



MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN
CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

July 20, 2020

5:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83596550131?pwd=MIRxZ3Z4RVU2WGRsdGR6VzlwNVcvdz09>

Webinar ID: 835 9655 0131

Password: 882603

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Peter Pelham, Major Marin Employers (Chairperson)
Bob Burton, Southern Marin Planning Area (Vice-Chairperson)
Joy Dahlgren, Central Marin Planning Area
Charley Vogt, Northern Marin Planning Area
Vince O'Brien, Bicycle & Pedestrian Groups
Kate Powers, Environmental Organizations
Kevin Hagerty, League of Women Voters
Allan Bortel, Marin County Paratransit Coordinating Council
Paul Premo, Taxpayer Group

Alternates Present:

Jeffrey Olson, Central Marin Planning Area
Kay Noguchi, League of Women Voters
Kingston Cole, Taxpayer Groups

Staff Members Present:

Anne Richman, Executive Director
Li Zhang, Chief Financial Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Bill Whitney, Principal Project Delivery Manager
Dan Cherrier, Principal Project Delivery Manager
Derek McGill, Planning Manager
Denise Merleno, Executive Assistant
Helga Cotter, Senior Accountant
Grace Zhuang, Accounting and Administration Specialist

Chairperson Peter Pelham called the Citizens' Oversight Committee (COC) meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Introductions and Welcome

Chairperson Pelham asked TAM Senior Accountant Helga Cotter to conduct the roll call. Ms. Cotter did so and confirmed that a quorum was present. Chairperson Pelham stated the meeting order rules and instructions for the public comments.

2. Open Time for Public Expression

No public comment had been received.

3. Review and Approval of June 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes (Action)

Vice-Chairperson Bob Burton requested that halfway down on page 3 of 8 of the Minutes, “*worse*” should be amended to “*worst*”, and “collected” should be changed to a more suitable verb when describing the agency’s reserve policy. Vice-Chairperson Burton suggested “*collected*” should be amended to “*allocated*”, which occurred in a few other places after this one.

Member Allan Bortel asked if the 10% drop in revenue on page 5 of the Minutes related to FY2019-20 or FY2020-21, and Chief Financial Officer/Deputy Executive Director Li Zhang confirmed it is FY2019-20. Ms. Zhang stated that June’s sales tax revenue is stronger than the same month last year, noting that sales of luxury sporting goods and clothing rose considerably in that month.

Ms. Zhang reported that staff had received minor corrections to the minutes from Chairperson Pelham prior to the meeting and will incorporate them into the final minutes.

Member Joy Dahlgren moved to approve the June 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes with corrections. Member Allan Bortel seconded the vote and the Minutes were approved with Member Vince O’Brien abstaining.

4. TAM Staff Report (Information)

Executive Director (ED) Anne Richman presented the staff report. ED Richman confirmed that staff continues to work remotely in accordance with the Marin County Public Health Officer’s direction and that TAM is following the County’s guidelines for an eventual return to the office with the preparation of a Site Specific Plan and the acquisition of personal safety supplies such as masks, sanitizers, gloves, etc.

ED Richman provided an update on her participation in Marin Recovers, noting that some of the recommendations from the Transportation Task Force have been posted on the Marin Recovers website. ED Richman stated that the recommendations relating to public transit refer primarily to the guidelines that the State has developed for transit.

ED Richman noted TAM’s commitment to equity with dedicated funding for transit service, Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S), and programs for seniors and people with disabilities. ED Richman stated that the agency is considering ways of increasing equity and is currently developing a framework for the Board’s consideration.

ED Richman provided an update on construction projects. She stated that Marin County has completed the installation of 3 Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at various pedestrian crosswalks, which were funded with \$100,000 from the Safe Pathways Program under Measure AA. ED Richman stated that the locations are in Terra Linda, Tam Junction and San Rafael High School.

ED Richman reported that staff will be recommending that the TAM Board approve one-time grants to local jurisdictions for Quick Build projects at the July 23, 2020 meeting. ED Richman stated that applications were received from 11 jurisdictions for up to \$20,000 per project from the Measure AA Category 2 Innovation Program, which has about \$200,000 total available. ED Richman stated that these projects necessitate the redesign of streets for safe opening and operation of businesses as a result of the pandemic which include open-air markets on public streets, street closures for outdoor dining and retail, and long-term street redesign effort in the vicinity of schools.

