



DRAFT MINUTES

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

1. Roll Call

Chair Mandelman called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Present at Roll Call: Commissioners, Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, and Walton (11)

Absent at Roll Call: (0)

2. Chair's Report - INFORMATION

Chair Mandelman reported that over the past weeks and months there has been a surge of violent attacks against Asian Americans in the city and across the country. He extended his condolences to the families of those lost to violence and those hurt by the attacks in Atlanta and San Francisco. He said that the Board stands with the Mayor and community leaders across the city for the collective calls for an immediate end to the violence against Asian American Pacific Islanders (APIs) and all members of the community. He expressed that everyone deserves to feel safe on their streets and in the city. At times like these, he said, it is important and healing for people to be able to gather in the public squares and open spaces to remember victims and confront and denounce hate. He shared that the past weekend, many attended vigils, marches, and community events at Portsmouth Square, in the Castro, and along Market Street to Chinatown and heard messages of solidarity and support.

Chair Mandelman also reported that this month marked the anniversary of the start of shelter-in-place public health orders. He said it has been and continues to be a trying time for so many community members and businesses. He said they are continuing to work on ways to support essential commuters and travelers and want to belatedly thank the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and regional operators, as last Thursday the 18th was Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day. During the pandemic, he said, they have provided safe, reliable transportation for their riders as they travel to and from work, medical appointments, and other essential trips. He said he looks forward to SFMTA's presentation on their transportation recovery plans later on the agenda. He added that with more and more people getting vaccinated, they are beginning to re-open the economy, and restoring transit service will be key to that recovery.

He said that the economic recovery got a major boost with the passage of the third major COVID relief bill in Washington. He thanked Speaker Pelosi, the entire Federal delegation, and President Biden for passing the American Recovery Act, which included \$1.6 billion in lifeline funds for Bay Area transit operators and around \$3.1 billion for local Bay Area governments. He also added that transit projects that received funding in the bill include Caltrain Electrification (\$52 million), Central Subway (\$23 million) and BART Transbay Core Capacity program (\$87 million). He



said that they were very grateful for the essential support which would help backfill project funds that were impacted by the pandemic and enable them to avoid layoffs and re-grow the economy.

Lastly, Chair Mandelman recognized the passing of Anne Halsted, who was honored last week at the TIMMA Committee and at the Board of Supervisors. He said as Commissioner Ronen and Vice Chair Peskin recalled in their tributes, Anne served the city for over 5 decades in numerous capacities, including on the Treasure Island Development Authority and for the past 12 years on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), as a San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission representative. He added that she was a strong voice for regional collaboration, climate resilience and sustainable growth. He expressed condolences to her loved ones and legions of city and regional colleagues who benefited from her leadership, mentorship and service and added that he would be adjourning the meeting in her honor.

There was no public comment.

3. Executive Director's Report - INFORMATION

Tilly Chang, Executive Director, presented the Executive Director's Report.

During public comment, Roland Lebrun shared that Union Pacific Railroad (UP) has agreed to operate diesel freight under the wye on the Peninsula which has profound implications for achieving GHG targets. He said between San Jose and Gilroy they will no longer need a third electrified track just for freight. He added that moving forward, UP will be sharing track with electrified rail like they do elsewhere. Mr. Lebrun said Pacheco Pass was the wrong alignment and they need to focus more on Fresno. He said to look for a memo from the former CEO of the California High Speed Rail Authority (January 1999, Item #7) which shows there is another alignment that does not require tunneling. He said to ask Chief Executive Brian Kelley to restore all board agendas and memos prior to January 2018. Lastly, Mr. Lebrun said the Caltrain board should understand the relationship between Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Capital Corridor to inform Caltrain governance discussions.

4. Approve the Minutes of the March 9, 2021 Meeting - ACTION

There was no public comment.

Vice Chair Peskin moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Ronen.

The minutes were approved without objection by the following vote:

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

Absent: (0)

Consent Agenda

5. [Final Approval] Appoint Rosa Chen and Sophia Tupuola to the Citizens Advisory Committee - ACTION

6. [Final Approval] State and Federal Legislation Update - ACTION



7. [Final Approval] Allocate \$945,258 in Prop K Funds, with Conditions, and \$2,020,000 in Prop AA Funds for Four Requests - ACTION
8. [Final Approval] Support the City and County of San Francisco's Project Nominations for \$6,359,000 in Senate Bill 1 Local Partnership Program Formulaic Program Funds - ACTION
9. [Final Approval] Approve the Transportation Authority's Project Nominations for \$10,444,302 from the Safe and Seamless Mobility Quick-Strike Program - ACTION
10. [Final Approval] Amend the Downtown Rail Extension - Phasing and Partial 15% Design Project Scope, Schedule, and Budget and Release \$6,210,000 in Previously Allocated Prop K Sales Tax Funds, with Conditions, for Accelerated Project Development - ACTION

There was no public comment.

