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January 21, 2025

SFCTA Community Advisory Committee
Via email: clerk@sfcta.org

RE: Item 10: SFMTA Bike and Roll Plan Update - INFORMATION

Dear CAC members,

I write on behalf of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and our thousands of members and tens of thousands of constituents, regarding our concerns about the current status of the Biking and Rolling Plan. The City has invested nearly 3 years and \$1 million in developing this plan — the first update to the bike plan in 15 years. The plan is intended to provide a roadmap (figuratively and literally) for the next twenty years towards a safe, interconnected bicycle network. To get there, we need a plan that has strong ambition and the accountability of clear goals and timelines. At the moment, the plan has neither.

This is not to say that the process has not been valuable, even transformative. We applaud the intentional work that SFMTA has done to engage with five community-based organizations to gather deep community input from communities who have experienced real and lasting harms from racist planning. The resulting Community Action Plans speak to how the harms inflicted by racist planning persist and must be addressed alongside increasing safety for affected communities. The thoughtful process, and commitment to address the recommendations that they are able to, helps to rebuild trust and cooperation between the agency and these communities.

It is also laudable, and potentially powerful, that the SFMTA intends to adopt the guidelines of the National Association of City Transportation Planners (NACTO) for All Ages and Abilities facilities. These standards, as written, center the importance of both safety and perceived safety to make biking and rolling accessible to all. However, we have grave concerns about how SFMTA is defining “All Ages and Abilities”. The map on page 21 of the draft plan shows current streets that are supposedly “All Ages and Abilities” — and many of them are streets that nobody could reasonably consider fit for all ages and abilities. These include Valencia from 23rd to Cesar Chavez, unprotected bike lanes on Anza, and the western end of Alemany. Calling these streets high-quality All Ages and Abilities routes does not seem to use this framework in good faith.

The last draft of this plan that the agency released did not provide timelines for its goals, other than a vague idea that the North Star Network would be created within 20 years. Goals and timelines are still missing from the current draft. The lack of timelines and goals strips the plan of accountability and saps it of urgency that can focus the will of the agency and city leaders.

We have asked the SFMTA Board to direct staff to incorporate two modest goals into the plan: establish slow school zones around all elementary schools, and create a base grid of convenient, separated or slowed cross-town routes, both within the plan's first five years. These strategic goals would improve connectivity across the city, while targeting neighborhood improvements to serve the local children and families that live there.

Staff heard our demands and alluded to them in their presentation to the SFMTA Board on January 21, implying that they are achievable. It's telling that they don't discuss these goals in the presentation for this CAC. These goals — which would set us on the path towards an interconnected, safe, and welcoming network — are not incorporated into the plan and certainly don't have timelines. The current school traffic calming program audits just ten schools per year — it would take over 13 years just to assess SFUSD's schools, to say nothing of private and parochial schools. The grid they show in their presentation may eventually be All Ages and Abilities — by 2045. The city can't wait that long.

It is a daunting task to plan for where we'll be two decades from now, but there are a few things we definitely know. The city must build 82,000 housing units in the first half of that time period. All the new residents living in those units also need to get around the city. If they don't have a variety of real transportation choices, they will turn to cars to get around — and this would be a disaster for everyone in SF, especially the people who must rely on driving, like many seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income workers.

We expect that the city's economy will be revitalized, with a bustling downtown complemented by thriving commercial districts around the city. This is certainly part of Mayor Lurie's vision. Fully incorporating biking and rolling into the lifeblood of the city serves these economic outcomes — it more efficiently uses our street and curb space, and costs next to nothing to maintain. Over the next 20 years, goods will increasingly move around the city by e-bikes and cargo bikes. And they will do it efficiently, cleanly, and with less disruption.

Finally, we know that in 20 years the planet will be a lot hotter. It is an ethical, economic, and self-preserving imperative that we do everything we can to minimize those impacts.

We ask you to support the incorporation of our modest goals of establishing, within the plan's first 5 years, slow school zones around all elementary schools, and a base grid of separated or calmed cross-town routes. SFMTA staff are looking for leadership, which needs to come from both the SFMTA Board, as well as the SFCTA Commissioners that you advise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris White", written in a cursive style.

Christopher White
Executive Director