ED Richman discussed projects that are seeking public comment, including the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC’s) Draft Blueprint for Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050. ED Richman also noted that the Marin County Drawdown Strategic Plan has been released for public comment through July 31, 2020.

ED Richman reported that Caltrans has issued a Notice of Preparation for the environmental documents relating to the Interim Segment B project for segments of State Route (SR) 37 in Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties. A public meeting will be held on July 22, 2020 to receive public comment and the public comment period is through August 24, 2020.

ED Richman reported that TAM will be hosting the second virtual stakeholder working group meeting for the NB US-101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project on July 21, 2020. She thanked Members Kate Powers and Kevin Hagerty for their participation in the group.

ED also reported on items for the forthcoming July 23, 2020 Board Meeting, including the annual report from Marin Transit and the triennial evaluation of the SR2S Program from 2016–2019, which will include information on how the program has changed as a result of the pandemic. She also noted that the Board meeting will include the Quick-Build projects, the PBA 2050 update, and a presentation on transit and traffic data that has been collected during the Shelter-in-Place Order.

Finally, ED Richman reported that Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) has approved placing an extension of its Transportation Sales Tax Measure on the November ballot, noting that SCTA is seeking to extend its ¼-Cent Sales Tax for another 20 years.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Burton, ED Richman confirmed that SCTA's ¼-Cent Sales Tax Measure does not relate to SMART.

In response to Member Kate Powers, ED Richman stated that most of the projects TAM submitted to PBA 2050 for funding consideration have been included in the Plan. She stated that the exceptions include an improvement project for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge's westbound third lane and projects related to SR37 that are proposed to be included in the Plan but are subject to additional Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions data.

Member Powers asked ED Richman to provide an update on Segment A of SR37. ED Richman stated that Caltrans is starting the environmental process using \$10 million of its own funds, and that they are also considering an environmental study for the whole SR37 corridor.

Vice-Chairperson Burton asked staff for the completion date of the exit lane from US-101 to Bellam Boulevard, which he thought might solve traffic congestion problems to the extent that a prohibitively expensive connector might not be necessary. In response, ED Richman stated that construction is scheduled to begin in early 2021 and that more information will be provided under the item relating to the NB US-101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project.

In response to Alternate Jeff Olson, ED Richman confirmed that a ¼-Cent Sales Tax Measure proposed by the City of San Rafael does not relate to TAM. Member Paul Premo stated that the San Rafael Town Council is considering a 9-year sales tax increase for general purposes.

In response to Member O'Brien, ED Richman stated that information on the NB US-101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project is available on TAM's website and that staff could recommend other resources for information on SR37.

Member Charley Vogt commended staff for their outreach efforts, noting that TAM staff will be addressing the Rotary Club of Ignacio.

5. TAM and Marin Transit “Connect2Transit” Program in Uber App (Information)

Planning Manager Derek McGill presented the staff report and noted that the Connect2Transit Program was launched on July 1, 2020 in partnership with Marin Transit. He stated that the program combines TAM’s GetSMART First/Last Mile Program, which provided a \$5 incentive for shared rides to and from SMART stations through the Lyft App, and Marin Transit’s Connect Service launched in April 2018, which provided on-demand wheelchair accessible vehicles. Mr. McGill stated that the aim of the new program is to expand the service under a contract awarded to Uber.

Mr. McGill reported that the GetSMART program has been very cost-effective, providing on average 700-900 rides per month.

Mr. McGill stated that the Connect2Transit Program will allow TAM and Marin Transit to fully integrate their programs. During the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, in May 2020 Uber was selected with the commitment to provide real time transit information for services operated by SMART, Marin Transit and Golden Gate within its Uber App. He stated that the program also provides additional support for seniors and riders with disabilities, and expands TAM’s first and last mile connections to transit stations and employment sites in Marin County, with the added benefit of cost savings to both agencies by streamlining the contracting process.

Mr. McGill stated that partnerships have been entered into with the County of Marin and Kaiser to pay for additional costs for employees in excess of the \$5 incentive TAM offers and he discussed a possible opportunity with Uber to electrify fleet vehicles. He also noted that the new program provides enhanced data reporting.

