

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of March 5, 2024

Committee Actions

- Consent Calendar items - all approved unanimously
 - 4a) Minutes of the CAC meeting of 1/30/2024
 - 4b) (Board 5.b) Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending January 31, 2024
 - 4c) (Board 5.c) Acceptance of Capital Projects Quarterly Status Report for 2nd Quarter Fiscal Year 2024
 - 4d) (Board 5.d) State and Federal Legislative Update

Other Items

- 5) TA Board Item 5.a Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of February 1, 2024
- 6) TA Board Item 10 Strategic Plan Workshop
 - Staff provided a summary of the TA's high-level goals, timeline, history, staffing, and a review of the past five years
 - CAC Members cast three votes on their top three priorities for each of the following Measures:
 - Measure W Core Principles
 - 6 votes
 - Reduce VMT and GHG emissions
 - Repair and maintain existing infrastructure
 - 5 votes
 - Invest in financially sustainable public transit system
 - Environmentally friendly transit solutions that include green stormwater infrastructure
 - Implement Complete Streets policies
 - 4 votes
 - Relieve traffic congestion
 - 3 votes
 - Enhance safety and public health
 - Shared ride multi-modal
 - 2 votes
 - Maximize traffic reduction potential associated with creating housing in high-quality transit corridors.
 - 0 votes
 - Promote economic vitality
 - Leverage public/private partnerships

- Measure A Goals
 - #1 - Enhance safety was clear winner
 - #2 - Meet local mobility needs
 - #3 - Regional connections
 - #4 - Reduce congestion
- What are TA's biggest accomplishments of the past five years?
 - Mr. Londer - electrification of Caltrain, improvements to 101
 - Ms. Lang - increased information on grade separations, safety, and financial conditions
 - Mr. Swire - consultants acknowledging that widening highways doesn't reduce congestion
 - Mr. Bojack - grade separations, Caltrain electrification
 - Mr. Bucio - Safe Routes to School, grade separations
 - Ms. Enriquez - scope of programs tackled, partnering with other organizations and cities
 - Ms. Kuklin - leadership transition, electrification of Caltrain, Express Lane project
 - Mr. Ohtaki - Safe Routes to School - impactful and cost-efficient grade separations combined with Caltrain electrification
 - Chair Arietta - Caltrain electrification & grade separation; hopefully Manor Drive overcrossing soon
 - Mr. Mattammal - grade separations & Express Lanes, coastal multi-modal trail
 - Mr. Fox - Caltrain infrastructure investments, bike & ped mobility (including Safe Routes to School)
 - Ms. Paul - grade separations and Caltrain electrification, bike/ped projects, California road diet in Burlingame
 - Mr. Carlini - mode shift, California Avenue bike lane, Safe Routes to School
- What are TA's biggest opportunities for improvement?
 - Ms. Arietta - securing funding for all projects
 - Mr. Mattammal - focus more on safety given traditional focus on cars
 - Mr. Fox - intersystem operability and seamless transit, including last mile on single fare and payment method
 - Ms. Paul - prioritizing safety, prioritizing smaller projects, moving more quickly
 - Mr. Carlini - reducing VMT and greenhouse gas emissions, providing 20% of road project funds to active transportation, requiring safety in all projects, prioritize longer, cross-jurisdiction active transportation projects instead of smaller disconnected efforts
 - Mr. Londer - anything that helps the environment, e.g., electric cars, electric trains, bike/pedestrian
 - Ms. Lang - more in-depth analysis on health ramifications of projects

- Mr. Swire - recognizing and acknowledging the negative equity impacts of projects that adversely impact low income and diverse populations - e.g., highway expansion
- Mr. Bojack - more creativity in VMT reduction while working within Measure A & W guidelines, reduce congestion through means other than car capacity expansion
- Mr. Bucio - safety, access to non-car alternatives
- Ms. Enriquez - reduction of larger costs (e.g., right of way acquisition), streamlining projects & processes, more focus on metrics like VMT, look at trade-offs of decisions
- Ms. Kulkin - address transportation needs of all users, not just single solutions; improve regional connections given isolated, underutilized systems
- Mr. Ohtaki - prepare for and incentivize migration to EVs - e.g., electric shuttle buses; incentivize highway use for EVs; mobility connections
- How can the TA elevate consideration of equity? What is "equity" - e.g., social vs. geographic?
 - Mr. Carlini - everyone should be able to get around, fares need to be affordable, travel times should not be excessive for modes used by poor
 - Mr. Londer - tax policies can influence equity
 - Ms. Lang - partner with CBOs to improve equity
 - Mr. Swire - identification and reporting on metrics that reflect equity of recent projects - e.g., asthma rates, life expectancy, traffic deaths
 - Mr. Bojack - align transportation policy with housing (as both are largest costs for residents), work with housing organizations
 - Mr. Bucio - housing is key; work closely with less wealthy cities that don't have well-funded staff
 - Ms. Enriquez - look at root causes of equity imbalances; look at systemic level to reduce travel time inequities for various groups
 - Ms. Kulkin - look at geographic imbalances as smaller communities are suffering; apply equity overlay when reviewing and implementing projects
 - Mr. Ohtaki - we should visit equity priority communities in order to get their input (instead of making assumptions)
 - Chair Arietta - Coastside needs to get their fair share; projects on the books for a long time should get priority over new projects
 - Mr. Mattammal - we should visit equity priority communities in order to get their input (instead of making assumptions); lower income communities use and need buses, not Caltrain
 - Mr. Fox - need to identify metrics that clarify what is/not equity; prioritize denser communities instead of spreading money to all communities
 - Ms. Paul - incorporate equity into project reviews and metrics, earlier in the process

