

Report of the TA Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting of March 31, 2026

Video - https://samtrans.granicus.com/player/clip/1478?view_id=2&redirect=true

Committee Actions

Consent Calendar - *Approved unanimously*

- **4a) Approval of Minutes of the CAC Meeting of February 3, 2026**
 - Vice Chair Mike Swire asked why the CAC did not meet last month. Staff said that legal counsel recommends not starting a meeting of a quorum is not present. Chair Barbara Arietta stated that it would be useful to know the reason for cancellation at that time.

Other Items

- **3) Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda - None**

- **5) (TA Board Item 10a) - San Mateo County 101 Express Lanes Initial Performance Study**
 - John Fox agreed that High-occupancy vehicle (HOV)-3 self-reporting is problematic and thus we don't know whether this means more riders are using the corridor. He asked what information we have on California Highway Patrol (CHP) enforcement on HOV-3 compliance and citations. Staff stated that the 101 Express Lane quarterly reports have citation data. The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) contracts CHP for enforcement. Violations of HOV-3 designation are subject to a \$490 moving violation fine. CHP monitoring has increased roughly 100 percent in the past year. Staff stated that CHP monitoring is dependent on available capacity. Mr. Fox asked how many citations have been issued and whether this serves as a deterrent. Staff said that contracting with CHP is required by state law and this is our only means of enforcement. In February 2026 CHP issued roughly 200 occupancy citations. This is a small number. Mr. Fox said that this was out of hundreds of thousands of trips and thus a very small percentage of violators are caught. Staff said that additional technology is required to better understand the total number of cheaters and how many are caught.
 - Chair Arietta asked whether Express Lanes Joint Powers Board (ELJPA) is still paying overtime rates for enforcement. Staff said that contracting with the CHP

was required by state law and the CHP sets the rates. She recommended changing this state law. She also endorsed other enforcement mechanisms.

- Vice Chair Swire asked whether enforcement was more difficult due to the removal of shoulders. Staff stated that this is the case and that overhead occupancy signs are visible to CHP officers and that their presence may deter violations. Staff stated that mobile enforcement from the general-purpose lane is preferable.
- Chair Arietta asked whether occupancy violation fines covered the cost of CHP enforcement. Staff said that the quarterly report includes this information. Fine revenue goes to the State general fund, however, not the JPB.
- Giuliano Carlini stated that the study methodology is insufficient. He stated that traffic analysis requires pre/post data that is comparable. He said that looking at peak traffic points is not comparable due to the variety of contributing factors. He said this differs from prior analyses that used comparable datasets. He said that we had previously heard that general purpose lanes were increasingly congested, increasing vehicle miles traveled (VMT); this suggests that greenhouse gas and pollution are increasing and safety is decreasing. He agreed that incomplete data is not useful in making conclusions. He said that we have metal loop detector (MLD) data from pre/post as well as the camera data that drives congestion pricing; thus, why not use this data from two weeks before and after the opening of the Express Lanes. He said we have used this data in the past.
- Sandra Lang said that the future transit analysis should use a new methodology of quantifying transit use, instead of self-reporting. Staff said that they will quantify the number of transit users from the two express buses on the Express Lanes.
- Vice Chair Swire said that the presentation indicates that reliability has improved due to reduced travel times on the “top 5 percent worst travel days”. He asked what about the other 95 percent of travel days. Staff said that they wanted to highlight improvements in the worst-case scenario. They said that reliability also improved on the other 95 percent of days. He expressed concern regarding the selection of data presented. He said that this is cherry-picking positive data, highlighting the best 5 percent of results. He said that this doesn’t instill confidence in the findings, especially given how long he and others have been asking for some of these answers. He said that it is important to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest in the analysis given that the report is authored by those whose work is being evaluated. He thought that there is a

better way to avoid skepticism. He stated that consideration should be given to ensuring objectivity in the analysis.

- Mr. Carlini said that he has been asking for three years for more complete data sets, including heat maps across the day and the aggregate distributions of median speeds. He said this would provide transparency and allow others to perform their own analyses. He said that this is what is necessary to pass peer review. He suggested consulting external experts for peer-reviewed analysis.
- Christopher Kao asked for more details on the reduction in VMT. Staff stated this applied to all lanes during peak periods. He asked why Express Lanes reduce vehicle travel hours given the number of contributors. Staff stated that Express Lanes influence traffic behavior and improve reliability across lanes. He asked about the relationship between hotspot improvements and Express Lanes. Staff said that the widening in Phase II opened bottlenecks and the Express Lanes shift travel to underutilized lanes at times, smoothing travel across all lanes.
- Vice Chair Swire said that peak periods car traffic has returned to pre-pandemic levels, while Caltrain and Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) remains lower. He asked why car volumes have increased but transit continues to struggle. He hypothesized that more people are driving because the recent widening of the highway made it more convenient for people to drive. He said that over time, however, any advantage would erode as more people choose to drive (versus taking transit). He asked whether this was possible. Staff said that after the pandemic it has been difficult to convince people to recommit transit in lieu of driving alone. He said that more people will drive if we make it easier to drive. He said that it is worrisome that fewer people are commuting to the office and yet driving is back to pre-pandemic levels (while transit suffers). He said that population and jobs have remained constant in the County in recent years.
- Mr. Carlini said that he recently traveled to Europe, where they invest heavily in public transit, which is more comfortable than driving, and thus fewer people drive. He stated that previous analysis indicated increased congestion in VMT, while current findings differ. He asked why. Staff stated that they don't have access to the previous studies at this time.
- Ms. Lang requested data on why people choose to drive and how it influences these results.
- Vice Chair Swire asked whether there were any findings on safety. Staff said that freeway crashes can contribute to increases in crashes. He asked why we didn't have more safety data given. Staff stated that this will be included in the next update. He also suggested looking at safety on roads adjacent to the highway. He said that San Mateo has seen an increase in crashes on streets near the highway;

