



Memorandum

Date: 12.15.16 **RE:** Transportation Authority Board
December 15, 2016

To: Transportation Authority Board: Commissioners Wiener (Chair), Cohen (Vice Chair), Avalos, Breed, Campos, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee

From: Tilly Chang – Executive Director *TJC*

Subject: **INFORMATION** – Executive Director’s Report

REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL ISSUES

FAST Act – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act Signed into Law: On December 4, 2015 President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The five-year program provides a certain level of stability and modest funding increases, though it does not provide a long-term funding solution to address inadequate funding levels in the federal Highway Trust Fund. We have heard that the Act is likely to include an additional \$30 million for the Bay Area over what was previously expected under the prior transportation bill. Some other changes from the prior bill include the return of a competitive bus and bus facilities program, two new freight programs, and a revision to Small Starts that increases the project eligibility cost threshold to \$300 million, which could certainly be beneficial to our next generation of transportation projects such as Geary Corridor Bus Rapid Transit. We need to continue to advocate strongly for an increased and reliable source of federal funding for transportation to avoid further harm caused by chronic underinvestment in our transportation systems.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Policy on Aviation Fuel Tax Proceeds – Prop K Sales Tax Not Impacted: In November 2014 the FAA re-released an earlier policy dating to 1999 requiring that states and localities use aviation fuel tax revenue – including revenues generated from locally adopted transactions and use taxes – for air travel-related uses. The policy exempts transactions and use taxes in place prior to January 1, 1988. FAA gave jurisdictions until December 2015 to draft an action plan and until December 2017 to comply with that action plan. This could have potentially impacted Prop K since the half-cent sales tax was approved by San Francisco voters in 2003. Fortunately, we have determined that Prop K is not impacted by the FAA’s policy as Prop K is, by municipal code, only levied within San Francisco County and not at San Francisco International Airport which is located within San Mateo County. We have also learned that the FAA’s policy does not impact the one-quarter percent sales tax that is returned to counties through the 1971 Transportation Development Act (TDA) as this tax is grandfathered. The City receives approximately \$45 million annually in TDA funds which generally are distributed to San Francisco Public Works and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). We will continue to follow this issue as other voter-approved sales taxes measures for transportation and other sectors statewide may be highly impacted.

Caltrans holds Transportation Planning Conference – Transformative Changes Underway: I was pleased to participate at the California Transportation Planning Conference earlier this month, speaking on a Rail Modernization panel about Bay Area rail investments. The Conference highlights included addresses by Secretary Kelley and Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty as well as remarks by U.S. DOT Undersecretary Victor Mendez. While acknowledging the positive news regarding passage of the pending FAST Federal transportation bill, the speakers all highlighted the need for more dedicated infrastructure funding and new modes of partnership among public agencies at different levels of government and with the private sector. Other conference themes included the fast-paced change presaged by new technology and innovative mobility services and the challenge for Caltrans of responding to these trends within a multi-objective policy environment.

LOCAL ISSUES

School Transportation Survey Project Gets Underway: This week we met with Commissioner Tang and staff from multiple city agencies to review existing conditions research and data on K-12 school trips, and discussed the development of a survey to better understand the solutions needed to make school transportation easier for parents and kids. The group will reach out to public and private school officials, as well as stakeholder groups such as the Youth Commission, in the next stage of work.

District 2 NTIP Planning – Outreach Planned for the Crooked Block of Lombard: In May, the Transportation Authority appropriated Prop K sales tax funds for the Crooked Street NTIP planning project. The purpose of the planning effort was to identify a comprehensive set of strategies to manage vehicle and pedestrian visitor congestion on the crooked block of Lombard Street and surrounding area. We have completed an analysis of existing conditions, which estimates that about 2 million people visit the block annually, making this residential street among San Francisco’s top tourist attractions. We are planning community outreach for January to share findings and screen potential congestion and demand management strategies. For more information, contact Andrew Heidel, Senior Transportation Planner, at Andrew.heidel@sfcta.org.

