



# DRAFT MINUTES

## San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

### 1. Roll Call

Chair Peskin called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

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

**Absent at Roll Call:** Commissioners Haney (entered during Item 3), Mar (entered during Item 4), Safai (entered during Item 3), and Walton (entered during Item 3) (4)

### 2. Chair's Report - INFORMATION

Chair Peskin reported that despite the difficulties transit is facing locally, regionally, and nationally, he was very pleased to share some good news about new funding from the California State Transportation Agency, which awarded \$160 million in Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program funds to Bay Area transit and rail projects, including funds for Muni, BART, and the Water Emergency Transit Authority. He further explained that SFMTA would receive \$40 million to improve reliability and travel times for the J and M lines, as well as \$1.1 million for project development for train control; BART would receive \$111 million to implement its Transbay Core Capacity Program, consisting of vehicle purchases, train control, and maintenance facilities that would enable BART to increase service to 30 trains per hour in each direction and carry an additional 200,000 passengers per day; the Water Emergency Transit Authority would receive \$9 million for a new ferry service between the downtown San Francisco ferry terminal and the Mission Bay ferry landing. Chair Peskin thanked California State Transportation Agency Secretary Kim and his team for their support to the region, noting Executive Director Tilly Chang and the he had met with California State Transportation Agency staff several months ago. He also thanked the state delegation and staff who supported the various funding applications and said he looked forward to working on each of the projects with staff to make transit more reliable and resilient.

There was no public comment.

### 3. Executive Director's Report - INFORMATION

Tilly Chang, Executive Director, presented the item.

There was no public comment.

### Consent Agenda

### 4. Approve the Minutes of the April 14, 2020 Meeting - ACTION

### 5. Authorize the Executive Director to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA), the Metropolitan Transportation



**Commission, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, the California High Speed Rail Authority, and the City and County of San Francisco for the Establishment of a New Organizational Structure that Will Support the Efforts of the TJPA in the Development of the Downtown Rail Extension to a Ready-for-Procurement Status - ACTION\***

6. **Allocate \$11,906,558, with Conditions, for Downtown Rail Extension - Phasing and Partial 15% Design and Appropriate \$2,636,109 in Prop K Sales Tax Funds for Rail Program Oversight and Project Development Support - ACTION**
7. **Approve Programming Priorities for Up to \$3,794,003 in San Francisco's Estimated Fiscal Year 2020/21 State Transit Assistance County Block Grant Funds - ACTION**
8. **Allocate \$580,000 in Prop K Sales Tax Funds and \$383,776 in Prop AA Vehicle Registration Fee Funds, with Conditions, for Three Requests - ACTION**

There was no public comment on Item 4.

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, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

#### **End of Consent Agenda**

9. **[Final Approval on First Appearance] Reprogram \$197,500 in Transportation Fund for Clean Air funds from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Fiscal Year 2016/17 Alternative Fuel Taxicab Incentive Program to San Francisco Department of the Environment's Fiscal Year 2018/19 Emergency Ride Home Program - ACTION\***

Anna LaForte, Deputy Director for Policy and Programming, and Charles Sheehan, Chief Policy and Public Affairs Officer with the Department of the Environment (SFE), presented the item per the staff memorandum.

Commissioner Haney expressed appreciation to staff from SFE, the Transportation Authority and his own office for the speed and creativity with which they developed the proposal. He expressed the hope that they would get the word about the expanded service to non-profits, homeless shelters and staff for single-room-occupancy housing organizations. He asked why the program was scheduled to operate for 12 weeks when the shelter-in-place orders would only last an additional 8 weeks.

Anna LaForte answered that a 12-week operational period was consistent with requirements of the funding source, which sets standards for the emissions reductions and cost effectiveness expected from projects. She said additional funds from the same source might be available if the demand exceeded the capacity of the initial allocation. She said the program was a good fit for the fund source because it utilized San Francisco's very low-emissions taxi fleet and also supported the City's taxi drivers.

Commissioner Haney expressed support for the proposal to help essential workers,



appreciated that it also benefits the City's taxi drivers, and spoke in support of scaling up the program if it proved popular.

