

San Mateo County Transportation Authority
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, California
Minutes of April 6, 2023

Members Present: E. Beach, N. Corzo, J. Mates, R. Medina (Chair), R. Mueller, M. Nagales,
(In Person) C. Romero (Vice Chair)

Members Present: None
(Via Teleconference)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: A. Chan, J. Cassman, P. Skinner, P. Gilster, J. Epstein, J. Brook, D. Seamans

1. Call to Order

Chair Rico Medina called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

2. Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance

Dora Seamans, Authority Secretary, confirmed that a quorum was present. Chair Medina led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments.

Director Ray Mueller joined the meeting at 5:02 pm

4. Report of the Citizens Advisory Committee

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

5. Consent Calendar

5.a. Approval of Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of March 2, 2023

5.b. Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the Period Ending February 28, 2023

5.c. Acceptance of Measure A & Measure W Semi-Annual Program Status Report for July to December 2022

5.d. Adoption of Resolution to Enable Receipt of One Bay Area Grant Funds from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the 19th Avenue/Fashion Island Boulevard Complete Street Class IV Bikeway Project – Approved by Resolution No. 2023-7

Motion/Second: Romero/Mates

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

Noes: None

Absent: None

6. Report of the Chair

Chair Medina said on April 15, there will be the official ribbon-cutting for the recently opened 101 Express Lanes.

7. San Mateo County Transit District Liaison Report

Chair Medina said that the report was in the packet and posted on the website. He noted the retirement of Director Rose Guilbault, who had served for a total of 17 years as a public member on the SamTrans Board.

8. Joint Powers Board Liaison Report

April Chan, Executive Director, said that the report was posted on the website. She noted the JPB had held their Board meeting on March 29 as JPB was holding a separate Finance workshop today, April 6. She said that after the recent major storms, Caltrain Executive Director Michelle Bouchard said they would do an assessment of the trees along the corridor and remove any trees that may affect service. Ms. Chan noted that SamTrans provided bus bridges to continue transit service while Caltrain staff cleared the fallen trees from the tracks.

Ms. Chan said earlier in the day, JPB held its Finance Workshop to look at the fiscal cliff analysis and address revenue loss due to the pandemic. She said over the next 10 years, Caltrain could experience a \$500-plus million shortfall on the operations side alone. She said they also discussed the capital shortfall and how to fund future needs through either member contributions or establishing an endowment fund.

Director Emily Beach said it would be helpful to understand what JPB's member agencies' resources are and what will be asked of the TA in terms of financial contributions.

9. Report of the Executive Director

Ms. Chan said the report was in the packet. She noted that TA staff would be kicking off the US 101 Multimodal Strategy. She said that standalone highway projects are not competitive for state or federal funding, so the TA will be working with jurisdictions along the 101 corridor to develop multimodal projects such as transit services and bicycle/pedestrian projects.

10. Program

10.a. US 101 Cordilleras Creek Bridge Replacement

Peter Skinner, Executive Officer, Transportation Authority, introduced Rebecca Krawiec, Consultant, and Mohammad Suleiman, Regional Project Manager, and Kelly Ma, Project Manager, Caltrans, who provided the presentation.

Director Mark Nagales asked if they were estimating four weekends for the construction and if the closures will be on holidays. Mr. Suleiman said they are working to determine the final closure dates, which would be on two weekends each for northbound and southbound from 10:00 pm Friday to 5:00 am Monday.

Director Nagales also asked if local jurisdictions will be reimbursed for any roadway damage that could occur from the traffic being diverted to local streets. Mr. Suleiman indicated they do not anticipate any damage to local roadways.

Director Ray Mueller asked where the water goes in the creek diversion. Mr. Suleiman said the work will take place during the dry season within one year to avoid impacts to the creek environment.

Vice Chair Carlos Romero asked about the outreach plan to notify the cities of the closures. Ms. Krawiec said they have a robust outreach plan and are providing mailers in four languages via direct mail and to neighborhood associations, area airports, and the Chamber of Commerce. She said they are also planning to do neighborhood association presentations. Vice Chair Romero asked if there will be traffic management on Industrial Road in San Carlos. Mr. Suleiman indicated they are working with the cities to adjust signal timing as well as having the California Highway Patrol provide additional traffic control. Vice Chair Romero also suggested that SamTrans and Caltrain should encourage people to ride transit during the closures.

Director Beach asked if electronic freeway signs were part of the plan, which Ms. Krawiec confirmed. Director Beach asked if the cut-and-cover construction method will result in cost savings along with time savings, which Mr. Suleiman confirmed.

Director Mueller suggested that the project team consider contacting a number of local organizations to assist in providing community outreach support.

Chair Medina emphasized the need to inform local city council members and to have a plan in place to address damage to local city streets resulting from the diversion of traffic.

11. Finance

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

Ms. Chan said after the first part of the presentation on variable rate bonds, there would be time for questions before the second part of the presentation on Express Lanes operations.

Connie Mobley-Ritter, Director of Treasury, introduced Kevin Beltz, Manager, Treasury Debt and Investments. She provided the initial part of the presentation.

Vice Chair Romero asked about strategies to pay down principal. Ms. Mobley-Ritter said they could use the remaining bond funds to reduce the principal owed. Vice Chair Romero also asked about the payment of monthly interest if there is insufficient toll revenue moving forward. She said they would use Measure A and Measure W as those funds are the backstop to the bonds.

