



# DRAFT MINUTES

## San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

### 1. Roll Call

Chair Peskin called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**Present at Roll Call:** Commissioners Haney, Mandelman, Peskin, Ronen, Stefani, Walton and Yee (7)

**Absent at Roll Call:** Commissioners Fewer (entered during Item 2), Mar (entered during Item 2), Safai (entered during Item 6) and Brown (4)

**Commissioner Stefani moved to excuse Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Mandelman. Commissioner Brown was excused without objection.**

### 2. Citizens Advisory Committee Report - INFORMATION

In regard to Item 5 on the agenda, allocation and appropriation of Prop K funds, John Larson, Chair of the Citizens Advisory (CAC) Committee, reported that the CAC expressed concern over Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) using express lanes contemplated by the 101/280 Carpool and Express Lane project request. He said the main issue was the potential of TNCs causing congestion in express lanes similar to city streets. He said the CAC was also interested in the equity study that was to be conducted as part of the project and how it would be structured and conducted. He noted that during public comment an idea was proposed to allow construction and delivery vehicles to use the express lanes to free up regular lanes.

In regard to Caltrain's 22nd Street ADA Study, Chair Larson reported CAC members were surprised that even though the station predated the ADA, there was little to provide accessibility in the ensuing years. He said staff was urged to think about technology and infrastructure that could be deployed to make Caltrain's 22nd Street station accessible now and for the foreseeable future.

In regard to Item 6 on the agenda, 2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), Chair Larson reported that the CAC asked about the communication based train technology that would be the subject of RTIP funds. He said the CAC's biggest concern was how Muni would avoid a service meltdown similar to the one that accompanied the installation of train control technology in the late 1990's. He said the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) staff noted that the new system would be deployed side by side with the existing system in a series of phases and could revert to the existing system if any delays occurred.

Chair Larson reported that the CAC received an update on the Geneva/San Jose Intersection Study and was encouraged to see that pedestrian-focused improvements were addressed, given the complex intersection. He said the CAC supported the idea of pop-up meetings being held at the Balboa Park station during commute hours as a way to obtain public input. During public comment the CAC was reminded that the



Balboa Park station was the second largest transit hub in the city and was urged to encourage better linkage among transit lines for the southern part of the city and take note of the comparative level of investment in outer neighborhoods of the city versus downtown.

Chair Larson lastly reported that the CAC received an update on a regional measure by the FASTER Bay Area steering committee representative. He said the CAC cautioned that the FASTER branding strategy could be met with public skepticism given the recent history of delays in big transportation projects and relatively small gains in transit speed. The consensus was that any additional regional measure request should be tied to specific projects that would move transit forward.

There was no public comment.

### **Consent Agenda**

**3. Approve the Minutes of the October 22, 2019 Meeting - ACTION**

**4. [Final Approval] Accept the Downtown Rail Extension Peer Review Panel's Final Report on Governance, Oversight, Management and Project Delivery - ACTION**

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Mandelman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Yee.

The Consent Agenda was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Peskin, Ronen, Stefani, Walton and Yee (9)

Absent: Commissioners Brown and Safai (2)

### **End of Consent Agenda**

**5. Allocate \$870,000, with Conditions, and Appropriate \$5,700,000 in Prop K Sales Tax Funds for 6 Requests - ACTION**

Anna LaForte, Deputy Director for Policy and Programming, presented the item per the staff memorandum.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Walton moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Ronen.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Peskin, Ronen, Stefani, Walton and Yee (9)

Absent: Commissioners Brown and Safai (2)

**6. Approve the Amended Program of Projects for the 2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program - ACTION**

Amber Crabbe, Public Policy Manager, and Daniel Howard, Project Manager at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), presented the item per the



staff memorandum.

Commissioner Mar stated that the Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) project would be a good investment if it resulted in significant improvements in the reliability and efficiency of the light-rail system. Regarding the SFMTA presentation, Commissioner Mar noted the public's frustration with overcrowded lines during commute hours and asked why there were sometimes big gaps between trains. He also asked whether the current train control system was the main reason for the delays or if there were other factors.

Mr. Howard stated that the current level of congestion was not the result of the existing train control system. He said Muni was falling short of its goal of running 42 scheduled trains an hour because the subway tunnel cannot handle that volume and it would need a significant upgrade to do so. Mr. Howard noted that in comparison, the city of Boston only ran 15 trains per hour through the most congested corridors in its system. He said investing in the train control system would allow Muni to run trains tighter together and get closer to the 42 trains per hour goal.

Commissioner Mar asked if there was a separate plan to address the physical issues with the tunnel and meet the scheduled train trips if the train control system was not the issue.

Mr. Howard said the limitations of the subway were physical, with all the light rail lines running down Market Street with one track in either direction. He said the solution would be capital-intensive, requiring more tracks through the tunnel and creating an opportunity to turn back trains at the Embarcadero station. Mr. Howard said the train control system was the most cost-effective way to achieve a modest increase in capacity, around 20%, rather than committing to a major capital expenditure at the scale of the Central Subway project to more significantly increase capacity.

During public comment Jim Patrick, owner of Patrick and Company, asked if Muni performed a failure analysis of fleet parts or conducted train schedule simulations to avoid congestion.

