



MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN
TAM

JULY 23, 2020
6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83548745398?pwd=UWlhVzhvbDZEYkphK3F5TVJYUGZMUT09>

Webinar ID: 835 4874 5398

Password: 484419

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Alice Fredericks, Tiburon Town Council, TAM Vice-Chair
Beach Kuhl, Ross Town Council
Brian Colbert, San Anselmo Town Council
Charles Lee, Corte Madera Town Council
Damon Connolly, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Dan Hillmer, Larkspur City Council
Dennis Rodoni, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Eric Lucan, Novato City Council
Gary Phillips, San Rafael City Council
James Campbell, Belvedere City Council
John Reed, Fairfax Town Council
Judy Arnold, Marin County Board of Supervisors, TAM Chair
Kathrin Sears, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Katie Rice, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Urban Carmel, Mill Valley City Council

Members Absent:

Susan Cleveland-Knowles, Sausalito City Council

Staff Members Present

Anne Richman, Executive Director
Bill Whitney, Principal Project Delivery Manager
Dan Cherrier, Principal Project Delivery Manager
David Chan, Manager of Programming and Legislation
Denise Merleno, Executive Assistant
Derek McGill, Planning Manager
Helga Cotter, Senior Accountant
Li Zhang, Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer
Molly Graham, Public Outreach Coordinator
Nick Nguyen, Principal Project Delivery Manager
Scott McDonald, Senior Transportation Planner

Chair Arnold called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. Chair's Report (Action)

Chair Arnold welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Ms. Denise Merleno to conduct a roll call to ensure a quorum. Chair Arnold confirmed the quorum and went on to describe the way in which the public could offer their comments throughout the meeting.

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2. Commissioner Matters Not on the Agenda (Discussion)

Commissioners Hillmer and Reed joined the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

3. Executive Director's Report (Discussion)

Executive Director (ED) Anne Richman reported on staff's continued practice of working remotely, two recent meetings of the Marin 101-580 Direct Connector Project Stakeholder Working Group, and her participation, as a panelist, in the first of a series of webinars sponsored by CoMotion LIVE on July 15, 2020. She noted that the Caltrans Report will become part of her monthly Executive Director's Report (EDR) rather than a stand-alone agenda item. The ED commented, as well, on the following: a number of projects and programs that are in their public comment phase; that the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) will ask the voters to extend, by 20 years, its ¼-cent transportation sales tax this November; the creation of a Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC); and that the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) named MTC Chair Scott Hagerty as its Person of the Year. She finalized her report by noting that August meetings for the TAM Executive Committees and Board of Commissioners have been cancelled and meetings will resume in September.

Chair Arnold asked if any members of the public wished to speak or had sent in an e-comment, and hearing that none had been received, she closed this item to public comment.

4. Commissioner Reports (Discussion)

Commissioner Rice joined the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

a. MTC Report – Commissioner Connolly

Commissioner Connolly reported that a number of transit workers attended a recent meeting of the MTC Commission to emphasize the need for safety during the current health crisis. Regarding Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050, he noted that the Commission voted on recommendations for specific regional discretionary funding levels for the transportation element of the Plan. He added that input on the Plan is being sought from the public through August 10. He finalized his report by reviewing three housing bills that MTC discussed including his dissent on the votes taken for Senate Bill (SB) 902 (Weiner) and SB 995 (Atkins), and his support for AB (Assembly Bill) 3040 (Chiu).

b. Marin Transit Report – Commissioner Rodoni

Commissioner Rodoni reported that the District introduced a new fare policy on July 1, 2020, which included a decrease in the cost of adult passes as well as one for seniors, disabled and low-income riders. He noted that MTC is considering adding Marin Transit to its Clipper Start program which provides discounts to low-income adults who ride on the transit agencies included in that program. This would allow for a further reduction in fares for low-income riders.

c. SMART Report – Commissioner Lucan

Commissioner Lucan reported that SMART approved a budget for the upcoming year which included significant cuts and he added that the agency had a number of public engagement sessions and that the input heavily guided the budget approval process. He finalized his report by stating that SMART is moving forward on its quest to renew its sales tax and is conducting extensive virtual listening sessions with communities in Sonoma and Marin.