Director Julia Mates asked how long Measure A and Measure W funds would need to be used to make payments on the bonds and whether it is in perpetuity or until the lanes start earning sufficient revenue. Mr. Mobley-Ritter said that the TA was able to obtain the loan due to its superior credit rating but the intent is to have the revenue from the express lanes pay for the bonds. Director Mates asked when the TA may need to consider other options if the revenue is not sufficient. Ms. Mobley-Ritter indicated they do not have any options yet, but are continuing to work with investment advisors to look at alternatives.

Director Beach asked about the three and a half years where the TA could use capitalized interest. Ms. Mobley-Ritter said they had a long runway at low interest rates, but that does not change the amount of time they can capitalize those funds. Director Beach also asked if the Measure A and Measure W highway program categories collect sufficient funding to pay off the bonds if needed. Ms. Chan noted the tax measures can pay off the bonds but that using Measure A and W funds for this purpose will have an impact on the ability to fund future

highway projects. Director Beach asked what the average interest rate has been since inception. Ms. Mobley-Ritter said the TA has paid 55 basis points so far in interest rates.

Monique Fuhrman, Deputy Policy Program Manager, HNTB, provided the second part of the presentation on the Express Lane operations.

Director Beach asked if they track average toll cost during peak hours, which Mr. Fuhrman confirmed.

Vice Chair Romero asked if pricing was based on an algorithm. Ms. Fuhrman said they have a custom-made dynamic pricing algorithm which collects data from the lanes in real time. She said that human intervention comes into play when there are incidents and tolls can be overridden depending on the situation. Vice Chair Romero also asked about the revenue scenarios for the express lanes. She said the original revenue projections were developed prior to the pandemic and it remains to be seen how well the lanes will perform.

Director Mates asked if there have been any new projections or surveys done to determine when more people will start using these lanes. Mr. Fuhrman said the trend is that there is an increasing number of people on the freeways, but it is not back to pre-pandemic levels.

Director Mueller said San Francisco ranks dead last in North America in terms of the return of the economy and cell phone use in the downtown area, which is impacting transit ridership as well as freeway usage into the City.

Director Noelia Corzo asked if the Community Benefits Program (equity program) was actively being promoted. Ms. Fuhrman indicated they have a robust outreach program and she indicated that individuals were choosing the Clipper card loaded with a \$100 transit credit versus the toll credit on the FasTrak transponder. Director Corzo asked what the percentage of utilization was for the program overall, which Ms. Fuhrman indicated was approximately 20 percent. Director Corzo asked what happens if someone in the lanes does not have a transponder in their vehicle. Ms. Fuhrman said cameras take photos of vehicle license plates and those without a FasTrak account would be assessed a violation and those with a FasTrak account would be assessed the single occupant toll. Director Corzo also indicated she is concerned about the low level of program utilization and wanted to see how that can be increased. Ms. Chan explained the initial \$1 million had been set aside to kick-start the equity program and \$600,000 would be set aside annually thereafter to ensure it is continuously funded. Ms. Chan also stated staff will be embarking on a more robust marketing program to reach out to more income-eligible County residents.

Director Mates concurred with Director Corzo on getting the word out to potential users of the equity program.

Director Nagales said he would like to see a breakdown of penalties that have actually been collected compared to uncollected penalties.

12. State and Federal Legislative Update and Approval of Legislative Proposals: Support Assembly Bill (AB) 817 (Pacheco) and Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 1 (Aguiar-Curry)

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

At the federal level, she said the President had released his budget request. She said they had submitted an earmark request to Representative Kevin Mullin.

At the state level, she said the legislature is currently in recess but when they return, there would be a lot of negotiations around transportation funding over the next few months.

Ms. Epstein said there were multiple Brown Act bills in the state legislature. She said staff is requesting that the TA Board support Assembly Bill (AB) 817, which proposes exempting nondecision-making advisory bodies such as the Citizens Advisory Committee. She said staff is also asking the TA Board to support Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 1, which would reduce the voter threshold for special-purpose taxes like Measure A and W from two-thirds to 55 percent.

Director Nagales said he supported AB 817 and advocated expanding the number of “just cause” exceptions per year.

Director Corzo said she supported AB 817 and the regional body bill supported by other organizations where she serves.

Director Mueller said he does not support lowering the voter threshold per ACA 1.

Chair Medina said he supported AB 817 because the teleconferencing rules are affecting the attendance of members of nondecision-making bodies.

The Board voted on whether to support AB 817:

Motion/Second: Nagales/Romero

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

Noes: None

Absent: None

Vice Chair Romero asked if the lowered voting threshold is just for taxes that fund affordable housing and public infrastructure projects, which Ms. Epstein confirmed.

Director Mueller said he was voting no because he supports the two-thirds voting threshold.

Director Nagales expressed his support for the measure.

The Board voted on whether to support ACA 1:

Motion/Second: Corzo/Beach

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

Noes: Mueller

Absent: None

13. Requests from the Authority

There were no requests.

14. Written Communications to the Authority

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

15. Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting

Chair Medina announced the next meeting would be on Thursday, May 4, 2023, 5:00 pm in person at the SamTrans Auditorium and via Zoom teleconference.

16. Report of Legal Counsel

Ms. Cassman said she had nothing to report.

17. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

An audio/video recording of this meeting is available online at <https://www.smcta.com/about-us/board-directors/video-board-directors-cac-and-smcel-jpa>. Questions may be referred to the Authority Secretary's office by phone at 650.508.6242 or by email to board@smcta.com.