

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of January 30, 2024

Committee Actions

- Consent Calendar items - approved unanimously, pending potential revisions to Minutes per 4a below:
 - 4d) (Board #5d) Amending the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget to Increase Total Expenditures from \$180,605,687 to \$191,064,010
 - Nheeda Enriquez asked what happens if revenues fall below budget. Budget Manager Cleo Liao said the shortfall would go back to the Board and they would amend the budget to adjust allocations for the future.
 - Sandra Lang asked how the budget deltas would be allocated. Staff said that they would only influence unallocated amounts.
 - 4a) Minutes of the CAC meeting of 1/9/2024
 - Mike Swire said that he had proposed revisions to the Minutes summary of #3 Report of the Nominating Committee for 2024 Chair and Vice Chair. Executive Officer Peter Skinner reminded the CAC that Minutes are supposed to be action minutes, not verbatim minutes and that the official record is the video. Members can clarify their own comments, but wholesale changes to the minutes should not happen; the less detail the better to avoid editorializing. Mr. Swire's comments will be reviewed against the video record and then evaluated to confirm that these changes are OK. These reviews will occur in the next few days. They won't be sent to the CAC.
 - Ms. Lang asked whether staff would inform the CAC if the changes to minutes were accepted. Staff said the final minutes are posted on the website for the relevant meeting.
 - Ms. Enriquez suggested that the Minutes include a time stamp to make it easier to refer to the video. Less than two days is not enough to watch the entire video prior to the Board Meeting. Mr. Skinner said that the intent of the minutes is to capture a summary of the discussion and the votes of the CAC. CAC members should look to ensure their votes are correct and to clarify their own comments if needed. However, it would not be appropriate to suggest changes to comments made by other Members. Mr. Skinner noted again the minutes are action minutes and if they are too detailed it negates the purpose of the video.
 - 4b) (Board #5b) Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending December 31, 2023
 - 4c) (Board #5c) Acceptance of Quarterly Investment Report and Fixed Income Market Review and Outlook

Other Items

- 5) (Board #5a) Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of January 11, 20–4 - no discussion
- 6) (Board 9a) Regional Transit Connections Plan Update
 - Patrick Gilster provided a program overview, process, timeline, and existing conditions. Amy Linehan presented the community & stakeholder engagement plan, schedule, and next steps.
 - Giuliano Carlini asked whether we collect data on trips by transit agency. Staff said that this should be available, especially for BART and Caltrain by station.
 - Mr. Swire recommended that, in addition to the proposed outreach actions, staff consider data/text mining from existing online sites/chat rooms. This may provide access to some good ideas from frequent travelers, especially from those who might not be aware of outreach events. Staff said that this hasn't been discussed but they would confer with legal counsel about what could be possible.
 - Ms. Lang expressed concern about reaching the disabled community, which has unique experiences. Ms. Linehan said that the outreach team will contact stakeholder groups that represent the disabled community. Customer service staff have been trained in reaching out to those who might not have access to other outreach types.
 - Chair Barbara Arietta asked whether the recently discussed BART/Caltrain consolidation would impact this program. Staff said that both agencies are eligible sponsors for the SMCTA funding and a potential consolidation of the agencies would not impact eligible project submittals. The issue is still very TBD.
 - Gus Mattammal asked whether the Dumbarton Rail project would be in scope. Staff said that large projects are eligible, although the amount of Measure W RTC funding may not be sufficient to cover all costs without additional funding sources.
 - Vice Chair John Fox asked about *future* transit connections (not existing ones). He said that survey might identify prospective ridership opportunities. Staff said that the survey tries to identify general concerns as opposed to asking about specific/existing services.
 - Mr. Carlini questioned whether the process will identify unsatisfied demand. Pop Ups might be too focused on existing transit systems. Data mining of social media might be useful. We need to find new riders with demand down. Staff said that their consultant was looking into possible advertisements of the survey in targeted areas on social media to reach new audiences.
 - Ms. Lang asked about the proposed regional (MTC) tax and whether it impacted this project. Staff said that TA money is not dependent on the regional measure. The regional measure might provide additional funding sources to TA transit funding recipients.
 - Mr. Swire asked whether multi-agency fare integration was in scope for this project. Staff said that this could be an eligible project if submitted by an eligible transit agency sponsor.

