

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of April 30, 2024

Committee Actions

Consent Calendar items - all approved unanimously:

- **4a) Approval of Minutes of the CAC Meeting of April 2, 2024**
- **4b) (Board 5.b) Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending March 31, 2024**
- **4c) (5.c) Acceptance of Quarterly Investment Report and Fixed Income Market Review and Outlook**
- **4d) (5.d) Call for a Public Hearing at the June 6, 2024, Board of Directors Meeting on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget**
 - No comments on any items

Other Items

- **5) (5.a) Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of April 4, 2024**
 - No comments

- **6) (10.a) US 101 Express Lanes: Quarterly Update on Variable Rate Bond and Operations**
 - Variable Rate Bond
 - Ms. Lang asked about another bond issue. Staff said that the JPA can issue another bond once it has established a revenue history on current operations. This would allow JPA to get its own bond and take the TA out of the equation.
 - Mr. Mattammal said that a twice a year update for the bond data would be adequate.
 - Ms. Kuklin asked about the reserve. Staff said there are sufficient revenues and potentially remaining project bond funds to address the 2027 principal payment.
 - Mr. Fox asked why, given variances from expected interest rates, we are still breaking even given current revenues. Did we previously not expect this much revenue, or did we expect that interest would be lower? Staff said that the original plan was that revenue would pay down debt service and principal. The 1.4% average variable rate to date is better than 3.5% fixed. We have not made any principal payments yet. We need to fill up reserves and then start paying principal.
 - Mr. Carlini asked when we would pay off principal (as this has yet to happen). Staff said the first principal payment is due in 2027 and there is a 30-year schedule of payments.

- Mr. Carlini said that less frequent reports on the variable rate bond is OK, but he asked that the Operations Report and KPIs be more frequent. He asked for a comparison of congestion before and after the Express Lanes were implemented. Staff said that the project was not required to complete a before/after analysis of congestion.

Express Lane Operations

- Ms. Lang asked for a definition of “unique vehicle.” Staff said that each license plate is counted.
- Mr. Mattammal asked about average revenue per ticket issued (for comparison to the cost per enforcement stop). Staff did not have this figure as the JPA does not see the revenue from CHP enforcement.
- Mr. Mattammal asked whether we had heat maps of congestion prior to implementing the Express Lanes for comparison to current conditions. Staff said that we do have heat maps from the planning phase and can look at those images. Tolling equipment monitors general purpose lane traffic congestion, too.
- Mr. Fox asked about the net cost of enforcement (revenue minus costs). Staff clarified that, per state law, all enforcement revenue goes to the State/local jurisdictions, not to the JPA. Also, the marginal CHP enforcement cost is borne by the JPA.
- Mr. Bucio asked whether the heat map data had smoothed out over the quarter. Staff confirmed that this was an average, not an instantaneous view.
- Mr. Bucio asked if there was a maximum toll fee? Staff said that the max toll, but sometimes it is not possible to buy into the lane if it is too congested and it becomes HOV only.
- Ms. Kukliin said that she uses the Express Lanes when time is of the essence.
- Ms. Enriquez noted that we have asked several times for data on equity and environmental issues, but they aren’t present in this presentation. She asked whether the project has been successful in reducing congestion. She asked whether the project goal is the performance of the Express Lanes or if we are also trying to get cars off the road. Staff said that they are monitoring whether those electing HOV-3 are indeed carpooling vs. cheating. Staff said that their primary focus has been on revenue metrics, but they do hope that the Express Lane gets more people on public transit or into carpools.
- Mr. Fox asked what fraction of revenue we are losing due to drivers not paying. He said this is important to quantify, as a business would track shoplifting. He suggested a pie chart that shows a mix of vehicle types and payments. He asked what % of IBT fines are paid vs. not paid? Staff said that they sometimes used human intervention to review license plate photos.
- Mr. Carlini asked how the \$3.80 average assessed toll is calculated. Staff said that this is total revenue divided by paying vehicles.

