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## *Memorandum*

TO: Minority Citizens Advisory Committee –  
Transportation 2035 Equity Analysis Subcommittee

DATE: April 25, 2008

FR: Jennifer Yeamans

W.I. 1114

RE: Transportation 2035 Equity Analysis: Staff Recommendation

At your April 15 meeting, subcommittee members highlighted two areas for follow-up discussion regarding the proposed approach to the Transportation 2035 Equity Analysis: (1) additional information from staff on how the analysis of base-year/existing conditions in communities of concern can be improved; and (2) more detailed explanation of the four proposed model-derived indicators. Taking into account feedback received so far from subcommittee members and other stakeholders on the Equity Analysis development, this memo identifies two options to address base-year conditions, provides some discussion of the advantages and drawbacks of each, and presents staff's recommendation for the subcommittee's consideration and approval. Staff will provide additional materials and describe each option in greater detail at your May 1 meeting.

### **Option 1: Analyze base-year data in the context of RTP forecast alternatives**

This option attempts to create an “apples to apples” comparison of base-year conditions and forecast-year alternatives in the context of the RTP. In order to do this, such an analysis must rely strictly on variables that can be forecast for the future year (i.e., 2035). These variables are quite limited in number, thus limiting the scope of how equity can be considered for such an analysis. Nevertheless, it is possible to explore potential analyses of equity within these variables. Staff will provide examples of such analysis at your May 1 meeting.

#### Advantage:

- Consistent set of variables between base-year and forecast-year alternatives makes it possible to identify any current disparities (albeit with only a limited set of factors) and determine whether any such disparities are addressed under the RTP alternatives.

#### Disadvantages:

- Limited set of variables available.
- Does not assess base-year conditions as directly or robustly as other potential data and tools available (such as GIS mapping analysis using the Regional Transit Database and other resources).
- Doesn't readily inform policy or program development, since the underlying causes of disparities are not revealed in the process.

## **Option 2: Separate development of a more detailed shorter-term analysis from the RTP Equity Analysis process and pursue each separately**

This option recognizes that much of the data and methods available to assess equity result in “apples to oranges” comparisons between short-range and long-range planning horizons. For example, you have heard at past meetings how MTC’s travel forecasting model (used to forecast over a long-range planning horizon) is not directly compatible with other shorter-term planning tools available such as the Regional Transit Database and GIS-based mapping of existing assets and resources.

As feasible, staff would pursue two separate assessments for two separate purposes, one for long-term planning analysis (the RTP Equity Analysis) and one for short-term analysis (and separate from the RTP process and schedule). The short-term assessment could create a “snapshot” analysis of existing conditions, ideally with the goal of tracking mobility in communities of concern over time, highlighting potential community-oriented actions, and informing policies and programs such as the Lifeline Transportation Program.

Under this option, the RTP Equity Analysis would serve to highlight any potential disparities of the Plan over a long-range (25-year) horizon, with a regionwide perspective using indicators discussed at previous meetings.

### Advantages:

- Generates a robust snapshot of a greater range of conditions.
- Can be updated periodically to assess mobility and other factors at the community or neighborhood level, with new data added as it becomes available.
- Can inform policy and program development.

### Disadvantages:

- Current-year “snapshots” can’t be applied or compared directly to technical analysis of RTP alternatives.
- Timing of shorter-term analysis would likely not coincide with the current RTP process.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends Option 2. Under this option, the RTP Equity Analysis would focus on regional-scale view of the equity implications of future-year alternatives relative to each other. Staff believes the variables available to analyze base-year equity under Option 1 do not inform key equity issues as effectively as the analysis possible under Option 2, nor do they readily inform near-term community-oriented actions or policies.

### **Additional Information**

At your last meeting, subcommittee members requested brief descriptions of the four model-derived equity indicators proposed. This information will be provided separately in advance of next week’s meeting.

At your May 1 meeting, staff welcomes discussion and input on both of the options presented above.