



DRAFT MINUTES

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

Tuesday, June 9, 2020

1. Roll Call

Chair Peskin called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Present at Roll Call: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Stefani Walton, and Yee (10)

Absent at Roll Call: Safai (1)

Chair Peskin expressed grief and mourning over the recent tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Sean Monterrosa, noting that people of all backgrounds had gathered to speak up for Black lives and to demand long overdue reforms. He further declared the Transportation Authority's call for justice for victims of racial violence and police brutality, recognizing that City streets, sidewalks, and public squares must be safe and secure for all, and the agency's commitment to support the preservation of Black Lives, safe streets, and just enforcement, while advancing racial equity in the agency's work.

2. Citizens Advisory Committee Report - INFORMATION*

John Larson, Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee, reported out from the first remote CAC meeting held on May 27.

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda

3. Approve the Minutes of the May 19, 2020 Meeting - ACTION*

4. State and Federal Legislation Update - ACTION*

There was no public comment on Item 3.

Commissioner Mandelman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Yee.

The Consent Agenda was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

End of Consent Agenda

5. Appoint One Member to the Citizens Advisory Committee - ACTION*

Aprile Smith, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the item.

Chair Peskin complimented Rachel Zack on her contributions to the Citizens Advisory



Committee (CAC).

Rachel Zack expressed her desire to continue as a member on the CAC, representing District 3, and spoke to her interests and qualifications.

There was no public comment on this item.

Commissioner Peskin moved to reappoint Ms. Zack to the CAC, seconded by Commissioner Mandelman.

The motion was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

6. Revise the Amended Fiscal Year 2019/20 Budget to Decrease Revenues by \$33.4 Million and Decrease Expenditures by \$5.0 Million for a Total Net Decrease in Fund Balance of \$28.4 Million - ACTION*

7. Adopt the Proposed Provisional Three-Month Fiscal Year 2020/21 Budget and Work Program - ACTION*

Cynthia Fong, Deputy Director for Finance & Administration, and Tilly Chang, Executive Director, presented the items.

During public comment, Francisco Da Costa complained about amount the time given for public comment and that spending should be tightened up.

Commissioner Mandelman moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Yee.

Item 6 was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

Commissioner Mandelman moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Yee.

Item 7 was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

8. Allocate \$566,800, With Conditions, and Appropriate \$100,000 in Prop K Sales Tax Funds for Three Requests - ACTION*

Mike Pickford, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the item.

During public comment, Francisco Da Costa commented that old projects should be finished before starting new ones and that a needs assessment needed to be done before recommending new projects.

Commissioner Preston moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner



Mandelman.

The item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

9. Amend the 2017 Prop AA Strategic Plan - ACTION*

Mike Pickford, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the item.

Commissioner Yee asked for an explanation of the request regarding the Bulb-outs at Walk First Locations project, as the Board had previously extended the project in 2019. Mr. Pickford asked Damon Curtis, Project Manager at SFMTA, to address the commissioner's concerns.

Mr. Curtis acknowledged that the project had experienced delays. He explained that the project was currently at 65% design, with a plan to complete design by the end of the calendar year and the project had the full support of both SFMTA and San Francisco Public Works.

Commissioner Yee asked for clarification of what work the request was for and if any construction was involved. He continued by stating that he recalled previous amendments to the Prop AA Strategic Plan in 2019 to delay project funds and that he had emphasized the urgency of construction during the previous amendments. Commissioner Yee expressed disappointed that a year had already passed without any construction being done and he asked what would happen if the Board did not support the request.

Mr. Curtis answered that the subject Prop AA funds were for the construction phase and explained that the design phase was delayed, leading to the request to delay the construction funds. Mr. Pickford added that if the Board chose to not approve the recommended reprogramming of the funds, they would be made available for other projects through the competitive call for projects to be issued at the end of the month, increasing the amount of funds available.

Chair Peskin asked Mr. Pickford to confirm that the \$500,000 for the bulb-outs construction would no longer be available for the bulb-out project and the next call for projects amount would be \$4.2 million instead of \$3.7 million. Mr. Pickford answered in the affirmative.

During public comment, Francisco Da Costa said that two minutes was an inadequate amount of time to comment, that there was a lack of accountability and transparency, and that the members of the Board rubber stamped everything. He also said that there was a need for monitoring stations to address the congestion throughout the Bay Area and suggested hiring locals from San Francisco to address the situation.

Commissioner Yee moved to amend the item to exclude the requested \$500,000 in funding for construction of SFMTA's Bulbouts at WalkFirst Locations project from the proposed Prop AA Strategic Plan amendment, seconded by Commissioner Safai.