District 9 NTIP Planning – Project Kick-Off for Alemany Interchange Improvement Study: This month we kicked off the Alemany Interchange Improvement Study, convening project and technical team members from SFMTA and Caltrans District 4. The purpose of the study is to develop bicycle and pedestrian facility concepts to improve access and safety along and across Alemany Boulevard at the Alemany Maze. In the coming months we will prepare an existing conditions analysis and develop initial design concepts. We are planning community outreach in early 2016 to share alternative design concepts. For more information, contact Sarah Fine, Transportation Planner, at sarah.fine@sfcta.org.

Neighborhood Transportation Improvement Program (NTIP) – 2015 Year in Review: In 2015, the first full year of NTIP implementation, we funded five NTIP planning projects (Districts 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9) and three NTIP capital projects (Districts 2 and 10). We have seen significant progress on a number of capital projects and plans. Over the past month we’ve continued to work with Commissioner Avalos, SFMTA, and the Planning Department to explore a District 11 NTIP planning project for improvements at San Jose and Geneva Avenues and San Jose and Ocean Avenues, as well as with Commissioner Kim and SFMTA to develop plan and capital project concepts in District 6. We will work with our colleagues at SFMTA to develop a presentation on NTIP efforts and progress to date at the January Plans and Programs Committee meeting. For more information, please contact NTIP Coordinators Anna LaForte (Transportation Authority) at anna@sfcta.org or 415-522-4805 or Craig Raphael (SFMTA) at 415-579-9740 or craig.raaphael@sfmta.com or visit www.sfcta.org/NTIP.

Geary Bus Rapid Transit Project – Environmental Process Public Comment Period Concluded, Community Meeting Held in Japantown: The public comment period on the Geary Draft EIS/EIR concluded on November 30, closing an extensive outreach effort to solicit comments that began with release of the document on October 2. We received over 300 comment submissions, and the project team has begun the process of reviewing and responding to them. The project team has also reached out to community groups and stakeholders that submitted comments regarding location-specific project design and implementation details in order to better understand all perspectives and seek potential solutions to issues identified. Members of our joint SFCTA/SFMTA project team joined me recently at a meeting in Japantown to discuss concerns related to project proposals in that neighborhood, and we are scheduling meetings with the business community as well. In addition, nearly 6,000 people have used the digital viewfinder devices known as OWLs at 17th Avenue and Webster Street to view images of the proposed improvements. The Final Environmental Document, including all comments received and responses, is scheduled to be released in spring 2016, after which we will bring a publicly noticed action item to the Transportation Authority and SFMTA Boards to complete the environmental and approval and project selection process. For more information please visit the Geary BRT website at www.sfcta.org/gearybrt.

Bikes on Market Street – Barometer Tops 1,000,000 Trips in 2015: On December 1, the bike barometer on Market Street counted the one millionth bike trip for 2015, which is an increase of nearly 20% over the same time last year. Since its installation in May of 2013, the Market Street Bike Barometer has counted 2,308,732 bike trips. The average weekday count is nearly 3,000 trips, with an all-time one-day high of 4,500 trips counted on May 27th of this year. Earlier in 2015, the Transportation Authority awarded \$100,000 in Prop K sales tax funds to SFMTA to install three additional barometers, two of which will be located at the following locations: Market Street westbound between Hayes and Polk Streets, and Valencia northbound between 18th and 19th Streets. SFMTA is working on selecting a third location, and anticipates the barometers to be operating and counting by summer 2016.

PROJECT DELIVERY

Bikers Seeing Green (Sharrows) on 5th Street – Prop K Funds Implement Vision Zero Project: SFMTA recently installed 90 green shared lane road markings along 5th Street, from Market to Bluxome Streets. Shared lane markings, often referred to as “sharrows”, alert motorists of cyclists sharing the travel lane, while also reminding cyclists to avoid areas where they may collide with opening car doors. Placed in both the northbound and southbound directions of 5th Street, these cost-effective treatments are an important safety improvement on the 5th Street bicycle route, where bicycle counts have increased by 30% from 2011 to 2013. Additionally, the sharrows will create a stronger connection between the 5th Street bicycle route with adjacent and connecting bikeways on Market, Howard, Folsom, and Townsend streets. This project was identified as one of the 24 Near-Term Vision Zero Capital projects, and was funded with Prop K sales tax funds. More information on Prop K projects can be found at www.MyStreetSF.com.