- Ivan Bucio asked whether staff was collecting data further south than Santa Clara County. Staff said that they were not, but that if another agency could show a nexus to improving regional transit to/from San Mateo County explicitly then a project may be eligible.
- Public Comment - Malcolm said that SFO is a key transit point and recommended that it be looked at more closely. He also recommended projects that would improve coordination of schedules across different transit systems.
- Chair Arietta asked about ferry projects. Staff said that South San Francisco and Redwood City are both receiving ferry money from Measure A currently. SSF's terminal is operational and RWC's is in EIR development. Capital, including the purchase of vessels, and operating expenses would be eligible.
- Mr. Carlini asked how the OpEx vs. CapEx mix would be determined. Staff said that the Board's choice of projects will drive the future mix.
- Mr. Carlini asked whether the scope was final destinations or transit station destinations. Staff said the former.
- 7) (Board 10a) US 101 Express Lanes: Quarterly Update on Variable Rate Bond and Operations
 - Kate Jordan-Steiner, CFO provided the project's background, flow of funds, debt service, and bond outlook. Lacy Vong, Policy Manager, summarized the project's operating performance highlights.
 - Ms. Lang asked whether the toll revenues were the source for repayment of debt service and other expenses. Staff said yes. Ms. Lang asked what would happen if toll revenues fell short of expenses. Staff said this is unlikely, but there are other levers to pull if necessary, including restructuring the bond.
 - Chair Arietta asked about the slight improvement in expenses. Staff said that it wasn't necessarily an improvement, but that estimates were conservative in forecasting repairs, which haven't been as bad as expected.
 - Chair Arietta raised concern over CHP overtime expenses. This is a lot of money. Staff said that CHP expenses will continue to be billed at overtime rates, which are not negotiable. Technological solutions will be looked at for the long term.
 - Chair Arietta asked about enforcement scheduling. Staff said that CHP officers volunteer for slots and thus there may be gaps in enforcement.
 - Mr. Carlini asked to see more data on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for general purpose (GP) and the Express Lanes (EL).
 - Mr. Swire suggested that the heat maps include a delta in GP vs. EL speeds. He asked whether VMT had increased as a result of the project. Staff said that they have not looked at VMT. This data would need to come from other agencies. Mr. Skinner said that the TA cannot assign Lacy, a contractor to the JPA, work that is not authorized by the JPA.
 - Ms. Enriquez also asked for before and after data. She also suggested a clearer scorecard and color coding to demonstrate whether the project is meeting its stated goals - e.g., have we reduced congestion? This analysis will be necessary in evaluating future projects.

- Mr. Fox asked about the 30% of vehicles/trips without transponders and how much of their revenue we do/not recover. How much phantom revenue is there from vehicles that are unidentifiable or do not pay? Staff said that they can look into this. They will continue to monitor this problem. Mr. Fox said that knowing the leakage number is very important, especially from those who obscure their license plates intentionally.
- Mr. Carlini asked to see data on whether congestion has improved year over year.
- Mr. Bucio asked how CHP assignments were filled. Staff said that officers sign up for specific time blocks and locations throughout the entire day.
- Chair Arietta recommended that AI be used to limit CHP overtime expenses.
- Mr. Swire said that the heat maps show bad congestion at times in the general purpose lanes. He asked whether the GP congestion was in line with expectations. Have we succeeded in our goal of congestion relief? Staff said that they were meeting state and federal guidelines.
- Mr. Carlini said that the average \$3 fee seemed well below the \$10-15 he has seen. He also asked why the transponder was necessary. Staff said that the transponder was necessary to discriminate pricing by occupancy.
- 8) (Board 11) State and Federal Legislative update
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether SB915 (Autonomous Vehicles) would impact the TA's AV plan. Staff said that they are watching the bill for this reason.
 - Mr. Swire thanked Staff for their work on GP to HOT conversions after making this part of the 2024 Legislative Plan at the previous meeting. He asked about next steps per this action. Mr. Skinner said that the TA, on advice of legal counsel, would not be pursuing legislation regarding a project alternative that has not yet been selected as part of the EIR process. This could be considered pre-supposing the outcome of the EIR process. Before we take legislation, we need to follow the science and see what the EIR says. Staff will reevaluate the issue after a preferred alternative is selected.
 - Ms. Lang asked about SB915 given recent local developments. She said that we are very interested in safety. Staff said that given the focus on safety we are watching the bill closely. Staff considers a host of legal and technical factors prior to making a recommendation on supporting or opposing a bill. This bill is still in its infancy.
 - Mr. Mattammal asked about the impact of bills that state an "intent". Staff said that these bills are starting points or softer approaches relative to similar legislation.
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether the workshops mentioned in the bills are for public attendance. Staff said that these workshops are open to the public but are focused on transit agencies refining guidelines for SB1 grant programs.
 - Mr. Swire asked whether MTC regional revenues could flow through SMCTA and thus be impacted by MTC rules for how the money is used (e.g., no highway expansion). Staff said that MTC money can flow through the TA and would thus be subject to MTC rules.

- Mr. Carlini commented that the State of CA and even SMCTA are going down the wrong path in pursuing projects that increase road capacity and VMT, despite fiscal challenges. We are playing shell games to keep the ATP projects going. Widening projects always fails to improve congestion.
- 9) Report of the Chair
 - Chair Arietta advised the CAC that volunteers are being sought for a three to four-person Ad-Hoc Committee charged with recommending updates to the Rules of Procedure to the full CAC.
 - Staff anticipates 3-4 meetings over the course of the next 8-10 months.
 - Meetings will include the Ad-Hoc members, TA staff and Legal Counsel.
- Chair Arietta asked interested CAC members to email Jean Brook before the next CAC meeting in March.10) Report from Staff
 - Martin Reyes has left to join SFCTA. Staff are looking to fill this role.
- 11) Member Comments
 - Chair Arietta mentioned that SF is the third most congested area of the country. She asked staff to report back on how SM County is doing on congestion.
 - Ms. Enriquez asked about the scope of the ad hoc committee. Chair Arietta said that the election and other rules of procedure are in scope. Legal counsel will provide some models for evaluation.
 - Ms. Lang reminded everyone that there is an important election happening in March.
 - Mr. Swire recommended that, for future elections, the CAC consider that candidates provide a one pager prior to the election including their goals and qualifications, as SFCTA's CAC does, if we are interested in thoughtful discussion of candidates. Chair Arietta disagreed, saying that wasn't necessary to do all that. Mr. Skinner said that this can be discussed as part of the revisions to the rules of procedure.
 - Mr. Carlini said that the California Bicycle Coalition is advocating for a people first mobility budget. He hopes that the TA Board will adopt its tenets, including shifting funding from widening highways to maintaining existing roads.