



DRAFT MINUTES

SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Thursday, January 5, 2017 Special Meeting

1. Roll Call

Chair Peskin called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Present at Roll Call: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Peskin, Tang and Yee (7)

Absent at Roll Call: Commissioners Mar (entered during Item 2), Farrell and Kim (entered during Item 3) (3)

2. Approve the Minutes of the December 13, 2016 Meeting – ACTION

There was no public comment.

The minutes were approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee (8)

Absent: Commissioners Farrell and Kim (2)

Items for Direct Board Consideration

3. Commit to Fund Up to \$50 Million in Additional State Regional Improvement Program Funds to the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project, Beyond the Adopted Budget, for Potential Cost Over-Runs or a Shortfall of Revenues, to Support and Ensure Execution of a Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration – ACTION

Maria Lombardo, Chief Deputy Director, introduced the item and Michael Burns, Caltrain Modernization Executive Officer at Caltrain, who presented the item.

Chair Peskin noted that there would be a new presidential administration on January 20th and asked if the resolution was approved as planned by the various Boards that day and by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on January 11th, if the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) could be entered into prior to January 20th. Ms. Lombardo responded that nothing is really certain with the FFGA approval until it is actually signed. She noted that as of that morning, there were assurances from the Federal Transit Administration that as the FFGA would be entered into in time [for Caltrain to issue the full notice to proceed to the contractor], but that Mr. Burns would have better information in the FFGA status.

Chair Peskin asked if the Caltrain segment between San Jose and Gilroy stations would remain diesel. Mr. Burns confirmed that the segment from the Tamien Station in San Jose to the Gilroy Station would remain diesel as part of the project, and noted that there were currently three trains each morning and night that served Gilroy.

Chair Peskin asked that in the event that there was not full funding, how would that work with the contractor, and whether there would be minimum exit fees. Mr. Burns replied that it was not currently defined but there would be a negotiation process with the contractor. He said there was authority to terminate for convenience, though there would be a cost associated with that.

Chair Peskin asked if the FFGA was entered into by or before January 30th and the 30-day Congressional review went as planned, was it still subject to appropriation by Congress? Mr. Burns confirmed that it would be an annual appropriation, and said that there was \$72 million in prior year appropriations that would be available once the FFGA was entered into, and that it was included in President Obama's proposed budget for the current year at \$100 million. He added that the plan in the FFGA was for \$100 million per year. Chair Peskin asked if that worked with the project schedule, which Mr. Burns confirmed.

Chair Peskin asked is there would need to be side tracks in order for high-speed rail trains to bypass Caltrain trains. Mr. Burns replied that the high-speed rail project was currently going through the environmental process, and as part of that would be determining what improvements would need to be made in order for high-speed rail to operate with Caltrain on the right of way. He said it could include additional side tracks but that it was not yet determined and would be the California High-Speed Rail Authority's responsibility to fund the improvements.

Chair Peskin noted that Mr. Burns had been associated with three of the four involved agencies and asked about the status of the project delivery and who was overseeing it. Mr. Burns replied that he was responsible for the project overall and but that Dave Couch was responsible for project delivery and had extensive experience delivering rail transit projects throughout his career. He said that Elizabeth Scanlon was managing the planning and environmental review, and had extensive experience in those aspects of project delivery. He added that there was a team of consultants providing technical assistance, in addition to other consultants providing oversight.

Chair Peskin asked for clarification that the item was a commitment by the Board to provide future State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds or other resources as they become available, should the contingency to the contingency become necessary, which Mr. Burns confirmed.

Commissioner Yee asked how the \$50 million amount was decided and what the formula was to calculate San Francisco's share. Mr. Burns replied that the Joint Powers Board agreement that was still in existence among San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties was for the counties to share one-third of the capital costs. He noted that for this resolution the Metropolitan Transportation Commission agreed to participate which reduced the share to one-fourth for each party. He said for the electrification project the local counties shared costs following the one-third formula.

Chair Yee noted that the mileage of track was disproportionate for the three counties and asked how the one-third cost sharing was determined. Mr. Burns agreed that the mileage of track was disproportionate between the counties but said the formula was determined in order for the project to cover the entire system. He said there was another formula in a separate agreement that divided operating costs based on number of train boardings, and noted that San Francisco contributed significantly less to operating costs than San Mateo and Santa Clara counties based on that.

Chair Peskin asked what the total ridership from San Francisco was per day. Mr. Burns replied that there was 63,000 boardings in San Francisco per day which would equate to approximately

33,000 each way. Chair Peskin asked how many of the passengers disembarked in San Francisco. Mr. Burns replied that the last time he checked it was near a 50% split between travel going north and south along the Caltrain corridor, but that he could provide the exact figures after the meeting.

Ms. Lombardo said that an amended resolution was distributed to the Board that contained minor changes. She said the primary change was adding the language 'or other available sources' to the action, in order to recognize that should the funds be needed the Transportation Authority would need to look at other sources in addition to the STIP funds to ensure that funds would be readily available. She said another change that was worth noting was the addition of a whereas and resolved to the resolution that stated that if the funds were needed, the Transportation Authority would work with the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) to seek the other sources. She said this change was requested by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority since the CCSF was actually a member of the Joint Powers Board and not the Transportation Authority.

