

# SFMTA Youth Transportation Advisory Board 2021-2022

Program overview, development, implementation,  
and supplemental resources for the SFMTA's Youth  
Transportation Advisory Board.

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August 22, 2022





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## About the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

### Who We Are

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) is the department of the City and County of San Francisco responsible for the management of all ground transportation in the city. The SFMTA is governed by a Board of Directors who are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

### What We Do

The SFMTA oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni) public transit, as well as bicycling, paratransit, parking, traffic, pedestrian safety and infrastructure, and taxis. Today, Muni is the eighth largest provider of transit passenger trips in the nation with a diverse fleet of vehicles – hybrid bus, trolley bus, light rail, historic streetcar, and cable car. Looking to the future, the SFMTA provides long-range forecasts for the agency’s fleets and facilities, public rights-of-way, and reviews expected transportation needs of proposed land-use development with private developers and other partners. Through these various functions, SFMTA actions affect every person who lives, works in, or visits the city.

## About the Report

Establishing a youth board within a city or county department is a unique opportunity to create a mutually beneficial, supportive, and purposeful relationship between a department and the community that it serves. Participating youth take on a meaningful role in defining and addressing the social issues and inequities that affect them and their communities. They also gain work experience and professional development support to help them determine and pursue their next professional and educational steps. Participating staff benefit from access to a wealth of knowledge, experience, and ideas that traditional outreach strategies miss. Staff also learn about the experiences of the families and communities the youth are part of, including communities that traditional outreach pathways have difficulty reaching, such as immigrant populations.

This report details the goals, successes, staff lessons learned, and youth feedback from the creation and implementation of the SFMTA’s first Youth Transportation Advisory Board (YTAB). The report is organized by YTAB’s programmatic elements and sub-elements, as listed in the table of contents. Finally, the report appendix includes the foundational documents for all program elements which, along with the report, can be used as a guide for implementing a youth board at any city or county department.

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**“YTAB was the first place that I felt listened to and like my opinion mattered.”**

*- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort*

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## Program Overview

### Background

The idea of the SFMTA Youth Board originated from San Francisco youth, mainly through the San Francisco Youth Commissioners during an SFMTA budget presentation in March 2020. For the many young people in the San Francisco Bay Area who have limited transportation options, public and active transportation is essential to their mobility, connecting them to educational, social, and economic opportunities and other critical services. Too often, however, their needs go unmet by transportation agencies and services. The vision of a youth-specific advisory board is driven by the recognition that young people’s dependence on our services makes them particularly sensitive to changes in our services, policies, and programs.

SFMTA’s Youth Transportation Advisory Board (YTAB) intends to elevate the lived experiences of young San Franciscans explicitly and intentionally to better inform our policies and practices. Young people’s reliance on the transportation system and experience navigating it make them transportation experts. By amplifying the perspectives of local youth, the SFMTA is investing in the next generation of transit riders, whose experiences can and should shape the development of the transportation system.

The vision for this board was the result of input, feedback, and collaboration with the 2019-20 San Francisco Youth Commissioners, external youth leadership & development experts, and internal agency stakeholders. Our collective vision for the first YTAB cohort and effort to achieve that vision are detailed in this report.

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**“I thought nothing would come from this, but I can’t quantify how thankful I am that we could make this program work”**

*- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort*

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## Benefits

### FOR THE AGENCY

Board member contributions, ranging from their experiences & ideas to specific work products, advanced the SFMTA towards achieving our strategic goals. Dialoguing on a regular basis with youth from throughout the city has illuminated several challenges that the Agency was previously unaware of. Additionally, our youth have created several valuable deliverables for our Agency.

#### Key Benefits:

- Elevate the lived experiences of young people explicitly and intentionally from across the city of San Francisco to better inform SFMTA policies and practices
- Invest in the next generation of transit riders and active transportation users
- Identify the unmet needs of San Francisco’s children and youth through examining the existing services, policies, programs, and budgets of the SFMTA

#### Key Learnings:

- Girls, non-binary, and queer youth experience harassment throughout the transportation system. Existing safety and security measures are inadequate for keeping our youth safe
- Many youths feel like they are discriminated against by other riders and SFMTA operators
- Youth are often passed up by buses that are in-service and not full
- Youth are uninterested in interacting with official Agency social media accounts
- Network change announcements are published on unfamiliar mediums, resulting in many youths struggling to navigate the system

#### Key Deliverables:

- Youth Town Hall Report & Presentation to SFMTA Board of Directors
- Youth Pass-ups Research
- Youth Social Media Pilot Assets
- Youth Social Media Account Proposal & Presentation
- Free Muni for Youth Survey Outreach to Peers

### FOR THE YOUTH

Based on feedback from the youth board members themselves, participation in the YTAB program was valuable for them and their communities.

Survey Question	YTAB Member Rating (from 1-5 with 5 being Strongly Agree)
<b>I did meaningful work with YTAB</b>	4.2
<b>I understood my role and the purpose of the work</b>	3.8
<b>I felt I was able to advocate for my community</b>	4
<b>I felt supported by the coordinators</b>	4.7
<b>I would recommend the program to a friend</b>	4.8

## Values & Goals

### VALUES

#### Equity

Age, race, gender, class, ability, and other forms of identity shape interactions with the transportation system and the city at large. SFMTA's commitment to addressing inequities requires the prioritization of those who have the most need. It also requires that individuals most in need are represented and participate in SFMTA planning processes that aim to identify and address those needs.

