

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

February 1, 2024

Members Present: J. Mates (Vice Chair), R. Medina, R. Mueller (left at 6:27 pm), M. Nagales
(In Person) (arrived at 5:16 pm), C. Romero (Chair)

Members Present: E. Beach
(Via Teleconference)

Members Absent: N. Corzo

Staff Present: A. Chan, J. Cassman, S. van Hoften, P. Skinner, P. Gilster, J. Epstein,
A. Linehan, J. Manzi, K. Jordan Steiner, J. Brook, D. Seamans

1. Call to Order

Chair Carlos Romero called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance

Dora Seamans, Authority Secretary, confirmed that a quorum was present. Chair Romero requested that Vice Chair Julia Mates lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Giuliano Carlini announced that the California Bicycle Coalition has an online petition promoting people-oriented transit over car-oriented transit. He said that adding road capacity increases VMT (vehicle miles traveled), which does not reduce congestion and said he supported repairing and making other changes to roadways that will improve both mass transit and active transit.

4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

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

5. Consent Calendar

5.a. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of January 11, 2024

5.b. Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending December 31, 2023

5.c. Acceptance of Quarterly Investment Report and Fixed Income Market Review and Outlook

5.d. Amending the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget to Increase Total Expenditures from \$180,605,687 to \$191,064,010 – Approved by Resolution No. 2024-1

Motion/Second: Medina/Mates

Ayes: Beach, Mates, Medina, Mueller, Romero

Noes: None

Absent: Corzo, Nagales

6. Report of the Chair

6.a. Resolution of Appreciation for Rico E. Medina – Approved by Resolution No. 2024-2

Chair Romero summarized the resolution.

Director Rico Medina thanked Chair Romero for his support in the role of Vice Chair over the previous two years. He commended the Board members for their kindness and professionalism, which he said was critical to the TA's success.

Vice Chair Mates offered her thanks for Director Medina.

Motion/Second: Romero/Mates

Ayes: Beach, Mates, Medina, Mueller, Romero

Noes: None

Absent: Corzo, Nagales

Chair Romero requested a roll call vote to allow Director Emily Beach to participate remotely per AB 2449.

Motion/Second: Mates/Medina

Ayes: Beach, Mates, Medina, Mueller, Romero

Noes: None

Absent: Corzo, Nagales

7. Joint Powers Board Liaison Report

April Chan, Executive Director, said that the report was posted on the website. She said the JPB Board received an update on the Caltrain Electrification Program, and that there would be a public event on the new trains in the spring to be hosted in San Mateo County. She said the Board also heard about a financial plan for Caltrain going forward towards 2033.

8. Report of the Executive Director

Ms. Chan said the report was in the packet. She noted that Mary Ellen Cassman, the mother of Joan Cassman, Legal Counsel, had passed away on January 19 at the age of 100.

Director Mark Nagales arrived at 5:16 pm.

Ms. Chan gave some highlights of Mrs. Cassman's life and achievements and requested that the meeting adjourn in her memory. Ms. Cassman noted that the Los Angeles City Council, where Mrs. Cassman had served as campaign manager in 1969 for the fourth woman councilmember to be elected, had adjourned their January 31 meeting in her mother's honor.

9. Program

9.a. Regional Transit Connections Plan Update

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

Amy Linehan, Government and Community Affairs Officer, presented on community and stakeholder engagement, and the schedule and next steps.

Vice Chair Mates asked if the plan would mesh with existing programs and does it potentially duplicate efforts from other programs. Mr. Gilster said they would look at how different types of projects overlap with their eligibility.

Chair Romero said he felt the Regional Transit Connections Plan will clarify what is needed in the Strategic Plan. Director Beach asked if there was some kind of incentive to attract people to community outreach meetings. She suggested asking drivers what the advantages of using their cars as opposed to trying transit. She asked if some of the eligible projects could be based on community needs, such as fare incentives, transit passes, Clipper cards, or discounted fares. Mr. Gilster said they trying to define "operations." He said the survey is asking what obstacles people have with taking transit. Director Beach said that category could explore ways to educate people about transit options.

Vice Chair Mates said it is difficult to individualize the transportation piece, since many users do not use transit on a consistent schedule. She asked in addition to the collected data if there is something else to ask about people's behaviors. Mr. Gilster said they could ask their consultant if the data source could reveal other data such as travel times and major corridors that affect transit users' behaviors.

Chair Romero asked how the outcome of the study would mesh with the Strategic Plan. Mr. Gilster said their goal was to have the plan approved by the Board by September so that the policy recommendations could be incorporated into the Strategic Plan.

