

Date: July 11, 2008
W.I.: 1411
Referred by: Planning Committee

ABSTRACT

Resolution No. 3869

This resolution approves the definitions of the proposed Project and alternatives to be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report for the Transportation 2035 Plan.

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Re: Approve the Definitions of the Proposed Project and Alternatives To Be Evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report for the Transportation 2035 Plan

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 3869

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the regional transportation planning agency for the San Francisco Bay Area pursuant to Government Code Sections 66500 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, MTC staff and its consultants will prepare a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Transportation 2035 Plan, pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and

WHEREAS, CEQA Guidelines §15126.6 requires that an EIR evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives; and

WHEREAS, MTC staff has developed the definitions of the proposed project and alternatives to the project to be evaluated in the EIR; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that MTC has reviewed and approved the definitions of the proposed project and alternatives to the project to be evaluated in the EIR, and directed staff and its consultant to proceed with the EIR assessment.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Bill Dodd, Chair

The above resolution was entered into by the
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
at a regular meeting of the Commission held in
Oakland, California, on July 23, 2008.

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Attachment A
Resolution No. 3869
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Project and Alternatives in Transportation 2035 EIR

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Guidelines §15126.6), an environmental impact report (EIR) shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project. The alternatives would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. While the EIR does not need to consider every conceivable alternative to the project, it must consider a range of feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision-making and public participation. The EIR does not need to consider alternatives that are infeasible.

Project and Alternatives

Below is a description of the proposed Project and Alternatives to be evaluated in the Transportation 2035 EIR:

Project: Transportation 2035

The Transportation 2035 Plan represents a strategic investment plan to improve system performance, accessibility and mobility for Bay Area travelers over the next 25 years. As required by state and federal planning regulations, the Transportation 2035 Plan is financially constrained in that it includes a set of transportation projects and programs that would be funded through existing and future revenues projected to be reasonably available to the region over the 25-year horizon of the plan. A total of \$223 billion in revenues, including net High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) Network revenues (\$6.1 billion) and Anticipated/Unspecified revenues (\$12.9 billion), is available for the financially constrained Transportation 2035 Plan. Moreover, the Transportation 2035 Plan also includes an unconstrained financial element that identifies a set of illustrative transportation projects and programs that would be shifted into the financially constrained element if additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become available. Both elements combined, along with supporting goals, performance objectives and policy strategies, constitute the strategic Transportation 2035 vision. The latest socio-economic forecasts adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) – *Projections 2007* – serve as the underlying demographic and land use assumptions for the EIR analysis.

Alternative 1: No Project

The No Project Alternative, required by CEQA, addresses the effect of not implementing the Transportation 2035 Plan. This includes a set of transportation projects and programs that are in advanced planning stages and slated to go forward since they have full funding commitments. These projects are: (1) identified in the federally required Fiscal Year 2009 Transportation Improvement Program, a four-year funding program of Bay Area projects and programs, (2) not yet in the TIP but are fully funded sales tax projects authorized by voters in seven Bay Area

counties, including San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Contra Costa, Sonoma and Marin counties, and (3) not yet in the TIP but fully funded through other committed funds as defined by statute or MTC policy. ABAG's Projections 2007 serves as the underlying demographic and land use assumptions for the EIR analysis.

Alternative 2: Financially Constrained Plan with Heavy Maintenance Emphasis

This alternative represents only the set of transportation projects and programs that would be funded through revenues projected to be reasonably available over the next 25-year horizon of Transportation 2035. Unlike the proposed Project, this alternative shifts its investment emphasis towards system maintenance. That is, most of the \$32 billion in uncommitted discretionary revenues available is shifted toward maintenance of the existing system, thereby limiting the amount of discretionary revenues available for system efficiency and expansion. As such, some system efficiency and expansion projects identified in the proposed Project would drop out of this alternative. This alternative assumes no pricing strategy beyond the Regional HOT Network that is included in the financially constrained plan, and uses ABAG's Projections 2007 as the underlying demographic and land use assumptions for the EIR analysis.

Alternative 3: Financially Constrained Plan with Heavy Maintenance Emphasis + Pricing Strategies

This alternative reflects the same project definition as Alternative 2 **plus** examines the level of impact that additional user-based pricing strategies beyond the Regional HOT Network could have on the performance of the infrastructure investments. The pricing strategies are intended to induce changes in travel behavior by increasing the cost of driving. They include: (a) carbon tax or tax on vehicle miles driven that would essential double auto operating costs, (b) congestion fee for using congested freeways during peak periods, and (c) increased parking charges for all trips. The cumulative effect of these pricing strategies is a substantial increase in transportation cost. This alternative uses ABAG's Projections 2007 as the underlying demographic and land use assumptions for the EIR analysis.

Alternative 4: Financially Constrained Plan with Heavy Maintenance Emphasis + Land Use Strategies

This alternative reflects the same project definition as Alternative 2 **plus** evaluates the level of impact that an alternative land use forecast that goes beyond the Projections 2007 could have on the performance of the infrastructure investment. ABAG staff produced this alternative land use forecast with the objective of balancing jobs and housing and targeting growth in existing communities and near transit. This alternative land use forecast is a policy forecast, as opposed to a purely market-driven outcome. Compared to Projections 2007, this forecast reflects considerable shifts in regional growth to existing employment and housing centers, areas projected to have either household or employment growth, and areas with existing and/or planned transit. It also assumes fewer in-commuters from neighboring regions by accommodating 37,000 more households within the Bay Area. This alternative assumes no pricing strategy beyond the Regional HOT Network that is included in the financially constrained plan.