#### Empowerment

Participation in any SFMTA Advisory Board or working group should empower participants to be agents of change, both internally and externally to the SFMTA. In asking members of the public to share their lived experiences for the benefit of the Agency, their participation should equip them with the knowledge and resources to better advocate for positive outcomes and opportunities for themselves and their communities.

#### Accountability

Accountability from the Agency includes transparency about constraints and follow-through on outlined actions and goals.

The scope of work and realm of possibility for advisory groups is largely determined by structural or resource constraints. Agency direction on what is and is not possible supports actionable and intentional work that successfully meets stated needs and achieves identified goals.

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**“I think as the inaugural board our biggest accomplishment was purely showing that this board can be done and done well, pandemic or not, which will pave the way for more kids to come in and do things beyond what we have even thought of.”**

*- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort*

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### GOALS

1. **Representative Board** - An inclusive and equitably staffed board that will holistically represent the varied needs of San Francisco youth across identities and experiences.
2. **Better Processes and Outcomes** - The intentional consideration of youth perspectives and recommendations about SFMTA processes, leading to better design and implementation of policies and projects.
3. **Purposeful Youth-led Work** - Youth lead the advisory board, contribute to the definition of their work, and feel their ideas, recommendations, and opinions are valued and seriously considered.
4. **Professional and Leadership Development** - Board members gain confidence, knowledge, and skills to advocate for themselves and their communities and to prepare them for the next steps in their education or careers.

## Scope of Work

YTAB’s scope of work derives from the program’s three functions: advisory board, outreach mechanism, and professional development program.

1. Identify the unmet needs of San Francisco’s children and youth through examining the existing services, policies, programs, and budgets of the SFMTA.
2. Design and conduct outreach to youth and their communities to learn from underrepresented groups and begin addressing gaps in dialogue.
3. Develop and deliver recommendations to staff and the Director of Transportation to support or improve SFMTA services.
4. Partner with SFMTA staff to add a youth perspective to and generally support their work.
5. Report on at least a biannual basis to the SFMTA Board of Directors & Director of Transportation on the activities, goals, and accomplishments of YTAB. Give public comment in between biannual reports if needed.



*YTAB Board Members talk with Youth Town Hall Attendees*

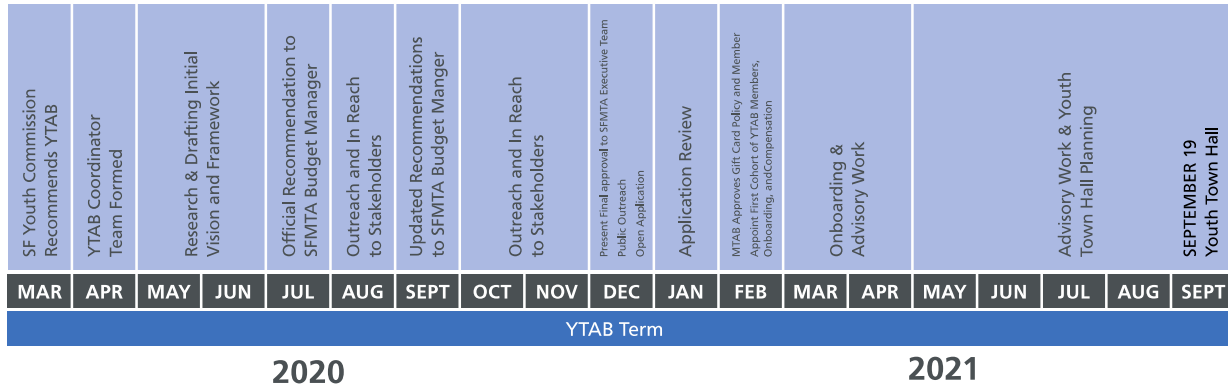


*YTAB Board Members pose with a YTAB Coordinator after a successful Youth Town Hall*



# Program Development & Structure

## Development Timeline



## Board Structure

### Youth Board

Creating a youth-centered space is necessary for empowering youth to share their input and experiences. Youth leadership & development experts advised the SFMTA team against adding youth seats to an existing advisory body because youth among a group of adults will likely feel uncomfortable sharing their perspectives. Additionally, a few youth seats are insufficient for representing the diversity of youth experiences.

### Eligibility

Members must be San Francisco residents and between the ages of 13 and 18 years at the time of appointment. Members must have experience with children and youth programs or organizations, be involved with school or community activities, or otherwise demonstrate an understanding of youth experiences and needs.

### Composition

As a group, the members must represent the diversity of ethnicity, race, gender, class, ability, housing status, sexual orientation, and geography of the youth of San Francisco. The Board shall consist of one member from each San Francisco Supervisorial District, along with four to six at-large members from underrepresented communities to ensure equitable representation. Flexibility in the number of at-large members enables the adjustment of YTAB’s board size based on the applicant pool and available resources.



## Term

Members will serve a 13-month term, with the option to reapply for two total terms. A 13-month term, with a new board appointed every 12 months, creates one month of overlap between incoming and outgoing board members. This month provides a knowledge transfer period and gives outgoing members a leadership opportunity to support onboarding new members. A two-term limit creates space for new voices to participate in and contribute to YTAB.