Commissioner Cohen moved to amend the item per the distributed amendments, seconded by Commissioner Mar. She said the resolution was a commitment by San Francisco that it was committed to seeing the project through completion and that she supported the proposed amendments.

During public comment, Peter Straus commented that he was representing the San Francisco Transit Riders and the Friends of the Downtown Rail Extension (DTX), and that both organizations strongly supported the item and supported the DTX as the city's next major rail project following the completion of the Central Subway. He said that electrification of Caltrain was essential for Caltrain as well as essential for the DTX, and that he appreciated the oversight protocols that were put in place to protect the financial interests of San Francisco.

Dr. Nancy Jewel Cross commented that she represented the Clean Air Regional Transport System which was comprised of regional and interregional transport developers. She said they were the developers for the extension of Muni Metro to connect Caltrain and BART and that had advocated the California Transportation Commission for that project. She said the organization support connecting rail lines and minimizing car trips, which could be achieved by prioritizing connecting rail systems rather than extending them. She said traffic through San Francisco could be mitigated or reduced by having a light-rail line across the Dumbarton Bridge between Union City and Palo Alto and that they had measured support for the project from thousands of people on the Peninsula.

Roland LeBrun commented that he found serious issues with the electrification project and questioned how \$2.2 billion was being spent but the new trains were losing 200 seats per train. He said the Caltrain corridor was not ready for electrification and noted that in the Bayshore area the stations and tracks would be moved 150 feet to the east. He said in terms of funding, there was a court ruling in April that said if the electrification project only went to the 4th and King Station and not the Transbay Transit Center (TTC) then it would not be eligible for Prop 1A bonds and that since the ruling was not appealed the corresponding \$600 million in funding should be removed from the budget. He requested that the Board amend the item by adding a condition for the \$647 million in the FFGA that if the FFGA was not entered into the city would not be liable for the \$50 million, as well as a condition that the Board evaluate the Caltrain administration.

Thea Selby, Chair of the San Francisco Transit Riders, said that the organization supported the

item and believed it was critical for the electrification project. She said she also represented the Friends of the DTX and that the organization believed it was critical to extend Caltrain from the 4th and King Station to the TTC. She said both organizations would commit to bringing together a revenue package for the DTX and other projects for the 2018 ballot, commenting that the city was not organized enough and did not think big enough on the 2016 revenue package. She added that the San Francisco Transit Riders were also in support of Item 4.

Chair Peskin commented regarding Mr. LeBrun's comment that if the FFGA was not entered into, he did not believe the city would be in jeopardy of committing the \$50 million, which would only be needed if there were cost overruns above the \$316 million contingency on top of the \$2 billion budget. He said he was on the Board for the cost overruns for the TTC and appreciated oversight protocols that were in place for the electrification project.

The amendment to the item was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee (10)

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

Ayes: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee (10)

4. **Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Geary Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Project; Adopt the California Environmental Quality Act Findings including a Statement of Overriding Considerations; Adopt the Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program; Approve the Hybrid Alternative as the Geary Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Project; and Select the Hybrid Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative – ACTION**

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

Chair Peskin asked for confirmation that making the Laguna Street stop a rapid stop would not require additional or supplemental environmental review. Mr. Dentel-Post replied that was correct and that staff had completed environmental documentation for both options. He said that the local stop option was documented in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) but additional analysis was also completed on the rapid stop option and that it was found to have no additional or worsened environmental impacts and therefore no mitigation measures would need to be added.

Chair Peskin asked if that was also true for the Webster Street bridge. Mr. Dentel-Post replied that was correct, as it was incorporated in the Final EIR and no additional environmental impacts were found. Chair Peskin asked if that was also true for making the Collins Street stop a local only stop. Mr. Dentel-Post replied that was correct and that staff had analyzed keeping the Collins Street stop a local only in its existing configuration and it was found to have no additional environmental impacts and therefore no mitigation measures would need to be added. He added that staff had prepared an amended resolution that included both the Laguna Street rapid stop and Collins Street local stop that the Board could approve.

Chair Peskin asked whether further analysis of the bus lane transition at 27th Avenue would be conducted prior to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) completion and federal action, should the Board approve the item. Mr. Dentel-Post confirmed that was the plan, and said that

if a project change were made then staff would need to complete additional California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation likely in the form of an addendum and also incorporate the additional analysis into the federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Chair Peskin commented that the project touched four Supervisorial districts and was a massive cross-city undertaking. He thanked the members of the Geary Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Citizens Advisory Committee (GCAC) for their involvement with the project over many years, and in particular Alex Post, who Chaired the previous night's meeting. He noted that former District 1 Supervisor Jake McGoldrick was in attendance in the audience along with San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Board Member Cheryl Brinkman. He invited Mr. Post, Mr. McGoldrick and Ms. Brinkman to speak following Commissioner discussion. He said that because of the controversial aspects of the project that were mentioned during Mr. Dentel-Post's presentation he would propose starting public comment with a few members of the public who led opposition to the project, while the rest of the comment cards would be called in the order they were received.

