



MEETING OF THE
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN
CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
February 21, 2023
5:00 p.m.

Virtual and In-person Meeting

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86722758510?pwd=QlREdS9YdkxibzBRelQ3eHF1SEc2dz09>

Webinar ID: 867 2275 8510

Passcode: 022123

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Kevin Hagerty, League of Women Voters (Vice-Chairperson)
Jeffrey Olson, Central Marin Planning Area
Charley Vogt, Northern Marin Planning Area
Debbie Alley, Southern Marin Planning Area
Scott Tye, West Marin Planning Area
Kate Powers, Environmental Organizations
Allan Bortel, Marin County Paratransit Coordinating Council
Kingston Cole, Taxpayer Groups
Zack Macdonald, School Districts

Alternates Present: Kay Noguchi, League of Women Voters
Nancy Okada, Environmental Organizations
Susannah Saunders, Ross Valley Planning Area
Jim Schmidt, Taxpayer Groups

Marin Transit Staff Present: Nancy Whelan, General Manager
Cathleen Sullivan, Director of Planning

Staff Members Present: Anne Richman, Executive Director
Li Zhang, Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer
Ben Bogas, TAM Intern
David Chan, Director of Programming and Legislation
Dan Cherrier, Director of Project Delivery
Grace Zhuang, Accounting and Payroll Specialist
Jennifer Doucette, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board
Mikaela Hiatt, Associate Transportation Planner
Molly Graham, Public Outreach Coordinator

Vice-Chairperson Kevin Hagerty called the Citizens' Oversight Committee (COC) meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Introductions and Welcome

Vice-Chairperson Hagerty asked Grace Zhuang, Accounting and Payroll Specialist, to conduct the roll call. Ms. Zhuang did so and confirmed that a quorum was present. Ms. Zhuang stated the meeting order rules and instructions for the public to provide comments.

Vice-Chairperson Hagerty asked the members, Marin Transit (MT) and TAM staff to introduce themselves for the benefit of new attendees.

2. Open Time for Public Expression

Member of the public Clayton Smith discussed the lack of transit riders who use the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) train from downtown San Rafael to Larkspur during the middle of the day and the impact on vehicle traffic at Anderson Drive. He also commented on the buses in Mill Valley with few passengers during the midday hours.

3. Review and Approval of November 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes (Action)

Member Kingston Cole moved to approve the November 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes. Member Debbie Alley seconded the motion, and the Minutes were approved with Member Scott Tye abstaining.

4. Marin Transit 2023 Update and Review of the Short-Range Transit Plan (Discussion)

MT General Manager Nancy Whelan introduced Cathleen Sullivan, Director of Planning, who recently joined the agency from Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), to provide the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) report. Ms. Sullivan provided an overview of the discussions, which included current ridership levels; the SRTP; service opportunities and challenges; upcoming service change proposed; planning and project development highlights, and an update on fare policy and activities.

Ms. Sullivan compared ridership levels in November 2019 (pre-Pandemic levels) and November 2022 (post-Pandemic levels). She stated that MT has the highest ridership recovery level among the Bay Area transit operators; that ridership on fixed routes increased to almost 90% of pre-Pandemic level but ridership for Marin Access services has only recovered to 43% of the November 2019 level.

She outlined the possible reasons for the drop in Marin Access ridership, including caution amongst older adults and the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) population; slow return of in-person meetings/services, , and an impact on the service by reduced driver-availability. MT is addressing these issues by increasing wages for drivers; conducting recruitment drive to attract more drivers; and forming a paratransit working group to investigate reliability issues.

Ms. Sullivan discussed the SRTP, which she stated needed to adhere to guidelines from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). This SRTP has been reduced from a 10-year to a 5-year plan and all Bay Area operators need to incorporate three specific planning scenarios in to their SRTPs, which she discussed. Ms. Sullivan stated that MT has added a fourth scenario, Scenario 0, where projections match those approved in the current fiscal year budget, which MT staff feels is more relevant to the agency.

Ms. Sullivan explained that each scenario included service impacts; that Scenarios 1 and 2 were similar because MT revenues do not heavily rely on fares and both scenarios would result in a 45% reduction in services; and Scenario 3 would result in a 60 % reduction in services. She stated that under Scenario 0, no service reductions are anticipated in the next 5 years since MT's near-term financial outlook is stable. She noted that MT will publish a more comprehensive SRTP in 2024, which will be similar to the traditional SRTP.

Ms. Sullivan noted that fixed-route ridership trends are strong but service reliability is decreasing due to traffic increases and driver shortage, which is affecting all transit operators. Ms. Sullivan added that 60% of MT's fixed-route services will be out for re-bid by the end of this fiscal year and that increased labor and fuel costs are likely to impact the bids. She confirmed the lack of a maintenance and operational facility is making it hard to attract contractors and meet the fleet-electrification requirements.