Vice Chair Peskin moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Ronen.

The consent agenda was approved without objection by the following vote:

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

Absent: (0)

End of Consent Agenda

11. San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Transportation Recovery Plan - INFORMATION

Jeffrey Tumlin, Director of Transportation, Julie Kirschbaum, Director of Transit, and Tom Maguire, Director of Streets Division with SFMTA presented the item.

Commissioner Chan thanked Chair Mandelman for adding this item to the agenda which she requested in February. She said that as they reopen and restart the economy, the westside communities need to see a concrete plan to show it is safe to get from one place to another to ensure they are truly a transit first city. She said they need to make some of the temporary improvements permanent for transit speed and safety, noting that some of the improvements like the Great Highway and Golden Gate Park road closures, slow streets and shared spaces call for improved safety and efficiency. She acknowledged that will likely hear through public comment today that there are a wide range of opinions on these topics. Commissioner Chan continued by saying that she and likely her colleagues Commissioners Mar and Melgar have heard that they cannot go back to the way it was. She said there is a unique opportunity to rethink streetscape and street designs and that through good planning, they can keep neighborhoods walkable, bikeable and connected.

Commissioner Chan said that the Great Highway had 20,000 cars daily, but more than 60,000 were traveling downtown using transit. She stated that more people were working from home and on a hybrid work schedule, which has changed how people travel around the city. She said she has asked SFMTA how they track data and travel patterns and to develop plans to meet those travel needs.



Director Tumlin said that he understands the necessity to keep the best of what they have done, and also recognizes that travel patterns have changed. He emphasize that improvements were done quickly, expressing that some should stick around while others should be let go. Director Tumlin said they need to make adjustments along the way as they are a long way from full recovery at the SFMTA.

Commissioner Chan pointed out that current ridership data doesn't include lines that do not have service.

Director Kirschbaum responded that is why they are also tracking coverage. She said they think they can come back to 98% coverage by August when school returns. She said as they add back routes it reduces their ability to address crowding, but also provides important coverage for those that currently don't have transit service. She said they may not restore service exactly the way it was and that it may be more about making connections to higher frequency routes, but they will have the data to help them make decisions.

Commissioner Preston thanked Commissioner Chan for calling the hearing. He also acknowledged SFMTA's staff and line workers for their hard work. He said that he recognizes the visionary work and the activation of outdoor spaces. He added that he encourages all to view these as successful pilots and to continue to push the envelope on expanding Slow Streets to help achieve Vision Zero while prioritizing non-car use of public space. With respect to Muni, he followed up on the level of service and said he understands the previous lack of service was caused by a lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) but has since been addressed. He asked why the level remains at 70% and not 100%.

Ms. Kirschbaum replied that operators are one of dozens of positions needed to run the transit system. She said they had a 15% vacancy coming into COVID, which compounded over the last year. She added that they also lost efficiency noting operators can't meet buses in the street, as they have to change operators at the division since vehicles are cleaned first.

Commissioner Preston asked what the current reserves of SFMTA were.

Director Tumlin replied that he did not have that answer but would report back once he did.

Commissioner Preston asked if they were allocating the reserves in order to increase, the service restoration to 85% and beyond.

Director Tumlin replied that SFMTA's key sources of revenue, particularly parking and transit fares, have been significantly depressed. He said their plan for using the reserves now that they have the benefit of some one time federal relief money, is to use the reserves as a backstop if they are unable to get onto the 2022 ballot for a new ongoing revenue measure or if the measure fails at the ballot. He said they need to save their reserves to avoid laying off staff if they are unsuccessful in restoring ongoing operating revenue that is necessary for them to get to full service restoration. He added that they don't want to gamble reserves and risk staff positions if they are not successful.

Commissioner Preston noted that under the recovery plan, they are planning less than 100% restoration by Fiscal Year 2022 with a policy decision to not use reserve to further increase the restoration of service.



Ms. Kirschbaum clarified that there were two reasons why they will be at 85% service levels by the end of the year. She said one is the risk of not having stable funding, and second is not having the time, ability to hire, and ability to create new civil service lists quickly enough. She said they just got authority from the Department of Public Health and all of their hiring has a long lead time. She said they looked at how quickly they could hire up, and other staff looked at what service level they could sustain. She added they will need all of that lead time to deliver that 85% service level. Ms. Kirschbaum said that they can have the policy decision about what level of risk is appropriate and what the ballot is looking like by the Spring. She emphasized the need for time to hire and train personnel.

