



MEETING OF THE  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN  
CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

June 21, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85916430810?pwd=b2ZzaHhxRHILQUVRdDEzNnBwNEZadz09>

**Webinar ID: 859 1643 0810**

**Passcode: 720381**

**MEETING MINUTES**

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

Alternates Present: Veda Florez, Northern Marin Planning Area  
Debbie Alley, Southern Marin Planning Area  
Nancy Okada, Environmental Organizations  
Kingston Cole, Taxpayer Group

Staff Members Present: Anne Richman, Executive Director  
Li Zhang, Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer  
David Chan, Manager of Programing and Legislation  
Dan Cherrier, Principal Project Delivery Manager  
Jennifer Doucette, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board  
Grace Zhuang, Accounting and Administration Specialist  
Helga Cotter, Senior Accountant

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

**1. Introductions and Welcome**

Senior Accountant Helga Cotter stated the meeting order rules and instructions for the public to provide comments.

Executive Director (ED) Anne Richman introduced TAM's new Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board, Jennifer Doucette, and swore in Chairperson Pelham, Members Paul Premo, Charley Vogt, Jeffrey Olson, Kate Powers, Alternates Kinston Cole, Veda Florez and Debbie Alley for their respective member/alternate terms.

Chairperson Pelham asked Ms. Cotter to conduct the roll call. Ms. Cotter did so and confirmed that a quorum was present

Introductions were made around the virtual Zoom meeting room.

## **2. Open Time for Public Expression**

No public expression was received.

## **3. Review and Approval of May 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Action)**

Member Olson made the following correction:

Page 4: "Olsen" changed to "Olson".

Member Vogt moved to approve the May 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes and Member Allan Bortel seconded the motion, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

## **4. TAM Staff Report (Information)**

ED Richman presented the staff report and provided an update to Executive Order N-29-20, which allows public agencies to hold public meetings virtually and confirmed the Order has been extended through September 30, 2021.

ED Richman reported on the following: Former TAM Executive Assistant Denise Merleno retired at the end of May; construction is progressing on the 12-foot bike path over Corte Madera Creek that is part of the North-South Greenway Gap Closure Project; construction should begin in late summer or early fall on the San Rafael Third Street Rehabilitation Project and the East Blithedale Rehabilitation Project in Mill Valley, which both are Major Roads projects and received Measure AA funds of \$11.6 million and \$1.2 million respectively.

ED Richman also reported on the following: staff's recommendation that the TAM Board approve the allocation of \$5.2 million in Measure AA funds for local infrastructure projects for the FY2021-22 fiscal year at the June 26 TAM Board meeting; a projected \$76 billion surplus in the state budget and a proposal by the Governor to allocate \$11 billion for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions, job creation and mobility enhancement projects/programs; approval by the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to reauthorize a transportation bill with potential funding for the Canal Crossing in San Rafael, Vista Point Bay Trail in Sausalito, State Route (SR) 37 corridor enhancements, Golden Gate Bridge suicide barrier, and Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) Russian River Bridge. ED Richman also reported that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG) has released the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050 and that staff from MTC/ABAG provided a presentation to the TAM Board at the May 27 meeting, and will conduct several virtual public meetings including the June 30 meeting in North Bay; that MTC is recruiting for Policy Advisory Council and will begin accepting application on August 1; that MTC and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) have released a survey on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge pathway; and that a joint study of the rail network in the Bay Area, called "Link 21", between Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and the Capital Corridor Rail System, will investigate the possibility of extending the rail network in the Bay Area to Sacramento and other regions in California, and a public workshop for San Francisco has been scheduled for June 28 at 6:30 p.m.

In response to Alternate Florez, ED Richman stated that the distribution of funds from the state budget remains undecided, but that it is possible funding will be provided for additional projects listed on a recent call for projects by the state.

Alternate Florez and ED Richman discussed funding for the suicide barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge. ED Richman stated that construction is underway and that Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District (GGBHTD) is utilizing all the funds that have been provided by MTC and other sources.

