

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting of January 6, 2026

Committee Actions

Consent Calendar - *all approved unanimously*

- **4a) Approval of Minutes of the CAC Meeting of December 2, 2025**
- **4b) (TA Board Item 8.b.) Adopting the Grand Boulevard Initiative Action Plan**
 - Sandra Lang praised the data collection and policy framework. She is in favor of the resolution.
- **4c) (TA Board Item 8.c.) Adopt 2026 Legislative Program**
- **5) Discussion on Senate Bill 707 - Advisory Body Meeting Requirements - *CAC members unanimously endorsed continuing to meet in person***
 - Rich Hedges said he wants to continue meeting in person if current remote options are also available and is open to later changing it.
 - Chair Barbara Arietta asked what the group thought about changing the character of the CAC's recommendations with a completely remote format.
 - Vice Chair Mike Swire asked whether details were in the staff packet. Staff said details weren't in the packet as a decision was not necessary to be made at the time. He said this seems benign but that the CAC will need more information to better understand the implications.
 - Chair Arietta showed concern about potential dilution of the CAC's authority.
 - John Fox asked for a summary of the proposed change to help the CAC understand the implications.
 - Ms. Lang expressed concern about diluting the authority of the Committee's advisory role and finds remote participation important and is adverse to diluting the quality of the CAC's thinking.
 - Richard Garbarino wanted to see a written summary of the proposal and wondered what the current process was broken.
 - Mr. Hedges said meeting in person is helpful for exchanging ideas and understanding others on the Committee. This builds comradery among members.
 - Karen Kuklin prefers meeting in person. During COVID, remote meetings didn't yield as productive conversations.
 - Chair Arietta asked to see a summary of the positives and negatives and learn about other CACs' experiences.

- Staff indicated they will prepare new Rules of the Road on remote participation given changes in the law and the CAC's desire to maintain in-person meetings.
- Mr. Hedges said the old Brown Act rules presented other challenges such as when remote participants drop off. Staff said that Assembly Bill (AB) 2449 will continue to require a quorum in person. Staff said that the CAC can change their preference on this at any time.
- **6) (Board Item 13a) Consider Amending the \$10,000,000 Allocation in Original Measure A Funds to the San Mateo County Transit District for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 Member Agency Contributions to Caltrain to Remove Conditions - *approved unanimously***
 - Mr. Hedges asked whether Santa Clara County was contributing to the project. Staff said Santa Clara County would contribute \$10 million.
- **7) (TA Board Item 14a) - Programming and Allocating \$189,934,617 in Measure A and Measure W Highway Program Funds for 17 Highway Projects; Supporting Requests for \$1,516,000 in Local Project Partnership Programs funds for City of Half Moon Bay's Highway 1: Main Street to Kehoe Avenue Project and \$3,000,000 in Regional Measure 3 Funds for City of San Mateo's Fashion Island/19th Avenue Separated Bikeway Project - *approved unanimously***
 - Mr. Hedges asked whether the Fashion Island/19th Avenue funding was contingent on Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) approval. Staff said the money is guaranteed, closing the funding gap.
 - Vice Chair Swire asked whether anything had changed since the initial proposal. Staff said there were no changes.
 - Chris Kao asked about the source of the \$3 million for the Fashion Island/19th Avenue project. Staff said that this will come from the Transportation Authority's (TA's) current (Regional Measure) RM3 allocation for the 101/92 interchange. Staff said that there will be a formal request for these funds from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in March, adding that this additional source is necessary given policy limitations on TA funding amounts.

Other Items

- **3) Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda - *none***
- **8) (TA Board Item 14b) - Proposed Updates to the Grade Separation Program Policies and Near-Term Funding Strategy**

- Chair Arietta asked whether Senate Bill (SB) 63 related funding could be used for these projects. Staff said there is too much uncertainty at this point to know if there is money available and how much it could be used for this purpose.
- Mr. Hedges was shocked at the cost escalations; the San Bruno grade separation cost under \$200 million. He said that the San Mateo grade separations were also less expensive. He asked about the increasing costs and if tariffs were factored in. Staff said costs increase due to several factors, including labor, tariffs, etc. Caltrain is trying to rein in costs. He said that the City of San Mateo is closing several small crossings due to noise concerns.
- Vice Chair Swire asked about the equity grades for the Broadway project. Staff said the neighborhood east of the area is considered equity priority according to various bodies. He said that this isn't an MTC equity priority community and that many of those who will benefit from the project are not "equity priority."
- Mr. Fox asked about the Ravenswood crossings. Staff said that one of the four crossings would remain at grade. He asked about coordination with Santa Clara County at the county border. Staff are coordinating with Santa Clara County but they may be focusing on other crossings in the short-term. There shouldn't be any conflict in designs at the border. He said that the Ravenswood intersection operates at Level of Service "D" and congestion will worsen; thus, the TA needs to continue to coordinate with the Menlo Park City Council to have a plan when money does become available. Staff said that the Corridor Crossings strategy will take this into account.
- Ms. Lang asked what Caltrain would be contributing. Staff said that Caltrain is helping with cost overruns, putting skin in the game. The money will not come from operations funding allocations, and there are ongoing efforts to improve safety at at-grade crossings.
- Mr. Kao supports the focus on a single project given limited funding. He asked whether a future Dumbarton project might necessitate additional grade crossings. Staff said the Dumbarton corridor is eligible for this funding, but this won't happen in this five-year time frame. He asked about available funding after paying for the grade separation. Staff said that they will give the City of Burlingame five years to address the funding gap for the Broadway project; if this doesn't happen, the money could be allocated elsewhere. If the Broadway project does occur, this will use up all available grade separation money. He asked for more details on the proposed sale of TA assets. Staff said the Board has approved the sale of property at the Broadway crossing, and additional divestitures will be considered in the near future.