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**“Everyone has different experience – every one of us joined for different reasons – we were able to come to better decisions because we are pulling from more knowledge”**

- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort

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## Board Member Feedback

*Shift the YTAB term from February – March to August – September to better align with the academic year. The Coordinators are implementing this feedback for year two. Shifting the year 2 term requires forgoing the desired one-month overlap between outgoing year 1 and incoming year 2 members.*

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## Meetings

The board meets twice per month for two hours per meeting. The meetings are open to the public due to Brown Act requirements. However, our board does not use Roberts Rules of Order as doing so makes the meeting space less accessible and youth friendly. All our first cohort’s meetings were held virtually due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## Coordinator Lessons Learned

*Online meetings hinder group bonding and discussion*

*Coordinators should have created more opportunities for small group discussions and collaboration*

*Coordinators should have explored innovative tools and methods for making online meetings interactive and engaging*

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## Board Member Feedback

*“Zoom fatigue is real!”*

*“Meetings being not in person is hard; they are optimized & organized but aren’t super interactive.”*

*“I’d like more opportunities for learning through discussion and other people’s opinions and viewpoints. Maybe more breakout rooms.”*

*Online meetings are easier for youth to fit into their busy schedules*

*Even after the pandemic, youth would be open to a hybrid schedule including in-person and online meetings*

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## Compensation

Compensating members is necessary to reduce barriers to participation and to create a representative board. SFMTA Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POETS) members shared that the barriers to participation in Agency working groups are reflected in the homogeneity of members and their experiences. Board members receive a \$25 generic cash value gift card for each meeting they attend.

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**“I one hundred percent feel more prepared for college and the job market.”**

*- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort*

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The City & County of San Francisco “restricts the purchase of gift cards to purposes defined by specific departmental programs”<sup>i</sup>. The Coordinator team overcame this challenge by securing SFMTA Board of Directors approval for use and purchase of gift cards to “compensate various forms of public outreach and engagement”. The first application of this new policy was to compensate YTAB members.

## Outreach

An intentional outreach process is key to achieving our goal of a representative board. Our outreach process grew from three key understandings: age, race, gender, class, ability, and other forms of identity shape interactions with the transportation system and the city at large; addressing inequities requires the representation and prioritization of those who have the most need; those with the most need must be meaningfully included in the processes that aim to identify and address those needs.

From these key understandings, the Coordinators aligned on the paired outreach approaches of reaching diverse youth where they are and then sharing clear and compelling information about the opportunity to join YTAB. We ran a general comprehensive outreach strategy that included social media posts, a press release and local media coverage, a blog post and website, and communications from local elected officials. However, connecting with a representative population of youth required new pathways and partnerships.

We worked with local public and private schools as well as community-based organizations (CBOs) to advertise and champion the program. School partnerships included connecting with SFUSD staff to share the YTAB application with parents and students. We reached out directly to staff from over 25 CBOs who work with youth, especially in underserved communities, to learn from their youth outreach experiences and utilize their networks to share the YTAB opportunity with SF youth. Our outreach approach was successful, and we received 170 applicants from diverse backgrounds.

## Coordinator Lessons Learned

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*Proactively building relationships with CBOs well in advance of launching outreach was key to our process’s success.*

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## Application Process

### Development

Accessible application and equitable selection processes were also necessary to achieving our goal of a representative board. The Coordinators were advised by youth programming experts to keep the application short and simple. The YTAB staff drafted the application questions which included demographic questions and three short essay questions based on the YTAB goals and values. The application content was refined and finalized with feedback from the SFMTA Intern Committee, SFMTA Equity Leads, and staff from the Director’s office.

YTAB staff collected and screened all applications with names redacted but all demographic information visible. The SFMTA’s Equity Leads advised the Coordinators to take demographic information into consideration while scoring applicants. The scoring rubric was developed with the same staff who reviewed the application questions and was designed to be equitable and productive (e.g. No points deducted for spelling errors, which may result from the applicant speaking English as a second language).



*YTAB Board Members present during the Youth Town Hall*

### Review

The application review process took place in six steps:

1. Coordinators reviewed and scored each application.
2. Coordinators identified the top 2-3 scoring applicants in each Supervisor District, including ties, and identified other high-scoring applicants from underrepresented communities.

3. The Coordinators reviewed these applications as a group and ranked them in order of recommendation for SFMTA equity leadership. This process resulted in a tiered list of recommended candidates that included the Coordinators’ top picks and potential alternates or additions.
4. Coordinators evaluated the demographics of each tier to identify whether any key underserved communities were underrepresented. Staff also compared demographics of top scorers to demographics of the applicant pool and SF youth overall to identify any potential disparities and ensure the Board adequately represents San Francisco communities.
5. Coordinators then shared the list of recommended candidates and alternative finalists for review by Agency Equity Leads, Director’s Office Staff, and the Executive Team Sponsor.
6. The final 16 candidates also participated in small group discussions with three Executive Team members to confirm their interest and suitability for YTAB.
7. All final 16 candidates were approved and appointed to the board. Additionally, including Executive Team members in the process was very helpful for securing leadership buy-in and investment in the program. We have continuously drawn on our outreach pool for advertising YTAB events and other youth opportunities with the SFMTA, our partner non-profits, and other City Agencies.

## Board Policies

The only official policies in place for YTAB’s first year are documented in the board’s Charter. The Coordinators drew on charters and meeting policies from the SF Youth Commission and several existing SFMTA working groups and commissions. The final YTAB Charter was presented to the board members for their review and approval during onboarding. Additionally, during onboarding, members discussed and aligned on community agreements that were incorporated into the charter. The final charter was maintained as a working charter that could be amended throughout the term if needed.