Member Powers asked if TAM will be providing comment on the transportation elements of Plan Bay Area 2050. ED Richman stated that all the projects for Marin County submitted by TAM have been included in the Draft Plan and that any comment letter would most likely be supportive.

In response to Member Bortel, ED Richman provided a brief description of the East Blithedale Avenue Project, which she stated will rehabilitate and upgrade the road between US-101 and Camino Alto, and will include a bicycle path for part of the roadway.

Vice-Chairperson Kevin Hagerty and ED Richman discussed the ongoing studies relating to the possibility of opening a third lane on the upper deck of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. ED Richman confirmed that Caltrans and MTC continue to research structural conditions and TAM is undertaking traffic modeling studies. ED Richman stated that there are a lot of moving parts right now but some of the results could be available in the fall.

Member Vogt confirmed that the cost of the Golden Gate Bridge suicide barrier is expected to reach \$211 million, which will be funded from a variety of sources including state and local funds and bridge tolls.

Alternate Nancy Okada discussed her concern that off ramps to US-101 in some locations appear to have minimal space for 3 lanes of traffic to merge into a single lane before they merge onto the highway. In response, ED Richman stated that the third lane is a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane, which is not intended for vehicles with single occupants to use. ED Richman noted that TAM is conducting a study of 13 US-101 interchanges, which will review safety and access.

In response to Alternate Florez, ED Richman stated that Community Project Funds (previously called Earmarks) would go directly to the agency that is implementing a project.

## **5. Review of 2021 Draft Strategic Plan**

David Chan, TAM's Manager of Programming and Legislation, presented the staff report. Mr. Chan noted that staff reviews the Strategic Plan with the COC on a bi-annual basis and provided background information on Measure A/AA. He stated that Measure A was approved by 71.2% of Marin voters in November 2004 and Measure AA was approved by almost 77% of Marin voters in November 2018, which renewed Measure A for 30 years until 2039. The Expenditure Plans for Measure A and AA direct TAM to prepare a Strategic Plan, which determines when projects should be funded and the amount. Mr. Chan noted that TAM still has remaining commitments for unspent funds from Measure A and that the Strategic Plan for Measure A must continue until all the funds have been reimbursed and all the commitments have been honored.

Mr. Chan stated that staff recommended the Strategic Plans for Measure A and AA, which were very similar, should be combined into one document. Mr. Chan discussed the new combined Strategic Plan's five-year outlook, the Guiding Principles, including two new Guiding Principles of Equity and Wildfire/Evacuation Awareness, the need to ensure accountability and transparency through compliance with all audits and reporting requirements, the involvement of the public in the process of allocating funds and the convening of the COC on a regular basis to review actions taken by the agency.

Mr. Chan discussed revenue projections, which are updated annually to show available funds for each category. He pointed out that the revenue projections for FY2021-22 are higher than originally anticipated last year. He also discussed Measure A funds, which TAM stopped collecting after March 31, 2019. Mr. Chan discussed Measure AA funds, which collection started on April 1, 2019, and the allocation of Measure AA funds include Quick Build Projects, Large and Small Projects for Safe Pathways, Local Infrastructure, Safe Routes to School, Crossing Guards and Transit, and also funding spent and committed under the Marin-Sonoma Narrows (MSN) Project, Northbound (NB) US-101 to Eastbound (EB)I-580 Direct Connector Project, and interchange study under Category 1.

Mr. Chan reported that the TAM Board released the draft Strategic Plan at the May 27 meeting for the 30-day public comment period and is expected to approve the plan at the June 24 Board Meeting.

Member Powers urged staff to add a Guiding Principle on reducing GHG, which she noted is stated in the goals of the Measure AA Expenditure Plan. Mr. Chan noted that Measure AA promotes GHG reductions by providing 55% of the funding to Marin Transit and through funding for Safe Routes to School and Safe Pathways.

Alternate Florez discussed her support for Member Powers' suggestion of adding a Guiding Principle on reducing GHGs. She also discussed the importance of promoting equity and wildfire risk for low-income residents. Alternate Florez asked if staff has been working with Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) on evacuation planning and stated her support for the five-year outlook for the Strategic Plan.