Director Tumlin confirmed that SFMTA's reserves were a little over \$130 million which translates to 10% of their operating budget. He said it was less than the gap that is necessary to get full service.

Commissioner Preston asked what the price tag was for the gap.

Director Tumlin replied that it is about 15% of their budget.

Commissioner Preston questioned if the SFMTA had made any decisions to permanently abandon any lines.

Ms. Kirschbaum replied that they have not made any such decisions, and she emphasized that the path they could take from 70% to 85% service and 85% to 100% service, presented a lot of choices about how to restore the service and when.

Commissioner Preston said that a route abandonment would require action by the Board of Supervisors. He added that a long-term suspension is 2 years and asked if there is a threshold at which the SFMTA would come to Board of Supervisors or was it only necessary if the line was suspended indefinitely.

Ms. Kirschbaum replied that that was a matter they would have to get legal guidance on, and then provide follow up.

With respect to lines 6, 21 and 31, Commissioner Preston raised the question of when they would be returning.

Ms. Kirschbaum responded that they anticipate that the hilltop portion of 6 Parnassus would return back in time for the August school restart. She said it is an area where they have heard about service gaps, and in the Fall, they will have more discussions as it relates to the 85% restoration, and what it looks like.

Commissioner Preston concluded that he wanted to emphasize those lines, but to also recognize that the 31 line, from an equity lens, runs through the heart of the Fillmore where there are high concentrations of low-income persons, African Americans, and seniors, as well as being one of the areas with the lowest car ownership rates in the city. He said the neighborhood is very dependent on the 31 line and to some extent the 21 and is very affected by its absence. He thanked the SFMTA staff in advance for the return of the N Judah in May.

Commissioner Melgar thanked the SFMTA staff for their flexibility and willingness to work with them on the restoration of some service to the hills between Districts 8 and 7, helping folks who were left stranded. She said that District 7 is far removed from downtown and has seen the least amount of attention in terms of Slow Streets. She appreciated that Director Tumlin recently biked through the district to see all the



possibilities. Commissioner Melgar said she is not happy about the delay in restoration of K and M, in particular. She commented that light rail not only moves people to downtown but also brings people to and moves them within District 7, and to institutions like the Zoo, San Francisco State University (SFSU), and City College. She said light rail is part of the ecosystem, and she was hoping the timing of the restoration would be more aligned with economic reopening. She noted bus service on Ocean is helpful, but it does not carry anything close to the volume of rail. Commissioner Melgar stated that the merchant corridors were desperate, and merchants feel like this decision has hit like a ton of bricks.

With respect to hiring, Commissioner Melgar asked if there is anything they could do to help speed up the slow process or anything that the Office of Workforce Development (OEWD) could do to tap into existing workforce programs and to move folks into positions more quickly. Commissioner Melgar expressed that they need to support the economic recovery of the neighborhood commercial districts as they employ people and are an important part of the city's economy.

Ms. Kirschbaum responded that they have enjoyed some successful partnerships with OEWD. She said they will continue to stay engaged with them, as that is an important recommendation as they try to accelerate hiring. She added that the city drive program that helps get potential drivers through the process of obtaining a Class B permit, which is a critical part of the program, is an example of a program where they partnered. She said that they are also working alongside OEWD to understand the downtown recovery and how they can support neighborhood commercial districts. Ms. Kirschbaum said she will work with their human resources department as they continue to push to fill tough-to-fill classifications.

Commissioner Melgar thanked the SFMTA for considering the 29 Rapid service for the district which is important for youth. She said it is important that youth learn to use transit - which needs to be easy and efficient - early on, as they will be lifelong riders. She added that she looks forward to speeding up the timeline and doing whatever they can do on the Board, especially if it is about projecting more stable sources of funding before SFMTA can put out the lists.

Commissioner Mar echoed his colleagues' words of appreciation, particularly for bringing back the N Judah in May, the 18 serving the west side in August, and 29 Rapid service. He said that this past year has shown dramatically different travel patterns with less congestion and fewer overall trips, but more in neighborhoods. He said that much of the capacity of the transit system has been focused on getting downtown. He added that the District 4 (D4) study showed that 65% of trips within D4 are taken by car. He asked how they are taking the lessons of the pandemic to better serve trips within and between neighborhoods.