## Coordinator Lessons Learned

*Plan and budget for resources required to support youth if a policy is violated.*

## Board Budget

Item	Amount
<b>Gift Cards</b>	\$11,050 (Regular YTAB Meetings)
	\$4,250 (Additional Meetings)
<b>YTAB Public Event</b>	\$1,500
<b>Coordinator Development Workshop</b>	\$500
<b>Original Budget Total</b>	\$17,300
<b>Processing Fees for Gift Cards</b>	\$7,700
<b>Final Budget Total</b>	\$25,000

After Board Members emphasized the importance and interest in hosting a youth-centered outreach event, YTAB Coordinators put together a proposal and received additional budget approval by the Acting Chief Financial Officer, for up to \$20,000 to implement a Youth Town Hall.

### **Coordinator Lessons Learned**

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*The original YTAB budget included funding to compensate board members for approximately ten meetings in addition to the regular bimonthly meetings. The purpose of this funding was to compensate members for work conducted outside of regular meetings. However, board members were excited and willing to conduct more out-of-meeting work than was initially budgeted for and compensation for full board meetings fell short of accounting for all the additional work.*

*Going forward, Coordinators recommend compensating board members with a larger monthly stipend.*

*Plan and budget for purchasing board member merchandise which requires approved merchandise vendors. Our board members really wanted YTAB-specific swag (t-shirts, hoodies, etc.).*

*Budget for food for any in-person meetings and events*

*Processing fees makes purchasing gift cards relatively inefficient. Increased efficiency would be achieved by placing one gift card order for all agency needs (increasing scale) or identifying an alternative payment pathway.*

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### **Board Member Feedback**

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*Difficult to plan for spending the gift cards before fees are applied or before the gift cards expire.*

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## Staff Support Structure

### **YTAB Staff**

After the SF Youth Commission shared their recommendation for the creation of a SFMTA Youth Board, a group of nine staff members from across the Agency came together to make the commission's idea a reality. This group conducted the foundational research and brainstorming that resulted in the draft plan presented to SFMTA leadership in July 2020.

The first cohort was consistently managed by four, and later six, staff who took the title of YTAB Coordinators. While each brought important professional skills (communications, public outreach, budgeting, racial equity policy creation, transportation planning) and diverse perspectives, only one Coordinator, a former teacher, had youth leadership and development experience. Additionally, each staff member could only dedicate a portion of their time to creating and running YTAB as they all had other full-time responsibilities.

### Coordinator Lessons Learned

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*Hiring or appointing adult staff with youth leadership and development training is key to achieving a truly empowering, youth-centered, and youth-led program.*

*Managing a level of programming and events comparable to YTAB's first year requires allocating at least one Full-Time-Employee (FTE) to the youth board. An important caveat is that collaboration among the six part-time Coordinators was indispensable to making YTAB's first year a success.*

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### Division Liaison

The Division Liaison role was envisioned to link YTAB to every part of the agency, carving out communication pathways between our board members and every organizational unit beginning at the division level. Empowering YTAB members to develop actionable and effective recommendations requires support & training from staff across the Agency. Further, effective implementation of YTAB's recommendations relies on division ownership. Additionally, working with staff from across the agency exposes members to new fields and careers and supports their professional development.

Liaison responsibilities include sharing relevant plans, projects, and service changes with coordinators for inclusion on board meeting agendas, coordinating the staff response to requests from board members, and reporting whether board recommendations were implemented. The anticipated time commitment was 2 hours per week at most, but the actual workload for most liaisons was zero hours most weeks. Liaisons were not required to attend most board meetings and liaison work was expected to take place during business hours.

The SFMTA Executive Team approved the Coordinator recommendation that each division have someone dedicate 0.1 FTE to supporting YTAB. The YTAB Coordinators released an Agency-wide call for division liaisons and got several volunteers but not a liaison for each division. Before their roles were finalized, liaisons secured their managers approval to include this role in their work plan.

### Coordinator Lessons Learned

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*For those who did sign up, it was helpful to have designated points of contact throughout the agency even though we didn't have liaisons for every division or team*

*The Liaison role was essential to filling agendas for the first 6 months of the program. However, once awareness of YTAB's existence and potential increased throughout the Agency, requests to present to or work with the board exceeded the board meeting and member capacity.*

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## Mentors

Beginning in September 2021, YTAB members had the opportunity to participate in an optional mentorship program. The program paired SFMTA staff with board members based on their interests, experiences, and professional development goals. The program aimed to give YTAB members every opportunity to explore their transportation and career interests and to demystify our large agency. Parents had to sign permission forms for their children to participate in the program and meet with staff, virtually or in person, one-on-one outside of the regular meeting times. 11 members participated in the program and were matched with SFMTA staff. We will note that we struggled to match members with direct service staff when requested, highlighting a place for growth with future boards.

Interested staff submitted a short application outlining their experience working with youth & their role within the Agency. Staff were asked to commit to one meeting with their board member per quarter over the course of the year-long term, totaling a minimum of 3 meetings. Coordinators used the staff applications, YTAB applications, and member check-in feedback to pair mentors and mentees. The program was largely self-sustained, designed to cultivate mentor-mentee relationships independent of board member relationships with the Coordinators.