ED Richman stated that TAM staff is working closely with MWPA and offered to provide any technical assistance needed for the development of evacuation plans.

In response to Alternate Alley, Mr. Chan confirmed that five of the guiding principles were carried over from Measure A's Strategic Plan and the TAM Board requested the two additional Guiding Principles of Equity and Wildfire/Evacuation. He stated that more guiding principles could be added in 2023. ED Richman stated that staff takes all guiding principles into consideration during funding allocations.

Li Zhang, TAM's Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer, stated that Member Paul Premo reported an inconsistency in the revenue projections and a few additional edits that staff will correct/incorporate in the final report, as well as any additional comments received from the COC. Chairperson Pelham reminded the members to ask staff for clarification on staff reports prior to the meeting to save time.

In response to Alternate Florez, Mr. Chan noted that the Board will adopt the Strategic Plan as part of the regular agenda at the June 24 meeting pending any additional public comments received by the end of the 30-day public comment period.

Chairperson Pelham thanked Mr. Chan for his report and committee for the discussions.

## **6. Input on NB US101 to EB I-580 Direct Connector Project Alternative (Discussion)**

Dan Cherrier, TAM's Principal Project Delivery Manager, presented the staff report. He noted that staff has previously addressed the COC on the outreach process and the various committees involved in the process. Mr. Cherrier stated that the main purpose of the project is to construct a new direct freeway connector between NB US-101 to EB I-580.

Mr. Cherrier discussed the project schedule and stated that the freeway could be constructed and opened in 2029 if an alternative design is chosen with funding available. He discussed the Project Study Report, outreach activities, the environmental process, and the traffic problems that have prompted the connector project. Mr. Cherrier discussed the location of the nine alternatives, bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Kerner and Anderson, replacement of a bridge on the EB lane of the I-580, improvements to local neighborhoods in San Rafael and the possible replacement of the Anderson/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard overcrossing.

Mr. Cherrier stated that the peak driving time between the Tamalpais overcrossing and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge is expected to double to 26.5 minutes through Bellam Blvd and 27.5 min through Sir Francis Drake Blvd by 2040. He discussed the two Hillside Alternatives (1A and 1B), which will reduce the travel time to 7.1 minutes and 11.4 minutes respectively.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Hagerty, Mr. Cherrier confirmed that the connector would not affect access to the Canal area from Bellam Blvd. and that 1A and 1B are the only alternatives that would meet Caltrans' design speeds for highway-to-highway connections.

Mr. Cherrier discussed Alternative 3A and Alternative 3B. He noted that 3B was not favored by the Stakeholder Working Group because the design would necessitate rerouting traffic to the Canal neighborhood and Spinnaker Point. He discussed the proposed modification to Alternative 3B that would maintain the I-580 offramp to Bellam Blvd. and add an additional offramp. Member Vogt discussed his concern about left turn traffic signal and traffic backups from the offramp on I-580 to US-101, which Mr. Cherrier stated should be eliminated by Alternative 3B.

Member Olson discussed his concern that the additional offramp to Bellam Blvd would interfere with pedestrian improvements. Mr. Cherrier confirmed that pedestrians may need to cross multiple lanes and that additional crossing time would be needed.

Alternate Alley and Mr. Cherrier discussed whether consideration had been given to constructing the connector in the area of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Mr. Cherrier stated that the construction would have significantly impacted the hillsides and current offramps. He also discussed the regulatory difficulties of locating the connector beside the Bay and problems relating to widening US-101 in place of a new connector.

Mr. Cherrier discussed the remaining alternatives: Alternative 4 swing out, Alternative 5 medium speed and Alternative 6 Andersen Dr mid-way concept, and funding for the project. He stated that there is likely sufficient funding for Alternatives 3A, 3B or a modified 3B design (includes RM3 and Measure AA funds) and that the remaining alternatives would need additional funding.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Hagerty, Mr. Cherrier confirmed the expected drivetime savings in 2040 between the Tamalpais overcrossing and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge for all the alternatives. He stated that the savings time for Alternatives 1A and 1B would be 20 minutes; for 3A, 3B or a modified 3B would be 15 minutes and the remaining alternatives should have a savings time of between 15 and 20 minutes.