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5. Open Time for Public Expression

Chair Arnold asked if any members of the public wished to speak or had sent in an e-comment, and hearing none, she moved on to the next item.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR (Action)

- a. Approve TAM Board Meeting Minutes July 23, 2020
- b. Amend the Administrative Code and the Accompanying Resolution for the Conflict of Interest Section on Designated Positions Requiring Compliance with State Disclosure Requirements
- c. Highway 101 Interchange and Approaching Roadway Study – Concur with Program Goals and Objectives and Approve Adding an Additional Interchange to the Project List
- d. Review and Accept the July 2020 Project Status Report
- e. Approval of Extension of Interagency Agreement with Kentfield School District for Crossing Guard Services

Chair Arnold asked if any member of the public wished to speak or if staff had received any public comment by e-mail, and hearing none, she closed this item to public comment.

Commissioner Campbell moved to approve the Consent Calendar and was seconded by Commissioner Phillips. A roll call vote was conducted and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Adopt Position on State Legislative Bill SB 288 (Action)

ED Richman introduced this item and noted that a number of comments received from the public had been distributed to the Board prior to tonight's meeting. David Chan, Manager of Programming & Legislation, provided a list of names and advocacy groups who submitted those letters and then introduced Gus Khouri, TAM's Legislative Consultant, who provided an update on legislative activities in Sacramento before presenting this item which recommended that the TAM Board adopts a position of support on SB 288 (Wiener).

Mr. Khouri stated that SB 288 provides for CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) streamlining to deliver non-capacity inducing projects for bus rapid transit, road maintenance and repair, electrification of the highway system via charging stations, and bus-on-shoulder projects. He added that streamlining thresholds would be based on the type and scope of the project.

Commissioner Connolly noted that the MTC Commission heard a presentation of this item and voted 16-0 to support it.

Commissioner Fredericks commented that the bill does not state, clearly, what type of projects and programs are exempted from CEQA and what type of projects and programs are exempted from its exemptions from CEQA. In particular, she expressed need for clarity on environmentally sensitive projects. She stated that while she supports what the bill purports to accomplish, she does not have a full-enough understanding to support the bill itself.

Commissioner Rice asked for an example of how Marin and its upcoming projects would be affected should SB 288 be adopted.

Mr. Khouri stated that given the sentiment in Sacramento to encourage mode shift, he could not see this piece of legislation passing if it enabled a negative impact on environmentally sensitive areas.

ED Richman stated that Marin's larger projects, such as the State Route (SR) 37 project, would require full scrutiny under CEQA and possibly NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) as well. She thought that projects that would fall under this proposed streamlining effort would be likely a bus-on-shoulder project, or a bike path project

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depending on the size and scale. She added that this bill does not preclude a project sponsor from doing more environmental clearance than what is required.

Commissioner Rodoni asked Mr. Chan if he could summarize the negative comments amongst the letters received from the public and he noted his concern that loosening the restrictions under CEQA could eventually lead to stripping its directive. He added that he is considering voting against or, at the least, abstaining from voting on the staff recommendation.

Mr. Chan replied that the overall theme of the comment letters was that this bill would degrade what CEQA intends to accomplish and would not protect the natural resources.

Commissioner Carmel noted that this bill relates to greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reducing projects and as such are positive for the environment.

Commissioner Lucan agreed with Commissioner Carmel's comments and noted that the projects that would benefit from the passage of this bill are those that promote mode shift and, as such, he will vote in support of the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Reed agreed with previous commissioner comments and stated that the projects that would benefit from this bill will help stem sea-level rise.

Chair Arnold asked if there was any public comment.

Kate Powers, representing the Marin Conservation League (MCL), thanked the Board for considering her group's concerns. She stated that MCL thinks that the small projects have a streamlining opportunity, already, through CEQA's Common Sense Exemption. MCL believes that the bill has been rushed and ask that the TAM Board refrain from taking a position on it as it is currently written.

