

Report of the SMCTA Community Advisory Committee Meeting of May 5, 2026

Video - https://samtrans.granicus.com/player/clip/1487?view_id=2&redirect=true

Committee Actions

- **Consent Calendar - all approved unanimously**
 - **4a) Approval of Minutes of the CAC Meeting of March 31, 2026**
 - **4b) SMCTA Board Item 5.b. – Accept Quarterly Investment Report**
 - **4c) SMCTA Board Item 5.c. – Accept Quarterly Reports for On-Call Contracts for Fiscal Year 2026 Quarter 3**
 - **4d) SMCTA Board Item 5.d. – Increasing the Allocation of New Measure A Local Shuttle Program Funds for the Skyline College Daly City Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) Express Shuttle from \$304,136 to \$608,272 in the Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 Shuttle Program**
 - Sandra Lang asked why the applicant did not apply for the higher amount initially. Staff said that the applicant made an honest error in their application.
 - Giuliano Carlini asked what the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) does to prevent similar errors in the future. Staff said that this is the first time this has happened and thus additional action is not necessary. He asked that the packet include a regular report on how we are meeting our Measure A and W goals; this is as important as how we spend our money (which is included in the packet in voluminous detail).
- **5) SMCTA Board Item 10.a. - Programming and Allocating \$2,804,490 in Measure A Grade Separation Category and \$860,625 in Measure A Caltrain Category Funds for the South Linden Avenue/Scott Street Grade Separation Project's Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Clearance Phase**
 - Ms. Lang asked whether lowering the street would create non-financial issues, including flooding - and whether this would impact the net savings. Staff said the environmental review will include additional hydrology studies and that this project has fewer creek concerns vs. other grade separation projects.
 - Richard Hedges asked about the cost of the project. Staff clarified the cost for the preliminary engineering (PE)/environmental (ENV) phase compared to total project costs. He asked why this project is getting funding priority instead of the

Broadway project, which is the most dangerous crossing in the state. Staff said that the Broadway project is funded separately and the Board of Directors (Board) grade separation policy includes advancing this project through final design. Broadway remains a priority.

- Nheeda Enriquez asked whether the estimates include cost escalation factors over time. Staff said estimates include escalation based on the planned construction schedule, noting this could change. Staff also said the SMCTA is anticipating a reauthorization of Measure A and that they can bond against it to advance the project more quickly.
- Rich Garbarino expressed support for the project. This is an industrial area and when railroad gates are down, large trucks stop and spew diesel into the air. He also agreed that the Broadway project is a priority.
- Mr. Carlini asked whether this design creates challenges for high-speed rail. Staff does not anticipate any issues. He expressed support for grade separations but noted that funding is limited. He is nervous spending \$10 million on this phase given that full project funding is not secured. He asked whether a reauthorized Measure A would increase funding for grade separation. Staff said the public will provide input on funding levels for a new measure grade separation program and the reauthorization process will begin next year. He said if we are committing \$10 million to this project now, the Board should commit to a reauthorized Measure A to fund this project fully or they should decide on whether to proceed with funding for this phase. He expressed concern that \$10 million could be spent on this phase if the total project funding doesn't materialize. Staff said a reauthorized Measure A will be shaped by the voters, not necessarily the Board.
- Vice Chair Mike Swire asked whether the optimized proposal would still offer a pedestrian and bicycle tunnel. Staff said yes.
- Christopher Kao asked what types of funding are contributed by new developments. Staff said a transportation/traffic impact fee might be required (i.e., local match).
- Karen Kuklin said that she appreciated the cost savings on this project but noted that Broadway is a high priority. She said that when the grade separation flooded in Millbrae the pumps failed; it wasn't a design issue.
- Ms. Lang noted that this industrial area has congestion challenges. Staff said that grade separation projects are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); thus the environmental review is less rigorous and does not include an air quality analysis.

- Mr. Hedges said that impact fees for some projects have been limited by the State to help expedite housing construction.
- Vice Chair Swire asked whether the Broadway crossing was still the most dangerous in California given the recent success of encroachment detection technology. Staff said it is still number 1 on the list. Staff said that the list is based on crashes over ten years. He said that this means that the project will still be ranked very high even if no additional crashes occur. Staff said that no encroachment crashes had occurred since the technology was installed.