a family of three pedestrians was just hit on Delaware in a crosswalk in front of San Mateo High School, near multiple offramps. He suggested evaluating safety impacts on adjacent local roads.

- Mr. Kao asked what percentage of loop detectors on 101 were functional. Staff said that eight-ten detectors are available and producing before and active data. Staff didn't know how many detectors were not functioning. He requested additional data on detector functionality.
- **6) (TA Board Item 11a) - Legislative Update -**
 - Ms. Lang asked how the state surplus would be allocated. Staff said that there is no surplus this year in California, but \$1 billion in unallocated funding will likely go to fire fighting.
 - Mr. Carlini asked whether mode shift was part of the San Mateo County Transit Authority's (TA's) legislative priorities. Staff said that the TA supports legislation for multimodal, but also legislation for all modes. Staff said that the TA has pushed for a multimodal approach. He said that Assembly Bill (AB) 2560 California Active Transportation Program and Infrastructure (CAPTI) is aligned with mode shift and that the TA should support this bill. Staff said that many TA projects are CAPTI-friendly. He said that CalBike opposes AB 1557, which would reduce e-bike speeds. He prefers Senate Bill (SB) 586, which targets illegal motos and focuses on manufacturers rather than riders. Staff said that they will continue to monitor e-bike bills as they evolve.
 - Vice Chair Swire agreed with Mr. Carlini on AB 1557. He mentioned changes since the packet that add controversy. He also said that AB 1557 could negatively impact cargo bikes. He supports SB 2560 (CAPTI) and asked the TA to consider AB 1837 (illegal parking enforcement), AB 2276 (speeders install safety devices, endorsed by Families for Safe Streets), and SB 1167 (Blakespear, false advertising by manufacturers/retailers). Staff said that they will look into these bills.
 - Mr. Kao praised the CAC members on these issues.
- **7) (TA Board Item 11b) - Connect Bay Area Local Investment Plan Update**
 - Mr. Fox asked whether this is the right time to put this measure on the ballot. Staff said the enabling legislation specified November 2026 as the only option.
 - Ms. Karen Kuklin asked how the proposed projects might benefit those who don't take the bus. Staff said the survey includes the potential for more routes in more areas.
 - Vice Chair Swire informed CAC members they should contact him to sign the petition. He also highlighted the demographics of San Mateo County Transit

District (SamTrans) riders, including 94 percent low income and 80 percent who don't drive/own a car. Thus, SamTrans is a lifeline for many communities. It is also very useful for others who should try SamTrans. He added that many on the Commission may not know SamTrans riders. He suggested reaching out to these communities in the survey process.

- Ms. Lang asked whether the list could be consolidated. Staff said they provided broader options for respondents. The Measure A effort will be a more thorough process.
 - Mr. Kao asked how the ballot campaign was messaging voters. Staff said they are not involved. Mr. Kao said that there is concern about fare evasion and this might have a negative impact on voters' willingness to increase taxes to fund transit. Staff said that non-paying customers have a negative impact on transit economics, but that the problem is less impactful on buses versus transit.
 - Mr. Carlini said that all these priorities were important except for "Faster, More Efficient, More Reliable Service." He said that transit services were more convenient in other countries and thus people of all demographics use transit instead of driving. He said that bus rapid transit lanes will improve reliability and convenience, leading to a cultural shift that will help SamTrans on all fronts.
 - Vice Chair Swire said that the ballot campaign is largely focusing on the threat of service cuts without additional funding, including stations closing, less frequent service, and other challenges. He noted that even drivers benefit when more people take transit. Staff said that Caltrain is studying the potential impacts of service cuts. Chair Arietta lamented potential weekend service cuts.
 - Mr. Carlini asked how the money might be spent. Staff said that the funding proposal aligns with County ridership. Staff highlighted the large number of San Mateo County residents who rely on San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI).
- **8) Report of the Chair**
 - What Traffic Problems In San Mateo County Are Currently Drawing The Most Focus?
 - I have not only read a number of articles over the past year concerning traffic impacts, but I have also heard equally as much, several statements from San Mateo County residents about which traffic problems in San Mateo County they are currently most focused on. The number one answer I've been told is chronic highway congestion, specifically regarding the United States (US) 101 Express Lanes and the impact of traffic "cut throughs" in residential neighborhoods. But there are also

congestion problems in mid county and on the Coastside. I would like to briefly share some information about these concerns from the public, so that all may be aware of what the public's current needs and wants are, as recommendations are made to the Board of Directors (Board) of the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA).

