

21st Annual Independent Watchdog Committee Report to the Public FY2021-22



Measure B and Measure BB Sales Tax Activities

The Independent Watchdog Committee (IWC) reports its findings annually to the public to ensure appropriate use of sales tax funds and provides oversight by reviewing Measure B expenditures and Measure BB expenditures and performance measures. The IWC does not opine on other funds the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) manages and/or programs. The 21st annual report reviews expenditures and IWC activities during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022 (FY2021-22) and presents findings.

IWC Activities include ongoing direct local distributions (DLDs), discretionary grant programs, and capital projects monitoring, review of Alameda CTC annual independent audits and DLD recipients' audit and compliance reports, identification of issues with Measure B and Measure BB expenditures, and development of the IWC annual report to the public. The full report is available at AlamedaCTC.org/IWC2023Report.



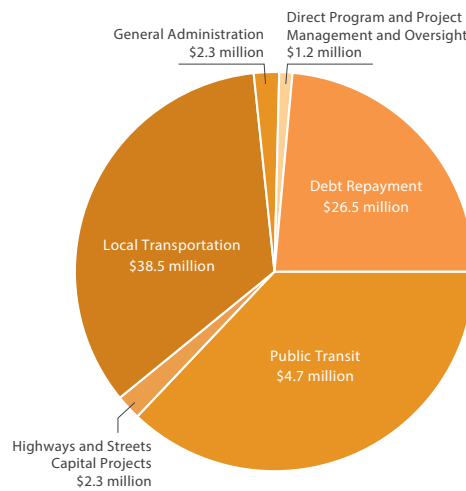
Ed Roberts Campus, Oakland

SUMMARY OF MEASURE B AND MEASURE BB

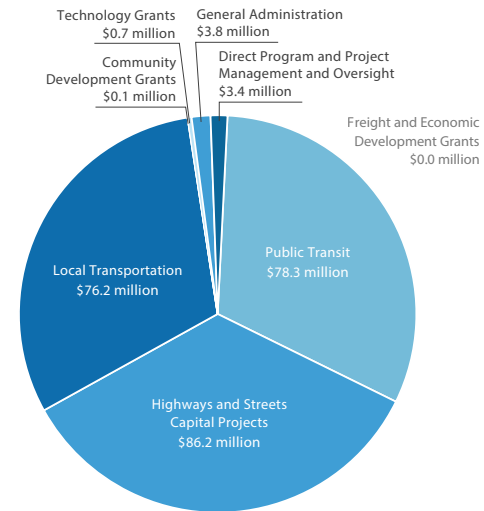
Revenues and Expenditures

Alameda CTC is responsible for administering the Measure B and Measure BB transportation sales tax measures. In FY2021-22, Measure B revenues for Alameda CTC totaled \$144.1 million, and audited expenditures totaled \$112.5 million. Measure BB revenues totaled \$241.8 million, and audited expenditures totaled \$248.5 million in FY2021-22.¹

¹ Measure BB utilized sales tax funds received in prior years to pay for expenditures.



FY2021-22 Measure B Named Capital Project, DLD, and Discretionary Grant Program Expenditures



FY2021-22 Measure BB Named Capital Project, DLD, and Discretionary Grant Program Expenditures

Measure B- and Measure BB-Funded Programs and Projects



International Walk and Roll to School Day, Walters Jr. High School, Fremont

In FY2021-22, Measure B DLD fund recipients reported \$73.8 million in expenditures on programs: \$31.9 million on public transit, \$24.0 million on local streets and roads, \$13.2 million on paratransit and \$4.7 million on bicycle and pedestrian safety. Measure BB DLD fund recipients reported \$79.7 million in expenditures on programs:

\$35.9 million on public transit, \$25.4 million on local streets and roads, \$15.5 million paratransit and \$2.9 million on bicycle and pedestrian. Alameda CTC expended \$2.3 million of Measure B funds and \$117.5 million of Measure BB funds on named capital projects for transportation infrastructure improvements.

Independent Watchdog Committee

Findings and Recommendations FY2021-22

The Independent Watchdog Committee (IWC) continues to be deeply concerned about the Alameda CTC. Last year, we reported that "Given the limited performance measures which have been adopted by the Commission, the IWC finds it difficult to offer an opinion as to the overall effectiveness of the DLD program expenditures." We are still unable to make a determination about the overall effectiveness of the DLD expenditures: yes, the DLD recipients are following the rules, answering our questions, and spending the money appropriately. But without assessing the benefits of these expenditures, we won't know how useful these projects are to our residents and communities. We have instead paid closer attention to and included performance metrics in this report and continued to ask many questions of the DLD recipients. There is still more work to do to ensure that the expenditures are effective.