Sunset Boulevard Traffic Signal Safety Improvement Project – Prop K Cost Savings Enable Additional Corridor Improvements: In 2013, the Transportation Authority allocated \$633,000 to SFMTA for signal upgrades at four Sunset Boulevard intersections – Lawton, Pacheco, Rivera, and Vicente – as part of a \$3.35 million traffic signal safety improvement project along the Sunset corridor. The upgrades, installed in 2013 and 2014, included new Pedestrian Countdown Signals, Accessible Pedestrian Signals, curb ramps, new signals infrastructure (poles, signal heads, controller boxes); and retiming to conform with new pedestrian signal guidelines and provide all-red intervals for additional safety improvements. Starting in summer 2015, SFMTA used cost savings from this project to install new, larger signal heads to replace the existing smaller ones at four additional Sunset Boulevard intersections: Taraval, Judah, Noriega and Ortega, as well as procure additional infrastructure that will allow signals to be more responsive to

users along the corridor. The overall corridor project leveraged past sales tax allocations and federal funding.

Transportation Authority Leads Tour of Yerba Buena Island - Burton High School Seniors Participate: Our Deputy Director for Capital Projects, Eric Cordoba, led a tour of the Yerba Buena Island Ramps Improvement Project for 14 students in the Engineering Academy at Burton High School on November 18. The trip exposed the high school seniors to the critical role that civil engineering plays not only on that project, but for San Francisco as a whole. Burton is the city's only public high school to offer an engineering track and we were excited to extend our community outreach to include this group, some of whom may help build the San Francisco of the future.

Transportation Authority Supports Unique McLaren Park Project – One Bay Area Grant, Prop AA and Prop K Provide Funding: Last month, Commissioners Scott Wiener, John Avalos, David Campos and Malia Cohen joined with SF Public Works, SF Recreation and Park, SFMTA, members of the McLaren Park Collaborative and Transportation Authority staff to celebrate the start of construction on the Mansell Streetscape Improvement Project. The project required collaboration between many entities and as many funding sources with the Transportation Authority providing the majority of the funding through the One Bay Area Grant Program, Prop AA vehicle registration fees, and the Prop K sales tax. The project will convert two of Mansell Street's four lanes into a pedestrian walkway and bike path through McLaren Park. The Burton High School band and color guard entertained all of us with a spirited concert and show, and we can't wait until we can invite them back next fall when the project is finished.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION ISSUES

Financial Outlook – Transportation Authority Credit Rating Affirmed: I am very pleased to announce that last month, Fitch Ratings affirmed the Transportation Authority's implied sales tax revenue bonds with a rating of AA+ and a stable financial outlook. The affirmation reflects robust coverage on the proposed sales tax revenue bonds; cites the Transportation Authority's strong debt coverage, capacity for payment of financial commitments, and minimum operating pressures; and notes that the Transportation Authority's approach limits exposure to potential project cost overruns and that San Francisco's economy had outpaced the nations since the economic downturn.

San Francisco COMTO Chapter Recognizes Local Students and Leaders: At the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) holiday event last week, I was pleased to present the Curtis Green Scholarship Award to Excelsior native and UC Davis civil engineering major Edgar Orozco. Mr. Orozco exemplifies the leadership and excellence of former Muni General Manager Curtis Green, who in 1974, after 29 years of service at Muni, became the agency's, and nation's, first African-American General Manager. Mr. Green eventually retired after 37 years of service in 1982. Another long-serving transportation leader is Vince Harris, Deputy Director for Capital Projects at SFMTA who received COMTO's Leadership Excellence award after 30+ years of service to our industry. Congratulations to him and to BART, winner of the Transit Agency of the Year award.

December Board Recess – December 16–January 4: In closing, let me welcome Commissioner Peskin to the Board and wish you and your staffs a safe and relaxing holiday season. We look forward to seeing you all in the New Year!