a Closed Session: Public Employee Performance Evaluation under Government Code Sections 54957(b). Title: Executive Director

Joan Cassman, Legal Counsel, said that no reportable actions was taken.

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments.

5. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

Chair Medina noted that the report was posted on the website.

6. Consent Calendar

6.a. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of November 2, 2023

6.b. Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending October 31, 2023

6.c. Acceptance of Capital Projects Quarterly Status Report for 1st Quarter Fiscal Year 2024

Motion/Second: Corzo/Nagales
Ayes: Corzo, Medina, Nagales, Romero
Noes: None
Absent: Beach, Mates, Mueller

7. Report of the Chair

Chair Medina wished everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

8. SamTrans Board Liaison Report

Chair Medina said that the report was in the packet and posted on the website. He noted that there was discussion about the upcoming MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) Legislative Committee meeting on December 8 regarding a potential merger of Caltrain and BART, and that the Board supported sending a letter to MTC outlining SamTrans concerns with the proposal.

Director Ray Mueller arrived at 5:07 pm.

9. Joint Powers Board Liaison Report

April Chan, Executive Director, said that the report was posted on the website. She said there was robust discussion about a construction manager/general contract authorization for the downtown extension project that Caltrain would be leading. She said once electric service is rolled out, there would be at least four trains an hour during peak periods, with trains every 30 minutes on weekends. She said the JPB Board also directed staff to send a letter to MTC regarding the Caltrain/BART merger. She said the letter to MTC emphasizes that San Mateo County voters are already contributing tax proceeds to BART per the reauthorization of Measure A. Director Ray Mueller said JPB included in the letter an explicit statement that Caltrain opposes consolidation with BART.

10. Report of the Executive Director

Ms. Chan said the report was in the packet. She thanked Director Emily Beach and Chair Medina for their attendance at the TA CAC holiday reception.

11. State and Federal Legislative Update

Jessica Epstein, Manager, Government and Community Affairs, introduced state legislative lobbyist Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting, who provided a summary of state legislation. He said that Governor has until October 14 to sign or veto legislation. He noted that action was taken on Assembly Bill (AB) 557, removing the January 1, 2024 sunset date on the ability to meet in a virtual capacity if a state of emergency declaration is issued. He said AB 817 is also pending, which would allow for all subsidiary committees of a board to meet in a virtual capacity.

Director Emily Beach arrived at 5:16 pm.

Mr. Khouri said the Governor anticipated the collection of \$42 billion worth of corporate tax, personal income tax, and capital gains. He said the 2024-2025 state budget deficit was anticipated to be about \$14 billion, but there would be a new update on January 10.

On the federal side, Ms. Epstein said the government is operating under a two-tiered continuing resolution (CR) that will keep it funding into the new year. She said they are closely watching a bill on transportation and housing tied to January 19. She reviewed recent personnel changes in Congress and the Senate.

12. 2024 Draft Legislative Program

Ms. Epstein summarized the updates from the 2023 program that are indicated in red font in the proposed 2024 program. She said they had also received feedback from the TA CAC and would bring the program back for adoption at the January 11 Board meeting.

13. Program

13.a. Countywide Autonomous Vehicles Strategic Plan Update

Peter Skinner introduced Vamsi Tabjulu, Project Manager, as well as staff from C/CAG (City/County of Association of Governments of San Mateo County): Kaki Cheung, Deputy Director, and Audrey Shiramizu, Transportation Program Specialist. Ms. Cheung thanked the Board for awarding the ACR/TDM (Alternative Congestion Relief/Transportation Demand Management) grant for the autonomous vehicle plan. She commented that the plan lays the foundation for planning a safe, efficient, and innovative transportation option for County residents and visitors.

Mr. Tabjulu provided the presentation.

Director Mark Nagales said he was interested in smaller AV shuttles to be used for first/last mile. He said he would like to see testing happen in a dedicated area or space on a closed track because there is still a concern about safety. He also wanted to see further discussion about AV freight trucks, given that a recent bill to required having a person in the truck was vetoed.

Director Ray Mueller expressed concern about increasing jobs, concerned about that that meant for the workforce.

Director Emily Beach said it would be good to make workforce development part of the plan. She said it is important to manage expectations with the planning, learning from what other agencies have done. She said she was impressed with the level of engagement at the public meeting. She wanted to see included in the Strategic Plan what the infrastructure to do make AVs safer.

Vice Chair Romero expressed concern that the technology would increase urban sprawl. He said one of the priorities should be understanding that the new technology may be a disruption in terms of labor, increased VMT (vehicle miles traveled), and congestion.

