



## Memorandum

### AGENDA ITEM 3

**DATE:** April 27, 2021

**TO:** Transportation Authority Board: Commissioners Mandelman (Chair), Chan, Haney, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, and Walton

**FROM:** Tilly Chang - Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** 04/27/21 Board Meeting: Executive Director's Report – **INFORMATION**

### REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL ISSUES

**Federal Infrastructure Packages - Democrat and Republican Funding Proposals Center on Transportation Investments:** As reported at the last Board meeting, on March 31 the Biden Administration announced the American Jobs Plan, a \$2 trillion eight-year infrastructure bill emphasizing investments that combat climate change, aid disadvantaged communities, and advance economic opportunities. It includes \$621 billion for transportation, including \$85 billion for transit modernization, \$80 billion for passenger and freight rail, and \$174 billion to support electric vehicle deployment. On April 23, Senate Republicans announced their own \$568 billion infrastructure package which includes \$380 billion for transportation. Of that, public transportation would see \$61 billion, and rail would see \$20 billion. While the Administration's version looks to incorporate tax increases to fund the bill, the Senate Republicans' version would pay for it, in part, by extending the cap on state and local tax deductions. We continue to work with the Mayor's Office, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), and the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) to support robust funding for any new infrastructure bill and to advocate for funding criteria that maximize the competitiveness of San Francisco projects.

**Downtown Rail Extension - Renewed Outreach to Regional and Federal Partners:** On March 30<sup>th</sup>, we joined the TJPA for a virtual federal "fly-in" set of briefings on the Downtown Rail Extension (DTX) with staff from Speaker Pelosi's office, members of the Congressional delegation from the Bay Area and Senators Feinstein and Padilla's offices. These sessions are part of a coordinated strategy to advocate for federal investment in the DTX as part of the American Jobs Plan and surface transportation reauthorization. We also have joined staff from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), TJPA, and Caltrain in a series of DTX briefings with MTC Commissioners from across the region. Interest is high at both the regional and federal levels in advancing the DTX project, which is a foundational investment for the rail program of the Northern California mega-region and the state.

**Climate Action Plan for Transportation (CAPTI) - Feedback Provided through the State's Comment Period:** The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) continues to collect feedback from stakeholders on the draft CAPTI, which was released on March 10, 2021. The plan examines how the state can prioritize the billions of discretionary transportation dollars it spends annually to combat and adapt to climate change while supporting public health, safety and equity. CAPTI signals the state's intent to deprioritize projects that increase



greenhouse gas emissions, such as highway widenings, and increase investment in transit and active transportation. This could include, for instance, advancing Senate Bill 1 funding to help transit operators transition to electric vehicles and facilities more quickly. CAPTI also proposes to form a Roadway Pricing Working Group to advance the state's road usage charge and identify how the state can support local and regional efforts like San Francisco's and Los Angeles' congestion pricing studies. CAPTI also demonstrates a commitment to improve equity in investment decision-making on an ongoing basis, including proposals to establish a Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Committee and mainstream community engagement. I participated in the kick-off Equity Working Group workshop hosted by the California Transportation Commission last week and our Public Policy Manager Amber Crabbe testified at the Commission's CAPTI workshop as well.

## **LOCAL ISSUES**

### **Safe and Seamless Mobility Quick-Strike Program - MTC Releases Initial Staff Recommendations with \$7 million for San Francisco; More Anticipated from Federal Relief Funds:**

On April 20, MTC staff released initial funding recommendations for the Safe and Seamless Mobility Quick-Strike Program. We are pleased that recommendations include \$5 million for Folsom Streetscape Project, as requested; \$1.8 million for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program of the \$2.1 million requested, and \$200,000, as requested in planning funds to continue outreach for the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study. While the recommendation for SRTS is a partial award, MTC also announced additional funding of \$34.4 million to augment the program through the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). The augmentation funds will be used to fund additional projects and we are hopeful that the SRTS program will receive its full funding request. The MTC Commission will approve the final list of projects in June.