Commissioner Fewer moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Mandelman.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Peskin, Ronen, Stefani, Walton and Yee (9)

Absent: Commissioners Brown and Safai (2)

**7. Authorize the Executive Director to Increase the Amount of the Professional Services Contract with Civic Edge Consulting by \$100,000, to a Total Amount Not to Exceed \$250,000, for Strategic Communications, Media and Community Relations Services for the ConnectSF Program - ACTION**

Eric Young, Director of Communications, presented the item per the staff memorandum.

Chair Peskin said his concerns about ConnectSF's efficacy and usefulness remained and on behalf of former Commissioner Katy Tang and himself said he would be voting against the item.



Commissioner Fewer asked if the workshops would offer in-language assistance for Russian speakers.

Mr. Young replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Fewer asked if that meant workshops would be conducted in English and monolingual participants would have interpretation services offered.

Mr. Young replied in the affirmative and noted that the interpretation would be simultaneous.

Commissioner Fewer suggested having language specific workshops, in which everything was in a particular language and offered her office's assistance in identifying District 1 locations where mini-workshops could be held. She noted that the Russian community that lived in District 1 was highly dependent on public transportation and felt that their voices were not at the table, but that a small, in-language workshop would be an effective way to reach this community, and potentially others.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Fewer moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Mandelman.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mar, Mandelman, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee (9)

Nays: Commissioner Peskin (1)

Absent: Commissioner Brown (1)

**8. Internal Accounting Report, Investment Report, and Debt Expenditure Report for the Three Months Ending September 30, 2019 - INFORMATION**

Cynthia Fong, Deputy Director Finance and Administration, presented the item per staff memorandum.

There was no public comment.

**Other Items**

**9. Introduction of New Items - INFORMATION**

Commissioner Safai requested a discussion in regard to the Transportation Authority allocating money to purchase school buses for the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). He said the school assignment policy had spread children throughout San Francisco and did not think it was fair to ask families to rely solely on the SFMTA. Commissioner Safai said there was underfunding for school buses and noted that during the most recent great recession, SFUSD had to make decisions to decrease the number school buses. He asked Chair Peskin and Transportation Authority staff to investigate how the Board could use Transportation Authority funds to work with the SFUSD to bring school buses back to San Francisco.

Chair Peskin thanked Commissioner Safai and said Transportation Authority staff would follow up on the request.



Commissioner Mar seconded Commissioner Safai's request and noted that he had started working on a new school transportation study with the Transportation Authority, SFMTA, SFUSD and San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF).

Commissioner Mar also requested a presentation and discussion at a future Transportation Authority Board meeting on the city's electric vehicle roadmap goal, released in June 2019, of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. He said the ambitious goal would require an all-of-the-above approach and meant substantial investments and improvements in public transit, walking and biking. Commissioner Mar said achieving the goal also meant expanding electric-vehicle (EV) adoption and infrastructure so that whatever car traffic remained in the future would be cleaner and greener. He said District 4 was among the most car dependent districts in the city, but only had one publicly accessible EV charging station, with a second on the way. He added that EV adoption rates were improving slowly and more needed to be done to switch to more sustainable options to address the current climate crisis.

Commissioner Mar said he hoped that a public discussion and presentation would help provide insight for the public.

In regard to Commissioner Safai's request for school buses, Commissioner Fewer cautioned the Board that only the SFUSD board had jurisdiction over the matter. She added that the SFUSD board was revising the student assignment process and suggested waiting to see how that turned out first. She stated that parents who choose to take their kids to schools outside of their district should be carpooling with other parents and noted that there was little effort to form carpools at school sites or in classrooms. Commissioner Fewer said she felt there were other measures the Board could take and noted that SFUSD spent \$20 million annually on transportation.

Chair Peskin suggested scheduling a hearing at the Board of Supervisors Joint City, School District, and City College Select Committee that was chaired by Supervisor Haney.

Commissioner Safai thanked the other Commissioners for their comments and was in favor of continuing the conversation at a future Board of Supervisors Joint City, School District, and City College Select Committee meeting.

Commissioner Ronen stated that she had been in communication with District 9 residents in regard to school drop off safety issues. She asked if the Transportation Authority could assist schools in identifying ways to create a safe system for drop-off and pick-up of kids. She asked if the topic could be intertwined with the school bus discussion.

In regard to Commissioner Ronen's request, Commissioner Fewer noted that Commissioner Yee's school drop-off program was working effectively and moving traffic quickly and smoothly. She added that it allowed students to arrive safely and was supported by parents' and neighbors on the school blocks.

There was no public comment.

#### **10. Public Comment**

During public comment Jim Patrick shared his displeasure in regard to the number of years it would take to complete the Downtown Rail Extension project. He asked the Board to focus on bringing the best transportation systems possible to the people of



San Francisco and the 60,000 -70,000 Caltrain riders.

Amy Vu spoke in support of Assembly Bill 362, that would create safe injection sites in San Francisco to help combat opioid overdoses.

David Su said he was concerned with congestion at Muni's Embarcadero station and believed that Muni operator shift changes at the station were responsible for the delays. He suggested operator shift changes at stations that were closer to the end of each line.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.