

From: [Jim Recker](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Budget Comment JR2 for March 29 CAC Meeting
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 8:48:59 PM

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Dear CAC Committee,

I do have another comment / question that may take some research and time to answer. I will not be disappointed if the reply to my comment is pushed off to the April meeting.

As I look over the [SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT FY2023 ADOPTED OPERATING BUDGET](#) prepared for the SamTrans Board, I am wondering how the District is justifying an expenditure of **\$39.65** for every single bus rider they carry.

- The District anticipates in its FY'23 "adopted budget" a passenger fare income of **\$9,739,000**, with an estimated FY'23 ridership of **8.5 million riders** (*which means that many riders are getting a discounted fare*). FYI, SamTrans states that passenger fares currently brings in approximately 4% of revenues. I used SamTrans latest ridership figures.
- The District anticipates total source of funds (minus passenger fares) of **\$308,316,358**. These are funds coming from a variety of external sources such as sales tax, TDA and STA fund, Measure W and more...
- If we then look at FY'23 operating costs in this budget, the District estimates them at **\$337,058,621** (*with an anticipated operating deficit*).
- In a quick calculation, this means that this FY'23 budget projects an individual rider's cost to the District at **\$39.65** (on operating costs alone).

Again, that is just **operating** costs I included above, and does *not* include the [SamTrans FY'23 Adopted Capital Budget](#) at **\$30,604,672**. While most capital items are fully funded, one capital budget item is a **Facility Power Infrastructure Upgrade** (ZEB Implementation and Deployment) for new electric buses. Only \$7,966,320 has been approved for now: However the eventual cost estimates for "preliminary design through final design, including the development of plans, specifications, estimates, and construction schedules" comes to **\$326,711,250!** That's *before* construction cost estimates! Is the CAC committee aware of this SamTrans vision?

My comments above are simply designed to get the **Citizens Advisory Committee** to start thinking about where SamTrans is "now" (post-pandemic) from a budgetary perspective, and begin to think of recommendations they could make to the SamTrans Board, and to start and take a harder look at the costs and future directions of our public transit system. As cities in Europe, Canada and even in the US are discovering, there are micro-transit EV alternatives available now that offer equitable, time efficient and more environmental friendly options at a much lower cost than the current SamTrans model we have today and are starting to plan for tomorrow.

Do let me know if I have overlooked or missed something in the SamTrans budget statements.
Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Jim Recker
Redwood City

From: [Jim Recker](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Ridership Comment JR1 for March 29 CAC Meeting
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 5:19:32 PM

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Question: Could the CAC request staff to provide ridership figures per SamTrans “regular” route (not a consolidated ridership figures)? It seems that many mid-county and south-county buses are running with just a riders of riders (or this could be my simple layman” observations.

Follow-up question: If certain individual routes are indeed seeing very small ridership, what route /service changes could be envisioned? Furthermore, seeing that the **Phase 3 Outreach of 2022** saw only 39% “very supportive” of route changes, and that many routes saw high “non-support” figures (routes 298, 112, 140, 260/261, 295), are there any plans to consider more route changes? Or was there a **Phase 4** for 2022 that I missed?

Note to CAC members: SamTrans has achieved above 70% pre-pandemic recovery rate of regular bus routes.. However, some SamTrans areas are struggling, such as Shuttle services. Perhaps the CAC could take a closer look at this and see if SamTrans shuttles could be re-deployed? Palo Alto is “experimenting” with [rideshare service](#), South San Francisco is seeing [success with their local shuttle](#) program, and other California cities are experimenting with [“microtransit” services](#). Could SamTrans consider newer models of mass transit?

Mode Jan-20 Jan-23 %
Bus 35,841 25,233 70.4%
Paratransit 1,051 591 56.2%
Shuttles 11,022 1,658 15.0%
Total 47,914 27,482 **57.4%**

Above figures from Board of Directors Meeting Summary, March 1, 2023

Thank you for your attention to my concerns,

Jim Recker
Redwood City