



DRAFT MINUTES

Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee

Thursday, October 14, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present at Roll Call: Members: Jay Bain, Rosa Chen, Anni Chung, Majeid Crawford, Zack Deutsch-Gross, Mel Flores, Amandeep Jawa, Sharky Laguana, Maelig Morvan, Susan Murphy, Calvin Quick, Pi Ra, Eric Rozell, Earl Shaddix, Yensing Sihapanya, Wesley Tam, Joan Van Rijn, Christopher White (18)

Absent at Roll Call: Jesse Fernandez, Rodney Fong, Nick Josefowitz, Aaron Leifer, Jessica Lum, Jodie Medeiros, Maryo Mogannam, Maurice Rivers, Kim Tavaglione (9)

2. Approve Resolution Making Findings to Allow Teleconferenced Meetings Under California Government Code Section 54953(e) - ACTION*

There was no public comment.

Chair Jawa moved to approve the motion, seconded by member Susan Murphy.

The resolution was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Jay Bain, Rosa Chen, Anni Chung, Majeid Crawford, Zack Deutsch-Gross, Mel Flores, Amandeep Jawa, Sharky Laguana, Maelig Morvan, Susan Murphy, Calvin Quick, Pi Ra, Eric Rozell, Earl Shaddix, Yensing Sihapanya, Wesley Tam, Joan van Rijn, Chris White (18)

Nayes: (0)

Absent: Jesse Fernandez, Rodney Fong, Nick Josefowitz, Aaron Leifer, Jessica Lum, Jodie Medeiros, Maryo Mogannam, Maurice Rivers, Kim Tavaglione (9)

3. EPAC Chair's Remarks

Chair Jawa thanked EPAC members, the public, and staff for attending. He said the focus of the meeting is several proposed street and freeway improvement programs and agencies will present on the benefits, funding needs, and the role of the sales tax revenue. Chair thanked the agencies presenting. He clarified that these initial meetings are for understanding the information and collecting feedback to set up future, more detailed discussions about tradeoffs and prioritizations.

4. Meeting #2 Recap, Minutes and Follow-Ups - INFORMATION

Michelle Beaulieu, Principal Transportation Planner, Government Affairs presented the item.

Chair Jawa encourage EPAC members to send questions to staff if they have them , recognizing there is a lot of information being presented. He then asked for clarification about the three priority funding levels listed for Prop K (slide 14).



Michelle Beaulieu, Transportation Authority, answered that they corresponded to different revenue estimates and clarified that the funding estimates were not additive, but were listed in order from lowest to highest revenue estimate.

A member asked if more money such as from the federal government became available, could sales tax funding be reduced and directed elsewhere.

Maria Lombardo, Chief Deputy Director with the Transportation Authority replied that all the programs listed need more much funding than what is available through the sales tax so it isn't a given that other programs should be reduced. She added that it would mean that the program with more funds would likely do a better job leveraging sales tax funds.

5. Enhancing and Expanding our System: Safe and Complete Streets - INFORMATION

Kaley Lyons, Transportation Authority; Jonathan Rewers, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA); and Oscar Quintanilla, San Francisco Public Works (SFPW) presented the item.

A member asked if there was research on new, cheaper methods of replacing and doing maintenance on traffic signals such as methods that may rely on newer technology that doesn't require digging underground.

Jonathan Rewers, SFMTA, answered that they use radio-based signal technology to put in signals quicker, but the most expensive element is the power distribution which will be still a big cost component. He added that SFMTA is looking into scaling, timing, and adding signals when completing major capital projects as opportunities to reduce costs.

A member commented about efforts toward Vision Zero noting that the number of deaths had not decreased since the policy was put into place and suggested a need to change community outreach methods. The member said that current outreach focuses on presenting plans and data to the public, but the focus should be receiving feedback on what programs and improvements the public would like to see. The member acknowledged that this step would require more SFMTA staff, but it is necessary for the process. The member concluded by saying he is glad to SFMTA addressing the traffic light issue as many of them are outdated.

A member asked if they heard correctly that there was additional funding for planting trees and the Bayview District.

Oscar Quintanilla, SFPW, answered that the city put out a competitive program as part of a city COVID recovery program that among other factors prioritized equity and climate change projects and that SFPW applied to the program and received \$2 for planting street trees in the Bayview. Mr. Quintanilla added that they are working with local organizations to conduct outreach and identify locations. He said there are lower revenues for tree planting now, due to the pandemic, in comparison to the current Prop K allocations.

Chair Jawa asked for clarification on the difference between the 18.4% proposed for Streets and Freeways (slide 17) and the 11.5% proposed for Safe and Complete Streets programs (slide 18).

Michelle Beaulieu, Transportation Authority, responded that the Safe and Complete Streets is a sub-category of the Streets and Freeways category, which also includes the Freeway Safety and Operational Improvements sub-category.