- How can the TA improve its Technical Assistance programs?
 - Ms. Enriquez - bundle projects to save money and improve speed
 - Ms. Kulkin - reach out to cities to better understand their needs
 - Mr. Ohtaki - specialization on grade separations and reducing their costs
 - Chair Arietta - help cities that aren't getting projects funded more quickly - e.g., Pacifica
 - Mr. Mattammal - bundle projects, push back on Caltrans
 - Mr. Fox - help cities prepare grants
 - Ms. Paul - expand support and look at the longer term
 - Mr. Carlini - help smaller project sponsors, focus on multi-jurisdiction transit and active transportation projects, focus less on smaller/isolated projects
 - Mr. Londer - reach out to communities through their Councils and their goal setting processes
 - Ms. Lang - make sure sponsors are well versed in TA's equity principles
 - Mr. Swire - push back on Caltrans to make sure that they are prioritizing projects that communities want and that their projects don't delay or kill projects that communities want - e.g., Holly (San Carlos) and Hillsdale (San Mateo) Bike & Pedestrian Bridges
 - Mr. Bojack - help traffic engineers that have limited bike/pedestrian expertise and/or are too auto focused; work more closely with CBOs that support bike/ped
 - Mr. Bucio - work with cities as part of their strategic plans; pass down equity focus
- Should the definition of "countywide significance" be amended?
 - Mr. Mattammal - include impact on equity communities
 - Ms. Kulkin - tie into regional connects
 - Ms. Paul - add equity component
 - Mr. Carlini - add lens of reducing VMT and GHG and improving equity; increase safety
 - Mr. Londer - add GHG reduction
 - Ms. Lang - maybe look at removing "through traffic"
 - Mr. Swire - look at mode shift/environmental criteria; look at a corridor approach - e.g., after spending \$2.5B on Caltrain, think about whether to spend \$600M widening a highway next to Caltrain
 - Mr. Bucio - grade on different priorities - e.g., equity & safety
 - Ms. Enriquez - clarify "significance" with metrics or minimizing harm when projects have externalities
 - Mr. Ohtaki - add equity considerations given differing tax bases of different communities
 - Chair Arietta - more emphasis on transit, especially on Coastside, which has lost bus routes; need to reduce car reliance on Coast through improved east-west connections
- CAC members voted on top five priority project types for next five years

- Other suggestions
 - Mr. Swire - How can the TA facilitate similar transportation decisions across multiple municipalities to increase expertise, lower costs, and accelerate completion? E.g., for a “no right turn on red” policy, could the TA establish a model ordinance that would be adopted at the local level. Similar to county template ordinances on plastic bag bans. Staff said that they have done this in some cases (e.g., C/CAG’s model TDM ordinances).
 - Mr. Carlini - Even if the TA can’t compel cities to make changes (e.g., no right on red), could the TA attach “strings” to funding, encouraging them to make these changes? Staff said that the TA can establish guidelines or incorporate these goals into evaluation criteria for projects.
 - Many members praised the strategic planning exercise and hoped that we could do it more frequently
- 7) Report of the Chair
 - Chair Arietta said that she had chosen the members of the ad hoc committee to improve the rules of procedure of the CAC, including its election procedures. She chose the first three members who responded as they represent an excellent cross-section of the Committee given their demographic, social, geographic equity, tenure, and interests. Members of the ad hoc committee will be Ms. Enriquez, Mr. Mattammal, and Ms. Kulkin. Chair Arietta advised that the Ad-Hoc Committee will have its first meeting with staff and Legal Counsel at the end of this month
- 8) Report from Staff-
- 9) Member Comments
 - Mr. Carlini mentioned two letters of support from the TA to U.S. Transportation Secretary Buttigieg. He lauded the San Mateo project but had concerns about the allocation of funding in the Burlingame project being too car focused instead of complete streets focused, as described. He also suggested that the Chair or other CAC member present our meeting summary to the Board and answer questions, as occurs with other such organizations.
 - Mr. Mattammal urged everyone to vote!
 - Mr. Ohtaki said that the Palo Alto Daily Post had put out an editorial encouraging their next Congressperson to help get funding for grade separations. He offered to help reach out to the editor to speak with the new Congressperson on this.
 - Ms. Kulkin recommended more focus on autonomous vehicles which are coming to the Peninsula. They could bring safety to the community and should be part of the long-term plan.

- Mr. Swire lauded Secretary Buttigieg for investigating Caltrans' potentially inadequate consideration of the environmental impacts on the proposed highway widening in Fresno. He also said that a Seamless Bay Area study had demonstrated that residents are most concerned with filling potholes and making transit safe, faster, and more convenient. He referenced an Economist article that indicated that younger people are driving less than previous generations and that we should consider future residents in our decisions. Finally, two pedestrians have died in Redwood City in the past month on the same block of El Camino.
- Ms. Lang encouraged everyone to vote and urged us to consider the "unseen" in our equity lens.