The item was amended without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen,



Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

Commissioner Yee moved to approve the amended item, seconded by Commissioner Fewer.

The amended item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

10. Increase the Amount of the Professional Services Contract with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates by 775,000, to a Total Amount Not to Exceed \$1,475,000, and Extend the Contract Term Through March 31, 2021, for Technical and Communications Services for the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study- ACTION*

Colin Dentel-Post, Senior Transportation Planner, presented the item.

During public comment, Francisco Da Costa asked what was being done to monitor congestion to get real-time results. He then stated that the physically challenged, like seniors, were not being represented in the study and that the agency was throwing money away.

After public comment, Commissioner Safai expressed concern that many people who should be part of the conversation, including those in his district, would not be reached since they are mono-lingual, lack computer literacy or access, or are seniors aging in place. He said carrying out the study at this time during the pandemic did not seem appropriate and should be put on hold until there was a better understanding of how to get more input from people that are not going to be able to participate electronically. Commissioner Safai said he was not clear about the justification for the additional money at the time, in this economic environment.

Chair Peskin commented that there were two separate issues here, one was how proper outreach should be conducted under the current circumstances and the other was about moving forward with the Downtown Congestion Pricing Study. He said he thought it the right time to move forward with the study and asked staff to expound on the outreach aspect.

Commissioner Walton concurred with Commissioner Safai's comments. He felt that a lot of departments were seeking Board approvals for projects during the pandemic and not doing proper outreach. Commissioner Walton commented that continuing outreach during the pandemic was not appropriate when the best forms of outreach could not be done, like knocking on doors, meeting with community members, and having that face-to-face contact for those that did not have electronic access. He expressed that increasing contracts for this type of work right now should be postponed until a better fiscal understanding was reached.

Mr. Dentel-Post responded that staff was continuing to work with hard-to-reach populations going forward to meet them where they were with a range of options, like mailing hard copies of materials and phone calls, as well as providing translators as needed. He further stated that the funding increase was for co-creation work with community partner organizations.



Eric Young, Director of Communications, addressed Commissioner Safai's concerns about appropriateness of timing by discussing staff's coordination with Community Based Organizations for guidance on the study's outreach approach and to confirm organizations' and communities capacity to participate.

Director Chang commented that staff heard the Board's concerns and wanted to be sure that staff was being thorough in the response for Board consideration. She added that staff had consulted with the study's Policy Advisory Committee, which included social justice and economic development organizations, community-based non-profits, and other community stakeholders, and which strongly supported the idea of continuing the study. Director Chang shared that staff did question whether it was appropriate to continue the study or if they should pause; but with the documented a return of congestion, the agency wanted to support affordable, safe, and convenient means of getting back to work for everyone, and avoiding a potentially worse congestion situation than pre-COVID. She further commented that the Policy Advisory Committee urged staff to rely more heavily on Community-Based Organizations, to increase funding, and to increase the scope of the project to be able to do more on-the-ground outreach, suggesting in-language radio and TV advertisements and forums as culturally appropriate formats to reach people.

Commissioner Walton expressed discomfort with increasing outreach resources during the pandemic due to lack of in-person opportunities as available before the shelter in place order.

Director Chang answered that staff was open to ideas for how to adjust the schedule.

Commissioner Safai asked how long the study been going on and why staff was proposing increasing its scope, referring to pre-COVID numbers that captured the true congestion. Commissioner Safai said that the concerns over rent, jobs, food, racial tensions, and police brutality did not lend itself to thoughtful conversation about congestion pricing.

Mr. Dentel-Post said that staff had also received feedback from all of the community-based organizations on its Policy Advisory Committee that it was important to think about the longer term and continue the study, answering that the study began with Nelson\Nygaard the previous July.

Commissioner Safai asked what staff hoped to gain that they hadn't already gained from the study.

Mr. Dentel-Post said that to date the study team had reviewed existing conditions, convened the Policy Advisory Committee, identified an outreach approach, had goals and success metrics approved by the Policy Advisory Committee, and started identifying potential scenarios. He said the study team would share a wide range of different options to implement congestion pricing with the Policy Advisory Committee in June and that next steps would be to try to narrow the options down to a few more detailed scenarios, work with communities to identify what should be in those scenarios, and do more technical work to identify how they would perform against the goals and metrics,. Mr. Dentel-Post further commented that there was a lot of analysis, including equity and effectiveness, left before staff could make a recommendation to the Board.

Commissioner Safai asked if it was true that the study did not need to study traffic



anymore and instead was moving into a phase of presenting options and getting input.

