

Report of the TA Community Advisory Committee

Meeting of September 1, 2026

Video - https://samtrans.granicus.com/player/clip/1531?view_id=2&redirect=true

Committee Actions

- **Consent Calendar - *all approved unanimously***
 - **5a) Approval of Minutes of the CAC Meeting of August 4, 2026**
 - **5b) SMCTA Board Item – 5.b. Accept Capital Projects Quarterly Status Report for Fiscal Year 2026 Quarter 4**
 - **5c) SMCTA Board Item – 5.c. Accept Preliminary Year-End Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026**
 - **5d) SMCTA Board Item – 5.d. Approving and Ratifying the Fiscal Year 2027 Insurance Program**
 - **5e) SMCTA Board Item – 5.e. Programming and Allocating \$4,100,000 in New Measure A Interest Income Funds and Awarding \$8,100,000 Under the 101 Corridor Connect Kickstart Mini-Grant Program for 11 Projects**

- **7) SMCTA Board Item – 10.b. Programming and Allocating \$3,000,000 in Highway Program Funds for the Design Phase of the State Route (SR) 84/ United States (U.S.) 101 Interchange Reimagined Project - *approved with one abstention***
 - Sandra Lang asked why this request is necessary. Staff said changes in seismic criteria required incremental design work.
 - Giuliano Carlini asked how much of the \$385 million total cost was devoted to bike infrastructure. Staff estimated roughly \$16-20 million for bike/pedestrian (bike/ped) improvements. He asked if there were Class I or IV separated or protected bike lanes. Staff said there are Class II and Class IV bike lanes, Class I paths, and protected islands. The Redwood City webpage has details. He said that Class II, Class III, and zero bike lanes are not comfortable for 85-95 percent of the population. Thus, Class I and IV are required throughout the project.
 - Richard Hedges asked for the length of the protected bike lanes. Staff said at least a mile.
 - Chair Barbara Arietta asked if there were nine lawsuits here. Staff said legal action arises when property owners don't negotiate directly; however, there

have been no court proceedings to date. This is a well-established process to determine the price of the property.

- Vice Chair Mike Swire asked about the 20 properties acquired. Staff said all are commercial or retail (and a post office). He appreciates the project's bike/ped improvements vs. the current dangerous conditions. He said that we are spending \$400 million to primarily move more cars through the intersection, through new offramps and widening Woodside. This will encourage more people to drive and increase traffic in residential areas. He emphasized SMCTA spending \$400 million for intersection enhancements during a difficult time of funding public transportation. Staff said the project is funded with Measure A Key Congestion Areas money which can only be used on named interchange projects such as this.
- John Fox said it is a complex intersection.
- Nheeda Enriquez said that this project has been in development for a long time. She asked if the \$3 million will be sufficient. Staff said it should be enough but are managing the risks and the budget does contain additional funding if necessary.
- Mr. Hedges asked about the rail line. Staff said it is a spur off a trunk line, accessing the cement plant and Port. He said this is a safety project due to backups when exiting from U.S. 101.

Other Items

- **4) Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda - *none***
- **6) SMCTA Board Item – 10.a. Peninsula Shuttle Program Optimization and Funding Strategy Update**
 - Gus Mattammal asked about the causes of financial difficulty for the shuttle program. Staff said fuel, labor, and vehicle costs were increasing. Also, the shuttle vendor contract is very old and thus these costs will increase significantly from previous levels.
 - Ms. Enriquez asked whether service level minimums were previously a challenge. Staff said that previous shuttles stopped operating or were in jeopardy. If a shuttle sponsor can no longer support a shuttle, the vehicles could be reassigned to an existing or new route.
 - Mr. Fox asked if ridership was a ranking criteria. Staff said yes, including modeling of ridership for new routes. He asked if the match could differ by sponsor due to differing willingness to pay. Staff said there is a 10 percent

minimum match, but some contribute more. The Board can consider overmatches.