Mr. Cherrier discussed the members of the Stakeholder Working Group, including business owners and community leaders, and priorities of the members, including traffic, equity, environmental and neighborhood impacts, lighting and access. He discussed the process for prioritizing the alternatives and reported that 90% of the members wanted to eliminate Alternatives 3B, 4 and 5, while approximately 70% wanted to eliminate the Hillside Alternatives 1A and 1B. Mr. Cherrier stated that most of the Stakeholder Working Group favored the remaining four alternatives.

Mr. Cherrier confirmed that the Ad-Hoc Committee is not yet in a position to recommend to the TAM Board which alternatives should move forward for environmental review. He discussed the next steps, including a Memorandum of Understanding between City of Larkspur, City of San Rafael, TAM, and Caltrans.

Member Olson commented on a discrepancy in the costs that formed part of the presentation and he stated that he votes for alternatives 2, 3A and 6, and would not support an alternative that included the removal of a Bellam offramp. Mr. Cherrier stated that a slide from the beginning of the process was added to the presentation that did not include \$38M of improvements, which was added to a later slide.

Alternate Alley asked staff how the decision-making process will incorporate objective data, such as costs and impacts, and subjective data, such as general public opinion. Mr. Cherrier stated that the Stakeholder Working Group reached consensus on some of the alternatives that should not be advanced and also made an effort to provide objective opinions in its review process.

Alternate Florez stated that she thought it incredible that nine options have been studied and that she would support Alternative 1A, which would appear to be an easier connection to I-580. She also voiced her support

for Alternative 6 and her concern that an additional offramp would cause an equity issue by making it more dangerous for people in the Canal area to use the Bellam underpass. Alternate Florez asked that the project ensures the area underneath the connector has natural light and is attractive. Mr. Cherrier noted that all the alternatives impact the underpass but that the upgrades will improve the area.

Member Powers stated that the presentation has been very helpful and that she would appreciate the addition of more road height visuals in future presentations.

Member Vogt stated his support for maintaining the current offramp from US-101 to Bellam Blvd. and asked if there is an opportunity to extend the offramp and add another lane to alleviate traffic backups. Mr. Cherrier discussed a short-term project that should help.

Alternate Okada discussed her belief the process appears to be piecemeal. She discussed her concern that improvements have not been included for the Southbound (SB) US-101 exit to Bellam, NB US-101 exit to Central San Rafael where it joins with the I-580, and issues with future improvements to Marin Square. Mr. Cherrier confirmed that Marin Square has a new owner, the design would take into consideration a future SB US-101 to Westbound (WB) I-580 connector, and that improvements to the connections to Bellam Blvd. will be included in the project.

Chairperson Pelham stated that he had recently driven from NB US-101 to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. He had experienced traffic delays exiting the freeway but that there was little congestion from Sir Francis Drake Blvd. (SFDB) to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Mr. Cherrier stated that the backup on NB US-101 is caused by traffic from Tamalpais and Blithedale and that ramp metering will come into effect later in the year. He stated that TAM sponsored a project using Measure A funds to extend a lane drop past Larkspur Landing Circle East on SFDB, which has improved traffic conditions.

Alternate Okada suggested additional signage on US-101 at the SFDB exit to tell drivers to take the far-right lane for the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

Chairperson Pelham thanked Mr. Cherrier for his presentation and the committee for the productive discussions.

## **7. Committee Member Hot Items Report (Discussion)**

Member Powers provided a brief report on the Marin Transit Board Meeting on June 7, 2021. At the meeting, it was reported that, as of June 15, buses have returned to 100% capacity with a significant decrease in pass-ups; and the Draft FY2021-22 Annual Budget presented to the COC at the May 17 meeting was approved by the Marin Transit Board at its July 12 meeting with no changes.

## **8. Discussion of Next Meeting Date and Recommended Items for the Agenda**

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, September 20, 2021. Ms. Zhang stated that staff will determine whether the meeting can take place in person after consulting the COC members. Member Olson asked staff to itemize a discussion on the development plans for Northgate Mall at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.