

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of April 2, 2024

Committee Actions

Consent Calendar items - all approved unanimously:

- **4a) Minutes of the CAC meeting of 3/5/2024**
 - Ms. Lang asked whether the CAC would get a report back on the priorities discussed and votes taken at the previous meeting during the strategic planning exercise. Staff said that this information would be included in the consultants' report, which will also include information gathered from the Board during their session.
- **4b) (Board 5.b) Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending February 29, 2024**
- **4c) (5.c) Amending the Investment Policy for the San Mateo County Transportation Authority**
- **4d) (5.d) Programming and Allocating \$475,000 in Measure W Funds From the Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Category for the Safe Routes to School Program in San Mateo County**
 - Mr. Carlini said that the Board was wildly enthusiastic in praising the Safe Routes to School Program; thus, why not increase their funding? Staff said that the Program's funding was prescribed in the Strategic Plan and could only be changed through a formal amendment to the Strategic Plan.
- **4e) (5.e) Authorizing an Amendment to On-call Transportation Planning, Management, and Support Services Contracts with WSP USA, Inc., and Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. to Increase the Contract Capacity by \$2.5 Million**
 - Mr. Carlini asked for details on the services provided by this contract and which funding bucket they were paid from. Staff said that the vendor provides planning and project management services across a variety of projects and funding buckets.
- **4f) (5.f) Authorizing the Submittal of an Allocation Request for Regional Measure 3 Funding in the Amount of \$19.277 Million for the US 101/State Route 92 Area Improvements Project**
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether this increase in funding would violate the 50% match rule for TA projects. Staff clarified that this increase in funding would come from other sources (MTC and C/CAG, funded by bridge tolls) and would not impact this rule.
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether Regional Measure 3 spending had requirements related to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or GHG emissions. Staff said that there were no such requirements in the RM3 expenditure plan.

Other Items

- **5) (5.a) Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors**
 - Mr. Swire noted that the Board, in its discussion of TA accomplishments, largely pointed to grade separation and Safe Routes to School Projects
- **6) (10.a) Transit - Ferry Program Update**
 - Redwood City service
 - Mr. Swire asked how commuters would get to and from the proposed ferry terminal in Redwood City. Port of Redwood City staff said that they were working with local employers to study this.
 - Mr. Carlini asked how commuters would get to the Oakland terminal. SMCTA staff said that there were multiple AC Transit buses serving the terminal and other projects will increase access options.
 - Mr. Ohtaki asked what the Redwood City proposal assumed for ridership. Port staff said that the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) was proposing a 300-person ferry with multiple morning and evening trips.
 - Chair Arietta mentioned that employers are increasingly asking employees to come into the office, necessitating revisiting business case numbers based on post-pandemic commuting patterns.
 - Mr. Mattammal asked whether the ferry could also serve San Francisco given the proposed increase in events at the Chase Center. Port staff said that they are open to SF routes but are prioritizing Oakland routes initially.
 - Vice Chair Fox said that publicity will be key to making the pilot successful. He recommended letting commuters know that future improvements (e.g., construction of a permanent terminal) would improve service. He also supported Oakland-RWC service as it complements other transit routes. He recommended consideration of a stop in San Leandro along the way. He also said that Dumbarton Rail might provide competition for these routes. Port staff said that a stop at Coyote Point was also under consideration.
 - Ms. Enriquez recommended that staff study pandemic ridership trends in forecasting demand.
 - Mr. Carlini asked why commuters would choose the ferry over BART. Port staff said that it is a more pleasant experience.
 - Mr. Mattammal asked what level of ridership was necessary to make the service viable. Port staff said that they were forecasting initially serving 850 people per weekday, rising to 1,800 per weekday, through two crossings in the morning and three in the evening.
 - Mr. Carlini pointed out that the TA financial commitment wasn't large. TA staff said that there were other funding sources, and that future funding will be confirmed prior to large investments.

South San Francisco Service

- Mr. Carlini asked about earthquake danger given the landfill geology. SSF staff said that a clay cap will address this issue.
 - Mr. Ohtaki asked whether there was a public/private partnership in place with Roche. SSF staff said that they are always engaged with local employers and the City was considering a Mello-Roos Tax to increase funding
 - Mr. Mattammal asked whether the success of the project was dependent on staff's projections of the local employee base increasing from 40,000 to 100,000. SSF staff said that the existing service was already very successful and thus growth wasn't necessary.
 - Ms. Enriquez asked whether ferry service was more environmentally friendly than other transit options. TA staff said that WETA currently operates diesel ferries but is evaluating trials of zero emission vessels.
 - Ms. Lang asked about plans for sea level rise and king tides. SSF staff said that they were planning for 6-7' in sea level rise as well as subsidence.
 - Mr. Carlini asked about current ferry demand. Staff said that there were roughly 600 boardings per day in 2019.
 - Mr. Carlini said that 6-7' sea level rises were optimistic; what if it hits 15'?
- **7) (10.b) Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Grant Award for Connect4SSF**
 - Mr. Swire asked what % of the spending would be for active transportation vs. transit vs. flood control. Staff said that this was TBD but that they were modeling the project on the I-5 project in Portland.
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether the project would include auto-focused investments. Staff said that most of the projects will likely be for active transportation and transit, although it depends on community priorities.
 - Mr. Fox encouraged projects to consider future land uses (e.g., housing), instead of just current (industrial) land uses. Staff said that there is some current residential use and will consider future uses, too.
 - Ms. Enriquez praised the initiative's holistic thinking.
 - Ms. Kulkin congratulated staff on their hard work on the project.
 - Mr. Carlini said that given the large amount of money in play, it might be possible to consider plans that would connect multiple communities (a frequent challenge with smaller funding amounts).
 - Mr. Carlini urged that multimodal projects segregate and protect travel for vulnerable users.