Commissioner Mar said the item before the Board was a long time coming and thanked Transportation Authority and SFMTA staff for their hard work on the project. He noted that staff received over 300 comments on the Draft EIR and had organized over 60 community meetings over the prior year. He said it was important that the Laguna Street stop be amended to increase the safety for the large senior citizen and disabled community in that area. He thanked the GCAC for its hard work, and particularly Joanna Fong who served on the GCAC since 2008. He noted that Mr. McGoldrick left office in early 2009 and passed on a lot of information and knowledge regarding the project, and that he was doing the same with incoming Supervisor Sandy Fewer and her staff. He said she recognized that many other project decisions would come before the Board of Supervisors in 2017, such as concerns around 27th Avenue. Commissioner Mar said the project team had been sensitive to community input and small businesses along the corridor, which exemplified the extent of community outreach conducted. He noted that he previously traveled to Mexico City to tour the city's BRT system and it demonstrated how important dedicated bus lanes were. He said the Richmond District would see a 30% reduction in travel time on the bus from Palm Avenue to near Presidio Middle School. He said the rest of the corridor would also benefit significantly from speedier buses as well as reduced wait times, and that there could either be a local or a rapid bus every two to four minutes. He also thanked Walk San Francisco, the San Francisco Transit Riders, and the Richmond District Democratic Club for their long-term support of the project. He said San Francisco was a transit-first city and deserved faster, more reliable, and safer transit along the six plus mile Geary corridor.

Commissioner Breed commented that she was excited to see the project move forward, as Geary was one of the most traveled transit lines in the country. She said it was important to move forward with the item in a timely manner and that no matter what project it is, it was impossible to satisfy everyone stakeholder. She said she appreciated the involvement of the many volunteers who provided input and advocated for changes to the project, specifically the GCAC members and residents of District 5 who pushed to preserve the Webster Street bridge for safety reasons. She said it was the right decision to keep the bridge but she did not believe the right decision was made on the Laguna Street stop and that it should be a rapid stop. She said there was a large senior and disabled population in that area and that it was not fair to take away the rapid stop as it was not close to any more intersections. Commissioner Breed said the city needed to be more considerate when making changes to transit service as while transit should speed up it should

not leave one of the city's most vulnerable populations, senior citizens, behind. She said it was important to move forward with the project as it would provide a variety of safety and infrastructure improvements and that the outgoing Commissioners had been heavily engaged in transit issues. Commissioner Breed moved to amend the item to change the Laguna Street stop to a rapid stop per the distributed amendments, seconded by Commissioner Farrell.

Chair Peskin noted that Geary BRT would also touch District 2 at Jordan Park.

Commissioner Farrell commented that as the city made improvements to Muni service throughout the city, it needed to make sure that efficiency and speed did not come at the expense of the city's senior population. He said public transit needed to be a viable alternative for seniors, and that including the Laguna Street stop as a rapid stop would be an improvement in that direction and he was supportive of it. He said from a project perspective, the city needed to do everything possible to make the public transportation system more efficient, as the increased population was making the city's streets more congested than ever. He said getting people out of single-occupancy vehicles and into public transportation or walking and biking was a step in the right direction for the future of the city. He said in the future he hoped the Geary BRT would be a secondary form of transportation on Geary, and that ultimately a subway system would make the greatest difference and was what the city needed to focus on.

Commissioner Mar said in addition to Commissioner Breed's amendment he would propose to preserve the Collins Street stop as a local-only stop in order to be sensitive to the significant senior and disabled community in that area. Commissioner Mar moved to amend the item to preserve the Collins Street stop as a local-only stop per the distributed amendments, seconded by Commissioner Breed.

During public comment, Alex Post stated that he had presided over the 33rd and final meeting of Geary CAC BRT and noted that the GCAC was formed in 2008 and that one member, Joanna Fong, had served the entire period. He said the purpose of the GCAC was to represent the public through specific neighborhood and at-large seats, and that it provided another outlet for the public to engage the Transportation Authority during its environmental analysis. He said he was impressed by staff outreach to the public and their engagement with the GCAC, and said they had a difficult balancing task of planning a robust BRT system with community concerns over specific aspects of the project. He noted that sufficient modifications to the BRT project would no longer make it a rapid system. Mr. Post said ultimately the public input made the project stronger, and cited pedestrian safety features as an example. He said the night prior to the GCAC discussed the Final EIR and the hybrid alternative and that many residents of Japantown attended and expressed their support for the project in theory but were not pleased with the Laguna Street stop being converted to a local only stop. He said the GCAC voted on two motions, the first being to approve the Final EIR, which passed with overwhelming support, and the second being an amendment to retain a rapid stop at Laguna Street, which also passed.

Jake McGoldrick commented that he served eight years on the Board, from 2001-2009, six of which he served as the Board Chair. He thanked staff and the Board for their many years of work on the project and noted that the project had gone on for a decade and that it was time for it to be approved. He noted that there would be expected tweaks to the project, but that he was confident that the details had been attended to and noted the various environmental benefits the project would provide.

Robert Starzel commented that the Supervisorial candidates for District 1 received over 80% of the vote after expressing doubts over the proposed hybrid alternative. He said that voters did not

want a hybrid system and requested that the Board delay the vote until incoming Commissioner Fewer was sworn in. He noted that the Final EIR was released on December 9 and questioned whether the Board had sufficient time to review the 1,065 pages in the EIR, in addition to the 870 pages of responses to comments and 83 pages of meeting materials, during its winter recess. He said the Board's action would be against the political will of the voters and that without sufficient time to review the materials the Board would not be exercising independent judgement.