Other Items

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

- **6) SMCTA Board Item 11.a. – Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary Budget**
 - Mr. Carlini asked why Staff Support had increased by 13.6 percent. Staff said that this was not due to additional staff positions. He asked how the SMCTA can encourage and help more cities to apply for bike/pedestrian (bike/ped) grants. He asked if the SMCTA can provide better oversight on bike/ped projects implemented by cities. He said that Belmont had installed sharrows in dangerous locations that will invite close passes and will anger drivers. Staff said that they are developing a best practice design review offering for cities. This should encourage better designs, even on non-SMCTA projects. The SMCTA does not fund projects that include sharrows.
 - Ms. Lang asked what is included in Bank and Investment Fees. Staff said that these are fees for converting funds between different types of investments. These fees are not negotiable.
 - Mr. Hedges said that cities may not be applying for grants because they do not have bike/ped master plans. Staff said that most cities have such a plan, as it is a requirement from Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). He also noted the SMCTA's holdings in Treasury Bills (T-Bills) given their current high returns.
 - Vice Chair Swire said that other plans can qualify for funding. Staff said this is accurate for some grants, but the SMCTA doesn't require such a plan. Staff clarified that Measure A Interest can be used on projects not prescribed in the allocation language of the Measure.
 - Mr. Kao asked whether spending on key programs was increasing year-over-year. Staff said that most projects funded through Interest Income have increased in the past year. Staff said that the Corridor Connect Program funds

the mini-grants recently approved and a Coastside version. The Technical Assistance Program includes walk audit funding.

- Chair Barbara Arietta asked about the location for the Coastside version. Staff said that the entire Coastside will be in scope. Funding levels are to be determined.

- **7) SMCTA Board Item 12.a. – Legislative Update -**
 - Mr. Carlini said that the State is trying to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gases (GHGs). He asked whether Assembly Bill (AB) 1244, 2059, and 2052 align with these goals. Staff will get back to the CAC with the answer. He said that the SMCTA should oppose these bills if so. He asked what impact AB 2560 would have on California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). Staff will get back to the CAC with the answer. He asked whether AB 1412 (road usage charge) will exclude freight, as does the Senate bill. He said that large trucks create much more road damage vs. all passenger vehicles; if we exempt electric trucks from road charges, this will hurt us. He said that the SMCTA needs to oppose bills that oppose transport and support those that are good for it. He said AB 1557 proposes restrictions on electric bicycles (e-bikes) when the problem is already illegal e-motos. He said he is disabled and that this bill would make it impossible for a legal e-bike to get him home. He said that the SMCTA should oppose this bill. He also supports AB 954 (bicycle highways), AB 1412 (road usage charges) and AB 2168 (Active Transportation Program requirements and penalties).
 - Ms. Lang asked about the Highway Trust Fund. Staff said that this is where the federal gas tax goes, funding much of the Department of Transportation. Staff said that gas taxes are threatened by improved fuel efficiency and increasing electric vehicle (EV) penetration.
 - Mr. Hedges said that the federal trust fund has been bankrupt since 2008. He said that it would be easy to increase revenue from EV owners. He said that new electric trucks could exacerbate this problem.
 - Vice Chair Swire asked if we could better track CAC comments on legislation. He wanted to make sure that questions do not get lost between meetings. Staff said that it tracks bills recommended by the CAC. He asked whether the SMCTA has lobbied on e-bikes. Staff said that they will follow up on the question.
 - Mr. Hedges suggested that CAC members ask questions via the group mailing list (which is incorporated into the monthly public packet). Staff said that they will consider this.

- Mr. Carlini said that many e-bike bills do not hold accountable manufacturers who lie about their products. He said that illegal e-motos are the problem (not e-bikes), as well as conversion of e-bikes to e-motos. He said that manufacturers should be held liable and that the supply should be addressed. He said that manufacturers should have to register with the State. He said that law enforcement and schools should be provided with a list of illegal electric motorcycles (e-motos).
- **8) Report of the Chair**
 - Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) reports that its ridership rose 47 percent in 2025 compared with the previous year, saying it is the fastest growing transit agency in the United States. This accomplishment was helped by faster and more frequent service after the electrification of its trains.
 - However, transit officials report that rising high fixed costs, tied to maintaining the electric infrastructure, mean new funding will be needed to avoid cuts that affect tens of thousands of riders and businesses along the Peninsula corridor.
 - Caltrain reports that the rail system currently carries the equivalent of three lanes of traffic on United States (US) 101 in California each day. Officials warn that service reductions would add roughly 36,000 daily car trips and increase pollution by about 220 metric tons of carbon dioxide per day.
 - Current efforts to save Caltrain from major service cuts and station closures, which face a \$75 million annual deficit, focus on a November 2026 sales tax measure (Connect Bay Area), authorized by Senate Bill (SB) 63, alongside a temporary \$590 million state loan.
 - Efforts include gathering 200,000 signatures for the tax, which would fund transit for 14 years.
 - Key Efforts To Secure Funding and Avoid Cuts:
 - **Regional Sales Tax Measure (Connect Bay Area):** A coalition of advocates pushing a ballot measure for November 2026 to add a half-cent sales tax in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, and a full-cent tax in San Francisco to support transit, including Caltrain.
 - **State Loan Intervention:** Governor Newsom approved a \$540 million loan to Caltrain, Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to bridge operational deficits for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, preventing immediate, severe service restrictions.
 - **Internal Cost Reduction:** Caltrain has begun implementing expense reductions, including full-time equivalent (FTE) staff freezes, reducing

professional service contracts and increasing revenue from advertising, real estate, and fiber-optic cable leasing.