Ms. Sullivan discussed the service changes that are under consideration. The intention is to align services with ridership demand and improve service reliability, including possibly adding more buses to improve service schedules. She added that there is no major service decrease and current transit riders should not be severely impacted, but the service changes are considered to be major due to the number of routes that will be impacted. Ms. Sullivan stated that 12 of the 24 fixed routes will be affected and significant outreach is underway, including posting information at bus stops and major transit centers, and in-person outreach at bus stops and the San Rafael Transit Center. The MT Board will hold a public meeting on March 6 to discuss the proposed changes, which should be adopted by the Board on April 3, 2023 and implemented on June 11, 2023.

Ms. Sullivan discussed MT's Planning and Capital projects and thanked TAM staff for collaborating on a Transit Priority Corridors grant from the One Bay Area Grant program (OBAG). Other projects include updating the Title VI program, which considers better ways to serve low-income and limited-English proficiency populations; exploring options to adjust some Marin Access Programs to better serve the growing older adult population; regional transit coordination that resulted in the Transit Transformation Action Plan, which encourages better coordination among Bay Area transit operators. Ms. Sullivan noted that discounts on transfers among operators will be standardized throughout the region. She also discussed MT's involvement in the Countywide Transportation Plan and the San Rafael Transit Center design; the redesign of the San Anselmo Hub; Northgate Mall Redevelopment and the Tamalpais Drive Overcrossing project in Corte Madera.

Ms. Sullivan discussed the urgent need for a maintenance facility; electrification goals that have been set by the State; the promotion of free or reduced fare programs for youth and older adults/ADA riders and low-income families; a comprehensive fare collection study will be undertaken to prepare for the implementation of Clipper 2, the transit fare payment card system, which will no longer link MT with Golden Gate Transits (GGT's) fare structure; implementation of integrated regional fare coordination recommendations; free rides for youth during the summer of 2023, which in 2022 did not significantly impact revenues or operations and will also be offered by Sonoma County operators and SMART; improving promotions for existing discount programs, studying potential fare promotion options for low-income adults, and promoting the new Clipper Card.

Member Allan Bortel suggested offering free rides to seniors in the summer. Ms. Sullivan discussed a free ride promotion for senior and ADA riders from December 2021 to March 2022, which incurred a \$100,000 fare loss. She also noted that many senior riders insisted on paying the \$1 fare, which suggested that free ride is not a primary attraction for senior riders. Ms. Sullivan confirmed that the number of senior bus riders has not changed significantly from the number of seniors who used the bus before the Pandemic, but that MT would like to attract more seniors for the Marin Access Programs. She confirmed that seniors make up 20% of riders on fixed routes.

Member Charley Vogt expressed concern that the changes to the fixed routes will remove bus routes that serve schools, work locations and shopping centers, and also affect transfers to Vintage Oaks Shopping Center and whether MT is reaching out to the workforce and schools who will be impacted. In response, Ms. Sullivan stated that staff has discussed the proposals with officials from schools who will be affected. She confirmed that while supplemental services that were specifically timed for the school bells will be reduced, students can still ride the bus to school on other routes and confirmed that MT will continue its outreach efforts to those who will be affected. Ms. Whelan stated that most riders should still get to where they need to go with all service changes, but some routes have merged and some users will need transfers or the route numbers will change.

Member Vogt stated the need to inform the parents and students of the changes, in addition to the schools. Ms. Whelan noted that some schools will benefit by additional bus services. Member Vogt complimented the MT team for the information provided on the agency's website about the proposed changes.

Ms. Sullivan confirmed that MT will maintain the current bus schedule for those schools that will remain open beyond June 11th, until the end of current school term.

In response to Member Debbie Alley, Ms. Sullivan stated that MT maintained and even increased services during the Pandemic to allow social distancing, while other transit agencies reduced services, which could contribute to the success in reaching high levels of transit ridership recovery following the Pandemic. Ms. Sullivan stated that challenges they face include reliability issues related to traffic congestion; a shortage of bus operators, and lack of a maintenance and operational facility, which could all increase costs.

Ms. Whelan and Member Cole discussed the extra challenges regional transit agencies like Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and GGT, are facing since they rely more on fare revenues and the return of commuters.

In response to Alternate Susannah Saunders, Ms. Whelan discussed the challenge of finding of a property that can be used as the operation and maintenance facility, which would provide enough space for charging stations, vehicle storage, and a facilities' building so that MT would not be reliant on contractors. She noted that MT owns a smaller property in San Rafael where the paratransit vehicles can be maintained and a property in Novato with about 6 charging stations. Ms. Whelan confirmed MT has not yet considered electric buses that would have the capability of providing power to other facilities and that the electric buses needed to charge overnight.