Public Comment:

Adina Levin, Seamless Bay Area and TEAMC (Transportation Equity Allied Movement Coalition), said she supported the project moving forward. She said a joint letter was sent out on meritorious things of this category which can be spent on, including bus service that connects San Mateo County and Alameda County. She noted that there has been no bus service on the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge since the pandemic. She suggested soliciting feedback from the Belle Haven and East Palo Alto communities for that project.

10. Finance

10.a. US 101 Express Lanes: Quarterly Update on Variable Rate Bond and Operations

Kate Jordan Steiner, Chief Financial Officer, provided the initial part of the presentation on variable rate bond.

Chair Romero thanked Ms. Jordan Steiner for including information in the presentation regarding the TA's exit options in relation to the bonds. He asked if March would be the final month that the TA pays for the bonds out of its capitalized interest, which Ms. Jordan Steiner

confirmed. Peter Skinner, Executive Officer, Transportation Authority, said the civil portion of the project is in the close-out phase and Leo Scott, co-project manager for the Express Lanes project, is working to finalize all remaining project expenses to come up with a final number the TA can put toward the principal on the bonds.

Lacy Vong, Policy Program Manager, SMCEL-JPA (San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority) provided the presentation on the Express Lanes Operations, which included highlights from the quarterly performance period. She said they are starting to see some consistent trends.

Director Mark Nagales asked if it were possible to adjust dynamic pricing to encourage more usage of the express lanes. Ms. Vong said the pricing adjusts according to current traffic conditions. She said that many users report going in and out of the express lanes according to traffic.

Vice Chair Mates asked if it were possible to use the information from the express lanes update for the Regional Transit Connections Plan outreach, asking people traveling to adjacent counties about their use of managed lanes in San Mateo County, which Mr. Gilster confirmed.

Chair Romero said there was a significant jump in revenue between August and September. Ms. Vong clarified that that number was for the quarter. She said they were confident that they would be seeing revenues at the projected level of \$20-plus million. Chair Romero said they would likely see seasonal variations, which Ms. Vong confirmed. He said that expenses are going up every month. Ms. Vong said the expenses are under what they had estimated for Fiscal Year 2024. Chair Romero asked what the difference was between a violation and an IBT (image-based toll). Ms. Vong explained that an IBT is when the FasTrak office matches a license plate image taken by the system and attempts to match it with an existing FasTrak account and if it does, the account owner is billed at the full toll rate. She said if the IBT does not match an existing FasTrak account, it generates a violation notice.

Director Beach noted that with a big spike in revenue that the administrative costs would increase. Ms. Vong noted that there are variable costs associated with the volume of transactions.

Public Comment:

Mike Swire, asked the board to take a deeper, more holistic review of the recently completed project to see if it has achieved its non-financial goals. He said that converting a lane would have provided the same benefit but at a much lower price tag than the ultimate \$581 million that we spent here. He said in addition to congestion relief, it would also be helpful to see data on the project's impact on VMT and greenhouse gas emissions as well as the impact on air pollution and traffic violence in MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) equity-priority neighborhoods adjacent to the highway.

Director Beach noted that anyone joining a three-person carpool can enjoy the benefits of the express lanes for free.

Chair Romero acknowledged that traffic patterns should be explored and compared to VMT and the reduction of greenhouse gases.

11. State and Federal Legislative Update

Jessica Epstein, Director, Government and Community Affairs provided a summary of federal and state legislation.

On the federal side, Congress passed on January 18 another continuing resolution (CR).

Director Ray Mueller left the meeting at 6:27 pm.

On the state side, she said the Legislature has been acting to pass bills from 2023. She said the bills need to pass out of the first house by January 31 or else they die. She said Governor Newsom introduced his budget on January 10, and estimated a \$38 billion deficit preserving the \$5.1 billion state commitment to public transit. She noted state leadership changes and said that there are many bills on the legislative matrix that the TA is watching but that the language is likely to change as the bills move from house to house. She said they like to watch how a bill evolves before making any recommendation for taking a position.

Ms. Epstein said that Senate Bill (SB) 925 (Weiner) would allow MTC to place a measure on the ballot for transportation funding and noted that it was a spot bill.

She said that Assembly Bill (AB) 817 (Pacheco) had passed the Assembly and moved onto the Senate and is the only Brown Act bill to actively move forward at this time.

12. Requests from the Authority

There were no requests.

13. Written Communications to the Authority

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

14. Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting

Chair Romero announced the next meeting would be on Thursday, March 7, 2024, 5:00 pm in person at the SamTrans Auditorium and via Zoom teleconference.

15. Report of Legal Counsel

Ms. Cassman said she had nothing to report.

16. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm in memory of Mary Ellen Cassman.

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.