



DRAFT MINUTES

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, July 13, 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, Stefani, and Walton (10)

Absent at Roll Call: Commissioner Safai (entered during item 2) (1)

2. Community Advisory Committee Report - INFORMATION

Chair Larson reported out from the June 23 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. Chair Larson reported that the CAC was strongly supportive of the Great Highway report and discussed the types of measurements and data that would be developed and used from the planned pilot period. He said there was specific follow up suggested on the use of citation data and analyzing driver behavior on the side streets away from the Upper Great Highway. He noted that the pilot period could be a period of observation and data gathering and an opportunity to educate, influence and alter driver behavior in the area. Chair Larson shared that though the CAC did not endorse any of the concepts, there was preference during the discussion for a full closure promenade, and continued development of concepts 3 and 5, which was reflected by the unanimous endorsement of the report. He said the CAC supported in viewing the Great Highway as a whole from the north end closure to the impacts on the southern end where traffic would increase on Sunset, Sloat, and Lake Merced, as well as the adding the continued issue with shoreline resiliency and the future transformation of the Great Highway extension into the car-free recreational area.

With respect to the Prop K allocation requests, he shared that the bicycle safety education and outreach request as well as the additional outreach for the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study generated the most discussion. He said that CAC members were interested in the geographic distribution of the bicycle classes throughout the city. In response, he shared that San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) staff said that the contract required that classes be offered in every supervisorial district. Chair Larson added that the outreach effort would move beyond the main contractor, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC) to include other community based organizations. In addition, he said the CAC encouraged the program sponsors to cross promote other bike programs that fill needs that the education program was not designed for such as sources for free permanent bikes for disadvantaged youth who might use a program bicycle at one of the classes and adult programs offered through other organizations.

With regard to the Downtown Congestion Pricing request, Chair Larson reported that the CAC had a range of questions reflecting in part the need for the additional outreach funds being requested. He shared that one question was raised on who



would pay the fee when using ride hail or delivery services. He shared that the CAC was informed that the study advisory committee and other community outreach shared a strong preference for the rider paying the fee. A similar concern was expressed for small business vehicles operating in a proposed congestion zone versus large corporate fleets that can easily absorb more costs to their business models, he said. Chair Larson shared that the CAC learned that Transportation Authority staff considered having conversations with businesses and labor to understand those distinctions better and come up with options to recognize those distinctions in policy. He shared another question that concerned the proposed boundaries of the congestion zone and what the effects might be along the edges. He shared a specific example of including the Central Freeway entrance at Octavia Boulevard in the congestion zone, and whether that would cause increased traffic on border streets for people traveling through neighborhoods to find an alternative freeway entrance to avoid the fee. He said that the project team will be looking at whether there will be streets that would see an increase in vehicle trips, such as Caesar Chavez Street, that may need traffic calming to address any changes in vehicle routing that may happen despite the overall anticipated decrease in vehicle trip making and promotion of mode shift to avoid these consequences. Chair Larson also noted that Transportation Authority staff shared that the reinvestment of revenue raised through congestion fees and to better downtown access in general is a part of the continue outreach conversation.

In addition, he shared that the CAC requested a Vision Zero Action Strategy presentation at an upcoming meeting.

There was no public comment.

3. Approve the Minutes of the June 22, 2021 Meeting - ACTION

There was no public comment.

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

The minutes were approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, and Stefani (10)

Absent: Commissioner Walton (1)

Consent Agenda

4. [Final Approval] Adopt the Upper Great Highway Concepts Evaluation Final Report - ACTION

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

Absent: (0)

End of Consent Agenda



5. State and Federal Legislation Update - INFORMATION

Amber Crabbe, Public Policy Manager, and Mark Watts, State Legislative Advocate for the Transportation Authority, presented the item per the staff memorandum.

Commissioner Melgar asked when the federal funds would be available.

Ms. Crabbe responded that formula funds would be available starting in Federal Fiscal Year 2021/22 on an annual basis, and competitive grant programs would be released either annually or less regularly depending on the program.

Chair Mandelman asked if there were any other high speed rail projects outside of California.

Ms. Crabbe said there was demand for high speed on the East Coast, and the Brightline project to connect the Los Angeles area to Las Vegas.

Tilly Chang, Executive Director added there were also high speed rail projects in Florida and Texas.

During public comment, Francisco Da Costa said Speaker Pelosi should have the broader nation's and San Francisco's interests in mind when developing the federal transportation funding package.