Director Chang answered that the study was in the policy phase, including development and evaluation of policies around discounts, exemptions, and use of revenues such as for more transit.

Commissioner Safai said if the agency was intending to do robust community outreach, it did not make sense to do it in a shelter-in-place environment and a public health pandemic in which other things were on people's minds. He said he would oppose the item.

Director Chang clarified that the item was not a funding request but a contract amendment and that some of the funds were not yet in hand at the study outset but had become available more recently.

Commissioner Safai commented he would be in favor of pausing the study until staff could do sufficient outreach or working with the data that staff already had and then making some recommendations.

Commissioner Mandelman commented the he was keeping in mind that San Francisco was a transit-first city and the city was drowning in cars and congestion prior to the COVID pandemic, that public transit system was struggling to meet the demand, and congestion pricing was one of the few tools that was available to local governments to try to reduce the number of automobiles on the street and get additional resources for transportation. He said it was a policy the Board had previously supported and he did not want to slow this work down. Commissioner Mandelman further commented the Board should get a complete study that covers equity issues and provides a tool the City could use to mitigate congestion.

Chair Peskin agreed with Commissioner Mandelman. He said he represented one of the most congested areas of the city where congestion pricing would be implemented and that District 3 and District 6 were bearing the brunt of congestion pre-COVID, as shown on the Transportation Authority's online maps, and were already returning to that level of congestion.

Commissioner Preston agreed with Commissioner Mandelman and thought it would be the worst time to pause in moving forward with congestion pricing, not only based on pre-COVID congestion but looking at how cities in other countries, were experiencing extreme levels of post-COVID congestion. He added that the comments from Commissioners Safai and Walton were well taken about outreach, that it was appropriate to amend the consultant contract, and that he would like a more detailed plan regarding how the outreach would occur. Commissioner Preston said the Board needed to recognize that some outreach was more expensive and he did not think it should stand in the way of additional expenditures that are part of doing the outreach, so he would support the item. He also asked if there was any information on the level of engagement and involvement from District 5 or if that information could be provided after the meeting.

Mr. Dentel-Post answered that staff could follow up with information about outreach in specific districts and he said that staff had received the message from community organization partners that the study should move forward but that staff was also learning about what outreach strategies would be most successful and could report



back to the Board as the study proceeds on outreach progress and lessons learned.

Chair Peskin added to Commissioner Preston's question about whether there was other outreach methods, such as direct mail or public service announcements, included in the plan and for staff to take the Board's suggestions under advisement as the study moved forward.

Director Chang said staff would provide more information on the outreach plan, should the Board elect to continue with the study.

Commissioner Safai commented that his and Commissioner Walton's districts may have a different way of reaching out to residents and requested that if the Board proceeded with approving the item, that in-language radio and television methods (particularly in Chinese and Spanish), as well as direct mail, flyers, and door hangers be used as part of outreach for the study.

Commissioner Fewer added that her neighborhood houses a large Russian population that gets very little outreach and asked staff to reach out to her to connect residents with agency partners at their next town hall meeting.

Commissioner Mandelman moved to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Preston.

The item was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Stefani, and Yee (9)

Nos: Commissioners Safai and Walton (2)

Absent: none

11. Adopt the District 3 Pedestrian Safety Improvements Final Report [NTIP Planning] - ACTION*

During public comment, Francisco Da Costa requested the Board do the right thing and stop rubber stamping projects. He further commented that the needs of the most vulnerable be addressed and to stop contracting with consultants who are not based in San Francisco.

Commissioner Peskin moved to continue the item until next Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Mandelman.

The item was continued without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton, and Yee (11)

Absent: none

12. Presentation on the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Transportation Recovery Plan - INFORMATION

The item was continued until a future Board Meeting.

During public comment, Regina Islais expressed support for the expansion of transit-only lanes as congestion is expected to worsen, and riders wanted robust, reliable, and efficient transit which was critical to the City's economic recovery.



Cliff Barger expressed support for the Recovery Plan and the expeditious expansion of transit throughout the City before the increase of vehicular congestion happens. He also requested more bicycle and pedestrian improvements to help people avoid car usage and facilitate non-transit options for those uncomfortable riding transit.

Christopher Peterson urged the Board to support rapid citywide expansion of bus-only lanes, as buses are crucial for essential workers and the most economically vulnerable members of society, as well a cost-effective way to move traffic through the City. He further commented that the public process for deciding on this issue would work better when involving riders in the discussion.

Other Items

13. Introduction of New Items - INFORMATION

There were no new items introduced.

14. Public Comment

There was no general public comment.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m. in in observation of George Floyd's death.