Chair Jawa asked whether traffic signals really needed replacement or maintenance if they are able to be kept in a good state of repair and keep functioning well.

Mr. Rewers responded that the average lifespan for a traffic signal is 25 years, and some parts of the signal are exposed to outside weather conditions and do not last long. He added that signal timing changes currently need to be manually done, which is an outdated method and required a major overhaul.

Chair Jawa asked whether trees can be used as a traffic calming measure and if they can utilize funding allocated for traffic calming.

Mr. Quintanilla answered tree-planting as a stand alone item is not part of the SFMTA's traffic calming program.

Mr. Rewers, SFMTA, added that SFMTA will leverage traffic calming funding to add street trees as part of larger projects.

6. Enhancing and Expanding our System: Freeway Safety and Operational Improvements - INFORMATION*

Michelle Beaulieu and Yana Waldman, of the Transportation Authority, presented the item.

A member commented that the managed lanes program seemed to be motivated by easing freeway access for buses and improving transit services. The member asked if this was focused on improvements to existing infrastructure and whether there are considerations for dedicated transit lanes on the freeway.

Ms. Lombardo noted that there is funding proposed in the draft Expenditure Plan for dedicated transit lanes on city streets under another program and she invited Executive Director Chang to talk about the managed lanes concepts.

Director Tilly Chang added that Caltrans (the state Department of Transportation) owns the freeway system and has carpool and express lanes that high occupancy vehicles can use for free, but there are no bus-only lanes allowed. She said that the SFMTA has collaborated with Caltrans on carpool lanes on city streets during the pandemic.

Chair Jawa asked how the proposed congestion pricing policy affects or relates to the bus/high occupancy vehicle lanes.

Director Chang replied that Transportation Authority's Congestion Pricing Study is currently paused, but said it is anticipated that the congestion pricing zone would be free for transit and carpools would be charged. She added that this is a policy question and would be discussed further as the study continues.

The Brown Act meeting was suspended to allow members to participate in breakout rooms. The minutes below summarize discussions in the breakout rooms for reference and reflect the breakout group report outs after the Brown Act meeting was resumed.

During the breakout room, a member stated that this was a lot of material to digest. They asked how equity could be included in determining where street trees would be planted? Transportation Authority staff responded the Public Works said they focused on neighborhoods with low street tree canopy coverage.

Another member stated that it would be helpful to see street tree coverage at a finer grain detail, because there might be parts of particular neighborhoods that have lower coverage.



One member noted that in some neighborhoods like Chinatown, they have very narrow sidewalks, so it can be hard to add trees. They noted that it would be nice to have more trees but that there are a lot of other things to consider as well, such as ADA accessibility. The member noted that curb ramps are hard in Chinatown too because of sub-sidewalk basements.

Another member asked if trees could go in alleyways.

Another member supported the comment about Chinatown, because they had experience helping address trees that block traffic lights, making it unsafe for seniors crossing the street. They emphasized the need for community input in choosing locations.

The member also asked if SFMTA and SFPW sent outreach materials for safer streets investments in multiple language, particularly for large monolingual communities. SFMTA staff stated that they translate everything. The member appreciated that and encouraged the agencies to work with community groups to work with these monolingual communities.

Another member agreed with the first comment that there was a lot to digest. They stated they were clear on the need, and think the descriptions are fine, but didn't understand the full impact of the sales tax on budgets or scale. They wanted to see some sort of sensitivity score. Transportation Authority staff responded that they would work to consolidate information for the trade-offs conversation.

During the breakout room, A member asked why Caltrans isn't funding some of the improvements proposed for the freeway system.

Transportation Authority staff responded that the state was providing funding for projects on the freeway system, and most of the proposed projects are where the state facilities intersect with local facilities. They said in order to advance projects, local jurisdictions often need to do the advanced planning and provide local funding. They said the state's Local Partnership Program is an example of where the state invested funding in projects when the local jurisdiction provides a dollar for dollar local match.

A member said they understood the need for the proposed improvements, but the real challenge was determining how to prioritize funding across needs for all types of transportation investments.

A member said that it was important to understand leveraging to determine what funding project sponsors are bringing to the table and to demonstrate that sales tax funds were actually increasing spending above the status quo. They noted that some programs, like paratransit, were legally mandated, and suggested asking BART, AC Transit, and Samtrans what contributions they were making to paratransit in San Francisco.

A member noted that there were some neighborhoods with almost no trees that were not listed as priorities on the materials.

Transportation Authority staff noted that SFPW prioritized trees in empty tree basins. They said the Expenditure Plan could include policies with respect to tree planting, or



policies could be included in the prioritization process that would occur once the Expenditure Plan is approved.