### **2021 Mid-Cycle State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - \$3.2 Million in Additional STIP Funds for San Francisco Due to CRRSAA:**

I am happy to share that San Francisco is receiving \$3.2 million in federal CRRSAA funds through the 2021 Mid-Cycle STIP which we will bring to the Board for consideration next month. This money is the result of the state directing a portion of its CRRSAA funds to flow to regions, and in turn, counties statewide through the STIP. Per our long-standing board-adopted commitment to fund Central Subway (or another eligible SFMTA project since Central Subway is already under contract) with these funds, we anticipate recommending programming these funds to the Folsom Streetscape project next month, which will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and transit reliability on Folsom Street between 2nd and 11th streets. Along with the aforementioned Quick Strike funds and other discretionary and local grants, the proposed STIP funding will help fully fund the Folsom Streetscape project.

### **Sales Tax Reauthorization - May Board Action Item to Approve Process, Schedule and Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee Structure:**

At their March meeting, and consistent with our state authorizing statutes for the sale tax program, the CAC recommended that the Board approve a resolution establishing the schedule and process for development of a new expenditure plan for reauthorization of the local sales tax for transportation, Prop K, and to establish an Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee (EPAC) structure. We are continuing to work with project sponsors through the San Francisco Transportation Plan (or SFTP) update to review, evaluate and synthesize their needs as well as findings emerging from the ConnectSF work to inform the new expenditure plan framework. We also are meeting with current and past members of the CAC and will be holding listening sessions with communities of concern



to gather their input on a new expenditure plan. We welcome input on groups we should connect with and for opportunities to join Commissioners at town halls or other events planned in your districts. EPAC meetings will start in July and continue through the end of the calendar year when the EPAC would recommend a new Expenditure Plan to the board. We look forward to presenting on this item to Board at the May 11 meeting.

**School Access Plan - Upcoming Outreach to Youth:** We are excited to report that the first outreach events for our School Access Plan kicked off this week. The School Access Plan, which was requested by Commissioner Mar and funded primarily by a Caltrans grant, will develop strategies to improve school transportation for elementary school students in San Francisco. For this initial outreach, we partnered with the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families to design an art-based activity for children which will give students an opportunity to provide input on the kinds of transportation solutions they would like to see. The activity and accompanying questions will be included in community assessments being conducted for the Child and Youth Friendly San Francisco Initiative. Community Assessments will take place in the Mission, Bayview, Chinatown, Tenderloin, and Hunter's Point neighborhoods. We expect to reach over 300 San Francisco youth. Learn more at <https://www.sfcta.org/projects/child-transportation-study>.

**Bike to Wherever Day is May 21<sup>st</sup> - Transportation Authority Sponsored Event Will Feature Energizer Stations in Each District:** In recognition that most of our routines look a lot different than they used to, San Francisco will once again be celebrating Bike to Wherever Day on May 21st, rather than the usual Bike to Work Day. The Transportation Authority is sponsoring Bike to Wherever Day energizer stations in every District of the city, so whether you're an essential worker commuting, a family running errands, or an individual enjoying the outdoors, we hope you'll consider riding your bike wherever it is you're going and grab a traditional Bike to Work Day tote bag while you're out there. Please check the SF Bicycle Coalition website for a map of locations and other details: <https://sfbike.org/bike-to-wherever-day/>.

**Congestion Pricing Best Practices - Transportation Authority Staff Provides Expert Advice:** In April, the Downtown San Francisco Congestion Pricing Study team accepted invitations to serve as guest speakers on the topic at several forums. Senior Communications Manager Paige Miller will serve on a panel at the Code for America Summit on how transit agencies are using data for equity on May 13. Senior Transportation Planner Priyoti Ahmed provided a guest lecture on SF's Congestion Pricing Study at the Global Transportation class at San Francisco State University. Assistant Deputy for planning Rachel Hiatt also provided a guest lecture on the topic for the undergraduate Introduction to Urban and Regional Transportation class at UC Berkeley. Lastly, Rachel Hiatt also served as one of five panelists on the Portland Metro region's Expert Review Panel. The panel provided the Metro Board with feedback on the agency's draft Regional Congestion Pricing Study.

## **PROJECT DELIVERY**

**Lower Great Highway Pedestrian Improvements Project - NTIP Funds Advance Pedestrian Safety:** In District 4, SFMTA completed a Neighborhood Transportation Improvement Program (NTIP) funded project that added daylighting, painted pedestrian safety zones, speed tables, stop signs, a median island, and back-in angled parking, with improvements along the entire stretch of the Lower Great Highway from Lincoln to Sloat. The goal of the project was to increase pedestrian safety and comfort along the corridor and the project was born out of community concerns around safety from the increase in traffic diverted from the



Great Highway. In February 2018, the Board approved \$250,000 in NTIP funds for the project which funded the community engagement and implementation of the traffic calming improvements.