Ms. Kirschbaum responded that the pattern he just described is what has guided transit service recovery. She said that the pandemic took downtown out of the equation and made connectivity to neighborhood, commercial, grocery stores, and hospitals their highest priority and taught them a lot about the transportation network. She said that downtown continues to be a big driver of trips, and they will need to continue having a strong network. She added that they need to grow the system between neighborhoods and within neighborhood destinations.

Mr. Maguire added that it was not a one size fit all situation and the goal is to reduce



that 65% of car trips, but not all of it will be on bus and rail.

Director Tumlin said both Richmond and Sunset provide a complete grid of streets to be able to experiment with slow street corridors and different design techniques that do not diminish opportunities for any user or group. He said they are looking for more opportunities for families to make those short trips on any means of transportation safer.

Commissioner Mar said that it is critical that people have the opportunity to take transit. He said they have adapted many streets to serve new purposes, but all of these changes have caused cumulative effects. He said it has made it much harder to drive between the Richmond and Sunset, and asked what the plan was to properly manage traffic as volumes increase significantly. He said that data shows 20,000 vehicles on Upper Great Highway previously and asked how they were going to manage as that comes back, especially if there is a short-term shift to driving versus public transit. He added that the concept is to direct traffic to Sunset Boulevard, but he also has serious concerns about what that means for Lincoln Boulevard with no signal lights in that stretch.

Mr. Maguire said that it is a delicate balance. He said the arrows [routing] shown on the map only work if they address pinch points. He said that Great Highway and Lincoln are two of the important points they are currently working on. He said to address the congestion, they are looking into changing signal timing, and adding more green time to Sunset Boulevard so that it flows more smoothly, as well as improving signage for motorists who are traveling south on Great Highway towards Lincoln, so that they understand how to make the turn safely. With regard to safety, he said they would draw from the same toolbox used to build out the quick build vision zero network. Mr. Maguire said they also want to make sure that any work that they do to smooth out traffic flow does not increase speed.

Commissioner Safai asked SFMTA staff to explain why they were not restoring light rail service in some areas and keeping buses instead. He said when they were going into COVID, they were able to work with nurses to accelerate the timeline for hiring. He suggested engaging with the operators' union to accelerate the process for hiring drivers.

Ms. Kirschbaum said that the rail operator challenge is entirely about training and not hiring. She said that all operators start as bus operators, and they have a long list of bus operators excited for the opportunity to become a rail operator. She added that it is about not cutting corners and not compromising the safety of the training programs. She said they are on track to train 45-50 more operators between now and the end of August. Ms. Kirschbaum expressed that the challenge is that there are 100 supervisor positions open, and they anticipate upcoming retirements. She shared that because rail operators have training and very relevant experience, they compete well for the supervisor positions.

Commissioner Safai asked if they were working with operator unions at the table to help accelerate the process. He said they fought to bring back the bus line to replace the light rail and had long conversations about how much debt SFMTA would take on. He added that they also had numerous conversations with the finance team to understand the amount of money that is needed to restore service and said he's frustrated that they only have 80% of the story.



Ms. Kirschbaum said they work closely with the union. She said that the main reason to restore the F line is because of operator advocacy and working with the union to get barriers on historic trains so they are protected while maintaining the historic character of the cars. She said they are also incorporating rail training based on feedback from the union. She added that there are lots of operators where English is not their first language, so they have adjusted the program to be more hands on while addressing different learning styles.

Commissioner Safai asked if there was any way to accelerate that process for who gets promoted to supervisor based on how it would impact service. He said that is the type of result that a partnership with the union would help achieve. He asked Director Tumlin, going forward, through the Chair if he could make this a priority. He said it is quick moving and would help to have a monthly update on the recovery plan given all of the changes coming.

Director Tumlin responded that a monthly update may be too frequent given the pace of change. He said however that he is certainly happy to provide updates in regular conversations with the Board on impacts in their respective districts, with every other month or quarterly updates to the full Board.

Commissioner Safai replied that 60 days would be good and as needed, individual briefings. He asked about the temporary Slow Streets and car-free streets put into place citywide during the pandemic, and what was the plan and timeline to pull those back.

Mr. Maguire replied that the approach is neighborhood by neighborhood. Broadly speaking, he said that the program is popular, and they hear more from people about making it permanent rather than taking away. He added that they are working to provide better, more robust and uniform infrastructure, and if there are places where Slow Streets are not working, they will take that feedback and make adjustments.