This Report primarily addresses Fiscal Year 2021-22, which was still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. All transit services were still undergoing significant ridership losses, leading to the so-called "Fiscal Cliff" which is much in current news. But transit agencies need to start planning and movement for recovery and/or changes, and some are being more recalcitrant than others. Bailouts are not the only solution. We also recognize that construction projects languished during pandemic circumstances, but these seem to be recovering after the "Atmospheric River" storms of early 2023. The pothole situation has worsened considerably from recent deluges, but even before recent events, the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), used as the major metric for Local Streets & Roads expenditures, has been on a downward trend.

We appreciate that Alameda CTC staff has requested DLD recipients to report more thoroughly as to how their projects improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and auto users. The soon-to-be-completed Iron Horse Trail Overcrossing on Dublin Boulevard strikes us as a constructive use of sales tax funds for a long-desired Active Transportation project in coordination with other jurisdictions, and the City of Alameda has been exemplary in its transparency and innovation. In contrast, others seem to resist accountability in their documentation. The IWC believes that there should be more regular public reporting and detail as to how – or even whether – "improvements" in the High Injury Network (HIN) are achieving their desired goal. According to Alameda CTC staff, 65% of pedestrian collisions and 59% of bike collisions occur on just 4% of Countywide HIN roads. "Safety First" needs more Safety!

We are encouraged by the Commission's attention to Equity matters under Chair Batters with the wonderful acronym of JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion), which was approved in the past year. But "you can only succeed at what you measure." We look forward to the development of internal and external metrics for monitoring this worthy program. How, for example, will sales-tax recipients (i.e., the County, cities, and transit agencies) be held accountable?

IWC members are also concerned about the delay in multiple named projects that were supposed to be highlights of the 2014 Measure BB ballot measure and its Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP), but have not made expected progress. Some have not even undergone Environmental Review, nearly ten years later – do they still remain desirable, especially under post-pandemic "new normal" mobility conditions? We are still awaiting a follow-up report to the Commission on this issue. Do such projects remain relevant given the urgent impact of emissions from fossil-fuel-powered vehicles on our climate and other environmental, societal and economic realities?

We also note that the Paratransit Advisory and Planning Committee (PAPCO) has expressed concern about the levels of reserves held by some jurisdictions, sometimes as much as a full year or more of funding that is available for services to seniors and people with disabilities. PAPCO has requested a mid-year "check-in" about these spending and service levels, and IWC members will be listening.

The TEPs for both Measure B and Measure BB set a cap on the level of administrative expenditures, basically intended as a surrogate for agency efficiency and effectiveness. Alameda CTC has respected this limitation, but the overall trendline of expenses is upward. The IWC and the Public should monitor this voter-imposed metric.

The IWC is pleased to announce that we have made some significant changes to the format of this Report. We hope that they make our documentation more useful and understandable to local residents who use and pay for the countywide transportation system, and we invite your feedback at IndependentWatchdog@AlamedaCTC.org. We have moved our Findings and Recommendations up front to Page 2 of the Report. We have added some graphs on the last page to show recent trendlines – both pre- and during Pandemic – for key metrics that the IWC monitors. And we have correlated the map on Page 7, and the Tables on the two pages following, to identify the "Named Capital Projects," and their status with dedicated funding from both Measure B and Measure BB.

To its credit, Alameda County was one of the very first "self-help" counties, where residents voted to tax themselves to help pay for transportation improvements they wanted. But the process, and its outcomes, is not very nimble or responsive to change, and other counties have benefitted from the evolution of our learning curve. Development of the next iteration of our local sales tax will need careful scrutiny. We urge the Public to be attentive. The adopted "Performance Measures" for reported Measure BB formula funds are due to be updated by 2026. It is not too early to think about needed improvements.

Finally, the IWC not only reports to the Public, but we are also supposed to represent you. We have multiple vacancies on our Committee as noted on Page 11 of this Report, and we welcome additional thoughtful participation. Please contact IndependentWatchdog@AlamedaCTC.org for information about how to apply to become a member, and anything else in this Report. Thank you for your interest