Mr. McGill discussed the expanded Connect2Transit service area, which provides first and last mile rides to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, transit hubs (including The Hub in Ross Valley), and park and ride locations along US-101, in addition to SMART stations. He discussed the Uber App, which allows riders to choose between Marin Transit Connect service, Uber pool vehicles, and the Uber X service where available, based on cost, wait time and access needs. Mr. McGill confirmed the \$5 incentive applies to all qualified rides under the prior GetSMART and Marin Transit’s Connect programs.

Mr. McGill discussed the integrated real time transit data feature, which allows users to see route timings and available services on the public transit system. He drew attention to a feature relating to the first mile, which guarantees users a drop off time, noting that meeting a certain train had been a challenge under the previous ride share app. Mr. McGill discussed Connect2Ttransit.com, which he noted has a link to enable users to access the \$5 discount code.

In response to Member Kevin Hagerty, Mr. McGill stated that Marin Transit uses vans for the Connect Service. He confirmed the discount coupon is eligible for all Uber services and that the vans have a 2-person capacity.

Member Bortel and Mr. McGill discussed the reasons TAM is involved with a program that is operated by Marin Transit. Mr. McGill stated that during the SMART development process, there was a proposal of shuttle services to and from SMART stations. In 2015/2016 there were requests for TAM to provide shuttle services, so offering a first/last mile discount program through the Commute Alternative Program under Measure B was considered appropriate when SMART trains began operating. Furthermore, Marin Transit has asked TAM to continue with the partnership in 2017 to help alleviate the Marin Transit peak period demand along with the Uber pool vehicles.

In response to Member Powers, Mr. McGill explained the GetSMART Program with the \$5 discount program that operated under Lyft has transitioned to the new program with Uber. This program might serve as an opportunity to explore other on-demand services moving forward.

6. Status Update on NB US-101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project (Information)

Principal Project Delivery Manager Dan Cherrier presented the status update on the NB US-101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project. Mr. Cherrier discussed northbound traffic delays from the two exits from US-101 to I-580, which the project should relieve by providing a connector that will separate regional traffic from local traffic. He noted that the project will include bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Mr. Cherrier discussed the committees involved in the project, including an Ad-Hoc Committee that consists of 4 Board Members, an Executive Steering Committee that includes executive staff from stakeholder groups, a Technical Advisory Committee, and a Stakeholder Working Group that includes two members of the COC.

Mr. Cherrier stated that the main purpose of the project is to ease afternoon traffic from NB US-101 to EB I-580, which has increased over the past decade, without impeding a future project that would improve traffic conditions flowing in the opposite direction.

Mr. Cherrier provided background information on the alternative designs, including a moderately priced study completed in 2017 that was accepted in the Regional Measure (RM) 3 funding program. He discussed the work underway right now with the goal to finalize an approved project with 1 preferred alternative, which he stated should be accomplished by late 2023.

Mr. Cherrier discussed project funding, including \$135 million from RM3 and \$16.5 million from Measure AA. He stated that the Measure AA funds are being used to expedite the project by funding the Caltrans' Project Study Report and the environmental process.

Mr. Cherrier discussed the 7 alternatives, including Alternatives Hillside 1A and 1B and Low Speed 3A and 3B, and the costs associated with each alternative. He noted that Alternative 3A, with a projected cost of \$131 million, was successful in attracting RM3 funds. Mr. Cherrier advised the Members that there would be a presentation on all the alternatives at the Stakeholder Working Group Meeting on July 21, 2020 and that they could attend via Zoom.

Mr. Cherrier concluded the update by confirming that reductions in traffic congestion would be accomplished by moving regional traffic to the connector.

In response to Member Powers, Mr. Cherrier confirmed the Stakeholder Working Group will review and discuss the impacts of each alternative in more detail.

In response to Alternate Olson, Mr. Cherrier confirmed the drawings included in the presentation and the Stakeholder Working Group packet have been uploaded to TAM's website. Mr. Cherrier stated that he envisages 2 alternatives being chosen for the environmental analysis, which should begin in late 2021.

Mr. Cherrier and Chairperson Pelham discussed Alternatives 3A and 3B. Mr. Cherrier stated that approval of these designs would not necessarily provide an easier project because both have a design speed of 35 miles per hour (mph) and Caltrans requires a design speed of at least 50 mph for connections between freeways. However, he noted that these alternatives would have less impact on local businesses.

Member Vogt asked Mr. Cherrier to explain the role of the Ad-Hoc Committee. Mr. Cherrier stated that the Committee is made up of elected officials who will make a final recommendation to the TAM Board. He noted that the TAM Board will review the Environmental Impact Report and make a decision on the final design.