Commissioner Safai commented that as schools and the economy open up more, these programs will not work as well as when there were lower levels of traffic. He said as they see an increase in traffic, as they have already seen the freeway become more congested, it is an important conversation to be had. He acknowledged that a lot of people have enjoyed Slow Streets and car-free streets, but that it is going to be harder to justify them given serious traffic congestion and other concerns.

Mr. Maguire said they will look at places where there are pinch points and concerns and address while balancing the need to provide travel alternatives to driving.

Chair Mandelman said they will work on a regular schedule of briefings on the reopening.

Commissioner Walton acknowledged that Slow Streets are great for slowing traffic and providing a place for kids to play. He said they work well where they are asked for, but not places without transportation options or for communities who are dependent on car. He pointed out the exclusionary policies like closing JFK to black and brown communities and said that all communities have not weighed in on these closed door conversations. Commissioner Walton expressed that he has not had one conversation about JFK and said they will not exclude African Americans from participating, adding that Golden Gate Park and San Francisco streets belong to everyone.



Commissioner Mar said it sounds like defective splices in the subway have been addressed, but train control and track replacement are still needed. He asked what the timeline for those other major projects was to help ensure that the frequent delays and complete shutdown do not happen again.

Ms. Kirschbaum said that the subway renewal program is on the order of a \$1 billion investment and will take 5 to 10 years in duration. She said the design work is underway for track replacement and crossovers at Castro, Embarcadero, Van Ness, Church and Duboce and they anticipate those in a 2-3 year timeframe. She shared that the train control project was underway but was a complex project that was a significant upgrade to how they do business. She said they were going to operate the subway from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. which would allow a larger maintenance window to get the work done and minimize break downs throughout the day. She added that they would continue to work with Director Chang and staff to ensure it fit into the next sales tax expenditure plan. Ms. Kirschbaum said that San Francisco deserves a high capacity, reliable subway, which they can get to, but it will take continued focus and investment.

Commissioner Mar said he appreciates that the SFMTA is prioritizing deferred maintenance. He said this is key to restoring public trust and getting the public to embrace transit again.

Chair Mandelman thanked the SFMTA for their extraordinary effort over the past year. He said that the drivers kept coming to work and got people where they needed to go. He also thanked SFMTA leaders as they showed serious sensitivity to equity concerns while eliminating much of the service in his District to get essential workers where they need to go in a safe way. He added that innovative things like Slow Streets have worked in some places and not others but have been a real boon where they work.

He commented that he didn't hear that the federal funds would get them out of their challenges entirely, but that they would get them to a ballot measure without layoffs. He said some of the issues around hiring and training pre-date the pandemic and were discussed as part of the Transit Performance Working Group on which he had served. He said he was excited to see the SFMTA tackle the issues that were raised, and then COVID hit, so he is happy to go back to look at the issues they had a year ago rather than having to focus solely on pandemic emergency issues.

During public comment, Christopher Peterson said he is dismayed at how slowly Muni is restoring service being that Congress has provided unprecedented amounts of funding. He said that the prolonged service limitations may lead to a transit death spiral as well as slow economic recovery which will reduce fares and contribute to Muni's decline. He said Muni should be creative and shared an example of cleaning the buses, stating that it does little to impact transmission now that vaccination is underway, and yet reduces service capacity.

A member from the Concerned Citizens of Richmond said the meeting discussion made their blood boil. They suggested opening the gate to Great Highway and the problems would go away, and as they remain stuck in the Richmond, she hoped that both Commissioners Mar and Chan do the right thing to help their respective Districts.

Brian Wiedenmeier with the San Francisco Bike Coalition thanked the Board and staff



for the hearing. He said what they have seen over the past year is that Slow Streets, car-free spaces, and shared spaces have helped neighborhood commercial corridors and helped improve safety. He said that shared spaces, Slow Streets, and car-free spaces in parks can be supportive of the economic recovery, as they have heard from folks who have benefited across San Francisco. He urged SFMTA to make them permanent and expand upon them based on feedback from the community.

Richard Rothman, a Richmond District resident said that closing the Great Highway will have a great impact in the Richmond District. He said the biggest employers are in the western half of the city including the Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital. He shared that all the cars are backed up all the way to Fulton Street and people are driving on Chain of Lakes Drive. He suggested opening the Great Highway, half to cars and the other half to bicyclists and pedestrians.

Serena Unger who lives next to Golden Gate Park said that she's a mother and urban planner who knows they need to take action on climate change. She said she has lived 20 years without a car and supports the closure of JFK for kids' safety as they play. She said they need to act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and closing roads to cars helps address that.