David Heller questioned why the vote was being rushed since three new Commissioners would be sworn in the following week and would not be able to provide input. He said as president of the Geary Boulevard Merchants Association he represented 1,415 merchants who felt differently about the project than the Board. He noted that similar construction projects around the city had hurt local businesses and requested a 30-day extension of the hearing for additional input from the community. He added that left-hand turns on Van Ness Avenue were recently eliminated but that there was no outreach to merchants.

Cheryl Brinkman commented that she was a member of the SFMTA Board but was speaking as a private citizen. She said she rode the 38-line regularly and that the BRT project would provide improved service along that route. She said over 500,000 riders would benefit from the proposed improvements, with up to 20 minutes in round-trip travel time savings, which equated to 80 hours a year and 2 weeks over a lifetime. She said that the project would bring increased reliability for buses and riders had already noticed improvements in the bus service and had expressed that through ridership surveys. Ms. Brinkman said that better transit service reduced congestion and competition for parking, which benefited everyone. She asked that the vote not be delayed and that the project represented an affordable and achievable near-term win for the city. She agreed with prior speakers that rail on Geary Boulevard was the preferred future but that it was not feasible in the near-term, and therefore work on a BRT system should continue which would complement a future rail or subway line.

Mary Beth Starzel commented that she was a 22-year resident of the Richmond District and that the timing of the hearing did not provide enough time to review the revised EIR. She said the hybrid alternative offered many of the same features that were already not working on Mission Street, and noted that the red transit only lanes did not reduce transit times and led to side streets being more congested. She said that the prevalence of ride-sharing services, and soon self-driving cars, would reduce the number of bus riders as they did for BART ridership to the local airports. She said the city need to build flexibility and not rigid infrastructure for only buses. She said currently the 38R-line brought people downtown in 21 minutes and that the hybrid service would lead to buses waiting behind one another which would slow down the transit time. She said the organization San Franciscans for Sensible Transit supported all of the proposed improvements except for the red lane median removal, and that \$300 million should not be spent on a system that would be out of date and lead to years of disruption to the community.

David Dippel commented that an underground Muni rail line or subway should have the objective for the project and that a BRT system should have been subordinate to that. He said the EIR failed to address that sections of Geary Boulevard would be closed to traffic for three months at a time for construction which would divert traffic to side street and through neighborhoods. He added that half of the left-hand turns on Geary Boulevard would be eliminated which would lead to the remaining turns to be twice as congested. He said that for the BRT buses to safely move from the curb to a traffic lane would require a change in state law.

Phil Chin thanked Commissioners Mar and Breed for their leadership and for proposing amendments to the item. He urged the Board to approve the amendments regarding the Collins Street and Laguna Street stops and said it was important that senior citizens not be forgotten.

A member of the public complemented the Transportation Authority for its work on the EIR and said she had served on the GCAC for two years. She asked for a postponement of the vote for 30 days so the incoming Commissioner Fewer could provide input. She said the near-term improvements to the Muni service were great but that she was concerned about the \$300 million needed for the larger project. She questioned whether the city could afford that and noted that due to a new presidential administration there may be reductions to the city's federal funding, and said the project funding should not be committed at this point and could instead be used on neighborhood services.

Rose Hillson commented that the Geary BRT project impacted a wider residential area than the Van Ness BRT project, while the Geary BRT only released the Final EIR at this point while the Van Ness BRT had released a joint Final EIR/S at that point. She asked the Board to not certify the locally preferred alternative until the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published its Final EIS so that it could incorporate changes and unforeseen impacts. She noted that the Final EIR used different measurements for transportation impact analyses, that being Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled. She said the questionable funding sources for the project should be reanalyzed to determine which alternative would be feasible, and that it estimated \$49 million in annual operating costs in addition to capital expenses. She said the center lane that would run through the Richmond area, the Final EIR needed to include fog safety related features and therefore new analysis was needed for the EIR to be complete.

A member of the public commented that he was a retired Muni driver and questioned whether the figures provided by the SFMTA about the travel times were realistic. He said the figures were often based on the most ideal scenario that included the best circumstances and did not account for double-parked trucks, which often blocked the right lane of traffic. She noted that cars were an integral part of the city's transportation system and that not Muni was not always a viable transportation alternative. He reiterated that the models needed to consider all scenarios in order to come up with realistic estimates.

Cynthia Joe commented that she supported the Webster Street pedestrian bridge and the amendment to include the Laguna Street as a rapid stop. She said currently the Geary corridor has the local line and the rapid line and that making the Laguna Street stop local only was an outrage. She said the data for that stop was taken during an evening commute and did not cover the many people at the senior housing facilities.

Michael Murphy commented that he was a 40-year resident of the Inner Richmond and that BRT was a promising idea a decade prior but not anymore. He said the city had achieved remarkable progress in reducing board times since then, and that some of the advantages of BRT systems were already in place such as the low-riding buses and curb extensions, and that further improvements were on the way with new buses and curb alterations. He said the 38R-line proved that traffic conditions allowed for a faster bus route with six-block intervals, and that more progress could be achieved through an effective traffic light priority system. He said that opponents to the project were not advocating to not build anything and instead wanted successful improvements such as pedestrian safety features, lighting, and landscaping. He said the community wanted to avoid traffic congestion and not misplace public funds on a center lane that would disrupt the neighborhoods.

