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MINORITY CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes – September 8, 2009

Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m. Those in attendance were Vice Chair Carlos Castellanos of Alameda County; Vice Chair Darnell Turner and Michael Rubiano of Contra Costa County; Gerald Rico and Robert Liems of Napa County; Harvey Louie of San Francisco; Bill Allen, Wayne Lee and Carlos Romero of San Mateo County; Michael Lopez of Santa Clara County; Jim Simon of Solano County; Lee Pierce and David Rosas of Sonoma County; Michael D'Augelli, Native American representative; and Randi Kinman, Low Income Representative. Jacquee Castain, Dustin Daza, Dawn Love, James McGhee and Charles Rivasplata were excused.

MTC staff in attendance included Pam Grove, Georgia Lambert, Rebecca Long and Jennifer Yeamans. Also in attendance were Dorene Giacopini, MTC commissioner, Val Menotti of BART and Victoria Eisen of Eisen/Letunic.

Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of July 14, 2009. The minutes were approved.

Chair's Report

Vice Chair Castellanos, chairing the meeting in Chair James McGhee's absence, welcomed MTC Commissioner Giacopini to the meeting and said that he had no further information to report.

MCAC Member Reports

Equity Analysis Subcommittee: Randi Kinman reported that the subcommittee will get its first look at some maps/data from the snap shot analysis next month.

Lifeline Subcommittee: Michael Lopez, subcommittee vice chair, said the Lifeline subcommittee met on August 25 to review the Low Income Flexible Transportation (LIFT) Cycle 3 Draft Evaluation. Since the subcommittee's August meeting, however, there have been new developments related to Lifeline funding, which Jennifer Yeamans would present later in the meeting. Bill Allen stated that it was important to keep in mind the possibility of consolidation of the advisory committees when making any decisions.

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Legislative Update

Rebecca Long, MTC staff, provided an update on state and federal legislation affecting transportation and its funding. Some $800 million in public transit funds were diverted from transportation in the 2009-2010 state budget. While the CTA sued the state on this issue and won, the state plans to appeal, meanwhile, ballot measure is being prepared to protect local government funds from future raids on transportation funding. Ms. Long went over some key Assembly and Senate bills that are in process. AB 744 (Torrico), the bill that would authorize a regional HOT lane network, has now become a two-year bill. Although it made it all the way to the Senate Appropriations Committee, it is stopped there until concerns raised by environmental groups and the Public Engineers of California Government can be resolved. AB 338 involves allowing tax-increment financing of transit-oriented developments and is currently on the Senate floor. SB 205 was merged with SB 83 and will allow congestion management agencies to add up to $10 per vehicle as part of vehicle registration fees. SB 406 would allow a $2 vehicle registration fee for SB 375 implementation strategies.

Bill Allen wondered what impact the diversion of funds has on minority and low-income communities. Ms. Long said there is less money for transit operations because of fewer riders and fewer sales tax funds, so the transit operators will need to be as creative as possible with existing resources. Carlos Romero said that HOT lanes revenue is a political issue, rather than policy, and giving local entities funds with no strings attached is an issue. Ms. Long responded that there is no percentage or number attached to the amount going to transit, partly so there won't be a perception created that the number is a "ceiling or a floor." However, the bill includes a mandatory corridor analysis for equity, and states that the "highest priority" for use of the funds is public transit improvements. Darnell Turner asked if there are any ballot measures proposed to protect transit funds from future raids. Ms. Long responded that vehicle registration fees are local and imposed by counties, so they are protected. And the League of Cities and transit associations are crafting wording to prevent future raids by the state of California.

Ms. Long stated she will return to present MTC's 2010 Draft Legislative Program for the committee's review and comment in the next few months.

BART Demand Management Study

Val Menotti of BART and Victoria Eisen or Eisen/Letunic presented information on BART's Demand Management Study. The system is 35 years old and needs renovation and upkeep, as well as capital improvements that will most likely be necessary by 2035. In addition, strategies need to be determined to reduce the extreme crowding that is projected at some stations through mechanisms that encourage off-peak and reverse-commute travel. A demographic analysis of current ridership patterns was presented and MCAC members were asked to comment on impacts of these proposed strategies on low-income passengers.

Ms. Eisen went over a few approaches, including the idea of peak premium pricing. She asked the committee if they felt it was fair for low-income households (under $50,000 per year). She also mentioned that BART is planning focus groups to continue the discussion about what would help encourage off-peak travel.

