



METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

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## *Memorandum*

TO: Minority Citizens Advisory Committee

DATE: October 7, 2008

FR: Jacob Avidon

RE: TransLink<sup>®</sup> Program Overview and Status

### Background

TransLink<sup>®</sup> is the Bay Area's regional transit fare payment system. When fully implemented, Bay Area transit riders will be able to use a single, reloadable TransLink<sup>®</sup> smart card to ride any transit system in the nine-county region. The TransLink<sup>®</sup> card stores value in the form of electronic cash (e-cash) and transit passes. To pay a fare, a rider simply "tags" the card by touching it to one of the card readers installed on buses or at the entrance to transit stations or terminals. TransLink<sup>®</sup> cards and value are available online, by phone or mail, at participating retail outlets (including the Walgreens chain) and transit agency ticket offices, and through employee transit benefit programs. Customers also have the option of setting up their cards to reload automatically using TransLink<sup>®</sup>'s Autoload feature. The card is free for customers who set up Autoload when they get a card; without Autoload, the card is \$5.

TransLink<sup>®</sup> has been in full operation on AC Transit, Dumbarton Express and Golden Gate Transit & Ferry routes since November 2006. Operation began with a small-scale "soft" launch that allowed agencies to become familiar with the system and provided a chance to detect software and hardware problems not seen during the system's testing phases. In October 2007, AC Transit and Golden Gate Transit expanded the launch of TransLink<sup>®</sup> by promoting the card to their respective riders. AC Transit offered a discount to its riders from October 2007-January 2008 and offered another incentive to local riders from April-June 2008. Currently in a soft launch with San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and Caltrain, the system will expand in phases to include more than 20 Bay Area transit agencies.

MTC has funded the TransLink<sup>®</sup> implementation, and MTC and the participating transit agencies share responsibility for funding the system's operation. The system is being implemented by Motorola, Inc., and its subcontractor, ERG Transit Systems, under a Design-Build-Operate-Maintain (DBOM) contract with MTC. The contract covers all software development and implementation, equipment installation, equipment maintenance, and system operations, which includes transaction processing, customer service, operation of the card distribution network, operation of the website, etc. TransLink<sup>®</sup> is managed by the TransLink<sup>®</sup> Consortium, which is comprised of MTC and the participating transit agencies.

## Current Operations

The table below summarizes information about the system's current operation on AC Transit, Dumbarton Express and Golden Gate Transit and Ferry (current through the end of August 2008).

	<b>Last Month August 2008</b>	<b>Prior Month July 2008</b>	<b>Prior Year August 2007</b>
Transaction Volume			
Average Weekday Transactions	15,545	15,582	4,874
Fee-Generating Fare Payment Transactions (Not Including Free Transfers)	353,754	366,713	106,981
Fee-Generating Add Value Transactions	24,124	24,571	9,171
Unique Cards Used	18,799	18,328	6,115
Settled Transit Operator Revenue	\$970,652	\$1,011,334	\$389,591

As of September 1, 2008, more than 118,000 TransLink<sup>®</sup> cards were in circulation. This figure includes more than 45,000 Regional Transit Connection (RTC) TransLink<sup>®</sup> Cards.

## System Expansion

On August 12, 2008, MTC declared TransLink<sup>®</sup> "Revenue Ready" for the Caltrain system, which means that all software and hardware was in place and fully tested. Caltrain is preparing for a two-phase soft launch of TransLink<sup>®</sup>. The first phase will involve approximately 100 employees; the second phase will involve a small number of customers.

On September 5, 2008, MTC declared TransLink<sup>®</sup> Revenue Ready for the SFMTA system. SFMTA began an extensive three-phase soft launch on September 22. Phase 1 of SFMTA's soft launch involves use by up to 2,000 employees. Phase 2, slated to begin in November, will involve up to 5,000 key stakeholders and customers recruited through in-station outreach. Phase 3, schedule to start in January, will expand to include up to 18,000 additional stakeholders and recruited customers, including youths, seniors and riders with disabilities. SFMTA soft launch participants are being asked to use all aspects of the system—including adding value through all methods—and respond to periodic online surveys about their experiences.

TransLink<sup>®</sup> will reach the Revenue Ready Status milestone for the system's implementation on BART in spring 2009. The system will expand to SamTrans and VTA in 2010 and all other transit systems in 2011.

## Other Current Initiatives

TransLink<sup>®</sup> is participating in a pilot program that is studying the effect of providing free transit to residents of transit-oriented developments (TODs). Sponsored by MTC and AC Transit, the program has provided more than 1,300 residents in 24 TODs with free TransLink<sup>®</sup> cards pre-loaded with AC Transit 31-day passes. The passes will automatically be renewed for six or 12 months. Participating developments are located near AC Transit hubs and have limited parking; they include rentals, condominiums and combinations of rented and owned units. MTC will evaluate the short- and long-term effect of the passes on transit usage.