John Elliot, a District 1 resident said that it can't go back to the way it was before, as this is a unique opportunity. He said that this is their Embarcadero freeway movement in making the city more accessible. He shared that they are not stuck in the Richmond area as he navigates the city on his bike. Mr. Elliot said If they want to be equitable, 1 in 4 streets should not be accessible to cars.

Jean Barish with Save Muni urged the Board to postpone a final decision at this time. She said the original decision was a temporary response and the Great Highway is part of an arterial network that relieves traffic impact on local streets. She said that a decision on permanent closure is premature until the lifting of the health order. She added that they need robust outreach in Richmond and Sunset before enacting a permanent plan.

Cat Carter with San Francisco Transit Riders (SF Transit Riders) thanked SFMTA staff from Director Tumlin to the operators and maintenance staff. She thanked Ms. Kirschbaum and Mr. Ramos for their efforts and Commissioner Chan for calling the hearing and raising important questions. She said they understand SFMTA has real challenges and urged the Transportation Authority to assist in helping hire and train operators. She said now is not the time for half measures, and they need to grow transit to build back better. She commented that there were too many car dependent people in San Francisco, and that robust Muni service gives people an alternative. She added that Slow Streets are great, but Muni is critical for mobility, equity, safe streets, and climate goals.

An Outer Sunset resident said she lives directly across from the closed Great Highway and when she opens her front door she is faced with buses, commercial and industrial traffic and motorcycle gangs, saying many blow off stops signs. She said people need to travel north/south, that the closure is not working, and it should be made temporary not permanent.

Olivia Gamboa, a Richmond resident, and physician said she really enjoyed Slow Streets, car-free JFK and Great Highway to commute to work. She said there are lots of other places to drive, but if she wants to take a 5-year-old on a bike, there are few



places to take them. With respect to Mr. Maguire's earlier point, she said they need to continue to look at pinch points, and not destroy what makes their city livable. She added that they declared a climate emergency and vision zero, but the City is not acting like it.

A member of the SF Transit Riders voiced his concern about restoration of only 70% in 2021 and 85% of transit service in 2022. He said this is not a world class plan and SFMTA has no plan for full restoration. He said this could lead to further cuts and a continued decrease in ridership. He added that trying to shoehorn needs into this budget is a gargantuan task but deserves focus and it is vital that the city gets it right.

Barry Toronto said he appreciates the great comments and suggestions as well as increased service. He shared that he was on the 38 Geary recently and it was completely packed with no social distancing, and riding taxis after 9 p.m. has become dangerous. He said it is good that they have expanded paratransit, but many do not practice the current safety mandates put in place and drivers should be rewarded for the risks they take. He added the double parking, number of food deliveries and TNCs has increased making it hard for Muni to get around.

Hayden Miller, a San Francisco high school student, said he is worried about how he is going to get to school with the current service. He said SFMTA is following scientific guidance that says 3 feet distance is safe but continue to do unnecessary and unscientific cleaning of transit vehicles that slows down service. He commented that they say they don't have enough operators, but he's witnessed operators standing around looking at phones when they are supposed to be ambassadors. He said he supports operators, but they should be working. He added that people need to get around so the economy can work, so he and others can get to school, and that 70%-85% of service is not acceptable.

A caller thanked Muni bus drivers for their service and patience. She said the Slow Streets are a mess and the Page Street traffic has now been pushed to Oak Street and they have been inundated with all kinds of hazards. She said after the pandemic, people will want to use their cars and urged the Board not to make Slow Streets permanent. She said these were supposed to be temporary and now are being proposed to be permanent which causes distrust in the public. She noted she uses transit and doesn't own a car.

Roland Lebrun said he had a suggestion to get more funds to address some of the concerns raised by other callers. He referenced a letter dated March 8 that he wrote to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and that will be under tomorrow's MTC Programming and Allocations Committee Item 7B. Mr. Lebrun said Santa Clara County sales tax revenues are up 7%, and as a result VTA is projecting a \$96.8 million surplus for Fiscal Year 21, and yet VTA is on deck to get more funds tomorrow at MTC. He urged Commissioners Josefowitz and Ronen in their role as MTC Commissioner to have a robust conversation regarding the equitable distribution of federal relief funds at MTC tomorrow.

Pete Wilson, Executive Vice President Transport Workers Union Local 258 shared his appreciation for Commissioner Safai and said his questions raised regarding the trains. He said they would have liked to have seen 1 to 2 train lines running to keep the operators practiced so that they didn't have to be re-trained. He said it would have also been excellent for new people to be scheduled at the same time, but



nonetheless he is excited to see rail lines up and running again. He said he is not a big advocate of driving, but many operators have moved out of the city and now travel in for work. He said they are getting parking tickets because Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) closes at 9 p.m., and he said that they have received no assistance from the SFMTA. He raised another issue stating that the City tells their employees to stay home if they are sore or have a cough but then they are receiving suspensions for attendance.