Eva Lee commented that she was a resident of the Richmond District and questioned whether staff had conducted enough outreach to residents since she had never received a mailer or saw one of the OWL machines. She questioned whether the BRT system was worth spending \$300 million on and said there were significant improvements that could be made at far less cost. She also noted that the elderly would have difficulty boarding the rapid bus system and that many merchants along the corridor could not attend this meeting and requested additional time for community input.

Dave Hertz commented that he was a longtime resident of the Richmond District and disagreed with the project but commended Commissioner Mar for his ongoing support of it. He said the \$300 million could instead be spent on more productive projects for the community instead of on a project that would disrupt large segments of the corridor. He said that he had attended several of the public outreach meetings and said that not everyone was able to speak or voice their opinion. He requested that the Board delay the vote in order to avoid a lawsuit which would cost more time and money, and said that core of the project was viable but the rest needed to be overhauled.

A member of the public commented that he owned a small business on Geary Boulevard and noted that many of his customers drove to shop there, especially the elderly and disabled. He said the red transit-only lanes had been a disaster in other parts of the city, particularly in the Mission District, and that small businesses in that area lost up to 40% of their customers. He said the coalitions supporting the Geary BRT project were not representative of the general public. He questioned whether the SFMTA intentionally disrupted traffic on Geary Boulevard in recent months to enhance the travel time savings for the project. He said the BRT project was a solution to a non-problem and that the transit-only lanes would make it more difficult for the average driver to navigate the city streets.

Suzanne Smith commented that she was President of the Sequoias Resident Association on Geary Boulevard and that she supported the proposed amendment to retain the rapid stop at Laguna Street. She noted that Cathedral Hill had the greatest density of senior citizens in the city and that she appreciated Commissioner Breed's understanding of senior citizen issue. She asked the Board to approve the item with the amendments.

Anne Farrar thanked the Board for considering the proposed amendment for the Laguna Street stop.

Henry Karnilowicz commented that he was President of the San Francisco Council of District Merchants Association and noted that Geary was an expressway and not a true boulevard. He said the rapid line moved from people downtown to their destinations as fast as possible and that bus stops and parking spots removed would negatively affect the businesses along the corridor. He asked for a 30-day extension of the hearing and added that the Final EIR did not consider the impact to small businesses.

Corey Urban commented that he owned the Shell gas station on Geary Boulevard questioned the travel time benefits from the BRT project, particularly the savings of up to 20 minutes round trip during commute hours. He said that what was being advertised to commuters along the corridor was an average transit savings of 20 minutes, and asked if this was a mistake since it would not be an average for each commuter. She said the EIR showed that the travel time for one segment along the corridor would be 44 minutes and 45 seconds after the BRT system was built, but that currently that same segment only took between 42-46 minutes during various peak commute hours according to SFMTA's website. He said the average interval for buses was every

31, 32 and 34 minutes, and said the project would not be able to reduce that travel time by 30%. He added that Commissioner Mar said the BRT system would have a bus running every four minutes, but that interval was already in place during peak commute hours.

Steve Nakajo commented that he was the Executive Director of the Komochi Senior Center in Japantown which advocated for seniors and the Japanese-American community. He said that Geary Boulevard used to be an expressway which allowed people to travel quickly from the Richmond District to downtown, but that it passed under both the African-American community in the Fillmore area and the Japanese community in Japantown. He said the elimination of the 38R-line stop at Laguna Street was another example of disrespect for the Japanese community and that he appreciated the proposed amendment for Laguna Street.

Sandy Mori commented that she had advocated for senior citizens for over 45 years and support the amendment to include the Laguna Street as a rapid stop. She said she had emailed statistics to the Board showing the demographics around the Laguna Street stop which had the second highest population of people aged 60 and over, while the city's population was 25% aged 60 and over. She said she was very supportive of keeping the rapid stop at Laguna Street as it was a gateway to Japantown and supported the area's economic development and tourism industry. She noted that San Francisco's Japantown was only one of three remaining in the country.

Paul Epstein commented that he had served on two prior advisory committees for major transportation projects in the city and so he was familiar with the process. He complained that only half of the Board was present during public comment and was not listening to the public. He said when BRT was first proposed it was a good idea but that improvements to Muni service in recent years had already accomplished what BRT was setting out to do, as a result of Clipper Cards, low-entry buses and dual boarding. He questioned whether the proposed travel time savings was overstated and noted that it would likely be slower because the rapid buses would be stuck behind the local buses in the center lane.

Lorraine Petty commented that she lived on Laguna Street in a low-income senior complex and that she rode the 38-line bus every day. She said the Laguna Street stop was a maximum load point and that by the time the buses got to that stop there were already full and usually did not stop, so it was impossible to accurately count the ridership. She also said that travel time would not be lost by keeping the Laguna Street stop on the rapid line because there was a long traffic light there which buses got stuck at which allowed for ample boarding time.

Glenn Urban commented that he co-owned the Shell gas station on Geary Boulevard and questioned why only half of the Board was present and whether they could still take action. He said the SFMTA was using travel times from 2012 for the EIR and said that if they used travel times from 2015 they would account for the improved travel times. He said the FTA may notice this which could affect the project's federal funding.

