

**San Mateo County Transit District (District)
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, California**

**Minutes of Legislative Committee /
Committee of the Whole**

December 6, 2023

Committee Members Present: R. Mueller (Chair), R. Medina

Committee Members Absent: None

Other Board Members Present Constituting Committee of the Whole: D. Canepa, M. Chuang, B. Esser, M. Fraser, J. Gee, J. Powell, P. Ratto

Other Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: A. Chan, D. Olmeda, K. Jordan Steiner, S. van Hoften, J. Cassman, J. Brook, D. Seamans

10.c.1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Ray Mueller called the meeting to order at 3:38 pm.

10.c.2. Approval of Minutes of the Legislative Committee Meeting of November 1, 2023

Motion/Second: Esser/Ratto

Ayes: Canepa, Chuang, Esser, Fraser, Gee, Medina, Mueller, Powell, Ratto

Noes: None

Absent: None

10.c.3. State and Federal Legislative Update

Jessica Epstein, Manager, Government and Community Affairs, introduced Michael Pimentel and Matt Robinson, Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange, who are the lead lobbyists for SamTrans in Sacramento. Mr. Robinson provided an update on recent state legislation and leadership that included monitoring several Brown Act bills that would make it easier for non-decision-making bodies to meet remotely and conduct business the way they did throughout the pandemic. Mr. Pimentel provided an update on the state budget regarding accountability and reform. He noted a new requirement under the Budget Act for state transportation agencies to set up a transit transformation task force consisting of CalSTA (California State Transportation Agency) and Caltrans (California Department of Transportation) representatives. He also provided updates on finances and investments. Mr. Robinson said that on January 10, the Governor would release his Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget and commented on what is being called a budgetary problem, not a deficit.

Ms. Epstein said , there would be a two-tiered continuing resolution (CR) at the federal level and noted leadership updates.

Committee Member Rico Medina asked about discussions regarding merging Caltrain and BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), which would also affect SamTrans. Ms. Epstein said MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) has conducted some polling, and there has been much recent conversation about whether to merge Caltrain and BART, but that staff does not anticipate at this time MTC including it in a ballot measure. She said an enabling statute for a 2026 transportation ballot measure is being taken to the MTC Legislative Committee on December 8 as an informational item and would be brought back to that committee in January as an action item.

Director David Canepa noted that as an MTC Commissioner and Chair of MTC's Legislative Committee, information is available online and the goal is to share the information with the public and elected officials. He said MTC would review the voter survey and provide an update on the regional transportation measure. He said MTC is focusing on regional transportation measures and how the 27 transit operators in the area can work together collaboratively to achieve an integrated system that works well for riders. He noted that the proposed merger would be an informational item at the December 8 meeting and would go to the Legislative Committee in January before going on to the full Board; he encouraged input from everyone.

Committee Chair Mueller spoke against any proposed Caltrain and BART merger. Ms. Epstein noted that the MTC staff report did not specifically call out a merger but that it was well within what could be discussed at the upcoming MTC meeting. The Board members provided general informal support for sending a letter to MTC.

April Chan, General Manager/CEO, said she would author a letter to MTC on behalf of the Board.

Director Marina Fraser said there was no benefit to County taxpayers to taking on the burden of BART and said she would support sending a letter to MTC.

The Board approved a motion for a letter to be sent to MTC advising them on the perceived effect of the proposals to merge BART and Caltrain, to be signed by both the Chair and the General Manager/CEO).

Director Canepa said he was abstaining due to a potential conflict with his role as MTC Legislative Committee Chair.

Motion/Second: Medina/Fraser

Ayes: Chuang, Esser, Fraser, Gee, Medina, Mueller, Powell, Ratto

Noes: None

Abstain: Canepa

Absent: None

10.c.4. 2024 Draft Legislative Program

Ms. Epstein outlined the changes from the 2023 legislative program, indicating that they were mostly updates based on the progression of time, and noted that there were no major substantive changes. She said the final program would be brought back to the Board at the January 10 meeting for adoption.

Director Jeff Gee said that on the federal side, they may need to send a delegation to Washington on an annual basis to ensure the Bay Area is not forgotten.

10.c.5. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 pm.

An audio/video recording of this meeting is available online at <https://www.samtrans.com/about-samtrans/video-board-directors-cac-and-measure-w-coc>. Questions may be referred to the District Secretary's office by phone at 650-508-6242 or by email to board@samtrans.com.