Commissioner Yee asked why the proposal excluded passengers who had trouble travelling to work given the temporary transit reductions and instead focused only on the trip home, noting that the program could be beneficial to night shift workers who have limited transportation options.

Ms. LaForte answered that the return trip criterion was a confine of the current Emergency Home Ride program. She further explained that the Air District would consider expanding eligibility to include trips to work as a significant program change that would require Air District approval. Given the urgency of the need, staff was recommending working within the current Emergency Ride Home guidelines so the Transportation Authority Board could approve the proposal today and SFE could roll it out immediately.

Mr. Sheehan said SFE would explore other possibilities for a sustainable approach to providing emergency rides to work for essential workers, given the transit service reductions.

Commissioner Preston expressed support for the proposal and thanked Commissioner Haney and Mr. Sheehan for their advocacy and efforts. He asked when essential workers would be able to utilize the expanded program.

Mr. Sheehan answered that the program would launch on May 1, and that he expected his team to launch the website as soon as April 28 or 29, noting that the expanded program was on a rapid launch timeframe.

Commissioner Preston asked for a report as soon as there were results to report, so the Board could get a sense as to whether demand exceeded the available service.

Ms. LaForte acknowledged the request and said her staff would work SFE to bring a report back to the Board.

Commissioner Preston asked that the program team share information about outreach plans with the Board so members could help get the word out, especially to hard-to-reach populations. He pointed out that some Transportation Network Companies were rolling out similar programs and working with non-profits to provide transportation for essential workers, and asked if the program team had been reaching out to non-profits to make them aware of this new option through SFE and the Emergency Ride Home Program.

Mr. Sheehan answered that his team had involved SFMTA and their taxi representative from the beginning and that it rapidly became clear to them that the taxi industry was the best choice for the program because of its safety regulations and clean fleet. He said the team would remind their community partners that taxi drivers were essential workers and that the program would help them, as well.

Chair Peskin asked Kate Toran, SFMTA Director of Taxis and Accessible Services, for comment.

Ms. Toran said the program would support essential workers as both drivers and passengers. She added that San Francisco's taxis constitute a clean-air fleet, with 96% of the taxis being low-emissions vehicles. She said SFMTA had provided taxi drivers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and prepared training materials, including a



video, to inform drivers about how to properly clean their vehicles to reduce the risk of transmission of disease.

Commissioner Preston said it was important to emphasize the value of San Francisco's highly regulated taxi fleet as part of the pandemic response, and that it was critical to ensure that taxi drivers were supplied with PPE and related supplies, so that passengers would know the vehicles were safe.

Commissioner Fewer asked if the program team had made an effort to target essential workers who were very low income, non-English speaking, or home support workers, commenting that just relying on the program website wasn't a good way to reach these groups.

Mr. Sheehan said they were making efforts to target hard-to-reach populations and were already ramping up outreach in anticipation of the start of the program.

Commissioner Fewer asked if the program would give preference to people who qualified for reduced Muni fares, and asked if the program team had reached out to unions that represent low income and front-line workers.

Mr. Sheehan responded that his team had considered means testing the program's services but had not been able to identify any adequate models for implementing such a policy on short notice, despite discussions with Transportation Authority and Air Quality Management District staff. He said his team would continue to investigate solutions to such issues as assessing and verifying income levels. Regarding outreach partners, he said his team had not yet reached out to unions or other potential program partners, as outreach was just beginning that same day.

Commissioner Fewer said that given the limited number of beneficiaries of the program based on the funding available, she would prefer to target it toward disadvantaged populations that had already been experiencing limited transportation options prior to the pandemic.

At Chair Peskin's request Director Chang spoke about the potential for additional funding for the program. She referenced Ms. LaForte's earlier comment about the possibility of reprogramming up to \$250,000 in Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) funds from another incentive program for purchase of low-emission taxis. In addition to currently programmed funds she said the Transportation Authority was able to prioritize about \$750,000 in new TFCA funds annually, a process already underway for the Fiscal Year 2020/21 funds.

During public comment, a commenter asked how TFCA funds could address the issue of homeless sanitation.

Chair Peskin explained that the Transportation Authority's jurisdiction was limited to transportation issues.

