Agenda Item 2

METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Planning Committee DATE: February 6, 2009

FR: Executive Director W. I.

RE: Transportation 2035: Key Messages Heard on Draft Transportation 2035 Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Three Cs: *Convergence, Collaboration and Consensus*

Over 7,000 Bay Area residents from all walks of life helped shape the *Draft Transportation 2035 Plan*. The public outreach and interagency consultation effort – unprecedented for MTC in its scope – spanned 24 months, wherein the region focused its collective efforts on developing a performance-based plan that began with defining the region's vision and goals, followed by analyzing performance outcomes of various infrastructure investments and pricing and land use approaches, and then devising a regional investment strategy that takes into account tradeoffs, hard choices and financial constraints. At almost every turn in the Transportation 2035 planning process, we found that the following three key elements helped us to not only pull this plan together but make its content appeal to and resonate with many of our partners and stakeholders:

- **Convergence** – The convergence of issues – especially around climate change, focused growth, and system maintenance – influenced the plan's policies and investment strategies.

- **Collaboration** – The collaboration among MTC, Association of Bay Area Governments, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and Bay Area Air Quality Management District to develop this plan, along with congestion management agencies, transit operators, Caltrans, California Air Resources Board, Federal Highway and Transit Administrations, tribal governments and numerous resource agencies, broadened the interests and concerns to be addressed in the plan. MTC's citizen advisors and leaders from "Three E" stakeholder groups (environment, equity and economy) also were active participants.

- **Consensus** – The consensus among members of the public for change on a number of fronts – including fixing our existing system; investing more in transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and lifeline projects that improve accessibility and reduce greenhouse gases; and ensuring that infrastructure supports focused growth – helped us hone in on the investment strategy though there were differing opinions on investment priorities.

The Fourth C: *Change*

Staff will summarize the key messages heard from all the public workshops, surveys, written correspondence, and public hearings at your February 13 committee meeting. One thing is clear – "change" is the fourth "C" that underscored every element of the Transportation 2035 Plan, as reinforced by the message we heard from the outset: "Our world is changing, and we must change too!"

Steve Heminger

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Draft Transportation 2035 Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area

Key Messages Heard

CHANGE IN MOTION

Planning Committee
February 13, 2009

Public Outreach Program

Thousands shape Bay Area transportation priorities via two-year planning effort:

Phases I and II (January 2007 – September 2008)

- "Bay Area on the Move" Regional Forum (700 participants)
- 9 MTC advisory committee workshops
- 1 roundtable discussion with key "Three E" leaders
- 13 workshops around the region (650 participants)
- 2 statistically valid telephone surveys, offered in three languages (5,400 respondents)
- 2 Web surveys (over 3,000 completed surveys)
- 130 person-on-the-street, multilingual interviews
- 9 focus groups, one per county (some 100 residents)
- 10 multilingual focus groups with non-profits in low-income communities and communities of color (150 residents)

Interagency Consultation

- 3 Tribal government consultations
- 1 federal and state resource agency consultation
- Two rounds of meetings between MTC Commissioners and congestion management agency (CMA) board members
- Regular discussions with:
  - Partnership Board and Technical Advisory Committee
  - Federal Transit Administration at quarterly staff meetings
  - CMA Executive Directors
  - Air Quality Conformity Task Force
  - Joint Policy Committee
  - ABAG Executive Committee
  - MTC Planning Committee

CHANGE IN MOTION

Transportation 2035
Phase 3 Public Outreach

Phase 3: October 2008 – March 2009

- Two public hearings (some 80 participants)
- Two Joint Advisor Workshops
- Roundtable discussion with MTC Commissioners, stakeholders, advisors and partners

CHANGE IN MOTION

Phase Three Key Messages

- Review of all comments heard during Phase Three outreach (testimony, comment sheets, email and letter correspondence)
- Key messages reflect predominant thinking among many participants
- In many cases, opposing views were also expressed

CHANGE IN MOTION

MTC Advisor Input

- HOT Network:
  - Mixed views overall
  - Concerns about impact on low-income drivers
  - Concerns about viability of HOT in already-crowded HOV corridors
- Support for Climate Protection Campaign; questions on specifics
- Called for reducing Regional Bicycle Program funding to augment Lifeline Transportation Program
- Pedestrian safety should be specifically addressed in the 2035 Plan
- Needs of aging/disabled population deserves more emphasis

CHANGE IN MOTION

Key Message #1

Revisit Prior Investment Decisions

- Rethink prior commitments, particularly funding for transit and roadway expansion projects
- Reconsideration is warranted in light of climate change and AB 32 requirements
- MTC has more discretion to redirect funds than it exercises

CHANGE IN MOTION

Revisit Prior Investment Decisions

- Committed funds have been reserved by law for specific uses, or allocated by MTC action prior to the development of the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan

- Commission approved prior commitment policy in Resolution 3868 based on:
  - 85 percent of the committed funds (or $162 billion) are dedicated to transit and road maintenance and operations
  - Nearly 90 percent of remaining $29 billion for expansion projects are funded mostly with local funds or earmarked regional, state, or federal funds
  - Majority of these expansion projects are in advanced stage of development, and support multiple Transportation 2035 goals

- Strong opposition from local partners to abandoning prior project commitments

Key Message #2

Focus More on Transit

- The 2035 Plan should fund more transit operations and capital improvements
- Support Safe Routes to Schools and Transit
- More emphasis needed on "last mile" connections, rider comfort, amenities and safety