Roland Lebrun stated that Brightline had a line in Florida but it wasn't truly a high speed rail line, since it wasn't grade separated and only could reach 125 miles per hour. He said Brightline is also working on a privately funded high speed rail line between Victorville, California and Las Vegas that would reach 160 miles per hour. He asked about the status of the outstanding \$4.2 billion in available state Prop 1A high speed rail bonds.

Aleta Dupree said she was in general alignment with the positions in the table. She noted that she was concerned that Assembly Bill 859 was dead because she supported data privacy and didn't think the city should be able to ask companies for individualized data. She said high speed rail was currently being planned in Las Vegas and Florida, and she would support advocating for federal funds for the California to Las Vegas project.

6. Allocate \$14,892,610 and Appropriate \$200,000 in Prop K Funds, with Conditions, for Eight Requests - ACTION

Anna LaForte, Deputy Director for Policy and Programming, presented the seven allocation requests included in the item, and introduced Rachel Hiatt, Assistant Deputy Director for Planning, who presented the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study appropriation request.

Commissioner Melgar asked how the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study could best involve District 7 residents. She said the Study should be user friendly to make sure that interested parties could be involved, and that broad involvement would be needed to secure broad support. Commissioner Melgar also expressed concern about the practicability of having so many entry points into the congestion pricing zone.

Ms. Hiatt answered that the project's contact list included a long list of community groups that had engaged in previous congestion pricing studies and said the new study would seek input from these groups again. She said the project team would



work with the commissioners on identifying other groups for potential participation.

Commissioner Melgar asked how the study would seek input from interested individuals, noting that there were fewer existing active community groups in District 7 than other districts.

Ms. Hiatt answered that the study would conduct opinion polls both by phone and internet. She said the study would use media publicity, in Chinese, Spanish and English, as well as direct-to-drivers communications via Muni's parking permit holder program. Ms. Hiatt said survey results would yield respondent zip codes, allowing the project team to target low response neighborhoods for posters.

Director Chang said that staff understood that congestion pricing was a complex project and said the study team would work hard to present information clearly.

Commissioner Mar noted that the District 4 Neighborways project arose from conversations with residents. He said it was a version of Slow Streets, but forward-looking and permanent. Commissioner Mar said the project would include robust public engagement, and he expected robust results. Finally, he noted that he had separately approved the use of District 4 add-back funds to support neighborhood greening as an element of project.

Chair Mandelman noted that congestion pricing raised serious equity questions, and said he was glad that the project robustly addressed equity issues.

During public comment Brian Haagsman, with Walk San Francisco (Walk SF), expressed support for the District 4 Neighborway Network, District 9 Traffic Calming and paratransit requests. He said the District 9 project correctly addressed speed management, said paratransit was an important ongoing program, and thanked SFMTA's Accessible Services team for its guidance of the Paratransit program.

Janice Li, with SFBC expressed thanks to Commissioner Mar for his support of the District 4 Neighborway Network project, saying that the permanence of the improvements would be an improvement over the temporary Slow Streets improvements. She asked that the City commit to leaving the Slow Streets improvements in place while the neighborway improvements were being planned. Ms. Li also commented that the outreach for the neighborway project had been weak, saying that a wider mailing effort was needed.

A District 4 resident said they hadn't heard about the neighborways project through mailings and agreed that outreach for the project should be stronger. They expressed opposition to city funding of bicycle safety classes, saying the price increase was excessive and the classes should be privately funded. He said paratransit services should be free. Finally, he said Slow Streets corridors should be re-opened to vehicles immediately upon lifting of the emergency shelter-in-place orders.

Francisco Da Costa said the Transportation Authority should upgrade more crosswalks and said the discussion of outreach had been too general to be useful.

Aleta Dupree expressed support towards the bicycle education classes and the paratransit program. She said paratransit vans with wheelchair lifts should be available 24/7 and that ride hail services should be more available.

Steven Gorski from the Outer Sunset asked how the locations of the Slow Streets corridors had been determined, saying that the choice of 41st Avenue as a Slow



Street was poor because it increased the traffic on Sunset Avenue. He said all of the city's Slow Streets should be discontinued until a study of their impacts could be completed. Mr. Gorski agreed with previous commenters that stronger public engagement was needed for the District 4 Neighborway Network project.