- Mr. Carlini asked whether the data from the testing of the system could be used for a before vs. after analysis of congestion. Staff said that the test data was not available. Mr. Carlini said that we have the data to know whether the project reduced congestion and we should be looking at that.
 - Mr. Swire said that the report's focus on revenues and Express Lane performance do not address all the public's concerns with the project. He asked for data on performance of the general-purpose lanes and on air pollution, crashes, and VMT. Staff said that the CAC cannot assign work to Ms. Vong, who is a representative of the JPA. Only the JPA Board request the assignment of new work.
 - Chair Arietta said that, for businesses, when revenues don't meet expectations, expenses need to be cut. She expressed continued concern that the JPA is paying (high) overtime rates to CHP for enforcement. She asked whether there had been any action on this issue. Staff said that this point is not negotiable with the CHP.
- **7) (10.b) Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025**
 - Mr. Carlini asked why revenues and expenses increased significantly from FY24 to FY25. Staff said that the former only includes four months of data vs. 12 months for the latter.
 - Mr. Fox asked why allocations would decrease from 2024 to 2025 (when revenues were rising)? Staff said that allocation estimates are conservative and that if tax revenues are better than expected, allocations will increase in a similar fashion.
 - Ms. Enriquez asked what happens if interest rates don't fall. Staff said it will revise the budget in line with actual receipts.
 - Mr. Mattammal asked why Measure A had zero interest in 2024. Staff said that this was simply an accounting issue.
- **8) (11) State and Federal Legislative Update**
 - Mr. Fox asked where bike projects are represented in the proposed SB1031 funding structure. Staff said that this was likely in the Safe Streets bucket, but they will confirm. Staff also said that SB1031 revenue would be incremental to that raised through Measures A & W.
 - Mr. Carlini asked how we can be sure that collaboration between agencies will indeed occur through SB1031. Staff said that this already occurs at MTC through the Regional Network Manager structure. Staff said that transit agencies are working on collaboration and know that there is an expectation for more accountability.
 - Mr. Swire asked why collaboration hasn't already happened between agencies.
 - Mr. Swire said that we should not fear studying the benefits of consolidation and that the public expects government agencies to seek cost savings whenever possible. This would increase the public's confidence in future revenue measures.

- Ms. Kuklin noted that the funding formulae are difficult to explain and that this could impact public buy-in.
 - Mr. Mattammal asked about the potential impact of ACA 1 on the voter threshold. Staff said that ACA 1 is not applicable as it only applies to funding for capital projects and SB 1031 also covers operations.
- **9) Report of the Chair**
 - On Saturday, May 11, 2024, the public is invited to attend Caltrain's Electric Train Tour at the San Carlos Station.
 - This free 4-hour public event will be held between 10:30 am and 2:30 pm at the San Carlos Train Station, 599 El Camino Real, San Carlos, CA 94070.
 - RSVPs for the free Electric Train Tour portion of this event are required. Check Caltrain website.
 - In addition to the Electric Train Tours, this free community event will include Caltrain giveaways, food trucks, games, a photo booth, art demonstrations and community resources.
 - Parking is extremely limited. All guests are encouraged to take public transportation, walk, bike, or roll into the station. Free bike valet will be provided by Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.
- **10) Report from Staff**
 - Staff indicated the Board will be updating its Rules of Procedure and a detailed report from the TA's Legal Counsel is included in the CAC packet under item 10.
 - Staff indicated the rules, once adopted by the Board, will flow down to the CAC and that the CAC's ad-hoc committee would be evaluating how to best incorporate these rules in the CAC Rules of Procedure.
 - Staff also noted the Board will be considering a proposed change in the name of the CAC to the Community Advisory Committee as there are no requirements for CAC members to be citizens.
- **11) Member Comments/Requests**
 - Mr. Carlini said that he was excited about getting access to congestion data for research purposes.
 - Mr. Swire said that he had attended the recent SMCTA/Caltrans meeting on the 101/92 Direct Connect project and had concerns. He said that there is currently no public transit on 92. If the corporate shuttle buses are the largest benefactors of this widening, then he believes the tech companies should pay for it, not SM County taxpayers. He said that San Mateo residents and elected officials had concerns over eminent domain, incremental traffic, incremental air pollution, and whether this was the best use of taxpayer dollars.
 - Staff said the scoping meetings are the venue to hear from community members regarding the project and what should be studied as part of the Environmental Impact Report. Only the environmental phase for this project has been funded to date.

- **12) Date/time of next meeting**
 - Chair Arietta noted that the next meeting would be on Tuesday, June 4 at 4:30 pm at the SamTrans headquarters, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, 1250 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos.

- **13) Adjourn**