- **Funding Advocacy:** State Senator Scott Weiner and local officials are advocating for long-term regional tax solutions to stop a "death spiral" of severe cuts and rider loss.
- Description of Current Efforts Include:
 - **Funding Initiatives:** Regional revenue measures, transit funding campaign, legislative and community-led fund raising.
 - **Revenue Expansion:** Monetizing assets, increasing commercial revenue, pursuing state and federal support.
 - **Alternatives Actions:** Service optimization, cost-cutting initiatives, emergency financing structural funding proposal.
 - **Potential Consequences of Failed Efforts:** If new funding fails, Caltrain faces a "worst-case scenario" involving the closure of over one-third of its stations, the elimination of all weekend services, the reduction of train frequency from every 15 minutes to hourly only and the ending of weeknight service after 9 pm.
- Mr. Carlini said that mass transit is the heart of any transit system. He said that the benefits of EVs are overstated; they are not very efficient. He said that autonomous vehicle (AV) technology can reduce costs for transit.
- Mr. Hedges said that train systems can save a lot of money with AV technology, even if the initial investment is high.
- Ms. Lang appreciated the recent San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) survey. She liked the presentation on this to her City Council, but was dismayed that the Council didn't buy into this process.
- Vice Chair Swire agreed with Ms. Lang. He was frustrated many elected officials do not support the transit revenue measure, despite past grievances. He said that according to Connect Bay Area there are not many San Mateo County officials supporting the measure. He said that many CAC members and members of the public support the measure.
- Chair Arietta said that she is concerned that if train service is cut it will create carmageddon.
- Mr. Hedges said that some of the presentations on the revenue measure do not describe the benefits to Caltrain. He said that SamTrans riders do not vote as often.

- **9) Report from Staff -**

- Mr. Carlini asked how he could find the designs for the Willow Road Project. He said that California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 4 (D4) and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines discourage transitions between Class IV and Class II lanes. He said that 85 percent-90 percent of cyclists are not comfortable in Class II lanes. We need to upgrade Class II lanes. He said that in the Grand Boulevard Survey, he was forced to choose between bike lanes or bus lanes; both was not an option. He thinks this is nonsense. He said that there are solutions that do not eliminate car lanes. He said that turbo-roundabouts should be prioritized instead of traffic signals and stop signs. He said that center left turn lanes (at traffic lights) are a waste of valuable space. He said that bus shelters are important and shouldn't be removed; removal is not an improvement.

- **10) Member Comments/Requests**

- Mr. Kao said that East Palo Alto had recently launched two mini-roundabouts. He said that this is a proper design that needs to be repeated throughout the County. He said that in Palo Alto they are considering closing at-grade crossings due to recent suicides; grade separations can address this challenge. He said that Palo Alto is spending \$2 million for 24/7 monitoring of its at-grade crossings.
- Chair Arietta said that roundabouts work in some areas, but some can be frustrating.
- Vice Chair Swire thanked SMCTA staff for the early morning presentation on 101/92 Direct Connector to the San Mateo City Council. He would like the CAC to hear more about the new Hillsdale scope. He said that the County is revising its e-bike ordinance and that the recent meeting went well; this could improve safety without inconveniencing safe riders on safe e-bikes. He praised CAC Member Rich Hedges for his advocacy in the wake of 63-year-old pedestrian Veronica Vasquez's death in a crosswalk on El Camino in San Mateo. He praised recent progress between the State and City and hopes that traffic studies will slow the solution. He believes that saving lives is more important than vehicle speeds.
- Mr. Carlini said that roundabouts should have pedestrian islands. He said that some designs are better than others and that people will better understand them as more roundabouts are built. He said that San Mateo County and cities have talked a lot about Vision Zero in the past fifteen years, but we haven't made it happen. Deaths have increased for pedestrians and cyclists in that

period. He would like the CAC packets to include all material in the Board packets for ease of use. More detailed pagination would also help.

- Mr. Garbarino said that there are other successful roundabouts in the Bay Area. They slow down drivers and save lives.
 - Ms. Enriquez likes the new SMCTA logo.
 - Mr. Hedges likes the increasing cost of gasoline. He said that Caltrain ridership increased after the gas price spike after 2010, too. He said that some are against the transit measure because San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI) and BART receive most of the benefit and do not operate efficiently. Many worry that San Mateo County will not get its fair share. He said that some roundabouts are poorly designed and dangerous.
 - Mr. Carlini said that car usage receives the lion share of public funding (not transit).
 - Ms. Lang likes the Broadway roundabout in Burlingame but worries that drivers do not yield properly.
 - Ms. Kuklin likes roundabouts.
- **11) Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, June 2, 2026, 4:30 pm**