*Tired & happy YTAB Coordinators outside the Youth Town Hall*

## Coordinator Lessons Learned

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### *Program structure*

*Coordinate program kickoff meeting including introductions and ice breakers to facilitate mentor – mentee connections.*

*Provide discussion topics direct board members to prepare questions for mentor – mentee meetings. To help mentors who sought clearer understanding of who was responsible for taking ownership over the mentor - mentee experience.*

*Mentor – mentee meeting logistics*

*Schedules of mentees necessitated meetings outside of standard work hours.*

*Mentors needed to be proactive and consistent in reaching out to their mentees.*

*Mentors wanted to supplement meeting with their mentees with other forms of connecting, such as email updates.*

### *Program integration*

*Provide virtual community space or forum, for coordinator-to-mentor communication, mentor-to-mentor conversation, and resource sharing*

*Mentors expressed willingness and desire to attend at least one YTAB meeting per quarter) to stay updated on what their mentee is working on within the expanse of Board projects*

*Regular communication from program coordinators about what YTAB as a whole is doing.*

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## Board Member Feedback

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*I love my mentor as I have someone who's invested in my feelings towards any topic whether or not related to YTAB. My mentor is a wonderful and genuine person, and she helped me so much on my college apps. Can't be anymore grateful enough to have been connected with someone I can relate to and chat with.*

*I liked the ability to get a novel perspective on the agency and how it works, and consequently how to be effective. I got a lot of great feedback on my work as well as possible avenues to explore and contacts to reach out to and history to learn. I also got to learn about a lot of cool projects that my mentor did and what it would be like to be a transit planner.*

*I liked how much of learning experience it was; it was very informative and a great support system.*

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## YTAB’s Permanent Home

YTAB was housed in the Budget, Financial Planning & Analysis (BFPA) subdivision of the Finance and Information Technology Division during its inaugural year. BFPA was YTAB’s initial home because the original Executive Sponsor was the BFPA manager and YTAB’s budget came from BFPA’s budget.

Next year, and for the foreseeable future, ownership of YTAB will shift to the Agency’s Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB). The Coordinators recommended OREB for YTAB’s long-term home because it has the scope and structure to realize the vision of YTAB as a space to learn about transportation planning and government administration, identify means of achieving more equitable outcomes, and support youth professional and leadership development.

OREB’s goals and scope of work align productively with those of YTAB and have the potential to inform, support, and inspire each other; youth voices are key to defining intersectional needs, harms, and inequities in SFMTA services. Organizationally, OREB is structured to solidify and facilitate YTAB workstreams. The office reports directly to the Director of Transportation and consists of four sections: Equitable Communications, Equitable Services & Systems, Policy, Process & Practice Improvement, and Equitable Workforce & Workplace. These sections map perfectly onto the YTAB scope and ensures members will have access to staff within OREB and their expertise.

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**“I learned about public health issues that I wasn’t aware about. If I get into college & can pursue nursing, I’ll take those parts of community & public health with me into my studies**

- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort

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YTAB Board Members present their recommendations to the SFMTA Board of Directors

## Program Implementation

### Onboarding

#### What We Did

Board member onboarding took place in two, three-hour sessions the weekend prior to the first official board meeting. The first day of onboarding was designed to situate the board, its members, and their roles within the context of San Francisco City Government and the SFMTA. The second day of onboarding was designed to introduce the board members to the tools and pathways available for them to conduct their advisory and advocacy work.

#### Onboarding Day 1 Goals

- Gain understanding of YTAB vision, roles, and responsibilities
- Gain understanding of the SFMTA's position within SF City Government
- Gain understanding of the SFMTA's work and the constraints that shape it
- Gain understanding of SFMTA budget

#### Onboarding Day 2 Goals

- Gain understanding of the SFMTA's outreach and engagement approaches and tools
- Gain understanding of the SFMTA's internal and external equity work
- Gain understanding of YTAB advocacy tools and pathways

#### Coordinator Lessons Learned

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*Overall, there were too many presentations and not enough team building and experience-sharing. The board members received an overwhelming amount of information and were not given opportunities to discuss what they were learning in small groups. The focus of onboarding should've been demonstrating and affirming that the board members already have all the information they need to be qualified board members because they are experts of their own experience.*

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## Board Member Feedback

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*"I would have liked to learn more about how SFMTA has done outreach to youth previously, help members understand why youth concerns may not have been heard in the past, what tools can we reuse versus reinventing."*

*"I'm glad I was exposed to financial topics before heading into college & getting ready for future careers."*

*"I wish we talked more about equity – glad that the SFMTA has a racial equity action plan"*

*"Budget is a little difficult to comprehend and boring"*

*"Onboarding was a bit overwhelming with a lot of information. Maybe plan some more time to process every now and then"*

*"I thought that for a first run through of an onboarding that was excellent. better than the other Youth Program onboardings I've been through. loved it"*

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## Curriculum

### What We Did

The YTAB curriculum, broadly defined, is how Coordinators prioritize our time with the Board Members. The first YTAB term was an exercise in trying to strike the right balance between the group's possible functions. Each function and its workstreams requires different staff support and yields unique benefits to board members and to the Agency. When the Coordinators were dreaming up the curriculum, we aligned on the following general plan:

- Phase 1: First third of the term dedicated to advisory work to continue onboarding the board members and to give them time to gain ownership of their roles
- Phase 2: Second third of the term dedicated to leading, planning, and implementing a youth-led and youth-focused event
- Phase 3: Final third of the term dedicated to implementing YTAB recommendations and/or partnering with SFMTA staff on agency projects and initiatives

At the start of the YTAB term, curriculum planning centered on preparing for our twice monthly meetings. Meeting planning consisted of inviting SFMTA staff to present their projects and outreach plans to YTAB for feedback and to use YTAB as a youth focus group. At the beginning of year 1, the Coordinators shared a Microsoft form advertising YTAB's advisory and outreach functions and soliciting work proposals. The form only received four responses but staff requests to present their work at YTAB meetings steadily rose and were communicated through emailing the Coordinators. By six months into the program, Coordinators no longer had to reach out to staff to fill agendas; staff and external non-profit partners were consistently requesting time on YTAB agendas. Whenever possible, Coordinators tailored meeting presentations to Board Member interests as reported in feedback forms and check-ins.