Commissioner Mar moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Preston.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

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

Absent: (0)

7. Award a 15-Month Professional Services Contract, with an Option to Extend for an Additional 6 Months, to EMC Research, Inc. in an Amount Not to Exceed \$100,000 for Voter Opinion Survey and Public Messaging Services for Transportation Sales Tax Reauthorization - ACTION

Michelle Beaulieu, Principal Transportation Planner for Government Affairs, presented the item per the staff memorandum.

There was no public comment

Commissioner Melgar motioned to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Ronen.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

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

Absent: (0)

8. Streets and Freeways Strategy and Outreach Update - INFORMATION

Commissioner Chan began by commenting on the limited public transit options in her district, especially in the north/south direction. She remarked that residents of the Richmond District were lucky to live near Ocean Beach, Sutro Heights, and Golden Gate Park but that the pandemic highlighted a lack of investment in transit.

Commissioner Chan mentioned that the heavily used 38 Geary bus showed the demand for transit options was high in her district. She said she would like to see service levels returned along the 5 Fulton, 1 California and 31 Balboa lines, in addition to investments along Fulton, John F Kennedy Drive, and Geary Boulevard to better connect the Richmond.

Commissioner Chan remarked that this conversion could fit into the "repair harms" recommendation which was part of Mr. Louch's presentation. She said that when plans were made for new bike and transit infrastructure, that the Richmond was often left out. Commissioner Chan suggested that this has had the effect of pitting her residents against each other as residents were labelled either "pro-bike" or "pro-car".

Commissioner Melgar remarked that she was excited to have a strategic vision for City streets because improvements have often felt haphazard. She asked if there could be a prioritization of improvements and suggested that improving access to opportunity would be a good way to decide which projects were given priority. Commissioner Melgar used her bicycle commute along Portola Drive as an example. She said the



route is an important connection to downtown, but can be scary for bicycles, especially as she gets closer to downtown. She noted that improvements to a route like this could provide more access to opportunity than improving more recreational routes. She asked if the study would prioritize the needs of specific routes within the overall set of needs identified in the presentation.

Commissioner Melgar also mentioned that her district is home to three major education institutions and that connecting people to these opportunities has equity implications and should be a priority. She mentioned that there are few connections from District 10 to the educational institutions in her district. Commissioner Melgar then noted that the institutions prepare Transportation Demand Management Plans and asked how the City is coordinating with these plans and prioritizing equity.

Mr. Louch responded that the Streets and Freeways Study explores many ideas and will not be creating a prioritized list for each component. He said that the SFMTA, recently received an Active Transportation Planning Grant which will delve into more specifics and have room to explore tradeoffs and prioritization of different corridors and strategies within those corridors. Mr Louch then invited Sarah Jones, Planning Director for the SFMTA, to add more specifics.

Ms. Jones added that the SFMTA work will focus on an aspect of bicycling that has received less attention in recent years: mode shift or enabling more people to bicycle. She said the work will be focused on communities where bicycling has been particularly challenging and on advancing equity. Ms Jones said that the SFMTA does think about access to major institutions and designing complimentary options and solutions. She said that investments being planned through the San Francisco Transportation Plan and the Transportation Element update will consider and support these institutions and the people who need to get there.

Mr. Louch added that between the City's Transit Strategy and Streets and Freeways Strategy, Transportation Demand Management is not yet well represented. He said that staff know they have more work to do to help with strategy and investment prioritization.

During public comment, a caller remarked that empirical data and a needs assessment were missing from the Streets and Freeways Study. They said that the City had a major problem with particulate hot spots and that studies were being done during the pandemic linked to particulates. They said a needs assessment for crosswalks and construction timelines was necessary especially on busy streets like Geary and Van Ness. They said that the Commissioners were ignoring this issue to the detriment of young people and elders. The caller would like to see action and quality control, especially for the Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit and the Central Subway projects.

A caller expressed frustration with the SFTMA and said that the agency lacked strategy and that they could not think of one good thing that the SFMTA has done.

9. Major Capital Project Update: Caltrain Modernization Program - INFORMATION

Michelle Bouchard, Acting Executive Director, Caltrain, and John Funghi, Caltrain Modernization Program Director presented the item per the staff memorandum.

Chair Mandelman asked when the Board will be notified when they have identified other sources for funding the overrun, or if they are coming back to the member agencies for contributions.



Ms. Bouchard replied that they are working through the development of federal and state strategies. She said they have already done briefings with their state delegation and they understand that the state budget process is going to be working its way through the transportation piece through the Fall. She said then they will have a better sense of what might be available for them from the Biden administration, but they are looking to have more certainty throughout the fall into the winter. With respect to additional funds needed for the project, she said they are still working through the existing budget, so they have some time before they need to tap into the additional funds. She added that they will continue to work to get "other people's" money up until the time they would actually need the cash.