- Key Traffic Concerns of San Mateo County Residents (as of March 2026):
 - US 101 Expansion and Express Lanes - There is significant public debate and advocacy regarding the extension of express lanes north of Interstate 380. Residents and transit advocates have expressed concerns that these lanes may not actually reduce congestion for those in non-express lanes and could increase air pollution in adjacent lower income neighborhoods.
 - Residential Speeding and "Short Cuts" - Residents are increasingly vocal about drivers using local residential streets to avoid highway gridlock. This has led to heavy demand for a neighborhood traffic management program which implements traffic-calming measures like speed bumps and ovals to protect local streets.
 - Safety of E-Bikes and Micro Mobility - Following recent high-profile fatalities involving e-bikes and electric motorcycles, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors is currently considering new ordinances to regulate these devices, a move that has drawn intense public scrutiny.
 - Coastside Bottlenecks - In the Midcoast, the Moss Beach State Route (SR)-1 Congestion and Safety Improvements Project is a very major point of interest. Public workshops are scheduled for Spring/Summer 2026 to gather feedback on intersection modifications aimed at improving flow between Montara and Half Moon Bay.
 - Multimodal Integration - Transit users are currently being asked for feedback on the Central El Camino Real Multimodal Plan. The SamTrans Online Survey is open through March 31, 2026, focusing on improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along this major corridor.
- These are only a few of the traffic challenges in San Mateo County, but they are some of the current major concerns of residents, north to south and from ocean shore to bay shore.
- Vice Chair Swire said that many complain about congestion even though data shows congestion improving. He noted that many don't believe that traffic is improving despite the recent widening of 101. He said that there is a disconnect between data and people's perceptions. He said that more driving means more cut-through traffic. He also said that e-motos are by far the largest issue. The Mineta report indicates that 87 percent of electric devices on school campuses

are e-motos, not e-bikes; highlighting the need for targeted enforcement. He also questioned whether the County has seen any e-bike deaths. The Half Moon Bay Crash involved an e-moto, not an e-bike. He said that we already have laws banning e-motos; we should enforce these laws instead of further restricting e-bike use.

- Ms. Lang supported the concern over safety, especially on cut-through streets. Mr. Carlini recommended modal filters as a means of curtailing cut-through traffic. Vice Chair Swire said that cities have tools to fight cut-through traffic but they require restricting driver degrees of freedom for local residents, too.
 - Mr. Carlini said that public transit is also a top concern for the public.
 - Mr. Kao said that cut-through traffic is bad in East Palo Alto and other communities next to the larger roads.
- **9) Report from Staff**
 - Staff said that in June the CAC will start meeting in Millbrae.
 - Staff also stated that the TA is investigating providing CAC members with SamTrans monthly passes. CAC members expressed appreciation.
 - Mr. Carlini is excited about the 19th Avenue/Fashion Island project. He said the Broadway Grade Separation is very important; he thinks that Measure W funding should be more flexible for use in grade separation projects. He prefers grade separation investments to highway expansions like the 101 Express Lanes North of 380 and the 101/92 Direct Connector projects.
- **10) Member Comments/Requests**
 - Ms. Kuklin said that project sponsors need to do better on outreach such as outreach around Eucalyptus trees on El Camino in Burlingame. She said this will be important in getting approval for the transit measure given that spending is tight for many residents and some of the funding will go toward other counties.
 - Mr. Kao recently attended some community meetings on TA funded projects. He noted low attendance and limited awareness at the Reimagine Dumbarton project meeting. He also said Santa Clara is doing a better job than our County on El Camino multimodal features and bike trails. He said that his e-bike is very convenient in keeping him out of his car.
 - Mr. Carlini said that he is worried that his child is moving to a home a block from 101 because of pollution and cut-through traffic. He hopes that the TA and society can do better here. He gave kudos to Belmont for proposing to improve Ralston Avenue with Class IV bike lanes. He also supports better outreach to encourage more engagement. He recently visited Europe; they have the political

will to make transit better. He recommended modal filters as a means to deter cut-through traffic; these are prevalent in Europe and we can do it, too.

- Ms. Lang urged people to attend their city council meetings.
- Vice Chair Swire recommended more virtual outreach instead of in person. He recommended an article in the San Mateo Daily Journal regarding air pollution next to the highway in South San Francisco. He urged cities to make streets safer to avoid the fate of Burlingame, which is now being sued for not addressing residents' safety concerns that are alleged to have contributed to the death of a four-year-old boy on a sidewalk. Safety investments can save cities money in the long run.

11) Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, May 5, 2026, 4:30 pm