Member Vogt and Mr. Cherrier discussed the utilization of the current off-ramps in the new designs. Mr. Cherrier stated that two of the designs would close the Bellam Blvd. off ramp from I-580 and all other ramps would remain.

Ms. Cotter confirmed that no public comment had been received.

7. Highway 101 Interchange Studies Project Report (Information)

Principal Project Delivery Manager Bill Whitney provided an update on the Highway 101 Interchange and Approaching Roadway Study. Mr. Whitney provided an overview of the project, which he noted is funded through Measure AA with a 3% allocation of funds, estimated at \$24.8 million over the 30-year period of the Measure. He stated that the purpose of the project is to study interchanges and approaching roadways, including all users such as bicyclists, pedestrians and transit vehicles, and propose improvements. He stated that the study would be used to pursue funding sources for the projects.

Mr. Whitney discussed the goals of the project, which include enhancing health and safety features, relieving local traffic congestion, improving multimodal access to and from and across US 101, promoting economic vitality, and implementability. He discussed the goal to prioritize projects in the study that could be delivered and the need to draft evaluation criteria and performance measures to prioritize projects with good cost-benefit ratios.

Mr. Whitney discussed the 11 interchanges that were included in the study under Measure AA, and the process to select a twelfth interchange. He discussed the reasons for eliminating 10 of the 16 remaining interchanges, which included interchanges that are being studied in other projects, and with low traffic volumes and limited connectivity.

Mr. Whitney discussed the criteria used to measure the remaining 6 interchanges, including congestion relief, sea-level rise and collision data, noting that Shoreline Highway and Alameda Del Prado/Nave Drive have higher collision levels. Mr. Whitney stated that Caltrans has future plans for a major project at Shoreline Highway and that the object of the study is to focus on local roads. Therefore, Mr. Whitney stated that staff's recommendation is to include Alameda Del Prado/Nave Drive as part of the Interchange Study.

Mr. Whitney summarized the study process, which he stated is underway with data collection and would include an implementation plan for recommendation to the TAM Board. He stated that the project would conclude with the selection of two or three interchanges that would be submitted to Caltrans for a more in-depth study process.

Mr. Whitney provided a project timeline, noting that the study is expected to be completed in 12 – 14 months.

Member Vogt commended Mr. Whitney on his presentation and stated that the traffic statistics for Alameda Del Prado/Nave Drive interchange were unexpected. Member Vogt stated that the interchange is an excellent addition to the project list, noting the number of walking and bike trails that would need to be incorporated into the study.

Chairperson Pelham stated that he agreed with Member Vogt's comment and that Alameda Del Prado/Nave Drive is a risky intersection for cyclists.

Member Powers and Mr. Whitney discussed the correlation between a jurisdiction's General Plan and regional transportation projects. Mr. Whitney stated that TAM would be reaching out to Public Works Directors and Community Development Directors to ensure the study takes into account the needs of various jurisdictions.

In response to Member Vogt, Mr. Whitney confirmed the studies would incorporate current and future ramp metering, noting that Phase I NB US-101 from the Golden Gate Bridge to EB I-580 should be activated in early 2021. He stated that Caltrans has done an environmental document on the remaining ramps and they should be metered in 2026-27.

Ms. Cotter confirmed that no public comment had been received.

Chairperson Pelham thanked Mr. Whitney for his presentation, which he stated was excellent.

8. Committee Member Hot Items Report (Discussion)

There were none.

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

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2020.

In response to Member Hagerty, Member Powers stated that she had not yet attended a Marin Transit Board meeting due to the COVID-19 conditions. Ms. Zhang suggested that Marin Transit staff could provide a summary of the meetings for Member Powers to report to the COC. Member Powers added that she had started contact with Marin Transit staff but has not followed up due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms. Zhang asked the Committee members to advise her of items they would like to add to the agenda.

In response to Alternate Kay Noguchi, Ms. Zhang stated that Mr. McGill could provide an update on the Bus on Shoulder Project when there is more data to report, noting that the project has just started. Mr. Cherrier noted that the project is included in the Project Status Report that will be discussed at the July 23, 2020 Board meeting.

In response to Member Vogt, Ms. Zhang confirmed the TAM Board authorized ED Richman to enter into a lease amendment with the current landlord at a lower rent that should yield \$250,000 in savings over the 5-year lease period.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.