



MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN
CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

March 16, 2020

5:00 p.m.

TAM Conference Room
900 Fifth Avenue, Suite 100
San Rafael, CA 94901

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Peter Pelham, Major Marin Employers (Chairperson)
Bob Burton, Southern Marin Planning Area (Vice-Chairperson)
Charley Vogt, Northern Marin Planning Area
Paul Roye, Ross Valley Planning Area
Kate Powers, Environmental Organizations
Kevin Hagerty, League of Women Voters
Allan Bortel, Marin County Paratransit Coordinating Council
Zack Macdonald, School Districts
Paul Premo, Taxpayer Group

Alternates Present: Veda Florez, Northern Marin Planning Area
Nancy Okada, Environmental Organizations
Kingston Cole, Taxpayer Groups

Staff Members Present: Anne Richman, Executive Director
Li Zhang, Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer
Scott McDonald, Senior Transportation Manager
Grace Zhuang, Accounting and Administration Specialist
Nancy Whelan, Marin Transit General Manager
Aida Banihashemi, Marin Transit Planning Manager

Chairperson Peter Pelham called the Citizens' Oversight Committee meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

1. Introductions and Welcome

Chairperson Peter Pelham called the Citizens' Oversight Committee meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the start of the Shelter in Place order, TAM conducted the meeting online through Zoom. Chairperson Pelham and Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer Li Zhang conducted the roll call for online attendance. The Committee also welcomed new Alternate Kingston Cole for the Taxpayer Groups.

Chairperson Pelham administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Kingston Cole as an Alternate for Taxpayer Groups. Alternate Cole provided a short biography of himself, noting that he retired as a consultant and has extensive work experiences with many of the transportation agencies in the country.

2. Open Time for Public Expression

No comments were made.

3. Review and Approval of January 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes (Action)

Member Charley Vogt made the following change to the minutes:

Page 2, Item 6: “*Charly* Vogt” amended to “*Charley* Vogt”.

Member Kevin Hagerty made the following change to the minutes:

Page 2, Item 6: “In *repose* to those concerns...” amended to “In *response* to those concerns....”.

Member Paul Premo asked staff to clarify Marin Transit’s performance criteria that is specified in the Expenditure Plan. In response, Marin Transit General Manager (GM) Nancy Whelan explained that the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP), which she would be discussing under Item 5, includes a chapter on goals, performance measures, and target measures. She noted that these measures are incorporated into the Expenditure Plan. Ms. Zhang stated that staff would provide more information on the performance criteria to the members.

Member Hagerty moved to approve the January 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes with the changes. Member Zack Macdonald seconded the motion, with Alternates Veda Florez, Nancy Okada, and Kingston Cole abstaining, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

4. TAM Staff Report (Information)

Executive Director (ED) Anne Richman presented the staff report, beginning by expressing her pleasure that an application filed jointly with Marin Clean Energy (MCE) and other counties in the MCE service area, is advancing to the second phase in the funding process with the California Energy Commission (CEC). ED Richman stated that, if the application is successful, electric vehicle (EV) charging and technical assistance funding programs would be consolidated into a single program that would receive matching State funds. She reported that the final award should be announced in June 2020.

In response to Member Hagerty, ED Richman stated that TAM would contribute funds of \$80,000 over a 3-year period if the application was successful, and that TAM would be able to apply for matching State funds.

ED Richman reported on the State Route (SR) 37 Policy Committee meeting on March 5, 2020. ED Richman stated that the Committee consists of elected officials from four North Bay counties and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), who usually meet quarterly. ED Richman stated that an action was taken at the March 5, 2020 meeting to request \$3.3 billion from the FASTER (Freedom, Affordability, Speed, Transparency, Equity, Reliability) Measure if it moves forward, of which \$600 million would be used for projects in the first 10 years of the Measure. She also reported on a second action to endorse, in concept, a bill proposed by Senator Bill Dodd of Napa which would authorize tolling on SR-37.

Finally, ED Richman reported that, due to the shelter-in-place order that became effective today, TAM staff will be working remotely, and the office closed.

Chairperson Pelham and ED Richman discussed the likelihood of the tolling legislation succeeding. ED Richman stated that the legislation is intended to raise funds for roadway improvements, including widening the two-lane section of SR-37. She stated that it was too soon to comment on whether the bill might succeed.

In response to Member Kate Powers, ED Richman stated that the direction for tolling has not been determined and that the toll corridor is currently defined from Highway 121 to Mare Island. ED Richman stated that discussions are ongoing because Marin, Sonoma and Solano Counties have expressed interest in expanding the toll corridor to allow improvements to the approach roads. She also stated that expenditure of the \$600 million

of funds from the FASTER Measure includes the interim project for Segment B (expanding the roadway to two lines in each direction), and environmental and design work for the ultimate project that would include Segment A in Marin.