Derek Hansel, Caltrain Chief Financial Officer, added that the \$333 million was comprised of both known and anticipated costs as well as additional contingency, and that it is possible that not all \$333 million will be needed.

Commissioner Chan said there seems to be a lack of resolution and that they don't know where they are going to land. She asked if there is a timeline for the mediation process, and when will they get a written up resolution with the contractor.

Mr. Funghi said that as part of the mediation process they've developed ways to work around the issues. He said they have been getting certainty as to completion of the single system work by working closely with the contractor to develop a plan to enable them to complete all of the signal system work by September of 2023.

Chair Mandelman asked when the work would be completed on the project.

Mr. Funghi replied that their current target completion is for Revenue Service by the first quarter of 2024.

Chair Mandelman asked how it is a change from the prior projection.

Mr. Funghi replied the prior projection was August of 2022.

Chair Mandelman said it's disappointing, but that it seems to be a theme in the larger projects.

Commissioner Walton agreed with Chair Mandelman as it relates to the cost overruns for large projects.

During public comment, Aleta Dupree said she appreciated the update and asked the Board to do a deep dive into the foundation installation productivity. She added that signaling is important and she is looking forward to the railroad being built.

Roland Lebrun said the problems are deeper than the foundations. He said he hopes they implement Director Heminger's recommendation with the condition that any further Prop K allocations, they establish a structure that mimics the DTX governance structure including a monthly Executive Steering Committee meeting open to the public.

10. Major Capital Project Update: Better Market Street - INFORMATION

Cristina Calderón Olea, Project Manager at San Francisco Public Works (SFPW) presented the item.

Chair Mandelman thanked SFPW, SFMTA, and the Public Utilities Commission for their thoughtful consideration of the project. He said that the project was quite different



from what was presented to them a few months back but that is a good thing. He said it represents a grappling with reality that is to be commended and will ensure that the project is less disruptive and more successful. Based on the presentation, Chair Mandelman stated that it remains unclear on the benefits of the alternatives. He said the second alternative takes longer but only gets them a block of transit infrastructure toward an overall project, and the overall infrastructure project remains relatively uncertain. He said the only reason that the alternative would be worth an extra \$30 million and additional disruption is if it would somehow shed light on the larger project that needs to get done including the transit, sewer, water and transit infrastructure, which need to happen at some point.

Ms. Olea replied that there are benefits of alternative two, and in that they are chipping away at the larger project. She said the block is representative of a block above a BART/MUNI station, so wherever they have stations they have similar conditions. She said the utilities in this area are newer and were built in the 1970s as part of BART construction, but they still need to upgrade them and replace the joints. She said alternative two will also give the city an example of what the new boarding islands will feel like throughout the corridor, adding that they are able to optimize the transit stops within the block between 7th and 8th streets. Ms. Olea shared that currently there's four stops on that block, which they will consolidate into two and that this will reduce dwell time at the stops. She said it does help guide construction for the rest of the corridor, but it's also a tradeoff. She stated that as soon as they excavate, they will encounter other existing utilities, and very tight and constrained work zones, given the nature of Market Street.

Jeffrey Tumlin, Director of Transportation at SFMTA replied that SFMTA's primary interest in the second option is that it allows them to learn a lot about the mobility system. He said they're eager to use their quick-build approach that they did a year ago in January and some additional changes that they are hoping to implement later in the year to experiment with ways to physically keep all cars off Market Street but also traffic calm the outside lanes, so it is more welcoming and safer for cyclists. Director Tumlin said that alternative two allows them - by moving the buses into the center lane, to start some additional quick-build experiments with the outside lane in order to inform the longer term design of the corridor as a whole. He said from a mobility perspective, the second option has significant advantages, as the first option is really a simple repair project, which is good but doesn't inform the design project for the later phases.

Peter Gabancho mentioned another significant advantage of the second option, is it is riskier, but it will give them the experience of heavy utility construction on Market Street. He said if they cannot figure out how to build the one block of sewer water and track work they will not be able to figure out how to do the rest of the street. He said this allows them to go in and settle what their production rates would be, and what it is like to actually work on Market Street as opposed to Van Ness or Taraval Street. Mr. Gabancho said though there are risks, this alternative would provide them with a much better foundation on which they can build the schedule for the larger project.