- **8) (11) State and Federal Legislative Update**
 - Ms. Lang asked when the federal earmark money would be available. Staff said that there is a process for receiving this money, much of which goes through Caltrans.
 - Mr. Swire asked whether the TA had spoken with legislators on the use of SB1031 funding for highway widening. Staff said that the Transit District and Caltrain were primarily involved in these discussions (not the TA)
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether SB1031 would focus on repairing existing roads instead of widening highways. Staff noted that this was discussed but not resolved by MTC.
 - Mr. Ohtaki asked whether there was more money available for grade separations. Staff said that federal funding is unlikely, outside of smaller earmarks.
 - Mr. Mattammal said that SB 1031 included multiple new taxes. Staff clarified that multiple tax options were being discussed, but likely not in combination.
- **9) Report of the Chair**
 - Caltrain has successfully tested electric trains and overhead wires between Mountain View and Redwood City for the first time. This will allow the agency to ramp up the testing of the new fleet before the launch of its electrified service in the Fall of 2024. Twenty such tests were successfully completed over the course of one weekend. Each of the 23 electric trainsets must complete 1,000 miles of testing before it can carry passengers. With these live runs completed, testing can now take place from San Jose to Redwood City, thereby keeping the launch of service on schedule for this Fall. The proposed electrification plan includes 70 weekday peak hour trains, an increase from the current 66. Eleven stations would see four train arrivals hourly per direction, up from seven stations currently. Weekend service will arrive every half hour, rather than every hour. There will also be an increase in Midday trains covering stations. For the passenger experience, new trains will feature WI-FI, power outlets at every seat, onboard displays with digital trip information and increased storage capacities. Thirty-two of the nearly 40-year-old gallery cars have recently been shipped to Sonoma, CA, as the agency makes room for its new electric fleet. They were not in service, and their retirement will not affect Caltrain service. The cars will be stored in Petaluma with Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit until they are put up for sale and a buyer is found.
- **10) Report from Staff**
 - Mr. Carlini asked for additional detail on the 101/92 Direct Connector and Woodside Road projects in the Executive Director's report. Staff said that the 101/92 project was in environmental review and that the City of RWC would take input on the Woodside Road project.

- **11) Member Comments/Requests**

- Ms. Lang urged SMCTA to increase the attention paid to public health and air pollution, especially in the context of recent and proposed large highway widening initiatives. She said that we need to have more data on these impacts. Staff said that these were considered during the EIR phase. Ms. Swire added that the EIR data was projections on future projects, not actual health data on recent projects. He said that we have asked for this numerous times but hadn't seen it.
- Mr. Swire recommended that members read the opinion-editorial (op-ed) from Elaine Salinger, head of the local Citizens' Climate Lobby chapter. In it, she criticizes the TA's spending on highway widening projects and expressed her opinion that it had a negative impact on Pedestrian and Bike overcrossing projects. He also suggested the Chronicle op-ed on not including highway widening projects in the proposed MTC regional funding measure. He also said that Sam Liccardo, who won the recent primary for Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's seat, had opposed highway widenings in a recent CCL forum. Finally, he said that he had witnessed a bad crash in the 101 Express Lanes and frequently sees drivers weaving in and out of the lane to avoid tolling; he asked again for data on crash history in the Express Lanes.
- Mr. Carlini said that Director Medina had said that it was up to the CAC whether it endorsed presentation of its discussions to the Board, but that the Board controls its own agenda. Mr. Carlini said that many Boards have CAC members present at their meetings. Staff said that the Board is considering its own procedures.
- Mr. Carlini asked for an update from the Rules of Procedure Subcommittee. Staff said that they had met once and that the process would likely finish by the end of summer.
- Mr. Carlini urged the TA to include public health, VMT, congestion, and other metrics in regular and project reporting. He said that the TA has this data and thus should report on it. Staff said that this may come out of the Strategic Planning process
- Mr. Mattammal said that if you want a good laugh, you should read the High-Speed Rail business plan.