Maryo Mogannam, President of the San Francisco Council of District Merchants Associations said that he sent an email expressing his concerns about the progress of the Golden Gate Park Sustainable Access (JFK closure) stakeholder work group. He said they have addressed many variables, but not equitable access. Mr. Mogannam said they are dancing around the toughest topic and until it's addressed, they can't make any germane progress. He urged the Board to ask the task force to go back and have a more sincere and open dialogue.

A caller said he is frustrated by the city's implementation of the transit system. He said that since he has moved to San Francisco he has noticed that cars don't work, but that doesn't mean none of other services shouldn't work either. He said the projects that the SFMTA have allocated their resources to have been destructive to transit and have been reliably transit destructive especially during the pandemic.

Theodore Randolph an Excelsior District resident said that Slow Streets can be successful if they are given a fair chance to be successful. He said the only slow street in his neighborhood is Excelsior Road, which is steep, whereas in other neighborhoods, Slow Streets are flat, and are well enjoyed. He said that Slow Streets can be done quickly, but when he has asked for more realistic streets in his district, nothing happened. He suggested that the intersection of Excelsior Avenue, and Cayuga and Holloway should be turned into a Slow Street. He said before they decide to shut down the Slow Streets in District 11, they should give a chance for them to succeed.

Adam Jamin, a District 1 resident, asked the Board to continue to support Director Tumlin in his efforts to restore the Muni system. He said as a senior citizen he rides a bike as well as owns a vehicle, and he said he takes advantage of the Slow Streets in his neighborhood. He said his advice is to keep transit first and to get SFMTA to restoring service as fast as possible and increase when they can.

A caller pleaded to make policies that are inclusive of all San Francisco residents of all ages, abilities, and incomes. They said at a time when the elders are risking their lives, families want to protect them by personally transporting them for their daily errands. They said Muni is not a viable option for those that are unable to walk or stand for long periods of time waiting or climb steps in the vehicles. They said that everyone should be prioritized to public spaces. Both Great Highway and JFK drive have bicycle lanes and that everyone else needs to have access as well. He asked for there to be consideration of air quality impacts in neighborhoods from 20,000 cars that hit the Outer Sunset and Outer Richmond areas and it's not fair to those neighborhoods.

A District 1 resident called in to support the SFMTA for what they have been doing to increase transit ridership. He said he supports making Slow Streets permanent and car-free JFK and Great Highway. He shared that about 150 years later, they are finally catching up with Frederick Olmsted's vision and realizing there are a lot of spaces in



the city where people lack access to safe, outdoor space and he hopes they continue on this path.

An Outer Richmond resident said that her family has enjoyed Slow Streets as the city has been shut down. She said that as the city opens up, what has not been addressed are the people who cannot use transportation, take transit or ride bikes because they are immobile, disabled, their Immune system is compromised, and/or they have a family. She said that the temporary closure has resulted in traffic increases and shared that on the weekends they are blocked in on that side of town. She added that safety and parking issues in both the Richmond and Sunset area also need to be addressed. She said that a large percentage of residents in the Richmond District are against the continued and temporary road closure and urged leaders to keep the residents in consideration when they make a decision on reopening the Great Highway, and to keep San Francisco safe for all.

Matt Brazino, a District 8 resident, and a parent of 2 under the age of 3, said that his family uses bicycles as a main mode of transportation. He shared that he has been suffering 10 months from COVID and, as a result cannot ride a normal bike. He said thankfully there are electric bikes that he can use to travel safely with his family without harming the planet. With respect to making JFK car-free, he said that it's safe, exhaust free, and desirable. He added that a car-free highway encourages people to travel more by scooter or bike. He said there are 3,000 free parking spots in Golden Gate Park and more on Lincoln and Fulton and said that doesn't exclude anyone, but actually expands access to more people. He said that he will reach out to Commissioners Walton and Safai to discuss the issues further.

A San Francisco Bike Coalition and SF Transit Riders member expressed support for making Slow Streets permanent and additionally expanding across the city. He said there are equity issues but that doesn't mean they need to shut them down. He said they are a transit first city and should expand service. He said they should be flexible, and get people moving in a way that addresses their climate emergency.

Patrick, a long-term resident of District 2 and District 5 shared support for all Slow Streets and expanding Slow Streets while keeping JFK drive car-free. He said they don't need more space for cars in the city and stated that he hopes both Commissioners Walton and Safai change their position on.