- Mr. Mattammal asked how much investment interest is being used to buy the vehicles. Staff said that this will take up 10 percent of overall interest. He asked what happens if in three years a city (which commits for only three years) wants out, with SMCTA still on the hook with the vendor for the full seven years. Staff said this disconnect is currently occurring, but there is flexibility to add routes or frequency. Also, SMCTA solicits new shuttle applications every three years; this can fill such a void. Staff said SMCTA would still be on the hook for the expenses if they can't find a new sponsor in this case.
- Vice Chair Swire said that SMCTA should take advantage of the fact that some applicants are willing to pay higher matches; this would enable SMCTA to offer more shuttles. He wondered if there was a way to implement price discrimination. Staff said Commute.org brings in the matching funds across multiple shuttles and thus it is difficult to have different matches for different routes. He suggested a bidding mechanism to maximize match revenue; this would increase transportation bang for the buck.
- Rich Hedges asked if a 10 percent match is still a challenge for sponsors. Staff said it is difficult for some, given tight municipal and corporate budgets. He said inflation has outpaced tax revenues for many cities and likely for the shuttles.
- Richard Garbarino asked what happens to funding for existing routes that aren't renewed. Staff said money is prioritized for the highest rated shuttles.
- Ms. Lang asked whether adjustments can be made next year. Staff said that changes can be made based on Board input, operating rate actuals, and the response of sponsors; this is an estimate on a moving target.

- **8) SMCTA Board Item – 11.a. Update on United States (U.S.) 101 Express Lanes Variable Rate Bonds and Express Lanes Performance**

- Mr. Mattammal said he hoped that if the managed lanes continue to overperform financially, SMCTA will do more prepayments given expectations that rates will remain high.
- Mr. Hedges said that some on the CAC supported fixed rate bonds. He asked if fixed rate bonds would be better. Staff said consultants recommended variable rates and that the variable bonds saved the SMCTA money.
- Ms. Enriquez asked what is driving maintenance expenses up. Staff said that labor costs have increased and parts require regular replacement.
- Mr. Fox asked about fraudulent High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV-3) transactions and potential lost revenue. Staff said California Highway Patrol (CHP) is

enforcing the corridor at overtime rates and the San Mateo County Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority (SMCEL-JPA) has authorized a study of vehicle occupancy to evaluate self-declared carpools. He asked what percentage of violation trips are collected. Staff to look into it.

- Mr. Mattammal asked how the total users compare to original projections. Staff to look into it.
- Vice Chair Swire said that a performance report should reference the project's original objectives. He asked whether the \$600 million widening and Express Lane Project was achieving its objectives. Staff said performance is as expected. Staff said the focus is now on hotspots where speeds are dropping below 45 miles per hour (mph) and the impact on general purpose lanes. He noted the website says that the primary objective was to reduce congestion and delays in the corridor. Staff said more people are traveling through the corridor, and the CAC received a presentation on whether the express lanes achieved their identified goals earlier this year. In Spring 2027, Staff will have a more thorough performance report. He asked whether the project was meeting its second goal - encourage carpooling and transit. Staff said yes based on drivers declaring HOV-2 or HOV-3.
- Chair Arietta asked about CHP enforcement. Staff said officers elect to do enforcement on Express Lanes and the budget is roughly \$30,000 per month. State law requires CHP to do enforcement at overtime rates. She said this is a convenient contract.
- Mr. Hedges inquired whether CHP does other enforcement at the same time. He suggested a solid contract that they only enforce the lanes. He asked whether the equity program still offered \$200 per year, formerly the highest in the Bay Area. Staff said that the \$200 amount remains and has gained national recognition with multiple options. He asked if there are technological solutions to catch cheaters. Staff said that in the coming year there will be a recommendation. He said that the northbound curve in Burlingame causes backups. Staff said dynamic pricing and on-ramp metering is used.
- Mr. Garbarino praised the increase in usage. He asked whether the speed differential between lanes has increased crashes. Staff said that they are still developing answers to this question and the SMCEL-JPA will review it in the spring.
- Mr. Carlini stated his continuation to ask for the underlying data to determine how traffic is behaving over time. He said that online feed queries are not flexible enough; we need the data. He asked about congestion in the general purpose lanes. Staff said only Express Lanes are monitored. He said that it

appears that congestion in the general purpose lanes is worsening. Staff intend to respond to increased congestion in the general purpose lanes. He said that an increase in revenue implies an increase in traffic and/or a degradation of speed in the general purpose lanes. He believes that trips and congestion are increasing. He applauded the 10 times growth in the benefits program, but noted that more low-income residents need assistance.