Member Powers and ED Richman discussed studies relating to flooding in Segment A. ED Richman confirmed that a study by the County, funded by Caltrans (California Department of Transportation) and TAM, is available on the County's website, and that Caltrans is also funding an MTC study on the corridor.

5. Marin Transit's 2020-2029 Short Range Transit Plan (Information)

Marin Transit GM Nancy Whelan presented the agency's most recent SRTP, which she noted is required by the Measure A/AA Expenditure Plans. GM Whelan stated that the SRTP is Marin Transit's guiding policy for a 10-year period from 2020–2029, and highlights both local and regional funding needs. She stated that the Plan is updated every two years and is approved by both the Marin Transit and TAM Boards.

GM Whelan discussed the 3.4 million passenger trips each year served by fixed route service and Marin Access services, noting that the number of trips is similar to the number of bus trips provided by Golden Gate Transit (GGT), which serves a regional area. She acknowledged that the services Marin Transit provides are made possible by the Measure A/AA ½-Cent Transportation Sales Tax.

GM Whelan discussed the process to develop the SRTP, which began in July 2019 with a discussion on Marin Transit's fare policy, followed by a presentation of the draft SRTP to the Marin Transit Board at its November 2019 meetings. After a 3-month public comment period, the SRTP was adopted by the Marin Transit Board at its February 3, 2020 meeting and by the TAM Board at its February 27, 2020 meeting.

GM Whelan discussed the SRTP, noting that Marin Transit is in a good financial position due to the passage of Measure AA and the continuation of SB1. She confirmed the agency intends to maintain current service levels, including the additional funding provided to the 5 public school Yellow Bus Programs.

GM Whelan discussed the purchase of a site for bus parking in January 2020, expansion of services for first/last mile trips, trip planning, etc. She also discussed the 10-year Capital Plan of \$91 million and the Operating Plan, noting that revenues and expenses are almost balanced, and that the agency is not expected to enter into a deficit position.

GM Whelan discussed revenue sources, including capital funding over the 10-year period for vehicle replacement, and she confirmed the purchase price of the new site was about \$5 million. She also discussed operating revenue for the agency, including Measure A/AA and Measure B funds (36%), various state funds (24%), and property tax (14%), and fare revenue (11%). GM Whelan discussed expenditure of operating funds, including 77% for contracted services on fixed routes and paratransit services and 10% of administrative costs, which is relatively low compare to other transit agencies.

GM Whelan concluded her report with a discussion on future plans for the agency, including implementing a new fare policy and promoting Marin Transit Connect, the on-demand service, to target users such as seniors and other members of the population in need of accessible services. She also stated again Marin Transit's acquisition of its operation and maintenance facility will meet the for the majority of its operation needs and accommodate the expansion of the electric bus fleet to meet zero emission goals.

Marin Transit Planning Manager Aida Banihashemi discussed the agency's recent comprehensive assessment of fare policies across all programs and re-evaluation of eligibility standards for Marin Access programs that provide services to older adults and people with disabilities, such as Catch-A-Ride or Dial-A-Ride. Ms.

Banihashemi stated that staff has recommended changes to simplify fares and eligibility criteria for Marin Access programs.

Ms. Banihashemi discussed the agency's aim to streamline operations, support the low-income population, encourage ridership and simplify fares for riders. She discussed changes to the low-income fare assistance (LIFA) programs, including consolidation and expansion of eligibility criteria for the Paratransit and Catch-A-Ride programs to encourage more low-income riders. She also discussed new policies relating to fare assistance subsidies, including free and unlimited access to fixed routes services for riders eligible for LIFA programs. Ms. Banihashemi stated that a significant increase in ridership is anticipated with expansion of the LIFA programs, and she discussed the streamlined and simplified processes for programs targeted at seniors.

Ms. Banihashemi discussed fare changes in relation to the Clipper Program and fixed routes, including the elimination of 7-day passes for adults, seniors and youth due to low usage, and increases in Paratransit, Dial-A-Ride, and Catch-A-Ride fares with increased trips from 8 to 10 per month. Ms. Banihashemi expressed a desire to encourage fixed route services to be utilized over these services. She also discussed an increase in driver-reimbursement subsidies for the volunteer program to incentivize volunteer drivers to participate and riders to use the service.

Ms. Banihashemi provided a timeline for the draft policy changes, which were adopted by the Marin Transit Board at its February 3, 2020 meeting. She stated that an equity analysis concluded that the proposed changes to the Marin Access fares and Fare Assistance Programs would not result in disparate impacts or a disproportionate burden to minority and low-income riders. Furthermore, the proposed changes to the fixed route fares would benefit older persons, disabled and low-income riders. Ms. Banihashemi discussed outreach and education efforts, which have included mailing postcards to Marin Access and Paratransit riders.