Luke Borneheimer, a District 8 resident and father thanked SFMTA for trying people-oriented spaces, such as JFK, and stated that it's critical that they make Slow Streets and JFK closure permanent. He said that they need to provide better Muni access, especially for Districts 10 and 11 residents and added that Commissioner Mar's work to provide traffic calming for the Great Highway closure was inspiring.

Natasha Boule, a District 2 resident expressed her support for making Slow Streets permanent, keeping JFK car-free, and restoring Muni to full service. She shared that before JFK was car-free, she experienced harassment, and urged the Board to keep the impact on women in mind.

Jay Bain, a Richmond resident, said though he appreciates other point of views, they do not speak for him or any other District 1 resident who chooses to walk, bike or use transit for commuting, essential trips, and recreation. Mr. Bain said that his family walks, bike, and rides for short trips, and travels by car for further commutes. He said there are not traffic jams 100% of the time and when there is a delay it only adds a few



more minutes to their driving time. He encouraged SFMTA to use data and not traffic optics of a few drivers when making their decisions.

Steven Boss expressed his support and said he would like to see the Slow Streets program expanded. He asked if they were opposed to a people-prioritized JFK sharing that it is the most loved change in San Francisco.

A District 1 resident expressed strong support for keeping Slow Streets and JFK, in particular, car-free. He said he uses the route daily and has seen 300-400% increase of people on bikes and walking through the park. He said they don't have to worry about being hit by a car when doing daily exercise and everyone enjoys the fact there are not cars.

A caller suggested that Commissioners Walton and Safai visit and experience car-free JFK.

An Outer Richmond resident shared his support towards car-free JFK and said he has gone on walks with his family and has witnessed community building and serendipitous passings.

Commissioner Chan thanked Commissioner Mandelman and Director Chang for holding the hearing and her colleagues for hearing out the presentation and comments and her constituents for calling in. She noted that the public comment illustrated that her constituents have a diversity of opinions, especially as it relates to how JFK and the Great Highway closures impact the city.

Commissioner Chan said that the Great Highway and JFK closures have benefits, and she is glad people are enjoying them, but she also has constituents with concerns about access for elderly parents, and the need to drive, along with constituents who work in the South Bay. She also addressed the negative comments directed towards her colleagues, sharing that she grew up in Chinatown, and firsthand experienced how hard it was to visit JFK. She said there are equity issues affecting places like Bayview and Chinatown and they have to fight for green space and equity in access and said when they have a road closure, that creates segregation. Commissioner Chan said she shares that passion in Walton's comments and said that per SFMTA's presentation, the people will have to make a choice between public transit and private vehicles. She said saying that it's not a one size fit all approach pits her constituents against each other and is an easy way out. She said as experts, they need to provide expertise and data to make these decisions. With respect to the Golden Gate Park Sustainable Access study, she said she wanted to ensure the Board was aware that it is coming along, and Transportation Authority staff are helping to facilitate the conversation, and urged her constituents to contribute to the study, as well as the D4 Mobility Study and Great Highway. She echoed Commissioner Safai's comments on hearing back from the SFMTA regularly and closed by stating that she is looking to her colleagues to help hold the city accountable and to vet out the plan.

12. Connect SF Transit Strategy Update - INFORMATION

This item was deferred to the call of the Chair.



Other Items

13. Introduction of New Items - INFORMATION

Chair Mandelman called for a hearing on the troubling trends they have seen in recent years with the delivery of large transportation capital projects that are far too often delayed, over budget, or beset by unforeseen technical challenges, like the Twin Peaks tunnel track replacement, Van Ness BRT, or Central Subway.

He shared that last month the Controller's office issued an audit of the SFMTA's effectiveness at delivering capital projects and found that the agency needed to improve internal processes for accountability, communication, and collaboration among divisions and stakeholders, and included 16 specific recommendations. He said he would like for the Board to have an opportunity to hear from SFMTA about what they're doing to respond to the findings of the report and their progress on implementing those recommendations.

Chair stated that as they look ahead to various upcoming infrastructure projects, from Better Market Street to the Downtown Rail Extension, it's important to take a close look at what's not working and what they can do to change that. He added that it is especially important as they anticipate going to the voters next year for a renewal of the Prop K transportation sales tax and potentially other revenue measures. He said they should do everything they can to assure voters that transportation leaders take these problems seriously and are working diligently to ensure they don't happen on the next project.

14. Public Comment

During public comment, Roland Lebrun said he would be submitting his comments in writing due to time constraints.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.