

June 24th, 2021



Protecting Marin Since 1934

Anne Richman, Executive Director
David Chan, Manager of Programming and Legislation
TAM Board of Commissioners
Transportation Authority of Marin
900 Fifth Avenue, Suite 100
San Rafael, CA 94901
Sent via email

Re: Comments on TAM's Draft 2021 Measure A/AA Sales Tax Strategic Plan

Dear Board commissioners, Executive Director Richman, and Manager Chan:

Marin Conservation League has reviewed the 2021 draft of TAM's Measure A/AA Sales Tax Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is a thorough description of policies and practices to responsibly steward and manage the sales tax funds available for transportation-related programs and projects in Marin. However, what is missing and yet critically important, now more than ever, is TAM's stated objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and plan for climate adaptation and resilience.

The Goal of the Marin 2018 Measure AA 30-Year Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan, as stated on page 9, is "Reduce congestion and **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**, maintain and improve local transportation infrastructure, and provide high quality transportation options for people of all ages who live, work, and travel in Marin County" [emphasis added]. The inclusion of "reduce greenhouse gas emissions" was a result of organized advocacy by several local environmental groups to that end. However, the benefit of adding the phrase to the overall goal of the Expenditure Plan cannot be realized unless subsequent planning documents fully integrate it.

The current 2021 draft Strategic Plan states that it captures the intent of the Expenditure Plan by assigning funding commitments to the four key Categories and yet "greenhouse gas emissions" are referred to (aside from the statement on page 8) only twice: on page 21 under Category 1: *Reduce Congestion on Hwy 101 & Adjacent Roadways* and on page 27 under Category 4: *Maintain and Expand Local Transit Services*. "Climate change" is only mentioned in Subcategory 2.3 *Develop Projects to Address Transportation Impacts from Sea Level Rise* and this subcategory receives only 1% of the 30-year budget.

Transportation, as a sector, generates the highest share of greenhouse gas emissions not only in Marin but in California and the country. Climate change executive orders, policies and action plans are ineffective unless local jurisdictions and the agencies that serve them fund and implement specific programs and projects that take action to achieve federal, state, regional and local greenhouse gas reduction goals. Though not measured or monitored, or in some cases even stated, it's likely that many of the Expenditure Plan's Implementation Categories and Subcategories that

175 N. Redwood Dr., Ste. 135, San Rafael, CA 94903 | 415.485.6257 |
mcl@marinconservationleague.org

Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin County.

the Strategic Plan funds can and do reduce GHG's as their implementation increases. It's important, however, that all transportation programs and projects are evaluated through the lens of decreasing GHG emissions.

To that end, MCL suggests TAM make the following additions to the 2021 Strategic Plan:

- 1) In addition to the other two new Guiding Principles added "to address contemporary issues of prominence to TAM", we request that a third new Guiding Principle addressing climate change be added too; one that explicitly commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change on local transportation infrastructure. It is an emerging transportation issue that can no longer be ignored. Guiding Principle e: *Promote High Environmental and Conservation Awareness* is not specific to the climate crisis and does not suffice.
- 2) Make explicit how a guiding principle addressing climate change, as well as other guiding principles in the Strategic Plan, will drive expenditures in the five-year budget and forecast future allocations and expenditures.
- 3) Include with other funding allocation criteria, the comprehensiveness of a proposed project or program in applying as many guiding principles as possible.
- 4) Establish metrics and regularly monitor the outcomes of projects and programs funded by Measure AA in meeting the Expenditure Plan's Goal as well as the Guiding Principles of the 2021 Strategic Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,



Robert Miller
President



Kate Powers
Land Use, Transportation and Water Committee

cc TAM Board of Commissioners