In response to Member Hagerty, GM Whelan stated that the fare changes might result in less revenue, but the purpose of the changes is to encourage more people to use public transit. She confirmed there is sufficient bus capacity for additional riders.

Vice-Chairperson Bob Burton commented on his observation of large buses with few people on board in Southern Marin, acknowledging his observations were outside peak hours. GM Whelan stated that Marin Transit has replaced large 60-foot articulated buses with new 40-foot hybrid buses and stated that more services are provided during the peak times for the Canal. She noted that some services, such as the Route 17 from San Rafael to Mill Valley, appear close to empty as the bus reaches its destination. GM Whelan and Vice-Chairperson Burton discussed impacts from the SMART (Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit) operation in Downtown San Rafael on bus schedules. GM Whelan confirmed that services operating east to west of the transit center have increased their run time by 4-6 minutes and stated that this should improve after the new transit center is built.

In response to Member Macdonald, who asked what was considered the main obstacle to increasing riders, GM Whelan stated that reduced traffic impacts and increased travel times would make bus transit a more attractive option. She noted that the County is well served with buses and that improvements could be made if buses were given signal priority and bus-on-shoulder use, for example.

In response to Member Powers, GM Whelan discussed the flexibility of the 10-year SRTP to meet changes that could be implemented by local jurisdictions' general plan updates. She noted that the SRTP is updated every 2 years. GM Whelan discussed the location of the new maintenance site purchased in Novato.

In further response to Member Powers, Ms. Banihashemi stated that Marin Transit is working with partner agencies to seek ways of expanding and enhancing the Volunteer Driver Program. She noted that Marin Transit funds two volunteer programs. GM Whelan confirmed that the subsidies for the Yellow School Bus Program are different from the subsidies for other bus programs.

Member Hagerty expressed concern that tourists mainly utilize the subsidized Marin Woods Shuttle Service. In response, GM Whelan stated that the purpose of subsidizing the Marin Woods Shuttle service is to relieve traffic congestion impacts.

6. Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Pilot Program Update (Discussion)

Senior Transportation Planner Scott McDonald presented this discussion item regarding the Marin-Sonoma Bike Share Pilot Program that TAM is overseeing in partnership with Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA). Mr. McDonald provided background information on the program, noting that SCTA is directly managing the grant received from MTC and the contract with Gotcha Mobility. He stated that the purpose of the program is to provide a transportation option for employers and employees to travel to and from SMART stations other than driving a car.

Mr. McDonald discussed the \$826,000 grant, which identifies 7 cities with SMART stations in Sonoma and Marin, including Novato, San Rafael and Larkspur, and he confirmed the grant would fully fund the pilot program.

Mr. McDonald discussed the timeline and consulting team recruitment process, noting that a panel interviewed 3 consulting teams from the 8 proposals received, from which Gotcha Mobility was selected. He stated that Gotcha Mobility is based in South Carolina and operates bike share programs, and that the bikes could be tethered to infrastructure or self-locked and are designed to thwart vandalism. Mr. McDonald stated that several other agencies in the Bay Area are using the same vendor. Mr. McDonald discussed the Gotcha Mobility App, noting that Clipper Cards could be used for payment, and he provided information on the 3-year pilot program, which should begin operations with 300 electric bikes, and might be expanded to 350. He stated the contractor would be responsible for advertising, the collection of revenues, and customer service, and that they will work closely with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Mr. McDonald discussed the need to develop agreements with city partners and to identify specific sites and service areas before the pilot program could begin.

Member Macdonald discussed for the benefits of the program, stating that it would encourage people not to use their car. He discussed his concern that the contractor is not familiar with Marin, which he thought would need a different model to ones that are utilized in South Carolina. Mr. McDonald stated the contractor has committed to hiring a subcontractor, who is familiar with Marin's network, to advise them on implementation. Member Macdonald suggested the contract with Gotcha Mobility should necessitate them hiring a local subcontractor to ensure personnel are available to solve mechanical issues, for example.

In response to Chairperson Pelham, Mr. McDonald explained that the metric used to determine the program's success would be the amount of usage, with the ultimate aim of the program becoming self-sustaining with sponsorship and advertising revenue with no public funding subsidies required.

In response to Member Hagerty, Mr. McDonald confirmed the bikes would be used for a single trip and then be available for another user.

In response to Member Powers, Mr. McDonald confirmed the bikes would be too heavy to load on to a bus bike rack and noted that the intended use of the bikes is for shorter trips to and from transit. He stated that the battery charge should hold for approximately 37 miles.