Bjorn Griepenburg, representing the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC), reiterated his group's support as outlined in the comment letter submitted earlier. He stated that MCBC understands the concerns registered by the conservation groups, and he provided information based on a conversation he had with one of the bill's sponsors to get clarification and to ease those environmental concerns.

Cindy Winter, a member of MCBC, supported comments provided by Mr. Griepenburg.

Jean Severinghaus stated that this bill would require input from the public early on in a project's process which she thought was a good way to ensure that a project moves in the direction the public desires.

Chair Arnold, seeing no others wishing to speak, closed this item to public comment.

Commissioner Fredericks commented that, given some of the concerns heard over the bill's language, she suggested that the Board consider taking a "watch" position as an alternative to one of "support."

Commissioner Fredericks moved to adopt a "watch" position on Senate Bill 288 (Wiener) which was seconded by Commissioner Rodoni. A roll call vote was conducted and the motion failed to pass. (4 Ayes, 11 Noes, 1 Absent.)

Commissioner Lucan moved to adopt a position of support on Senate Bill 288 (Wiener) and was seconded by Commissioner Campbell. A roll call vote was conducted and the motion passed. (13 Ayes, 1 Nay, 1 Abstention, 1 Absent.)

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8. Marin Transit

a. Marin Transit's Annual Presentation (Discussion)

ED Richman introduced Nancy Whelan, General Manager of Marin Transit (MT), who provided the agency's annual report highlighting its achievements over the past year, necessary changes made in its operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, planning for revenue uncertainty, budget revenue sources for FY2020/21, and various factors that the agency is monitoring that may affect its operations or require a quick response. Ms. Whelan reviewed ridership trends since the pandemic started, the adaptation of paratransit vehicles to provide meal and grocery delivery, required physical distancing on busses which reduces ridership capacity by up to 75 percent, and efforts taken to eliminate "pass-ups" (wherein riders are being passed up by a bus) due to the new reduced capacity levels.

Ms. Whelan moved on to discuss the allocation requests including \$14,966,785 in Measure A/AA funding for local and basic service as well as community shuttles, school transportation, rural transit, seniors/special needs services, and for funding capital projects. She finalized her report by summarizing her agency's allocation request of \$1,075,000 in Measure B funding for mobility management program staffing and to support paratransit programs and other programs to provide mobility to seniors and people with low income.

Commissioner Phillips asked Ms. Whelan if the "pass-up" rate will increase over time, given the slow but steady increase in bus ridership coupled with the continued mandate for reduced seating capacity.

Ms. Whelan stated that it is a challenge within the industry but that MT is monitoring the required social distancing requirement, particularly as Marin comes off the State's watch list, and will seek authorization to reduce the amount of distancing required from six feet to three feet which would increase the number of riders on each bus.

Commissioner Reed asked if increased ventilation and the addition of plexiglass in busses would allow for an increase in passenger capacity while the 6-foot distancing requirement is still in effect.

Ms. Whelan replied that increased air circulation is being considered and that bus windows and hatches are opened where possible. She added that MT is studying how much fresh air is being circulated through the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system and what might be done to increase that volume. Regarding barriers, she stated that they are being installed to surround the driver and that the feasibility of installing barriers around passenger seats is being investigated as well.

Commissioner Lee, speaking on the 75 percent reduction in seat capacity in the larger busses, wondered if the seat capacity and operational costs of the smaller busses might be more efficient than the larger ones in MT's fleet. He went on to suggest that renting smaller busses, citing Bauer's as an example, might make sense given the limited capacity issue is a temporary one.

Ms. Whelan replied that it is more cost effective to have a higher driver to passenger ratio since labor is the biggest cost driver and fuel costs are secondary when considering the bus size to use. She added that renting vehicles has not been a consideration because her agency lacks both the drivers and the funding to do that.