9) SMCTA Board Item – 12.a. Legislative Update

- Deferred.
- **10) Report of the Chair**
 - Update: Senate Bill (SB) 63 (Who Supports It And Why - As of Mid-August 2026)
 - San Mateo County and its cities officially stand as participants in the 14 - year, half-cent regional sales tax measure, enabled by SB 63 (Connect Bay Area Act), which has qualified for the November 3, 2026 ballot.
 - Local transit bodies like the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) and the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) backed opting-in to stabilize regional networking and secure flexible return-to-source funding for local transit improvements.
 - Stance of the County and Cities Re: SB 63
 - SamTrans and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA): Voted to officially opt into the multi-county district framework.
 - C/CAG: Recommended opt-in participation representing the consensus of municipal leadership across the County's incorporated cities.
 - Voter Placement: Following signature certifications, the district finalized placing the initiative on the upcoming November ballot.
 - Why They Support The Measure
 - Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) and Regional Deficit Relief: Provides crucial operational revenue to clear heavy budget deficits for vital regional links like Caltrain, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and the San Francisco Municipal Municipal Railway (Muni).
 - Return-to-Service Funding: Guarantees that a substantial portion of the money raised locally stays inside San Mateo County to fund visible local transit and rider improvements.

- Accountability Mandates: Incorporating stringent financial efficiency plans, cost-containment rules and third-party audits required under SB 63 provisions.
- Conclusion
 - If the ballot measure is passed in November 2026, the regional transit funding measure would prevent deep service cuts to major transit services at BART, Caltrain, Muni and Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit District (AC Transit) and would provide funding for coordinated affordable service, including free transfers, standard low-income discounts, unified navigation and faster more reliable bus service.
- **10a) Committee Member Presentation: Mode Shift as a Strategy to Meet Measure A Goals and Measure W Core Principals (Presenter: Guiliano Carlini, CAC Member; Kari Edison Watkins, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of California (UC) Davis; and Susie Pike Cayar, Director, UC Davis Transit Research Center**
 - Mr. Hedges prefers protected bike lanes inside car parking for safety. The professors said that there are multiple options for protection, including planters. With car protected bike lanes, however, there needs to be sufficient clearance for drivers to open their door on the passenger side. Also, protection needs to extend into the intersection.
 - Ms. Lang asked who the incremental riders are when better infrastructure is installed. She said that cars need to be rid of. The professors said that the hope is that everyone is a candidate to ride a bike, depending on the distance of their destination. Bikes can play an important role in providing last mile connectivity to transit, thereby increasing rail and bus usage. Forty-five percent of trips are less than three miles and thus bikeable. Studies show that incremental users (including elderly and children) are waiting for protection and better comfort. In Davis, there are young kids biking to school alone due to the protected bike infrastructure. Transit and bikeability are symbiotic.
 - Vice Chair Swire asked how to best move the needle in San Mateo County. He said great engineers and planners at the TA and in our cities can only do so much. The professors often recommend great designs based on the discussed principles but are ultimately thwarted due to objections to giving up parking or travel lanes to accommodate safety infrastructure. He asked why Davis succeeded. The professors said that there was a Dutch transportation planner in the 1960s. Transformation

does take time, however. The professors say that if car-focused decisions continue, it will make it more difficult to achieve mode shift down the road.

- Mr. Mattammal agreed that there should be more protected bike lanes and bus lanes. He opposes 50 percent of fixed rail in the Bay Area and prefers investment in high-speed buses. He thinks autonomous vehicles do have value. He said many low-income workers have physically demanding jobs and are thus unable to bike after a long day. The professors said low-income households often have lower vehicle ownership per capita and thus many low-income people bike to school or the grocery store. They said that single user autonomous vehicles (AVs) increase congestion; shared AVs are better for congestion. AVs can increase safety, however.
 - Ms. Enriquez asked what would bring changes quick. The professors said that congestion pricing would be very effective.
 - Mr. Hedges said that many low-income residents use bike lanes.
 - Mr. Carlini asked fellow CAC members if they support SMCTA spending a majority of its money for mass and active transit instead of the current 5-10 percent. Staff said that only the voters of San Mateo County can make that change.
 - Ms. Enriquez said she supports mass transit.
 - Mr. Mattammal said this is not realistic as a sudden discontinuous change.
 - Mr. Swire supports the proposal.
 - Chair Arietta didn't know what to say.
 - Mr. Hedges said passing revenue measures is easier when discussing the fixing of streets instead of discussing bike lanes.
 - Ms. Lang said that supports mass transit and we need to get rid of the cars, but the voters need to approve a new measure.
- **11) Report From Staff** - No discussion due to no quorum.
 - **12) Member Comments / Requests** - No discussion due to no quorum.
 - **13) Date/Time of Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, September 29, 2026, 4:30 pm**