Member Scott Tye discussed the importance of considering the impact of sea level rise and flooding when choosing a location for an operations facility. He also discussed the need to consider targeted recruitment of bus drivers, such as retired military personnel.

In response to Alternate Kay Noguchi, Ms. Sullivan stated that it is more efficient to allocate a bus of a certain size to each route and that Mill Valley buses need more capacity during the peak hours. She noted that ridership could be higher on one portion of a route requiring a larger bus while under capacity on other portion of the same routes, but it would not be cost effective and feasible to switch buses on the same route. MT definitely uses smaller vehicles on routes where ridership demand is consistently lower.

Member Bortel suggested that GGT should subsidize the cost of operating the 219 Strawberry/Tiburon bus service to the ferry terminal. Ms. Whelan noted that ridership is at 50% of the pre-Pandemic level.

Vice-Chairperson Hagerty opened the item for public comment. Mr. Smith stated that he would like to review information on ridership for Mill Valley buses. Mr. Smith also had the following questions and comments: will Clipper 2 be mobile phone enabled; which company will operate Clipper 2 and provide data; would the regional network manager have a central role in Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050 He suggested that the private sector should subsidize transit service, and expressed concern that electric buses would overload the grid system.

Vice-Chairperson Hagerty closed the public comment period. Ms. Sullivan confirmed that Clipper 2 will be mobile phone enabled; that efforts to create a regional transit network will be integrated into PBA 2050; and that private sector funding for MT services might not be appropriate; and that MTC are undertaking a study on zero-admission operations for all transit operators in the Bay Area, which will include grid capacity studies.

5. Return to In-Person Meetings in Compliance with AB 2449 (Discussion)

ED Richman stated that the Governor of California has announced that the State of Emergency will end on February 28, 2023 and that return of in-person public meetings will be required. The Brown Act does allow a member or an alternate to use teleconference but the requirements include the need for the agenda to be posted at each teleconference location; the agenda would need to identify each location where a member is participating via teleconference; each location would need to be accessible to the public and the members of the public participating would need to be able to address the members from the location; and a quorum of the members would need to participate in the meetings within the location of the jurisdiction.

ED Richman then reported that Assembly Bill (AB) 2449 will allow remote attendance for reasons of Just Cause or an Emergency with different requirements than the original with Brown Act. Just Cause includes a childcare or caregiving need; contagious illness; a need relating to a mental or physical disability; or travel on official business for the COC in another state or at a local agency. She explained that an Emergency constitutes a physical or family emergency that prevents a member from attending the meeting. ED Richman noted that the member must seek approval from the COC before invoking the circumstances that constitute an Emergency that prevents them from attending the meeting in person. ED Richman asked the members to give staff notice if they ever need to attend the COC meetings remotely and noted that members are limited to attending 2 remote meetings per year.

ED Richman confirmed that members are required to be attend COC meeting in person as of March or follow the Brown Act or AB2449 rules for remote attendance, and since the COC is mostly not a decision-making body and items on the COC agenda usually will be discussed at the Executive Committees and/or TAM Board, staff recommends not providing virtual access to the public starting in March. She noted that members of the public could attend the meetings in person or submit comments before the meeting.

Member Tye discussed the importance of adhering to the Brown Act and the difficult process that needs to be followed to allow members to attend meetings remotely.

Alternate Nancy Okada discussed her support for maintaining virtual public access to the meetings via Zoom, at least for a couple of months.

Member Vogt noted that COVID still exists and that attendees who have been exposed should not attend meetings in person. He suggested members should be able to attend meetings via Zoom under the Just Cause rules.

ED Richman stated that masks are not required on TAM premises, but the choice to wear a mask should be respected.

Member Cole discussed his support for the continuation of hybrid meetings. He urged staff to continue offering Zoom as an alternative to attending in person to maximize public access to the meetings.

Member Zack Macdonald discussed his support for the comments made by Members Vogt and Cole and Alternate Okada.

ED Richman confirmed that staff would do their best to support members who needed to attend meetings via some other means than attending in person.

In response to Member Alley, ED Richman stated that the ventilation system was cleaned and inspected at the beginning of the Pandemic and Deputy Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer (DED/CFO) Li Zhang stated that staff will purchase portable air purifiers for the TAM conference room. She confirmed that the TAM Board meeting and Executive Committee meetings will continue offering virtual attendance options for the public, and staff is open to continue offering the Zoom option to the public.