Larry Costello commented that he was president of the Jordan Park Improvement Association which was opposed to the hybrid alternative as it was currently proposed. He said it was an expensive project with little transit benefits, and would be highly disruptive to neighborhoods and businesses along Geary, particularly those of west of Masonic Avenue. He said there needed to be greater input from neighborhood and merchant groups regarding that section of the project, and that the Jordan Park Improvement Association had not been invited to participate in the planning process or informed about the GCAC meetings. He said in order for the project to be successful neighborhood groups needed to participate and that the vote should be postponed so that incoming Commissioner Fewer had the opportunity to provide input, as it

was a significant project affecting District 1.

Paul Wermer commented that he was chair of the Japantown Task Force Land Use Committee and commended Director Chang and staff for its public outreach and for being responsive to the task force's concerns. He said that keeping the Laguna Street stop on the rapid line was a relief and that during the task force's meetings he did not hear any opposition to the project from Japantown residents.

A member of the public said he was a senior citizen who lived in the Outer Richmond district and questioned why local service should be reduced due to a tradeoff in design. He said the project ignored the increased likelihood of bus riders having to unsafely cross the street to catch a bus, while currently most could board from the curb. He said the travel time analysis ignored the time required for handicap and people with walkers or strollers to board the bus, and that the need for amendments at this stage of the approval process demonstrated lack of public outreach, especially in the Outer Richmond. He said the public did not like that local service was being reduced and requested that the vote be delayed until the new Board members were sworn in.

Peter Straus commented that he was representing the San Francisco Transit Riders and urged the Board to approve the item. He said it was essential that the EIR be approved so that the SFMTA could proceed with the near-term transit improvements, which had been on hold until the completion of this environmental process. He said he could not support the designation of the hybrid as the locally preferred alternative, and instead asked that the Board approve sections one to four of the resolves in the resolution, but remove sections five and six. He said the corridor deserved a high-quality vision BRT, and therefore the recommended alternative could be improved. He said if the city could not afford a subway, then the city must develop a BRT vision for a "subway on the surface", which is not captured by the staff recommended alternative. He said there should be further work to modify the staff recommendation before a locally preferred alternative be designated and the Final EIS approved.

Matt Cleinman commented that he was with the San Francisco Transit Riders and strongly supported the project. He said the Geary bus line was one of the busiest in the country and even busier than some rail lines and therefore any changes to it would affect a lot of people. He noted that there were many people who supported the project that were unable to attend the meeting, and that while the item should be passed, the third alternative should have been designated as the locally preferred alternative. He added that it would not have the hybrid issues on the center lane but would still enable full rapid service throughout the line. He said that this project, along with others currently underway around the city, would link the city's transit network.

A member of the public requested that the hearing be delayed as the release date of the Final EIR did not allow sufficient time for review. He said that given the capital cost of the project the vote should be delayed because there would be lawsuits filed against the city which would be costly. He said that as a resident of the Richmond District he did not receive any notices about the project and that bus service had improved recently.

Julia Raskin commented that she was a community organizer with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition which had over 10,000 members and whose mission was to promote bicycling as a viable transportation alternative. She said the Geary BRT project would make the city more bicycle-friendly, and that as a high-injury corridor, Geary was a prime location for improvements. She said the project would not only improve bus service but would reduce travel time and safety along the corridor. She said it would serve as an important connection for people traveling in the

area and that reconfiguring the median lane would provide room for a dedicated bike lane/ She urged the Board to approve the item and take an important step towards improving the daily commute of thousands of people.

Mary Ellen White Vondron commented that she was a resident near Laguna Street and asked the Board to keep the rapid stop at Laguna. She said the clean air buses were helpful for people with allergies and asthma and appreciated the low-boarding buses for people with limited mobility.

Brian Haagsman commented that he worked at Walk San Francisco and urged the Board to approve the item. He said that Geary Boulevard was one of the city's high-injury corridors and that the hybrid alternative would significantly improve the safety of walking on Geary. He said design features such as sidewalk extensions, bulb-outs, median refuge islands, pedestrian countdown signals, and new pedestrian crossings would also benefit people walking along the corridor. He said that projects like Geary BRT that redesigned dangerous streets would help the city achieve its Vision Zero goals.

Vitalich Lang commented that for eight years he served as chief of the Bureau of Engineering at San Francisco Public Works and that his staff restored the cable car lines along Market Street and the Embarcadero. He thanked staff on behalf of the Holy Virgin community for extending the weaving section west of 27th Avenue and for the proposed amendment to restore the bus stop at Collins Streets. He said that the project should not exist west of Stanyan Street, because it would only save nine minutes but would eliminate half of the bus stops, and therefore was not cost-effective.

Stephen Taber commented that he was a member of the Citizen Advisory Council and had participated in a number of Geary studies over the years. He said the current project was not the ultimate solution for Geary and that a rail line was needed instead, particularly for the area east of Arguello Boulevard. He said the Draft EIR did not take into account the impact on capital plans, but that the Geary light-rail project was included in the 20-year capital plan. He said if the city were to implement a rail project similar to Muni Metro that was previously recommended years earlier, it would require digging up the Richmond District portion of the BRT line and would cost several hundred million dollars and several years. He said the city should wait until the subway master plan was produced and study how the BRT line would affect a future rail line.