The youth leadership & development experts the Coordinators consulted advised that the first few years of the program would likely be adult-led as we refined the board's scope and processes. For our first year, the Coordinators set meeting agendas, invited presenters, and facilitated discussions. However,

from the beginning, our goal was and is to build staff and program capacity to support youth-led meetings where board members prepare meeting materials and facilitate meetings.

### Board Member Feedback

*Towards the end of the program's first quarter, board members shared the feedback that they wanted to go beyond their advisory roles by conducting youth-specific outreach to their peers and partnering with SFMTA staff on their projects. The Coordinators acted on this feedback by incorporating the Youth Town Hall and Project subcommittees and realizing phases 2 and 3 of the curriculum. Throughout the rest of the program (quarters 2-4), the bimonthly all board meeting agendas included not only regular staff presentations and advisory work, but time carved out for the board members to work in small groups amongst themselves or with staff on subcommittee deliverables.*

*In the program's final quarter, board members expressed the desire to create and take on leadership roles such as setting meeting agendas. The Coordinators plan to include Year 1 alum in scoping roles board members should own during Year 2 planning.*

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**“One benefit was that we were treated like actual workers during our YTAB experience”**

- YTAB member, 2021-2022 cohort

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Feedback Poll Question	Responses “Agreeing” or “Strongly Agreeing”
Regular Board Meetings were a good use of member time and resources	90%
Regular Board Meetings were engaging for members	70%
Regular Board Meetings were aligned with member interests and goals	90%

## Youth Town Hall

### Town Hall Purpose

During the first quarter of the program, in April 2021, the Coordinators began shifting curriculum focus to planning a Youth Town Hall in response to member requests for project work and direct youth engagement. The benefits of the event include:

- Creating accessible materials that demystify the SFMTA budget
- Demonstrating the members' expertise in the SFMTA, the services we provide, and how we provide them
- Defining specific, unmet youth needs that YTAB is uniquely suited to identify and work on addressing
- Demonstrating our board members' ability to implement their own project and preparedness to partner with SFMTA staff during the latter half of the program
- Advancing YTAB's goals by fostering relationships between YTAB and San Francisco youth

### Town Hall Vision

YTAB members plan and lead a town hall for their peers and organizations that serve San Francisco youth and families to take place in Fall 2021. The town hall will include presentations on the SFMTA budget and budget process, followed by a discussion of current unmet youth transportation needs. Following the event, YTAB members will publish a report including: an overview of the SFMTA budget elements and process, their key takeaways, and next steps. The report will be presented to the SFMTA Board during YTAB's mid-year report.

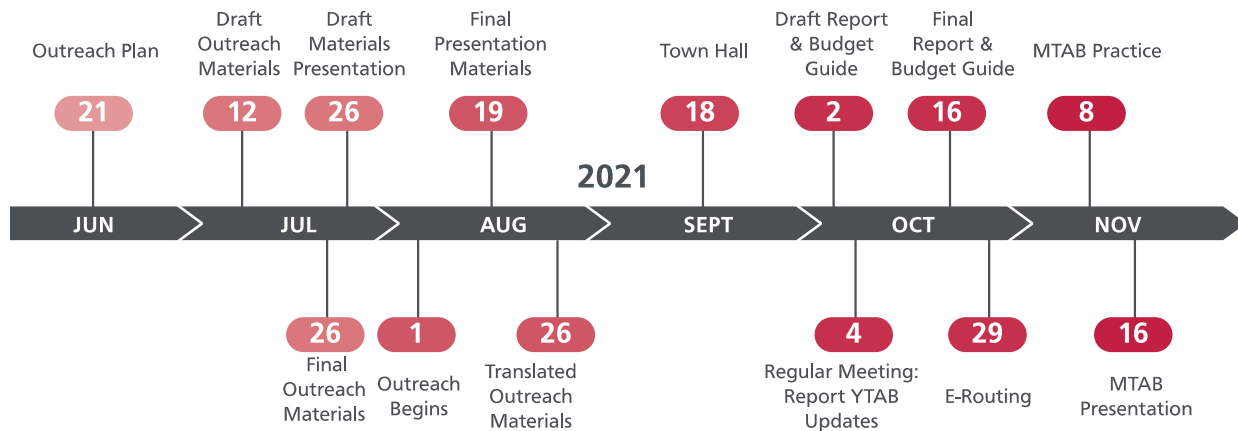
### Town Hall Subcommittees

- Budget Guide
  - Design accessible budget guide
  - Simplify budget process concepts and language
  - Design illustrations to explain key concepts
  - Implement youth art competition
- Outreach
  - Create and implement outreach and engagement plan
  - Design promotional materials including social media assets
  - Contact, correspond, and follow-up with SF youth and youth-serving organizations
- Town Hall Content
  - Design event materials and exercises
  - Plan any staff presentations
  - Facilitate event
  - Define and delegate support roles to YTAB members
- Town Hall Report
  - Write and present summary report
  - Identify pathways for including full board in defining key takeaways and recommendations
  - Design materials
  - Present to SFMTA leadership and MTAB

### Town Hall Development

In February 2021, the San Francisco Youth Commission (SFYC) held a Youth Budget Town Hall and published a summary report. This event inspired the Coordinators to pitch hosting a similar event to our board members. The board members approved the proposal and then self-selected into one of the four subcommittees. Two Coordinators were assigned to each oversee each subcommittee. In addition to working within their subcommittees during portions of the regular board meetings, each subcommittee and its Coordinators also met several times outside of regular meetings. This out-of-meeting work was compensated as a part of the Additional Meetings budget (~10 meetings per Board Member). Additional budget approval was given by Acting Chief Financial Officer, Jonathan Rewers, for up to \$20,000 to implement the Youth Town Hall.