<u>BART Demand Management Study</u> (Continued)

Michael Rubiano asked what the core purpose of demand pricing is, stressing that most low-income workers are constrained by set schedules of employers. Mr. Menotti said the purpose is to decrease crowding during peak hours of use, implementing a peak-hour fee that could be used for improving the capacity in more crowded stations. Mr. Rubiano further stated that BART should consider demand management a regional issue, not just a BART issue. There needs to be coordination between tolls, parking, etc., regarding pricing during peak hours.

Wayne Lee agreed that lower-level workers have set hours and less flexibility in their work schedules; asking businesses to shift their hours wouldn't necessarily be effective because these workers often have other issues such as childcare, school pick-up and drop-off, etc. Mike D'Augelli suggested there could be a fare structure with pricing options that corporations could purchase on behalf of low-income people. He also said the BART to the airport surcharge hurts people who work at SFO. Mr. Allen asked if BART is open to the idea of a regional fare, and stated that they need to consider the breaking point and when it is better financially for people to just drive.

Mr. Romero stated that central business districts are the most congested; if they are at the heart of this issue, it's important to note that people in the communities of concern tend not to be employed in central business districts. He also commented that perhaps BART should focus on alternatives that don't center around BART so much (bust rapid transit is much cheaper than rail transit and could provide BART some demand management alternatives even if not run by BART). Mr. Allen reiterated that existing businesses aren't going to change their hours, and reminded everyone that transportation and childcare are the two main concerns of workers. Ms. Kinman said that congestion pricing needs to take into consideration how interconnectivity pushes peak pricing regionally, which could mean commuters in San Jose would have to pay twice, for example – once for congestion pricing in San Jose and again in San Francisco. This needs to be a regional discussion, and there also needs to be a discussion of base fares with a regional approach. Mr. Louie stated that higher pricing strategies are already driving businesses out of San Francisco. Perhaps the focus should be on making it easier, not harder, for low-income individuals to take transit. Transit congestion pricing aimed at businesses will make people drive instead. He said that use of transit helps reduce pollution and that people may be working from home more in the future as telecommuting becomes more viable. David Rosas said he is a BART rider and felt "held up" when he had to pay the SFO surcharge. He would prefer BART focus on station improvements that could increase capacity (including restroom improvements). Mr. Menotti reminded the committee that capacity improvements are not funded in the current regional transportation plan.

Vice Chair Castellanos noted that low-income people have fewer options, and BART needs to beware of unintended consequences. If peak pricing is implemented, some sort of "lifeline" program should be implemented to use the funds for low-income riders. He also commented that BART should look at influencing the land use decisions and development around its stations.

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Lifeline Cycle II Funding Update

Jennifer Yeamans gave the committee an update on the second-cycle Lifeline Transportation Fund Estimate, including a proposed one-time funding augmentation of approximately $7 million for fiscal year 2010. Counties would work in close concert with their transit operators to strategically spend this money to sustain Lifeline-eligible services over several years. These funds should not be spread too thin, and should be directed toward maintaining critical services over the course of several years until the situation stabilizes.

Mr. Romero requested clarification on whether the funds can be used for fixed route transit. He asked if it would be possible to program some of the money for routes that were cut back, stating that these funds could actually save a route or two. Ms. Yeamans said yes, it's possible. Mr. Rubiano asked if there are any incentives that can be given to counties to follow the recommended spending pattern. Ms. Yeamans said MTC will ask for a rationale and a multi-year plan. Bob Liems asked why Napa's share of the funding is so small. Ms. Yeamans explained that the allocation is based on the county's poverty population per the 2000 census. Mr. Allen asked if the counties have the full authority over the funds, or if they work together with the transit operators to make decisions. Ms. Yeamans said the county congestion management agencies (CMAs) need to report to their board the reasons for their decisions on funding. She can put MCAC members in touch with their CMA representatives if they would like.

Staff Report

Pam Grove said MTC's "Proposed New Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Program Framework – 'TLC 2.0'" was available as a handout on the table. This report will be presented to the Planning Committee on Sept. 11 and is being given to MCAC as an informational item. Also, MTC's consultant report on the advisory committee review, along with recommendations for consolidation, will be presented to the Legislation Committee on Sept. 11. The advisors will have an opportunity to comment on this report at a joint advisor meeting currently scheduled for September 23. Information about two transportation reports was provided in the packet. The High School Internship program closing ceremony took place on August 20; statistics and a summary of the program will be presented to the High School Internship Subcommittee at its meeting next month. Ms. Grove went over the upcoming subcommittee meeting schedule for the next few weeks (as listed in her staff report in the packet), noting that details for the Lifeline Subcommittee site visit on September 29 will be available later in the month.

Other Business

An updated roster of MCAC members was distributed and several members announced changes to their information.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.