A member suggested seeking assistance from tech companies to devise a new type of traffic signal better suited for this day and age. They said many pedestrian countdown signals don't work, and that many intersections still did not have them installed. They said audible message boxes should also be prioritized, and that SFMTA needed to ensure they were all installed in the same place at intersections so visually impaired people knew where to find them. Transportation Authority staff responded that SFMTA is doing a signal inventory to better understand the condition of all the signal infrastructure.

A member said that signal upgrades and curb ramps should be prioritized over other types of maintenance.

A member stated that safety should be a priority, in particular repairing signals and installing curb ramps on the high injury network.

A member expressed disappointment that proposed projects and policies weren't more innovative. They said the proposal should be more intentional about increasing safety for nonwhite communities, which have been historically disenfranchised. They said they expected the proposal to be more responsive to the recently approved racial equity action plan.

During the breakout room, a member asked how much of the funding for new trees came from the Prop K sales tax.

SFPW staff answered that Prop K currently provides about 10% of the funding needed for new trees and that they are trying to keep up with the trees that are being cut down.

The member said it is surprising that revenue from the transportation tax is going towards trees and asked if this is because they are located along streets.

SFPW staff confirmed that these are street trees. He added that funding is limited as the funding need for maintenance is great.

A member commented that he is unsure of the funding needs for traffic signals and it could be better explained. He added that traffic signals seem to work well and wondered if it is a sign of good maintenance or a lack of need for repairs. He also said the expenses for curb ramps were surprising.

A member said that the presentation on trees could have included more information on the effects that trees have on transportation, as well as separate slides on climate and safety effects.

A member said he would have more personal interest in freeway safety improvements if they focused more on the relation with city street interface.

A member asked if the managed lanes and express buses were part of their own expenditure bucket.

Transportation Authority staff replied in the affirmative.



A member commented that enhancing bus rapid transit and bus-only lanes would help reduce the need to drive, and therefore lessen the burden of congestion in downtown.

A member emphasized the importance of tree canopies in the Bayview District as well as pedestrian safety and accessibility. The member also stated his interest in learning about tree canopies and their effects on streets.

A member pointed out that climate issues are important, and the EPAC will ultimately need to decide on priorities for the programs.

A member emphasized the importance of integrating bike and street safety into education. The member said that streets are a civic space, and engagement through education is needed.

During the breakout room, a member said with limited funding for transportation, they were okay with reducing the amount of funding for street trees compared to what was proposed in the draft Expenditure Plan.

Another member responded that they were not okay with reducing funding for street trees and said there was very low tree canopy in the Excelsior. They said it was disappointing to see there was a lot of money, but they don't see additional benefits coming their way. They said they heard pedestrian lighting would not be funded and said that it was really needed, especially near Geneva Avenue and they would like to see this eligible. They said they did not really understand the need for the programs because it felt like much of the benefit was not seen in their community, specifically the Excelsior. They said there were negative things, such as pollution coming in their direction.

Transportation Authority staff responded that the draft Expenditure Plan establishes eligibility for the sales tax funds and there would be a prioritization process for where improvements go and equity could be built into that process and asked for feedback.

A member responded that they would need to see specific benefits in their neighborhood and provided an example of making it easier to get to the Mission Street and Geneva Avenue area. They said the transit system takes about an hour to get to Mission Bay and the neighborhood was not connected to the T line, and driving was much quicker. They said they were not seeing a lot of the benefits gained from the sales tax funds being paid.

A member asked if geographic equity could be included in the language of the Expenditure Plan and said they agree with the tree canopy being very important and referenced maps showing areas with low tree canopy.

A member said that the Vision Zero strategy had not made measurable impact on traffic deaths per year and said there was not a lot of accountability. They asked if we could see actions that are not working to help achieve Vision Zero and stop doing those actions. They said they were struggling to see the tangible benefits of putting a lot of money into programs like off-ramp redesign.

A member said they had seen examples of city redesign that made it safer to walk, but they were not inspired about the ideas presented on freeway off-ramps.

A member agreed with this sentiment and said especially regarding managed lanes discussion, and as we put the sales tax to the voters, it was important to realize safety increases when people drive less and making it easier for people to drive, even if they



are carpooling, would not help with this. They said Vision Zero would be accomplished by getting people to drive less and freeway funding does not do that.

A member seconded the comment.

A member asked if language could be added to the Managed Lanes and Express Bus program about dedicated lanes for transit on freeways. They said they knew this was not Caltrans' interest right now but said it could leave the door open to take initiative on this. They said this was not a priority right now but if a freeway line item was being included, they would want transit lanes in there as well.

A member said that in terms of the importance of the programs presented, sidewalk improvements and tree canopy were most important. They said that it needs to be as attractive as possible for people to walk and if a sidewalk does not feel safe, people are not going to walk.

8. Public Comment

During public comment, Brian Wiedenmeier, Executive Director for Friends of the Urban Forest, spoke in favor of increasing funding for Tree Planting and Establishing.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.