

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

**March 7, 2024**

**Members Present:** N. Corzo, J. Mates (Vice Chair), R. Medina, R. Mueller (left at 5:19 pm),  
**(In Person)** C. Romero (Chair)

**Members Present:** E. Beach (joined at 5:23 pm), M. Nagales (left at 6:23 pm)  
**(Via Teleconference)**

**Members Absent:** None

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

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Carlos Romero called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

**2. Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance**

Dora Seamans, Authority Secretary, confirmed that a quorum was present.

The Board voted to approve Directors Emily Beach and Mark Nagales to participate remotely per Assembly Bill 2449.

Motion/Second: Medina/Mates

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

Noes: None

Absent: Beach

Chair Romero requested that Director Rico Medina lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda**

Giuliano Carlini requested that the Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee be presented in person by a member of the CAC at future Board meetings.

Mike Swire said he appreciated the opportunity to provide input to the Strategic Planning process at the CAC meeting. He noted he had attended a meeting with Senator Scott Wiener and the Silicon Valley Bike Coalition. He related Senator Wiener's and Congressional candidate Sam Liccardo's opinions in opposition to highway widening.

**4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee**

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

Director Rico Medina said regarding Mr. Carlini's comment that he should raise the subject of having a representative present the CAC report in person with the TA CAC rather than with the

Board. Chair Romero suggested having a separate discussion between the BOD and CAC outside of the meetings.

**5. Consent Calendar**

**5.a. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of February 1, 2024**

**5.b. Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending January 31, 2024**

**5.c. Acceptance of Capital Projects Quarterly Status Report for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Fiscal Year 2024**

**5.d. State and Federal Legislative Update**

Regarding Item 5.c, Chair Romero said he appreciated the new format of the report.

Motion/Second: Medina/Mates

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

Noes: None

Absent: Beach

**6. Report of the Chair**

Chair Romero said he appreciated staff providing snacks for the workshop. He noted he had made appointments to the following ad-hoc committees:

- Strategic Plan –Chair Romero, Vice Chair Julia Mates, and Director Emily Beach
- 101 Corridor Connect – Chair Romero, Director Noelia Corzo, and Director Rico Medina
- CAC Interviews – Director Rico Medina, Director Ray Mueller, and Director Mark Nagales

**7. San Mateo County Transit District Liaison Report**

**7.a. Meeting of February 7, 2024**

**7.b. Meeting of March 6, 2024**

Director Medina said that the reports were posted on the website. He summarized events of the March 6 meeting, including:

- The appointment of a new SamTrans CAC member
- An amendment to a contract to upgrade the District's PeopleSoft application, which he noted would also involve a cost to Caltrain, the TA, and the JPA (San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority)
- The launch of the EPX express bus route in East Palo Alto

**8. Joint Powers Board Liaison Report**

April Chan, Executive Director, said that the report was posted on the website and requested Director Medina summarize the report. Director Medina noted a new JPB member, Margaret Abe-Koga, who is a member of the Mountain View City Council and the VTA (Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority) board. He also noted that Caltrain received a commendation for how staff handled evacuation of a train for an incident that occurred on February 28. He commented on a final report received from the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) and noted that new safety procedures were implemented as a result. He announced that there would be an

event on May 11 in San Carlos to highlight the new electric multiple-unit train and celebrate the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of rail service on the Peninsula. He also noted the Caltrain energy policy was also discussed.

*Director Ray Mueller left the meeting at 5:19 pm.*

## **9. Report of the Executive Director**

Ms. Chan said the report was in the packet. She thanked Chair Romero and Directors Beach and Medina, who also represent the TA on the JPA Board, for attending and speaking at the new Route EPX launch event on February 9. She noted that the new express route will be traveling on the 101 Express Lanes.

Chair Romero asked about the postponement of the pedestrian and bicycle call for projects. Patrick Gilster, Director, Planning and Fund Management, said they have not received any direct correspondence related to the delay, but they could make a brief announcement at the next C/CAG (City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County) meeting that the call for projects would be released in June.

*Director Emily Beach joined the meeting at 5:23 pm.*

## **10. Strategic Plan Workshop**

Peter Skinner, Executive Officer, Transportation Authority, introduced the purpose of the strategic plan and summarized the workshop agenda. He provided the background portion of the presentation.

Chair Romero asked if it was possible to shift things within a category but not between the categories themselves. Mr. Skinner said that the creation of a set-aside can allow smaller projects to go forward. He clarified that the TA had no legal authority to change the categories themselves.

Mr. Gilster led the workshop portion of the presentation.

Chair Romero asked if they would have the advantage of incorporating the Regional Transit Connection Study results in the strategic planning process. Mr. Gilster said the study would be incorporated into the final Strategic Plan as its own chapter.

Director Mark Nagales said he was happy to see the equity portion of the funding process, which would be inclusive of both large and small communities by way of having set-asides for smaller communities.

### **Focus Area One: Measure A Goals & Measure W Core Principles**

Activity One: Using three dots for Measure A and three dots for Measure W, place your stickers on the boards for the goals and core principles that are most important to you.

Jessica Epstein, Director, Government and Community Affairs, introduced a dot exercise where the participants prioritized the categories for Measure A and for Measure W.

### *Measure A Goals*

The top priority was enhance safety, followed by reduce congestion.

### *Measure W Core Principles*

The top priority was financially sustainable public transit system, and then a three-way tie on traffic congestion, incentivizing bicycles, and maximizing the potential reduction in housing. There were no votes towards promoting economic vitality or maximizing opportunities to leverage public-private partners.

