



# DRAFT MINUTES

## San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

### 1. Roll Call

Chair Mandelman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Present at Roll Call:** Commissioners Dorsey, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, and Walton (8)

**Absent at Roll Call:** Commissioners Chan (entered after Item 1), Melgar (excused), and Preston (entered after Item 1) (3)

### 2. Approve the Minutes of the May 10, 2022 Meetings - ACTION

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Mar moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Dorsey.

The minutes were approved without objection by the following vote:

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

Absent: Commissioner Melgar (1)

## Consent Agenda

### 3. [FINAL APPROVAL] State and Federal Legislation Update - ACTION

**Support:** Assembly Bill 2147 (Ting) and Senate Bill 942 (Newman)

### 4. [FINAL APPROVAL] Allocate \$2,790,000 in Prop K Funds, with Conditions, for Two Requests - ACTION

**Projects:** BART: Elevator Modernization, Phase 1.3: Powell St. and Civic Center (\$1,290,000), Traction Power Substation Replacement, Powell St. Station (\$1,500,000)

### 5. [FINAL APPROVAL] Adopt the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Cycle 3 County Framework and Recommend Programming \$7,082,400 of San Francisco's Estimated Share of OBAG Funds to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program, \$2,200,000 to the Transportation Authority for Congestion Management Agency Planning, and \$52,855,600 to Projects to be Selected Through a Call for Projects - ACTION

### 6. [FINAL APPROVAL] Award a Two-Year Professional Services Contract to WMH Corporation in an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,700,000 for the Design Phase and Caltrans Right-of-Way Approval of the Hillcrest Road Widening Project - ACTION



7. **[FINAL APPROVAL] Award a Two-Year Professional Services Contract to Mark Thomas & Company, Inc. in an Amount Not to Exceed \$1,850,000 for the Design Phase and Caltrans Right-of-Way Approval of the I-280 Southbound Ocean Avenue Off-Ramp Project - ACTION**
8. **[FINAL APPROVAL] Award Contracts to Seventeen Shortlisted Consultant Teams for a Three-Year Period, with an Option to Extend for Two Additional One-Year Periods, for a Combined Amount Not to Exceed \$8,000,000 for On-Call Project Management and Engineering Services - ACTION**

Commissioner Stefani moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Peskin.

The minutes were approved without objection by the following vote:

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

Absent: Commissioner Melgar (1)

### **End of Consent Agenda**

9. **Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan and Seamless Transit Transformation Act (Senate Bill 917) Update - INFORMATION**

Chair Mandelman said that this topic had been one of interest to several Commissioners. He noted that at the beginning of the pandemic, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) convened the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force to help understand the scale of the crisis facing the region's transit agencies. He added that the task force was also charged with creating a Transit Transformation Action Plan to identify actions needed to reshape the region's transit system into a more connected, efficient, user-focused mobility network. He said that MTC staff would provide a presentation on the Transit Transformation Action Plan as well as Senate Bill (SB) 917, the Seamless Transit Transformation Act, a bill that, if passed, would require the implementation of certain actions from the Action Plan.

Melanie Choy, MTC Assistant Director, Funding Policy and Programs, and Rebecca Long, MTC Director of Legislation and Public Affairs, presented the item.

Commissioner Preston asked how ongoing efforts to advance free transit, either in whole or in part, would be impacted.

Ms. Long said the bill contained a provision specifically stating it did not prohibit an agency from providing free or discounted transit.

Commissioner Preston said he understood the bill wouldn't prohibit it, but he was wondering how it could work within the regional common fare system that was envisioned.

Ms. Long said the bill envisioned an integrated fare program, but the provisions were quite limited, including a requirement for MTC to develop a regional pass for all operators, and implement a pilot if funds are available to do so. She noted that there was also a requirement for a common fare for regional transit services. She added that since it would be for regional operators only, it wouldn't affect San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) local transit fares at all, and SFMTA could



offer free transit if they wanted.

Commissioner Preston asked Transportation Authority staff to comment on whether SB 917 would impede the ability of the free transit pass programs currently being discussed to advance as pilots or permanent programs, either at the local or state levels.

Chair Mandelman said he also wanted to hear more about how the money would flow in an integrated fare system, specifically because San Francisco heavily subsidized fares for its riders.

Executive Director Tilly Chang confirmed that there was nothing in SB 917 that would preclude San Francisco from implementing a free transit program and she invited SFMTA staff to speak to the flow of funds question.

Kate Breen, SFMTA's Director of Government Affairs, said it was important to first share SFMTA's perspective on SB 917 and the larger Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force work, in which SFMTA was very involved. She said SFMTA supported efforts that were underway to improve transit in the region and were making good progress in partnership with other operators and MTC. She added that SFMTA was directly involved in the Transit Transformation Action Plan work that Ms. Choy outlined and participated in the ongoing work of the Fare Integration Task Force. Ms. Breen stated that SFMTA was generally supportive of the elements of SB 917 that aligned with the ongoing work, such as wayfinding and real time data standards to improve information for transit customers, and the effort to develop a connected network. She said SFMTA's concerns were related to the integrated fare structure and the overreach with respect to granting fare setting authority to MTC in the current version of the bill. She noted that these provisions directly infringed on San Francisco's home rule authority as a charter city to set fares as a core municipal function. She added that SFMTA saw a downstream risk of harm to SFMTA's ability to provide service if provisions of the bill weren't funded. She said the Transit Transformation Action Plan estimated the costs as upwards of \$100 million a year, and San Francisco wanted a clear understanding of where that funding would come from and how it would be sustained on an ongoing basis. She stated that while there was no funding associated with the bill, there were punitive measures that would allow MTC to take funding away from operators if they didn't comply. She added that it was too early to double down on that threat while transit was in a state of prolonged recovery due to the impact of COVID. She suggested the bill was premature and its passage would be counter to the ongoing collaborative Transit Transformative Action Plan work that was developing related recommendations.