Mari Eliza commented that she was concerned about the homeless crisis in the city and that the funds should instead be spent on addressing that. She said the voters wanted to spend more on addressing homelessness and funding free City College and that this project was not a top priority for the city. She requested an extra 30 days for the public to review and comment on the Final EIR and to give the Board sufficient time to consider the alternatives.

William Shephard commented that he was a daily Muni rider and was impressed with the improvements to Muni service over the last few years, particularly on Geary Boulevard. He said he was concerned that the studies conducted do not accurately capture the amount of travel time saved from Arguello Boulevard to 27th Street, and that it was minimal. He that this was a contentious item and therefore should not be expedited over the holidays and therefore the item should be delayed.

Michael Zanoni commented that he had lived along Geary Boulevard for over 40 years. He said that Geary and Van Ness Avenue had functioned well for many years and questioned why they should be changed now. He said the city needed a long-term strategy and should build subways and surface rail instead of BRT systems. He said underground systems would be more efficient as it would not have to interact with surface traffic. He also said that parking should not be

removed on Geary Boulevard just for a dedicated bike lane and would hurt the local businesses.

Michael Zenonia said that we should have long-term strategy and save the same amount of time by tinkering the existing urban infrastructure, e.g. smart lights, truck loading zones, ridesharing, and traffic enforcement. He stated that he was glad to see BRT on the ground, but he also supported tunnels under Geary corridor which could add more pedestrian bridges, show more respect to Japanese communities by reducing traffic flow on the ground, and help speed the whole process.

Annel Deutscher, a member of the San Francisco Interfaith council, expressed her support for the item and said she appreciated the project team's work to make travel safer in the Geary corridor. She emphasized that the three local cathedrals, First Unitarian Universalist Society, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, and St. Mary's Cathedral, were not only places for worship but also community centers, meeting places, concert halls, and tourist destinations. She said there were many challenges for pedestrian and bus riders traveling to the cathedrals, especially during the construction of the new hospital. She said that staff was very responsive and willing to listen and address the council's concerns, and that project designs for that area were very accommodating.

A member of the public who was a resident of the Western Park Apartments on Laguna Street thanked the Board for keeping the rapid stop at Laguna Street. He commented that two challenges would still need to be addressed however, including buses that were too full to accommodate riders and double-parked vehicles which affected traffic flows.

Connor Makowski commented that he was a resident of Richmond District and that constructing a transit system underground was a better way and the only way. He said that residents of the Richmond District did not want the BRT project because it was a waste of time and resources.

Diana commented that the Board should consider other options and that there were other groups that needed to be considered such as youths. She said that a transportation system should move people in a safe manner without affecting the community and that the transit-only lanes on in the Mission District had hurt the local businesses.

Kevin Stull commented that he was a member of the GCAC and that the Committee had heard from many members of the public who would be affected the project. He said he was supportive of the project moving forward with the two proposed amendments.

Hiroshi Fukuda commented that he was the president of the Richmond Community Association and requested that the item be postponed one month in order to consider an alternative that would cost only \$50 million instead of \$300 million. He said another impact aspect was that only 1.7 of the 6.5 miles would comprise 70% of the project cost. He added that the affordable housing bonus plan would significantly impact merchants.

Nadine May commented that the Board should consider alternatives that were less costly and to postpone the item by one month. She said that boarding buses in the middle of Geary Boulevard was potentially dangerous.

Catherine Carter commented that she was excited to see the project move forward as soon as possible. She said the city needed a better, faster, and more consistent transit system. She urged the Board to find a way to help local businesses during the construction period and highlight the increase in customers they might see once the BRT system is complete. She voiced support for Peter Straus' recommendation to wait on approving the hybrid alternative because she thought there were better alternatives.

Peter Zerzan commented that he was a member of the Richmond District Democratic Club and support the project design. He said that the recommended alternative would serve the diverse needs of transit users along Geary Boulevard. He urged the Board to approve the recommended alternative and to certify the environmental documents. He said the city could no longer afford to delay approval of the project because congestion, safety, and traffic delays on Geary were getting worse.

Angela Paige Miller commented that she was a member of the GCAC and said that residents in the Richmond District strongly supported the project. She said that she had received positive community input through talking with riders, attending community meetings, and talking to her neighbors, and noted that the Go Geary Petition had collected 532 signatures.

Jim Billings asked the Board to delay the vote to consider another option. He suggested going with the \$50 million option first and noted that the Vehicle Miles Traveled estimates were based on 2010-2012 data and did not take into account the 45,000 ride-sharing cars in the city and many other aspects along Geary Boulevard over the past five years. He said he was also concerned with having bus stops in the middle of Geary.

Loins Zamora commented that he supported the project and that transit riders deserved a better transit system.

Peter Gallotta commented that he was a GCAC member and thanked Commissioner Mar for his leadership and advocacy for the project. He said the GCAC strongly supported the project and had supported the amendment to the Laguna Street stop, as they recognized the needs of senior and people with disabilities. He said the GCAC asked for the Board's continued support to ensure the project gets fully funded.

Chris Parkes commented that the project should not get approved because the Final EIR was released before the winter break so that the public would not have sufficient time to review. He noted that there were many competing funding needs.