Member Macdonald asked and Mr. McDonald confirmed that the bikes would be peddle-assisted electric bikes. Member Macdonald suggested collaborating with College of Marin. In response, Mr. McDonald stated that Kentfield is thought to be outside the service area of the current contract. He noted that the service area would be monitored for future expansion.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Burton, Mr. McDonald stated that opportunities to connect to the Larkspur Ferry terminal from the SMART station are being discussed.

7. Review of the Proposed Revisions to the Compliance Audit Policy (Action)

Ms. Zhang presented the item, which asks the Committee to review the proposed revisions to the Measure A ½-Cent Transportation Sales Tax Compliance Audit Policy, provide input, and refer it to the TAM Board for approval. Ms. Zhang provided background information on the Compliance Audit Policy, which was originally developed with guidance from the COC. She stated that the policy is in need of revision to reflect the new projects and programs implemented under the Measure AA Expenditure Plan since July 2019.

Ms. Zhang stated that she had highlighted the current policies and recommended revisions in the staff report for clarification. She discussed the proposed changes under Strategy 1, which includes transit expenditures and revenues, noting that Marin Transit is audited annually because it receives more than 50% of the sales tax funds. Ms. Zhang stated that staff is suggesting the policy to be revised to cover both Strategy 1 under Measures A and Category 4 under Measure AA because Marin Transit should continue to receive funds that were collected under the sales tax. She confirmed that both revenue sources would be included in Marin Transit's annual compliance audit process until Measure A funds are fully spent.

Ms. Zhang discussed the need to revise the policy relating to highway projects under Measure AA Category 1 because the policy under Measure A related to the Highway 101 Gap Closure Project which was completed in 2013. She stated that TAM staff typically manage the highway projects with support from consultants. Ms. Zhang confirmed the purpose of the audit would be to ensure that funds spent by the consultants were in accordance with the contract requirements, noting that an opportunity is also provided to review the in-house contract management process for potential improvements.

Ms. Zhang discussed revisions to the policy relating to the Major Roads and Local Streets and Roads Strategy under Measure A and the Local Streets and Roads Category under Measure AA. She explained that for the uncompleted major road projects under Measure A, \$2.35 million is set aside annually, for up to 13 years, to ensure the funding level committed to complete major roads projects started under Measure A. Ms. Zhang discussed the three project phases that could be audited, recommending that the process is not changed for Measure AA.

Ms. Zhang stated that the funds for Local Streets and Roads are distributed by formula to local jurisdictions, who do not need to incur expenses prior to requesting funds. Ms. Zhang noted that funding for Local Streets and Roads increased under Measure AA and the list of eligible projects was increased. She stated that staff is not recommending changes to the policy of selecting one jurisdiction for auditing annually.

Ms. Zhang discussed the Safe Routes to School Category that is audited every 3 years under Measure A. She stated that staff is not recommending changes to the policy under Measure AA. Ms. Zhang also confirmed that staff is not recommending changes to the Crossing Guards program under Measure AA, which is audited every other year or when a new contractor is hired.

Ms. Zhang discussed Safe Pathways to Schools under Measure A, which provides the discretion to audit 2 projects. She stated that one large project and one small project are usually selected, and that staff is not recommending changes to the process under Measure AA.

Ms. Zhang discussed interest revenue, which she stated is provided for multi-use pathways, and that the recipients are audited every 3 years. She stated that staff is not recommending changes under Measure AA.

In conclusion of her report, Ms. Zhang stated that the members are requested to review the proposed revisions, provide input, and refer the changes to the TAM Board for approval. Ms. Zhang also stated that the Committee members would be reviewing a list of proposed funding recipients selected for auditing for the FY2020-2021 audit cycle at the May COC meeting.

In response to Member Powers, Ms. Zhang explained that some of the strategies under Measure A have a remaining balance. She confirmed that Measure A funds and Measure AA funds are tracked separately and are only spent on projects that are eligible under the respective expenditure plan. Ms. Zhang confirmed a Major Roads Category does not exist under Measure AA but there is a \$2.35 million annual set-side for 13 years for the uncompleted major road projects that were promised under Measure A.

Vice-Chairperson Burton moved to approve the proposed revisions to the Measure A/AA ½-Cent Transportation Sales Tax Compliance Audit Policy and refer it to the TAM Board for approval. Member Hagerty seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously with Alternates Cole and Okada abstaining. Alternate Florez had left the meeting.

8. Committee Member Hot Items Report (Information)

Some of the members stated that they had not been able to unmute their phones to participate in the meeting. Ms. Zhang stated that the issue would be resolved prior to the next meeting.

9. Discussion of Next Meeting Date and Recommended Items for the Agenda

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, May 11, the second Monday of the week since Ms. Zhang will be on a business trip on May 18, the third Monday of the month.

Member Bortel moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m., which was seconded by Member Powers. The motion was approved unanimously.

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