CHANGE IN MOTION

MTC Response

Focus More on Transit

- Two-thirds of the Draft Transportation 2035 Plan goes toward funding transit capital and operating expenses
- MTC is implementing recommendation from MTC's Transit Connectivity Plan, which calls for:
  - Improved signage/information displays at regional hubs
  - Full implementation and integration of 511 and TransLink
- Key components of the proposed $400 million Climate Action Campaign would fund transit amenities and safety improvements
- There may be new opportunities from the federal economic recovery legislation and from 2008 voter-approved Prop. 1A (High-Speed Rail Bond) for transit and rail improvements

CHANGE IN MOTION

Key Message #3

Climate Protection and Energy Consumption

- Support for new Climate Action Campaign in 2035 Plan, but more and bigger changes are needed
- The 2035 Plan over-emphasizes road expansion and programs to encourage driving
- Concerns about 2035 Plan's ability to meet AB 32 goals
- 2035 Plan should invest in new technology to make cars more efficient and less polluting
- Concerns about dwindling long-term petroleum supply

CHANGE IN MOTION

Climate Protection and Energy Consumption

- The 2035 Plan dedicates only 3% of total funds to road expansion
- The 2035 Plan breaks new ground by illuminating key actions needed to achieve policy goals, including climate protection
- While infrastructure investments alone will not deliver sufficient progress, the 2035 Plan has started a critical regional dialogue on complementary pricing and land use strategies
- While several pricing and land use strategies are beyond MTC's current statutory authority, MTC will continue to advocate via implementation of SB 375 and AB 32 for the needed policies and programs to reach 2035 Plan goals

Key Message #4

Support for Bicycle/Pedestrian Funding

- Overall support for bicycle and pedestrian projects; key means of achieving 2035 Plan goals
- Bicycle/pedestrian facilities are a good complement to transit; bikes on transit are even better
- Bikes a good way to reduce driving

CHANGE IN MOTION

MTC Response

Support for Bicycle/Pedestrian Funding

- Transportation 2035 Plan dedicates $1 billion for Regional Bicycle Program
- Funding shares for bicycle and pedestrian facilities are comparable, considering historical spending shares of programs like Transportation for Livable Communities
- Continued funding support through TLC and new programs like Safe Routes to Schools/Transit included in the proposed Climate Action Campaign

CHANGE IN MOTION

Key Message #5

Regional HOT Lanes a HOT Topic

- Opinions about high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes mixed…
- Some felt it promoted driving when we should be discouraging it
- Others supported fee-based approach to driving and potential for funding key new transit services
- Questions about net HOT revenues, governance and financing options
- Concerns about impact on low-income residents

CHANGE IN MOTION

MTC Response

Regional High-Occupancy Toll Lanes

- Proven Success – HOT lanes successfully implemented in various U.S. cities to manage freeway operations, expand choices for travelers of all income levels, and improve bus service
- 62 percent of voters polled expressed support for HOT lanes (spring 2008: 3,600 voters)
- HOT Network pays for itself, and can be delivered 20 to 40 years faster than under traditional state and local funding
- Governance and financing details to be worked out in conjunction with authorizing legislation
- Ongoing discussions with the public, partner agencies and stakeholders on how to invest net toll revenues and ways to address social equity

CHANGE IN MOTION

Key EIR Message #1

EIR Alternatives Need Refinement

- Exclude select transit and roadway expansion projects from the 'No Project' alternative
- Evaluate a broader range of alternatives, including:
  - An alternative that maximizes greenhouse gas emission reductions
  - Project + Pricing
  - Project + Land Use
  - Project + Pricing and Land use
  - A Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection Emphasis + Both Pricing and Land use
- Don't dismiss the Heavy Maintenance/Climate Protection Emphasis + Pricing alternative; instead MTC should outline implementation steps

CHANGE IN MOTION

MTC Response

EIR Alternatives Need Refinement

- Per CEQA Guidelines:
  - 'No Project' includes existing conditions and what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the Plan were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure
  - An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project but rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public participation
  - Factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are economic viability, availability of infrastructure, regulatory limitations, etc.

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Key EIR Message #2

Travel Model Has Shortcomings

- MTC's travel forecasting model poorly reflects travel behavior changes from land use improvements or from bicycle or pedestrian amenities
- Accuracy of MTC's travel forecasting model would be improved with bicycle and pedestrian counts
- Gas price assumption for 2035, at $7.47 (2008$), is too low

CHANGE IN MOTION

Travel Model Has Shortcomings

- MTC's travel forecasting model …
  - Uses socio-economic and land use characteristics (e.g., mixed use development, proximity to retail/services) to predict mode use, including bike/pedestrian trips
  - Accounts for connectivity of bike and pedestrian improvements to predict bike and walk trips
  - Uses bicycle and pedestrian counts to validate model but having counts does not explain motivation for bicycling

- Volatility of gas prices has made gas price assumption more uncertain than other model assumptions

- If gas price assumption is too low, one can assume we are <u>over</u>estimating adverse environmental impacts

Next Steps

- March 2 – Comment period on Draft 2035 Plan closes
- March 13 – Planning Committee review and action on:
  - Proposed Final Air Quality Conformity Analysis
  - Proposed Final Environmental Impact Report
  - Proposed Final Transportation 2035 Plan
- March 25 – Anticipated adoption by the full Commission

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