**Second Street Improvements Project Completed - Supported by One Bay Area Grant and Half-Cent Transportation Sales Tax Funds:** On March 25, the Transportation Authority joined Mayor London Breed, Commissioner Haney, and local transportation agency representatives from SF Public Works, SF Public Utilities Commission, and SFMTA to celebrate the completion of the Second Street Improvements Project. This \$26 million project runs along Second Street from Market to King streets and enhances street safety and access for all road users. Improvements for the project include sidewalk widening, protected bike lanes, transit boarding islands, raised crosswalks, traffic signal upgrades, sewer upgrades, repaving, and more. The Transportation Authority supported this project with \$13 million in federal One Bay Area Grant funds and matching local half-cent transportation sales tax dollars.

**Bayview Quick Build Evans Avenue Completed - Half-Cent Sales Tax Advances Vision Zero:** On April 3, we were delighted to join community leaders, local artists and SFMTA staff to celebrate the completion of the Bayview Quick-Build project that constructed protected bikeways on Evans Avenue, as well as crosswalk safety improvements and murals by local artists. These improvements were identified and prioritized by community members through the Bayview Community-Based Transportation Plan and funded by our Prop K transportation sales tax. We provided \$400,000 towards the planning and implementation of this project and continue to be impressed with SFMTA's delivery of these quick-build projects that use a toolbox of proven techniques to quickly deliver transportation safety improvements that can be adapted to each location.



**Tenderloin Speed Limit Reductions and Quick Build Construction Update - Prop K Sales Tax Supports Neighborhood-wide Speed Reduction and Right Turn Restrictions to Improve Safety:** Speaking of Quick Builds, we're excited that SFMTA has begun construction of Prop K-funded Quick Build safety improvements on two corridors in the Tenderloin. On Golden Gate Avenue, SFMTA is converting the existing buffered bike lane into a protected bikeway between Polk Street and Market Street. Once work on Golden Gate is finished, SFMTA crews will begin on Leavenworth Street, where they will reduce travel lanes from three to two, add Painted Safety Zones, and update color curb zones. We are glad to see these improvements happening quickly in the Tenderloin, along with the recent 20 mile per hour speed limit reductions and right-turn on red restrictions that we celebrated with Commissioner Haney on April 15th. We know that speed is the biggest factor in the severity of pedestrian injuries in crashes, so these regulation and infrastructure changes will work hand in hand to improve safety.

## **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

**Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) - Clean Program Manager Fund Audit Released:** The Transportation Authority is designated as the county program manager for the local share of funds available through the Bay Area's TFCA program. Funds from this program come from an annual \$4 vehicle registration fee on automobiles registered in San Francisco and are for transportation projects that improve air quality by reducing motor vehicle emissions. The audit, conducted by Simpson & Simpson LLP, covered projects ended in the period between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019, and reported that the Transportation Authority spent program funds appropriately and complied with the funding agreements. Congratulations to the Policy and Programming Division for its ongoing efforts to run an effective TFCA program in San Francisco and to the Finance and Administration Division for yet another clean audit. In particular, I'd like to thank Mike Pickford and Kalman Hui from our staff for their hard work on this.

**COVID Impacts - February Sales Tax Receipts:** Collections for February 2021 (\$5.9 million) came in 10% higher than previous month, but 14% lower than February 2020. Sales Tax revenues continue to be affected by COVID-19 trends as FY21 revenues are running 30% lower than pre-pandemic levels. We continue to closely monitor revenue streams and anticipate seeing tax revenue slowly rebound later in the fiscal year as the economy opens up with the easing of shelter-in-place restrictions.

**In Memoriam: Martin Wachs:** On April 12, we lost a dear friend and colleague. Marty Wachs was a preeminent figure in transportation planning with an academic career spanning seven decades. He is remembered for his teaching, service, and drive to advance the field. I was honored to serve on a peer-review panel in New York City a few years ago with Professor Wachs and agree with many who have observed that he was a consummate and generous professional, willing to lend his expertise whenever needed, even well into retirement. He will be perhaps best remembered as the caring and generous mentor to many hundreds of planners, engineers, and scholars around the globe.