Commissioner Preston stated that anything depicted as transformative should be seen as working toward free transit, funded by the state if possible.

Chair Mandelman said he wanted to understand what the worst-case scenario impact would be for SFMTA with respect to its ability to set fares and the other provisions.

Director Chang noted that one of the differences across the region's 27 transit operators was the willingness to subsidize transit, which was reflected in how fares were set. She stated that a lot depended on how an integrated fare is defined, as well as a common regional transit fare. She speculated that if new regional fares include a free transfer to local transit, that cost would have to be split between the regional and local operator. She asked if the cost to implement this was fully funded, and if not,



what were the associated opportunity costs, and what possible funding sources would be. She noted that the home rule question was a policy issue, including whether San Francisco would have to pay more to regional operators if their fares were set too low.

Chair Mandelman noted that San Francisco would be giving up authority to set its own local fares at a time when it is asking the region for funding to help the city fix its deteriorating system.

Director Chang stated that the city needed clarification as to what counted as regional transit service fares to confirm that local transit systems weren't impacted and needed to understand whether the concern about home rule of transit fare setting also pertained to other transit districts.

Ms. Long said that MTC was aware of but hadn't received details about SFMTA's concerns regarding home rule, but it seemed that SFMTA had a philosophical concern with the way the bill was written specifying that MTC would develop fare changes in consultation with the operators. She stated that there might be a way to change that language in the bill and have the effort be led by the transit operators in consultation with MTC. She emphasized that everyone wanted more harmonious fares across the region, so she was hopeful to be able to navigate through the issue. She said the free transfer between local services would impact SFMTA, but MTC had not studied what that cost would be. She added that the operators had already agreed to free transfers between local services as a first step, and MTC had identified funds for the first year at least. She stated that all the work was being approached in the context of ridership having fallen tremendously during the pandemic and recognizing the need to make the system more rider friendly. She said there would be a related cost, but many parties had agreed it was a risk worth taking in order to create a better system.

Chair Mandelman asked if there was a study about how changes to fare pricing would attract people to transit.

Ms. Long responded that MTC and BART co-led the Fare Coordination Integration Study that consulted with many other operators and looked at a number of different scenarios, their costs, and their estimated impact on ridership.

Chair Mandelman if MTC anticipated a regional transportation funding measure was going to move forward in the near term.

Ms. Long said that MTC had not made a decision about what, if anything, should move forward. She noted that before the pandemic, there was discussion of advancing a capital-focused measure, but now, with the passage of a federal infrastructure bill and hopefully new capital funding in the state budget, needs had shifted to favor transit operations. She added that there would be an upcoming discussion at the MTC Legislation Committee in June and stakeholder meetings over the Fall about whether the region should pursue another authorizing bill, what a potential measure would fund, and what the revenue mechanism would be. She said these questions were on MTC's front burner because many transit operators in the region were approaching a fiscal cliff in the next year or so as the federal COVID relief funds wore out.

During public comment, Aleta Dupree supported the bill and talked about regional inclusion, user-friendly experience, and cost integration through nonpartisan efforts.



Francisco Da Costa said that due to federal funding, input was needed from physically challenged persons and drivers of transit vehicles, as well as enforcement of masking.

Roland Lebrun said that the MTC study indicated that 95% of survey respondents did not consider cost as a significant factor as a decision to use transit. He also said that the same study indicated that network integration was more important to users, which he personally experienced with Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority, where he could save 30 to 40 minutes in his own commute between San Jose and San Francisco.

After public comment, Chair Mandelman noted there were still questions about SB 917 and asked staff to return with more information about what the financial and other impacts to San Francisco would be.

Director Chang said staff would work to clarify what the bill said, what MTC was proposing, what the operators' response had been to date, and what the implications would be on the local side for San Francisco's fare setting and transit subsidy policies. She proposed to draft this information in a memo and present it at a future date.

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

Cristina Olea, San Francisco Public Works (SFPW) Project Manager, and Jada Jackson, Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) Project Manager, presented the item.

There was no public comment.

**11. Major Capital Project Update - Caltrain Modernization - INFORMATION**

Casey Fromson, Caltrain Chief Communications Officer, presented the item.

There was no public comment.

**12. Internal Accounting Report, Investment Report, and Debt Expenditure Report for the Nine Months Ending March 31, 2022- INFORMATION**

Cynthia Fong, Deputy Director for Finance & Administration, presented the item.

There was no public comment.

**Other Items**

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

There were no new items introduced.

**14. Public Comment**

During general public comment, Aleta Dupree talked about the importance of regional access to San Francisco and asked the Board to consider transit users who are different.

Roland Lebrun talked about his interest in briefing Commissioner Dorsey about proposed Caltrain Downtown Extension alignment changes, which would allow restoration of the full length platforms, continued service to Embarcadero and crossing the Bay, and would have less right-of-way impacts.

**15. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.