#### Townhall Timeline



### Youth Town Hall Event and Report Outcomes

The Youth Town Hall, the Agency’s first youth-led and youth-centered outreach event, was a success! Due to the efforts of our outreach subcommittee, 16 individuals, mostly youth, attended the event in-person and 17 people joined the zoom call in addition to over 100 people who tuned into one of the live streams. YTAB’s presentation to the SFMTA Board was greatly appreciated and received meaningful engagement from the SFMTA Board, the public, and SFMTA staff.

## Coordinator Lessons Learned

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*The volume and scale of event planning decisions (e.g., location, catering) that the youth had to consider made their work overwhelming at times. Going forward, youth input should be prioritized in event planning, but Coordinators should be responsible for event planning.*

*Given Covid restrictions, we had very limited event location & time options. However, it was not ideal for youth to have to go out of their way to participate, whether in person or virtually. Ideally events like this in the future will be held in schools, at other youth focused locations, and/or as part of other popular youth events.*

*The event should have had a greater focus on youth experiences and needs rather than the SFMTA budget. The town hall's focus on a breakdown of our budget did not generate priority and experience sharing or community building*

*YTAB members needed more guidance about the subcommittee scopes and expectations. Coordinators provided detailed scopes and expectations weeks prior to Project subcommittee sign-ups.*

*Staff should prepare to provide lots of additional support the first time YTAB members work in small groups. Coordinator support was required to ensure subcommittee members were communicating with each other and meeting outside of regular board meetings to work on their deliverables. Unforeseen coordinator responsibilities included weekly meetings with each subcommittee to support their scope and timeline development and deliverable completion. This additional work was somewhat spaced out throughout the town hall deliverable deadlines.*

*Subcommittees were a lot of additional work for the board members. The expectations and amount of work should be communicated well in advance so board members can effectively plan their schedules and take stock of their current and future capacity. If subcommittees are mandatory in our next term, we will do a far better job communicating the responsibility and time requirements during application outreach.*

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<b>Town Hall Feedback Poll Question</b>	<b>Average response on a scale of 1-5</b>
<b>Working on the Youth Town Hall was meaningful</b>	4
<b>Working on a smaller team was useful</b>	3.8
<b>I understood my role and the purpose of my work</b>	4.6
<b>I would be interested in planning and implementing another Town Hall</b>	3.7
<b>Town Hall content was interesting and engaging to attendees</b>	3.9
<b>Town Hall Planning and Implementation were relevant to my interests and goals</b>	4
<b>I felt supported by the coordinators</b>	4.6

## Board Member Feedback

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*"I'd like more open discussion about the problems youth actually talk about (Free Muni for all, lack of safety/security, youth don't seem to feel heard"*

*"We can also do booths at events, or schools to spread the word of YTAB, SFMTA, and any feedback we want from youth to the SFMTA"*

*"[budget guide subcommittee] only had 2 people which isn't enough people given how busy we both are"*

*"Outreach tools available to us were limited. I felt like if we had our own social media it would be more effective."*

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## Project Subcommittees

### Purpose

After the Youth Town Hall, the Coordinators began scoping pathways for board members to conduct Agency work, further their personal interests, and advance YTAB's goals and Town Hall Recommendations. The result was the Project subcommittee system that launched in the final quarter of the program. While two of the subcommittees-Tenderloin and Visitacion Valley - incorporated board members into existing work streams, two of the subcommittees- Research and Communications- created new work streams based on Town Hall Report findings and recommendations. Benefits of subcommittee work include:

- Supporting board member professional development
- Addressing youth specific needs
- Advancing YTAB's goals by improving SFMTA project deliverables and outreach through youth input and execution

### Subcommittee Workstream Identification

Coordinators reached out to and secured the partnership of staff that owned work or processes that members previously expressed interest in. Coordinators met with staff leads to align on the subcommittee scope as well as staff, Coordinator, and member expectations. Following alignment, staff leads attended a YTAB meeting to present their subcommittee scopes to the full board prior to opening subcommittee applications.



## Assignment Process

Unlike Town Hall Subcommittees, board members could opt out of joining a subcommittee and choose to only fulfill their regular advisory duties. Those who wanted to participate had to complete a short subcommittee application. The application asked members to rank subcommittees and write one paragraph explaining their interest in each of their top two choices. The purpose of the application was to support subcommittee assignments and to ensure youth were committed to the additional work they were signing up for.

## Implementation

Staff leads were responsible for defining and managing the workstream and Coordinators were responsible for providing logistical support. Coordinators encouraged board members to communicate directly with and build their own working relationships with SFMTA staff.