Director Tumlin summarized that from a SFMTA perspective, option two is significantly advantageous from both a risk benefit and a cost benefit standpoint.

Chair Mandelman thanked SFMTA for their comments and said he thinks it illuminates the conversation that's happening among the departments. He said If they think this project is going to have to be done at some point in the next 10 to 20 years, there may be benefits to getting more of a handle on it before they take on the whole thing.

During public comment a caller from San Francisco Transit Riders commended and supported the restrained approach that staff is recommending with the two-year alternatives in place of the earlier proposal. They recommended and urged the Board to do everything within their power to see that option one was pursued.

Other Items

11. Introduction of New Items - INFORMATION

There were no new items introduced.

12. Public Comment

During public comment Steven Gorski, resident of the Outer Sunset said they greatly oppose keeping the Great Highway closed as the studies continue. They said they believe the data is skewed and the disabled community along with the emergency responder vehicles are being thrown to the side.

Mike Reenan with Open the Great Highway said they don't support any of the options provided in the report except for the unhampered opening of the Great Highway. They voiced their concern of inclusion by stating that the ones that are being asked to compromise are people with cars, and bikers and walkers are not being asked to give anything up. They added that the traffic mitigation in the Sunset is making things worse.

Roland Lebrun recognized Director Chang and Nila Gonzales, Interim Executive Director with Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) for their two-way communication channel between the project partners and the general public. Mr. Lebrun said that a collaboration such as this has not been done in the last 10 years, and it may be possible to introduce the new Transbay tunnel as an integral part of the project sooner than 30 years down the road. Mr. Lebrun closed by saying he is convinced that in the next 6 months there will be tangible benefits of consolidating the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension (PAX), Downtown Extension, and Link 21 into a single project.

Judi Gorski from the Outer Sunset said linking the Upper Great Highway, Lower Great Highway and La Playa as one category for collisions does not reflect the fact that the Upper Great Highway had zero collisions in 2018 - 2021, and only one collision in 2017 when it was fully opened and over 19,000 vehicles were using it daily. She said that the statistics are categorized to promote permanent closure, disregarding the danger it brings residents who live near or who are visiting. Ms. Gorski stated that closing the Great Highway negates Vision Zero goals, and creates more collisions, not less. She said there are no studies calculating the added danger.



A caller echoed the previous caller by saying that closing the highway and diverting cars further out of their way onto other high injury areas completely undermines Vision Zero. They said that there are compromised agreements, such as a weekend closure, but no one is looking to compromise.

John Cabner who lives on Noriega Street called in support of the Great Highway being closed to cars. They said they walk to the Great Highway and it's good to see people of all ages and backgrounds.

Patricia Weiss called in support of opening the highway to cars. She said she is tired of cars being diverted to their streets and making unsafe driving and walking conditions. She asked the Board to not let people from outside the neighborhood decide what happens in their backyard.

A resident along the Lower Great Highway said the usage of the highway has declined since the beginning of the pandemic. They said there is plenty of beach and space for those that want to enjoy the beauty of the ocean. They added that the data usage is not a true reflection of the needs of the districts within the city, and all the necessary elements need to be taken into consideration. They said the city needs to fix their transit system and make the city safer so that people are comfortable taking public transportation. They closed by stating that they need to stop making driving a punishment because many residents need their vehicles to accomplish everyday obligations.

Patricia Arack said she was disappointed that they approved the Great Highway Evaluation Study as it was very flawed. She referenced the public comments taken in November at the height of the pandemic, stating that it's outrageous that they are even still considering it. She said all of the city agencies involved in the closure are biased and are not thinking about the people. She also shared that as a disabled resident who stays inside, she sits looking out the window to see a barely used Great Highway.

A 42 year resident of the Lower Great Highway said that no one is on the highway from 8 p.m. - 7 a.m. They said that the bicyclist should be able to share the road too. They noted that if someone is in dire need on the highway, the seconds lost from diverting emergency vehicles could cost someone's life, so they would like to keep the Great Highway opened.

A caller called opposing the closure stating that it's an emergency evacuation route and people need to get from one end to another. They added that they need to protect their coastline, and the money should be spent on restoring services.

A caller said their parents are unable to get to Chains of Lakes Drive because of the diverted traffic. They said it is the worst traffic they have seen in 40 years, and they have walked the Great Highway and have not seen a crowd big enough for it to be closed, and for people to not use the paths. They said the highway will not endanger children with the highway reopening and they would like to re-open it.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.