- Mr. Hedges said the State identified Broadway as its most dangerous rail crossing. Semi-trucks and buses get stuck on the tracks. Staff said that new detection technology at multiple locations has eliminated improper track incursions.
 - Ms. Lang asked about recent repairs at Broadway and in San Mateo. Staff said that these were likely emergency, ad hoc repairs.
 - Vice Chair Swire asked whether the City of Burlingame would receive the necessary funding. Staff said that the TA is coordinating with the City to facilitate this. Mr. Hedges said that at one point the City had a lot of state money for the project but this was rescinded. Staff said that various factors led to this delay and rescission.
- **9) (TA Board Item 15a) - Legislative Update - no questions or comments**
 - **10) Report of the Chair**
 - Next month's CAC elections
 - Staff said nominations will be collected between now and the next meeting for Chair and Vice Chair. A vote will be held at the next meeting.
 - Mr. Hedges said that nominations from the floor at the next meeting should be permitted. Staff said that the bylaws do not allow this but that anyone can put their name forward before the next meeting. At the next meeting, members can nominate from that list. Chair Arietta said that she supports new nominations from the floor. Staff said that the bylaws don't allow this. Ms. Lang suggested that this is looked into this question before there is an election. Ms. Kuklin said that this is a moot point as it is easy to put one's name forward before the next meeting; staff could send an email reminder. Chair Arietta said there is no harm in allowing last minute nominations. Ms. Enriquez also asked for an email on who is eligible given election rules (on tenure).
 - It's both a new year and a new opportunity to find solutions to our transportation problems in San Mateo County.
And, what are the most critical problems for the San Mateo County Transportation Authority? The answer to that question involves securing stable, long-term funding for Caltrain and SamTrans; addressing major traffic on corridors like United States (US) 101; improving safety for pedestrian/cyclists (especially post-pandemic); and enhancing connectivity/equity for underserved communities, all while navigating federal funding hurdles and planning for sustainable, multimodal solutions like improved shuttles and bike paths.

Here's a breakdown of key public concerns and challenges:

- **Funding Stability:** A huge issue in the potential loss of federal funds due to a Public Employee's Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) rules, threatening Caltrain/SamTrans services, pushing for regional funding measures.
- **Congestion and Connectivity:** Reducing traffic on US 101 and connecting coastal areas (Highway 1) with better transit, and bike and pedestrian options is a major focus.
- **Safety:** Higher post-pandemic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists highlight the need for safer infrastructure (Active 101 Projects).
- **Service Gaps:** Inconsistent shuttle performance and "last mile" challenge in connecting people to regional transit remain significant hurdles, per the SamTrans shuttle study.
- **Equity:** Ensuring improved access for lower income and underserved communities is a priority for new programs. Page 1 of 2 Item 10.

1/6/2026

In essence, the public wants reliable, safe and accessible transit, but the San Mateo County Transportation Authority faces huge financial and operational challenges to deliver it, especially concerning regional rail and first/last mile connections.

- **11) Report from Staff - no report**
- **12) Member Comments/Requests**
 - Vice Chair Swire highlighted the Board packet's proposed changes to CAC recruitment procedures (p. 136 of Board report). This was not in the CAC packet. Staff said that this was for Board discussion, not CAC discussion. He suggested that CAC members read this as it could revamp the CAC and its membership. He said that the proposal reduces the CAC's size, mandates slots from specific geographies and interest groups, and prescribes various recruitment processes and roles. He said this is a big change from current rules and processes, which are very flexible. He said that there have been vacancies for some time, but this isn't a reason to reduce the number of seats on the Committee. He said that people are applying and getting rejected so that it is possible to fill the full 15 slots given current processes. The geographic and issue criteria will make it even more difficult to fill slots. It could also mean removal of many current CAC members. Larger Committees leads to more diverse opinions, more consistency; several people miss each meeting. He also said that the required endorsement by a Board Member or interest group could increasingly politicize the CAC

recruitment process and lead to less diverse thought. He expressed concerns that this could mean a large change in the CAC membership and role given, in the past year, the Board has rewritten the CAC rules and considered not re-nominating the CAC Vice Chair.

- Ms. Lang said that the prescriptive categories are highly political and asked how it will be defined on who qualifies for the interest group categories. She asked where the at-large applicants would come from.
- Ms. Kuklin said that the CAC is a community advisory committee to oversee the expenditure of tax dollars in San Mateo County. She said that requiring signatures/endorsements from Board members or other community leaders doesn't seem appropriate. She wants a diverse mix of members; more flexibility in recruitment will help here.
- Vice Chair Swire said that applicants would also need to disclose their membership in other committees to determine whether they have sufficient time for the role. He didn't think this would provide much insight into whether individuals could do the job.
- Ms. Enriquez was surprised that the CAC recruitment item wasn't on the CAC's agenda and that there was no staff report on the SB 707 option (remote participation) and its impact on the CAC.

- **13) Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 4:30 pm**

Video - https://samtrans.granicus.com/player/clip/1442?view_id=2&redirect=true