Chair Arnold asked if there was any public comment and seeing none had been received, she closed this item to public comment.

b. Allocate FY 20/21 Transportation Sales Tax Funds (Measure AA and Measure A) to Marin Transit (Action)

Mr. Chan presented this item which recommended that the TAM Board Allocate \$13,791,730 in Measure AA funds, \$244,535 in Measure A funds, and \$930,520 in Measure A Reserve funds to Marin Transit from Category 4 and Strategy 1 of the respective Strategic Plans for FY 20/21 for a total of \$14,966,785.

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Commissioner Rice moved to approve the staff recommendation, which was seconded by Commissioner Fredericks. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously.

c. Allocate FY 20/21 Vehicle Registration Fee (Measure B) Funds to Marin Transit (Action)

Mr. Chan presented this item which recommended that the TAM Board allocate \$1,075,000 in Vehicle Registration Fee (Measure B) funds to Marin Transit under Element 2 of the Measure B Strategic Plan for FY 20/21.

Commissioner Phillips moved to approve the staff recommendation, which was seconded by Commissioner Fredericks. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion was approved unanimously.

9. Accept Safe Routes to Schools Evaluation Report and Program Update (Action)

Dan Cherrier, Project Delivery Manager, introduced David Parisi of Parisi Transportation Consulting, who presented this item which recommended that the TAM Board review and accept the Tri-Annual Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Evaluation Report and the SR2S Program Update.

Mr. Parisi introduced Gwen Froh, Education and Encouragement Director, and Wendi Kallins, Program Director and then highlighted various items of this program including a history of the program which began in the 2000/01 school year, the number of schools participating today, a summary of the travel mode shift that has occurred over the years including a significant increase in the percentage of green trips and then he discussed various elements of the program.

Mr. Parisi continued his presentation by showing an example of a school's travel mode summary, noting that each school is evaluated similarly, and a sample school report card which each school receives at the end of the year. He spoke briefly about the schools' Task Forces who meet with Mr. Parisi's team to provide feedback for what is working and not working at their particular schools. He summarized the components of the program which include education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, and equity and provided examples of each. He discussed TAM's Crossing Guards and Street Smarts programs and then reviewed the program's budget and various funding sources. He finalized his report by summarizing recommendations for improving the program and changes that the program has made due to the coronavirus.

Commissioner Colbert commented on his participation in a recent meeting of the Safe Routes Ross Valley Task Force where he engaged in a discussion on social distancing relative to when schools reopen. He added that he participated in many of this program's activities prior to the pandemic and he believes that it is these activities coupled with the Crossing Guard program which highlight ways that TAM connects with the community.

Chair Arnold asked if there was any public comment and seeing none had been received, she closed this item to public comment.

Commissioner Fredericks moved to accept the Tri-Annual SR2S Evaluation Report and the Program Update which was seconded by Commissioner Connolly. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion was approved unanimously.

10. Award Quick Build Funding from Innovation Program Funds (Action)

Derek McGill, Planning Manager, presented this item which recommended that the TAM Board approves the proposed award of \$208,776 in Quick Build Grants for 11 projects in Marin County; authorizes the ED to enter into

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all necessary funding agreements and an amendment to the budget to reflect the expenditure of \$208,776 in FY20/21 under Category 2.4 – Innovative Technology of the Measure AA Sales Tax Expenditure Plan.

Mr. McGill discussed the funding available through the Measure AA Local Streets and Roads' Innovation Program Category, the goals of the program, usage of the National Association of City Transportation Officials' (NACTO) Guidance for Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery to develop the Call for Projects, the accelerated application process, scoring criteria for the 11 applications submitted by the local public works departments, staff's recommendation to fully fund all grant requests which will create the need to amend the TAM Budget to reflect the full amount of \$208,776 of which funds are available, and staff's plan to monitor the projects to capture best practices.

Commissioner Phillips noted that some projects will not receive the full dollar amount needed to complete the project and asked what will happen if a jurisdiction is not able to cover the shortfall.

Mr. McGill replied that all project sponsors assured TAM during the application process that they will be able to cover any remaining unfunded costs for their projects.

Commissioner Colbert expressed his appreciation for the agile manner, in which staff handled the process and provided funding for these projects.

Chair Arnold asked if there was any public comment and seeing none had been received, she closed this item to public comment.