Bradley Wiedmaier commented that he was a member of the member of Citizens Advisory Committee and said that there was no explanation as to why the current proposal only covered the limited segment if the BRT system would bring so much benefit. He said currently there was a good system of local and rapid buses and that by adding a few extra stops, the BRT system might slow down the service and sacrifice the rapid part. He added that the Geary Boulevard transportation system was not just a corridor but a network.

Chair Peskin thanked everyone who testified during public comment and provided written comments to the Board. He said he recognized that there was a pending transition both locally and nationally, and that the composition of the Board would be changing, but that all of the members of the Board had been involved with the project for several years. He said over the 10 years of the project it had gone through numerous iterations of the Board and he did not believe that the pending composition of the Board would change the outcome of the vote. He said that several members of the public had commented about funding priorities, and noted that Phase 1 of the Geary BRT project to Stanyan Street was fully funded, but that Phase 2, which was the more controversial segment in the Richmond District, was largely unfunded. He said that moving forward, the city had various projects to prioritize including the DTX, Caltrain Electrification, Central Subway extension, and Van Ness BRT project, among others, and that the city needed to have a serious conversation about its funding priorities.

Commissioner Yee asked for clarification about the 20-minute round trip savings. Mr. Dentel-

Post replied that the 20-minute round trip travel time savings was based on modeling using various data inputs. He said the modeling found a 10-minute travel time savings for the bus going from one end of the corridor to the other, and would be the maximum travel time savings on a given trip that a rider might experience. He noted that if a rider was traveling from the middle of corridor to one of the ends then they would only experience a portion of that travel time benefit. He said the benefit was modeled in future years, so the existing travel times of the buses were input into the model and validated based on existing travel time as well as traffic counts and other data, such as future land use scenarios and other planned transportation projects. Mr. Dentel-Post said that these assumptions were put into the travel demand model to identify what the future travel time savings would be and that it was important to note that they were based on a future no build scenario. He said that meant the bus wouldn't be exactly 10 minutes faster than it was today, but rather that with the expected growth in the city over the time it would take to implement the project, travel times along the corridor without the project would increase to over an hour with the local buses and about 55 minutes with the 38-R line. He added that the 10-minute travel time savings was relative to these future travel times based on the growth that was expected along the corridor.

Commissioner Yee asked for clarification that the projections were based on the future slower times without and faster times with the BRT system, which Mr. Dentel-Post confirmed.

Commissioner Breed thanked the public for their comments and noted that when she first was elected Supervisor she advocated for a subway instead of a BRT system on Geary, but that this turned out to be very costly. She said the city should have originally built more public transportation systems underground but that it was much more expensive now as the city grew in population. She said the Geary and Van Ness BRT systems were currently what the city could afford to accomplish but that there was a current report underway looking at the city's underground transit system and what the future may hold but that right now was the time to move forward with the project as it had been 10 years in progress.

Chair Peskin commented in response to several public comments, that there were going to be more votes on the project as the funding package was not complete, and that if the incoming Supervisors held a different opinion than the outgoing Supervisors there would be many opportunities for them to weigh in.

Commissioner Mar commented that the vote only represented one milestone for the project but that it allowed it move forward, and noted that the incoming Supervisors would have significant input on funding and build out, especially on the segment from Stanyan Street to 34th Avenue. He said he recently visited BRT projects in San Jose and Oakland and appreciated the respective transit agencies' sensitivity to small businesses and highlighting the benefits of the project. He said it was important to focus not only on the improvements to bus speed but also the increase in bus frequency which would save riders travel time. He said the area from Palm Street to 27th Avenue would have a center lane that would significantly speed up travel from the outer and central Richmond District to the core of the city. Commissioner Mar commented that the dedicated bus lane was what made a BRT system effective, in addition to center lanes and improved stations. He noted that there was a petition of 530 people, mostly transit riders, who were strongly supportive of the project. He said the safety aspects of the project were critical, but that the Tenderloin area would also benefit from the bulbs and other improvements, and that it was important to note how significant and historic the vote was.

The amendment to the item made by Commissioner Breed was approved without objection by

the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee (10)

The amendment to the item made by Commissioner Mar was approved without objection by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee (10)

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

Ayes: Commissioners Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang and Yee (10)

Other Items

5. Introduction of New Items – INFORMATION

Chair Peskin introduced a resolution that was distributed to the Board and commented that Assemblyman Ting had introduced a bill to keep the city's streets safe relative to unregulated transportation network company vehicles, which numbered approximately 45,000 in San Francisco. He asked the Board to consider a resolution at the next Board meeting to support Assembly Bill 87 which would require the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to revoke the vehicle registration of any autonomous self-driving vehicles operating in violation of the DMV's autonomous vehicle tester program.

There was no public comment.

6. Public Comment

During public comment, Andrew Yip spoke about wisdom.

Peter Straus commented that on behalf of the San Francisco Transit Riders he commended Commissioners Avalos, Campos and Mar for their work on transportation measures.

Dr. Nancy Jewel Cross asked the Board to request regional data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on start and end trips throughout the Bay Area so that San Francisco could provide the necessary input to neighboring cities regarding housing development. She said the data would help create safe and efficient travel routes throughout the region.

Kevin Stull thanked Commissioners Avalos, Campos and Mar for their work on transportation. He said that no transit project was perfect or would meet the needs of every stakeholder, but that through outreach the city could design projects to benefit the most amount of people, including current and future riders.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.