Commissioner Preston moved to approve the item, and Commissioner Mandelman seconded the motion.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none



**10. Update on the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Transportation Programs to Assist Seniors and People with Disabilities - INFORMATION\***

Anna LaForte, Deputy Director for Policy & Programming, and Annette Williams, Director of Accessible Services at the SFMTA, presented the item.

Commissioner Safai commented on the importance of the Essential Trip Card program, given there are a number of pockets in the city that are really isolated given the temporary Muni service reductions. He reported that he had working with Roger Marengo (TWU), Director Tumlin and Director of Transit Julie Kirschbaum and was pleased to announce that there would be restoration of the M Line in some form soon. He emphasized that the Essential Trip Card was especially helpful for seniors who may not feel comfortable travelling with others around them right now. He thanked Ms. Williams and her team for prioritizing the program and allowing people, many of whom don't have a computer, internet access, or experience language barriers, to be able to get out for essential items and services.

Commissioner Preston concurred with Commissioner Safai's comments and thanked Ms. Williams for her work. He asked why age 65 was the minimum qualifier for the Essential Trip Card when for other purposes the City had defined vulnerable populations in San Francisco starting at the age of 60. He asked whether it might be possible to expand eligibility for the program during the shelter-in-place period down to age 60.

Ms. Williams replied that staff followed SFMTA guidelines for Muni fare categories, which qualifies age 65 and over as senior and qualifies persons with mobility impairment below age 65 for Regional Transit Connection. She further explained that with this approach, staff thought they captured everyone who had any kind of mobility limitation that would affect their ability to walk to Muni stops.

Commissioner Preston acknowledged that the program probably captured most folks, but also wondered if those who may not have mobility issues, but still were considered high-risk could possibly benefit as well.

Ms. William answered that SFMTA staff could definitely take the suggestion back to the policy group to discuss the matter, but also felt that they captured most of the people in the 60 to 65 category, who have mobility impairments, based on the fare programs at SFMTA and in the region (i.e., the Regional Transit Connection card/discount).

Commissioner Mandelman-posed a scenario of a 60 plus person without impairment, experiencing difficulty walking half a mile uphill with groceries, and asked for clarity on which program would that person qualify for.

Ms. Williams explained that a Muni rider with any kind of mobility impairment would apply for the Regional Transit Connection Program or senior Clipper card to get discounts or free Muni, if low or moderate income, and she clarified that these populations those with Regional Transit Connection card were automatically eligible for the Essential Trip Card Program.

Commissioner Mandelman replied that during his conversations with people in their late 50s/early 60s that did not necessarily have a mobility impairment to be enrolled in a particular program, it could still be difficult to walk half a mile to a mile uphill with groceries. He further echoed Commissioner Preston's comments about providing



some flexibility by pushing the qualifying age down to 60. Commissioner Mandelman also asked about the processing time from start to finish for people seeking enrollment in the paratransit program.

Ms. Williams answer that paratransit staff were trying to process applications as quickly as possible, with most getting done with 1-2 weeks. Some may take up to three weeks, which are often ones pending documentation such as from a doctor's office. She noted that the Americans with Disabilities Act required processing to be done with 21 days.

Commissioner Mandelman asked about how the Paratransit Plus Program related to the other paratransit options.

Ms. Williams explained that this programs was targeted at those that don't quite meet the Americans with Disabilities Act criteria to qualify for regular paratransit, but occasionally have difficulty using Muni and really benefit from having occasional access to a taxi.

There was no public comment on Item 10.

#### **Other Items**

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

**12. Public Comment**

During public comment, Chair Peskin acknowledged receipt of public comment via email from Alvin Ja, prior to the meeting.

Roland Lebrun asked about what happens to written public comment from the general public since the Transportation Authority doesn't append it to the agenda like MTC does. He further discussed the lack of Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings for two months.

Chair Peskin said that written public comment was distributed to all members of the Board prior to the meeting, but acknowledged the suggestion to append public comments to the agenda materials. He also addressed the comment on the CAC meeting, stating that the agency has only held its second virtual public meeting so far, and that he was working with staff to reconvene the CAC virtually in May.

**13. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.