Commissioner Lee moved to approve the proposed award of \$208,776 in Quick Build Grants for 11 projects in Marin County; authorize the ED to enter into all necessary funding agreements and approve an amendment to the budget to reflect the expenditure of \$208,776 in FY20/21 under Category 2.4 – Innovative Technology of the Measure AA Sales Tax Expenditure Plan which was seconded by Commissioner Campbell. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion was approved unanimously.

11. COVID-19 Travel Conditions in Marin County (Discussion)

Mr. McGill presented this discussion item which provided information on travel conditions within the county before the onset of and during the pandemic. He introduced Brian Canepa of W-Trans, who explained that the data would inform traffic studies, support recovery planning and inform policy considerations. Mr. Canepa reviewed data for the first half of 2020 including bridge traffic patterns, traffic volume flow and average highway speeds at various points along US 101 and SR 37 in the county, changes in the incident rate on the highway, significant changes in ridership levels on bus transit, ferry and the train in the past months, and the significant drop followed by the slow uptick in CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide) emissions. He summarized the initial findings of the report.

Commissioner Carmel stated that he believes that small changes can make an enormous difference and cited a comment made by Mr. Canepa regarding how reducing traffic by 10 percent can dramatically alter traffic congestion from standstill to free flow.

Commissioner Reed suggested that, since bicycle use has grown in the recent months, it may be a good idea to begin the practice of monitoring congestion on bikeways.

Commissioner Rice spoke on the topic of the transit-dependent rider versus the rider who has options on how they commute, and she suggested that when making transit funding decisions, it will be important to remember the operators that serve the riders who have no other way to reach their destinations.

Commissioner Phillips asked about the anticipated growth in SMART's ridership in the next six months.

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Mr. McGill said he expects ridership to increase once mainstream re-opening of businesses and life, in general, is permitted by local health officers.

Commissioner Fredericks referred to a rider survey conducted by Golden Gate Transit and noted only 6 percent of respondents reported a change in job status and 50 percent of respondents who take transit 4 – 5 days a week said they will resume taking transit once restart their commutes. She suggested that this may be a good opportunity to coax the other 50 percent to seek alternative transportation modes but it could also be a predictor of increased road congestion.

Commissioner Lee thought it would be a good idea to have both educational and advertisement campaigns to incentivize the return to transit ridership and to make riders feel safe in taking transit once things begin to open up.

Commissioner Lucan asked for the source of the ridership data, and Mr. Canepa replied that the data came directly from the transit agencies.

Chair Arnold asked if there was any public comment and seeing none had been received, she closed this item to public comment.

12. MTC's Plan Bay Area 2050 Update (Discussion)

Mr. McGill presented this discussion item and highlighted the background of PBA 2050; the Plan's blueprint to ensure that the Bay Area is affordable, diverse, healthy and vibrant for all by 2050 by employing transportation, housing, economic, and environmental strategies and then provided a more in-depth explanation of Marin's projects included in the Plan as well as those that are still being considered or not recommended for funding by MTC. He finalized his report by discussing upcoming activities including digital public outreach scheduled over the summer.

Chair Arnold referred to one of the slides in the presentation and asked about the funding shortfall for the Novato Blvd Project. Mr. McGill noted that the Public Works Department of the City of Novato has committed to covering the shortfall with its local funding sources.

Commissioner Rice stated that her takeaway from this presentation combined with the item previously heard is that it is imperative to electrify transportation in order to meet GHG reduction goals.

Mr. McGill noted that the GHG reduction target for the Plan is derived from vehicle miles traveled and that electrification that occurs gets accrued to the state level and is not passed down to the region as of yet.

Commissioner Hillmer stated that he will be working with his Council to look at land use around the Larkspur Ferry Terminal for transportation synergies in support of the Plan's goals.

Chair Arnold asked if there were any members of the public wishing to speak.

Cindy Winter of Greenbrae expressed her opposition to the proposed parking garage at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal since it will increase congestion and GHG emissions.

Seeing no others wishing to speak, Chair Arnold closed this item to public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.