### ***Discussion Question 1: What has been the TA's biggest accomplishment in the past five years?***

Director Medina: grade separations

Vice Chair Mates: 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hillsdale Caltrain Stations in San Mateo

Director Beach: Staff efforts have been remarkably productive in the last four years, noting the over \$600 million in funding that was allocated to projects across the community. Incorporating the Measure W principles to modernize Measure A's perspective within the limits of the voter-approved "box." The Measure W principles played out in projects that incorporate more sustainability, safety for all modes of transportation. The ACR/TDM (Alternative Congestion Relief/Transportation Demand Management) categories, where subcategories were created so that small jurisdictions could compete for project money.

Director Nagales: equity, making sure that coastal cities have a fair chance at getting project funding. Safety aspects; grade separations. Making sure cities are meeting their infrastructure needs in terms of bike and ped safety.

Director Beach: commended the TA for being the financial backstop for infrastructure projects on the Caltrain corridor and across the County.

### ***Discussion Question 2: Where do you see the biggest opportunity for improvement for the TA in the next five years?***

Chair Romero: do we need to improve the way we push money out the door? Because delayed projects are subject to substantial inflationary pressures. Mr. Skinner said that would be a topic of discussion for the Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee.

Vice Chair Mates: Find out from the jurisdictions what is keeping them from being able to start a project.

Director Medina: providing in-house staff to assist those jurisdictions that may not have the resources they need to be competitive. Evaluate steps to see if they can be improved upon.

Director Beach: asked if there are economies of scale for the TA to assist applicants.

Chair Romero: asked how to more seamlessly incorporate into all the call for projects environmental issues such as decarbonizing the environment.

Director Beach: incorporating green infrastructure into all projects to make them more grant-worthy in light of increased regulations.

Director Corzo: there are certain opportunities where projects incorporated all three priorities while maintaining an equity lens.

Director Nagales: technical assistance was beneficial to small cities and how to improve their process and their scores. Mr. Gilster said he and Jessica Manzi, Director, Project Delivery, would be conferring with cities' public works directors.

Ms. Epstein clarified that the TA is developing relationships with multiple agencies to work on equity elements.

***Discussion Question 3: How should equity continue to be considered or elevated by the TA for the next five years?***

Chair Romero: suggested clarifying the definitions of "equity" and "equality" beyond the geographic distribution piece.

Director Beach: doing on-site outreach to underserved communities to determine what is needed on the ground. Ms. Epstein said they are bringing interpreters to pop-ups as well as community events.

*Director Mark Nagales left the meeting at 6:23 pm.*

Director Corzo: we should recognize where the communities are; partner with the Air Quality Management District.

Vice Chair Mates: defining "equity" for the TA is important. Contractors and partnerships should also reflect diversity.

Chair Romero: concurred that bringing the discussion to the communities that have experienced the most disruption. Also suggested inviting representatives from marginalized communities a seat at the advisory table.

Vice Chair Mates: agreed with the other directors' ideas, although it may present a challenge in adhering to the voter-approved funding buckets.

**Focus Area Two: Roles of the TA**

Jessica Manzi, Director, Project Delivery, introduced Focus Area Two.

***Discussion Question 4: Are there areas TA Technical Assistance should be modified or expanded?***

Director Beach: it is a powerful role to help cities that do not have the staff or experience to complete projects.

Vice Chair Mates: encouraged staff to solicit feedback from the smaller jurisdictions to find out what in general they need guidance about.

Chair Romero: suggested that the TA be more proactive in offering technical assistance.

***Discussion Question 5: Should the definition of countywide significance be updated or expanded?***

Chair Romero: countywide issues such as reduction of VMT and GHG; suggested asking if a prospective project measurably reduces GHG in the County.

Ms. Chan said the reason that the TA took on this role – at least for the highway projects and especially those that touch a couple of jurisdictions and have a high dollar value . She noted that when TA is sponsoring a project, it is important not to compete with other jurisdictions.

Chair Romero: If you move the countywide significance piece to some of these other sectors, you may disadvantage the local nature of the category.

Director Beach: asked if there should be a dollar threshold for the TA to take ownership of a project of countywide significance. Ms. Manzi said staff is looking at past process with that in mind as they update their program management guidelines. She said one thing they look at is what level of oversight do they provide for a project depending on how much of an investment they are making into the project. Mr. Gilster said another aspect is how many partners are involved in the project, noting that projects involving multiple cities/agencies would require someone in a higher-level position to coordinate the project.

### **Focus Area Three: Envisioning the Next Five Years**

Activity Two: On your handout, mark the top five priority project types you are excited about for the next five years.

Mr. Gilster asked the participants to mark down the top five project types.

***Discussion Question 6: Are there any other actions or considerations for the next five years we should take into account that we haven't discussed?***

Director Beach: how can the TA leverage this work? Are there ways to leverage our credit?

Chair Romero: is there a project role that the TA plays in terms of the electrification of buses and trains?

Mr. Gilster reviewed the timeline and action items in the Strategic Plan development process.

Director Medina: the TA CAC members found the exercise very helpful.

Director Beach: commended the efforts of staff.

### **11. Requests from the Authority**

Vice Chair Mates noted that Belmont City Council had discussed the history of the code of conduct. She asked if the TA had a codified code of conduct and asked if staff could bring this item to the Board for discussion.

### **12. Written Communications to the Authority**

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

### **13. Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting**

Chair Romero announced the next meeting would be on Thursday, April 4, 2024, 5:00 pm in person at the SamTrans Auditorium and via Zoom teleconference.

### **14. Report of Legal Counsel**

Ms. Cassman said per Vice Chair Mate's suggestion that they were in the process of updating the 1994 Code of Conduct, which they would bring back to the Board for approval.

**15. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.

An audio/video recording of this meeting is available online at <https://www.smcta.com/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](mailto:board@smcta.com).