

July 20th, 2023



Anne Richman, Executive Director
David Chan, Director of Programming and Legislation
TAM Board of Commissioners
Transportation Authority of Marin
900 Fifth Avenue, Suite 100
San Rafael, CA 94901

Via email: dchan@tam.ca.gov

RE: MCL Comments on the 2023 Measure A/AA and 2023 Measure B Strategic Plans

Dear Executive Director Richman, Director Chan, Chair Colbert and Commissioners:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the 2023 draft Measure A/AA Sales Tax Strategic Plan and draft Measure B Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) Strategic Plan. MCL has reviewed and submitted comments on previous TAM Strategic Plans, most recently the 2017 Strategic Vision Plan and the 2021 Measure A/AA Sales Tax Strategic Plan. As in previous comments, we recognize and appreciate the consistent good work TAM does as Marin's sales tax and license renewal fee authority, managing funds and leveraging regional, state, and federal dollars for local transportation programs and projects.

However, we think a seismic shift is overdue in TAM's strategic plans. As greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation continue to dominate total emissions over other sources both in the state and the county, we urge TAM's staff and board of commissioners to take a decidedly proactive and bolder role in supporting the policies all levels of government are now focused on in accelerating the decarbonization of transportation, reducing and eventually eliminating fossil-fuel powered vehicles, and investing in reliable and affordable transportation alternatives.

The current drafts of these two Strategic Plans do not speak to the urgency of the climate crisis. It is only through local commitment and action that legislation, public policy, and mandates can effect change.

Funding for reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions needed in Measure AA

While other objectives in Measure AA's Goal are clearly addressed through Measure A/AA's Strategies or Categories, the more recent addition "reduce greenhouse gas emissions" is not.

Measure AA's stated goal:

Reduce congestion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, maintain and improve local transportation infrastructure, and provide high quality transportation options for people of all ages who live, work, and travel in Marin County.

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Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin County.

The donut chart of the Measure A (2004) strategies for 15 years of funding (page 11) does not look much different than the donut chart of Measure AA (2018) categories for 30 years into the future (page 12). That is because the overall categories and the percentage of Marin sales tax funds dedicated to them is roughly the same.

The funding strategies for Measure AA need more flexibility to respond to current needs and to evolve over time. We believe looking at reserve funds or designating funds over a certain percentage growth in particularly high sales tax revenue years, or other financial strategies could possibly secure funds for GHG reduction in future budgets and not rely solely on a zero-sum approach, reducing current funding commitments to accommodate new.

As described in the recently released, TAM-funded *Marin Countywide Electric Vehicle Acceleration Strategy*, a healthy, sustainable, and equitable transportation system will encourage “biking, micromobility, walking, shared transportation, transit use, and reduced dependence on the automobile” all which will reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs). Reducing VMTs, however, is not enough. Facilitating the transition toward electrifying transportation must also be an integrated part of a transportation system to meet state and local 2030 and 2050 GHG reduction targets and 2045 carbon neutrality goals. Substantially more funding than what is currently available through Measure B’s Element 3.3 is needed.

This is not to diminish the work that TAM is already doing as evidenced by its *EV Charging Station Siting Plan* and its analysis of public parking lot capacity for EV charging and other studies, the matching rebates it provides public agencies to electrify their fleets, and the technical assistance and resources it provides including its *Toolkit for EVs and Charging Infrastructure*.

However, additional funding through Measure AA could better target barriers to widespread EV adoption, map all available agency funding and determine coordinated priority funding targets over time, and support greater coordination among local government, public agencies, and community partners in achieving shared goals.

Additional funding would also be valuable support for actions listed in the *EV Acceleration Strategy* under the themes:

- Conduct Robust Community Outreach and Education
- Accelerate Public Charging Infrastructure
- Increase Municipal Fleet Electrification
- Support and Advocate for Policy and Funding that Accelerates EV Adoption

Performance metrics

MCL applauds the addition of performance metrics for each element and sub-element in Measure B in its recently renewed Expenditure Plan. We encourage TAM to create similar performance standards for Measure AA categories and subcategories as well.

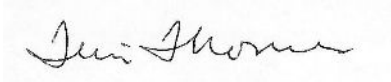
For both Measures, we encourage the inclusion of graphs or charts, such as column charts, which show change over time. Column charts with clustered columns of each year's categories and columns conveying budget vs actual expenditures would be helpful.

MCL's mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin in a changing environment. MCL recently added "in a changing environment" to its mission to acknowledge there are new threats and challenges to Marin's natural assets and that not addressing them would reduce our effectiveness.

We cannot afford delay in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and must dedicate resources to slow climate change. We owe strong commitment and action now to future generations. We hope you will act within your capacity to address these requests.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,



Terri Thomas
President



Robert Miller
Chair, Climate Action
Working Group



Kate Powers
Co-Chair, Land Use
Transportation, and Water