Alternate Okada reiterated her support for hybrid meetings to ensure the COC maximizes its accessibility to the public. Member Jeff Olson also discussed his support for continuing hybrid meetings to avoid the possibility of spreading Covid or other viruses.

Director of Project Delivery Dan Cherrier stated that if there was an IT glitch that prevented a public meeting from continuing virtually, the governing body then could not take action on the remaining items on the agenda.

ED Richman noted that the COC meeting dates are posted on the TAM website and publicized in the TAM Traveler and Annual Report. Based on input from the COC, ED Richman confirmed that hybrid meetings will continue to be offered beyond March for a few months and the COC will revisit the decision in the future

6. TAM Staff Report (Information)

ED Richman provided the following updates: The Supreme Court dismissed and remanded the appeal of Regional Measure (RM) 3 to the Appellate Court, which originally ruled in favor of the measure; RM3 funds have been accumulating in an escrow account since 2019 and will fund Marin projects that include Marin Sonoma Narrows (MSN) and State Route (SR) 37 improvements. ED Richman noted that the North Bay Transit Access and San Francisco Bay Trail/Safe Routes to Transit Projects are competitive programs, which will require a call for projects.

ED Richman also reported that the TAM Board did not take action on the amendment of Measure B Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) Expenditure Plan at its January 26 Meeting because the 45-day public comment period had not elapsed since the previous meeting was on December 15, 2022. She confirmed no additional public comments have been submitted since the January Board Meeting and that the Board is expected to adopt the Amended Measure B VRF Expenditure Plan at its February 23 Meeting.

ED Richman reported that MTC awarded almost \$20 million in funding from One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Cycle 3 and the Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 6 for projects in Marin. . She also

reported that MTC is expected to approve \$1.25 million for the environmental phase of the US-101 Part-Time Transit Lane (PTTL) project; and that TAM submitted a joint application with MT and GGT for state funding through the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), for funding for electric buses and additional funding for the PTTL project.

ED Richman stated that TAM has issued an RFP for a consultant to help in developing a sea level rise study that will examine potential solutions to sea level rise problems in the County with a focus on transportation. Measure AA Sales Tax provides 1% (approximately \$200,000 per year) for sea level rise planning efforts/projects.

ED Richman discussed a New Year Commute Challenge from January 25 to March 7, 2023 through the Ride Amigos app for the Marin Commutes Program; the Commute 37 Pilot Program that TAM operates with Solano Transportation Authority (STA), Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), and Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA), which includes a new video that promotes the program; an update on SR37 projects including issuance of the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in December 2022; the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was issued for Sears Point to Mare Island; SMART has been added to the SR 37 multi-agency agreement.

ED Richman also reported that GGT is considering fare changes for its bus and ferry services. She concluded her report by introducing Mikaela Hiatt, TAM's new Associate Transportation Planner, and TAM's Intern, Ben Bogas. Ms. Hiatt expressed her enthusiasm to be working with the team and COC members on sea level rise and electric vehicle programs.

In response to Member Tye, ED Richman confirmed that the purpose of the sea level rise study is to use the findings for long-range planning; consider projects that might address future sea-level rise issues; and will educate the public on the risks of sea level rise in Marin.

7. Review and Approval of the FY2021-22 COC/2022 TAM Annual Report (Action)

Molly Graham, TAM's Public Outreach Coordinator, presented the staff report, which asks the COC to review and approve the combined FY2021-22 COC/2022 TAM Annual Report and authorizes Chairperson Peter Pelham or his designee to present the report to the TAM Board for acceptance at its February 23, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Graham discussed the importance of the COC's collaboration with staff to produce the Annual Report. Ms. Graham thanked Alternate Noguchi and Member Bortel for their comments, which will be incorporated into the final report, and she also expressed her thanks to Vice-Chairperson Hagerty, Members Bortel and Cole and Alternate Noguchi, for participating in the Annual Report Development Subcommittee.

In response to Vice-Chairperson Hagerty, Ms. Graham stated that staff will accept comments from the members until February 28. She confirmed that photo captions will be added.

Member Vogt expressed his appreciation for the inclusion of a map that shows major transportation projects in Marin.

There was no public comment for this item.

Member Tye moved to approve the combined FY2021-22 COC/2022 TAM Annual Report and authorize Chairperson Pelham to present the report to the TAM Board for acceptance at its February meeting, which was seconded by Member Cole. The motion was approved unanimously.

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, March 20, 2023. Potential agenda items are an update on the Crossing Guard Program and the FY2023-24 budget development schedule and review of Measure AA/A Sales Tax and Measure B Vehicle Registration Fee revenue levels.

Member Tye requested a future discussion on possible speed regulations, education and signage for multi-use path projects that receive funding from TAM.

Member Alley requested a future update on the North-South Greenway Gap Closure Project.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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