Director Noelia Corzo agreed that the priorities should include addressing potential disruptions. She asked about the priority around equity and services for people with disabilities and for seniors. Mr. Tabjulu said they have identified these priorities, which will help them narrow down the projects that are feasible when funding is available. He said the partners are willing to work with them in every way possible and consider all the safety and other priorities that they will be highlighting for them while also following all the requirements that they have.

Director Mueller said for public agency AVs, he would like to have a no-net job loss policy; focus on either creating or repurposing jobs and not eliminating jobs.

14. Finance

14.a. Program and Allocate \$350,000 for the Development of the Strategic Plan 2025-2029 – *Approved by Resolution No. 2023-25*

Patrick Gilster, Director, Planning and Fund Management, provided the presentation.

Director Beach said it was important to evaluate the projects and quantify how to get better projects. Mr. Gilster said staff has been in discussion about how key performance indicators can be operationalized across all programs. She asked if the AV strategic plan would be ready in time to be included in the TA Strategic Plan. Mr. Gilster said it can get incorporated in how it affects the TA's programs and policies.

Vice Chair Romero asked what the public's role and stakeholders' role will be in developing the plan. Mr. Gilster said the key stakeholder advisory groups would be involved at each phase of the plan. Vice Chair Romero asked if the stakeholders who participated previously and newcomers understand that the updated plan is coming in 2024. Ms. Epstein said they hold quarterly meetings with a stakeholder group, and they plan to also hold a special meeting where they can hold an in-depth conversation with them during the planning process.

Vice Chair Romero asked if the TA workshop would occur during a regular Board meeting or be at a separate time. Ms. Chan said they want to ensure they allocate sufficient time, so that would be decided in the future.

Motion/Second: Romero/Beach

Ayes: Beach, Corzo, Medina, Mueller, Nagales, Romero

Noes: None

Absent: Mates

14.b. Programming and Allocation of \$135,916,790 in Measure A and Measure W Highway Program Funds for 11 Highway Projects; Deprogramming of \$32,698,304 in Funds for Four Highway Projects – *Approved by Resolution No. 2023-26*

Mr. Gilster provided the presentation.

Director Beach asked if technical assistance included TA staff time or if it referred only to consultants. Mr. Gilster said it includes consultants, staff time, and budget for legal counsel.

Public Comment:

Mike Swire, TA CAC member but speaking on his own behalf, urged the Board to vote no on the highway projects. He said he had attended the MTC Legislative Committee meeting several weeks prior where numerous members of that board spoke out against highway widening projects, including San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa. He said that Supervisor Canepa and the South San Francisco City Council and other elected officials on the Peninsula have opposed the 101 North of I-380 project.

Mr. Swire said the project will generate air pollution in South San Francisco that disproportionately impacts diverse and lower-income communities. He said we are better off using this money on public transit, on bike and pedestrian projects, and on maintaining the existing roads that we have. He said he really encourages the Board to think about this from a safety and from a smart-money perspective because that's what our voters want.

Mr. Swire also thanked Director Beach for stepping in to say hi at the Citizen Advisory Committee reception, and that it is very important in establishing relations between the two organizations.

Chair Medina noted that this item was also brought up before the TA CAC, where it was approved 8 to 1.

Vice Chair Romero noted that while he does not align with all of Mr. Swire's statements, he makes some valid points. He said we need to understand that when the public passed these tax measures, there are buckets of funding that must go to certain areas. He said that while he personally would like to see more money go to public transit, bike/ped, and overcrossing projects, it is impossible for the TA to move funding to other categories since that is not what the public voted for.

Motion/Second: Nagales/Romero

Ayes: Beach, Corzo, Medina, Mueller, Nagales, Romero

Noes: None

Absent: Mates

15. Requests from the Authority

There were no requests.

16. Written Communications to the Authority

Chair Medina noted that the correspondence was available on the website.

17. Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting

Chair Medina announced the next meeting would be on Thursday, January 11, 2024, 5:00 pm in person at the SamTrans Auditorium and via Zoom teleconference.

18. Report of Legal Counsel

Joan Cassman, Legal Counsel, wished everyone a happy holiday.

19. Adjourn

Chair Medina gave a brief history of former TA Board Chair Don Horsley's career with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department and participation on boards including Sequoia Healthcare District, San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, Council of Cities, and the TA. He called for a moment of silence and adjourned the meeting in memory of Mr. Horsley at 6:18 pm.

An audio/video recording of this meeting is available online at <https://www.smcta.com/about-us/board-directors/video-board-directors>. Questions may be referred to the Authority Secretary's office by phone at 650.508.6242 or by email to board@smcta.com.