## Scopes

1. Youth Research Subcommittee
  - a. Conduct research into question or issue identified by YTAB
  - b. Provide original, youth-focused data that supports broader YTAB goals
  - c. Present research findings to full YTAB board and relevant staff
2. Communications Subcommittee
  - a. Improve youth outreach through existing or additional channels
  - b. Increase SFMTA youth engagement
  - c. Build public YTAB recognition
  - d. Support Agency-wide, as opposed to a specific planning project, outreach
3. Planning Subcommittee: Tenderloin
  - a. Support SFMTA staff in planning and implementing transportation plans in Tenderloin neighborhood
  - b. Support project outreach to impacted neighborhoods and communities
  - c. Support project plan creation, review, and evaluation
4. Planning Subcommittee: Visitacion Valley
  - a. Support SFMTA staff in planning and implementing transportation plans in Visitacion Valley neighborhood
  - b. Support project outreach to impacted neighborhoods and communities
  - c. Support project plan creation, review, and evaluation

**Coordinator Lessons Learned**

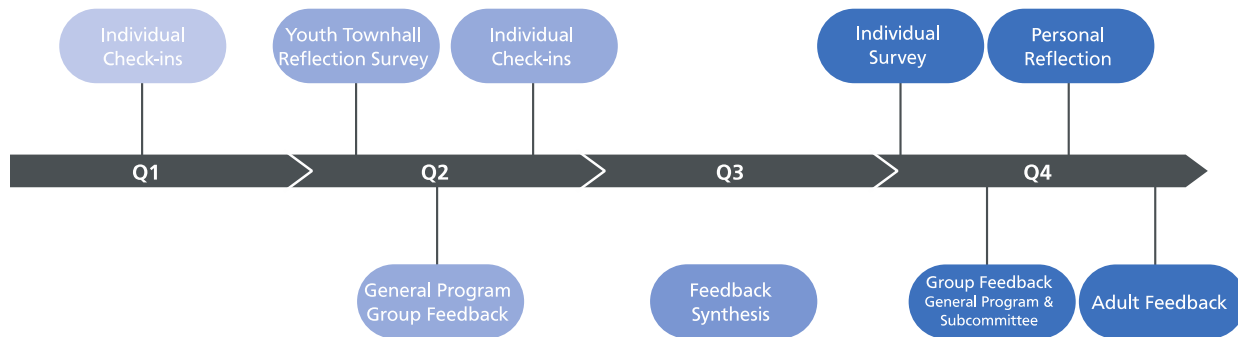
*Having an initial subcommittee task delegated by the Coordinators and completed by the board members was helpful in establishing communication among subcommittee members prior to passing them off to staff. The initial task was each subcommittee had two weeks to meet independently, review/edit subcommittee agreements and align on January meeting times & dates when all subcommittee members were available.*

**Board Member Feedback**

Feedback Poll Question	Responses "Agreeing" or "Strongly Agreeing"
Project Subcommittees were engaging for members	80%
Project Subcommittees were aligned with member interests and goals	80%
Project Subcommittees were a good use of member time and resources	80%

**Feedback Collection Mechanisms**

Feedback Timeline



The ways that the Coordinators collected feedback from Board Members evolved over the course of the program. What began as highly structured, individual quarterly check-ins grew into a four-part dialogue for the end of their term that was co-created with Board Members. This shift reflected the Coordinators’ commitment to the iterative & collaborative development of YTAB.

**Quarter 1**

The Quarter 1 feedback mechanism was Individual Board Member check-ins that were solely developed and facilitated by the Coordinators. These thirty-minute conversations focused on two primary sections (Experience Thus Far & Interests/Goals Moving Forward). These conversations were also used to gauge member interest in participating in a Mentorship Program.

## Quarter 2

The Quarter 2 feedback mechanisms began with a survey & special, out-of-meeting group reflection after the completion of the Youth Town Hall. Following this was a general group feedback session and individual check-ins. The inclusion of the group feedback session was inspired by informal group conversations about the Youth Town Hall. All these efforts remained solely directed & developed by the Coordinators.

The intention behind the group feedback session was that some themes would be more generative if discussed amongst Board Members, rather than collected separately. The thirty-minute individual conversations focused on four sections (Community, Personal, Professional, & Moving Forward). The group feedback session was held during Regular YTAB Meeting time and focused on four themes (Meeting Logistics, YTAB Structure, Skills & Modules, and Program Curriculum).

## Quarter 3

During Quarter 3, the Coordinator team focused on synthesizing all the feedback collected, aligning on Coordinator team capacity, documenting Coordinator feedback responses, and reporting to Board Members. The Coordinator feedback response synthesis was broken into three sections (Structure, Logistics, & Curriculum) with both actions & ideas documented (actions = changes the Coordinators were committed to implementing & ideas = changes that are interesting and cannot be implemented at this time). Significantly, three Board Members referenced the Coordinator's response to advance their own recommendation for a YTAB-run social media account.

## Quarter 4

The Quarter 4 feedback mechanisms were the first to be co-created with Board Members. The feedback types included:

- Individual Survey – mostly quantitative
- Group feedback – mostly qualitative
- General Program Reflection
- Project Subcommittee Reflection
- Personal Reflection – narrative
- Adult Feedback types
  - Mentor Survey / Office Hour

The Coordinator team drafted an initial set of questions for the survey & personal reflection before reviewing & changing them with the Board. Members added an additional question to the personal reflection & significantly edited the survey questions about the mentor program to reflect the varied experiences of Board members, moving from a quantitative to a qualitative set of questions. Coordinators chose to keep the same set of questions from the Youth Town Hall Subcommittee Group Reflection in the hopes of being able to compare the members' different subcommittee experiences.



Board members most significantly co-created the themes, questions & context for the General Program Reflection across a series of meetings with the Coordinators. Board Members identified this type of work as extremely gratifying.

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<sup>i</sup> [https://sfgov.org/oca/sites/default/files/Gift%20Card%20Policies%20and%20Guidelines\\_0.pdf](https://sfgov.org/oca/sites/default/files/Gift%20Card%20Policies%20and%20Guidelines_0.pdf)