



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700
TEL 510.817.5700
TTY/TDD 510.817.5769
FAX 510.817.5848
E-MAIL info@mtc.ca.gov
WEB www.mtc.ca.gov

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San Mateo County

Amy Rein Worth, Vice Chair
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**Policy Advisory Council
February 9, 2011
Draft Minutes**

Chair Paul Branson called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Members in attendance were Naomi Armenta, Cathleen Baker, Richard Burnett, JoAnn Busenbark, Carlos Castellanos, Bena Chang, Wilbert Din, Allison Hughes, Dolores Jaquez, Linda Jeffery Sailors, Randi Kinman, Federico Lopez, Marshall Loring, Evelina Molina, Cheryl O'Connor, Kendal Oku, Lori Reese-Brown, Gerald Rico, Frank Robertson, Dolly Sandoval, and Egon Terplan. Excused: Richard Hedges.

Minutes

The minutes of the January 12, 2011 meeting were approved after a motion by Mr. Loring and a second by Mr. Din. Chair Branson abstained because he was absent at the January meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

Regional Advisory Working Group (RAWG) Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Mr. Burnett announced that the RAWG ad hoc subcommittee met to discuss the SCS performance targets for the last time on February 7, and gave some highlights from the meeting. The Commission and ABAG's Executive Board adopted performance targets for the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in January 2011.

Equity and Access Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Armenta presented a recommendation to revise the scope of the SCS-RTP equity analysis. Ms. Jaquez moved approval to forward the recommendation to the Commission. Mr. Loring seconded the motion.

Chair Branson opened the floor for discussion. Ms. Kinman recommended that the language be changed in order to address all transportation modes, not only transit. She also suggested including youth into the scope. Ms. Sandoval suggested removing the words "at a minimum." Ms. Armenta had no objection to their suggestions. Following discussion, Ms. Kinman made an amendment to the motion to delete the word "transit" before the word "dependent," delete the words "at a minimum," and add youth to the scope. Ms. Jeffery Sailors seconded the motion to amend. Ms. Jaquez and Mr. Robertson noted their opposition to the amendment to add youth to the scope.

The revised language was passed with 20 ayes and 2 nays. Ms. Jaquez and Mr. Robertson voted no and asked that their opposition to adding youth to the scope be noted. Staff will forward a memo to the Commission.

SCS/RTP 25-Year Financial Projections Assumptions

Ashley Nguyen of MTC planning staff introduced the SCS-RTP agenda items to the Council. She noted that staff is presenting four agenda items as background for the future vision scenario work, as well as for feedback from the Council.

The Council received the report from Mat Adamo of MTC programming and allocations staff. Ms. Jaquez asked for clarification on the sales tax to be used for Napa and Solano Counties. Mr. Adamo responded that Napa and Solano do not currently have countywide tax measures; therefore, staff will use an estimate from ABAG in order to project their TDA revenue. Ms. Jaquez also noted that some counties pay more taxes per capita than others; she asked if money would be taken away from the counties that pay more taxes per capita and given to those counties that do not have tax measures. Ken Folan of MTC staff clarified that seven of the nine Bay Area counties have a sales tax that is dedicated to transportation, and the funds are at the discretion of their respective tax authority. He added that those seven counties would provide their estimates, and these counties do not give any funding to the counties that do not have sales tax measures. He added that the lack of a sales tax does not put Solano or Napa in a better or worse position to receive other types of funding.

Mr. Lopez asked if the basic underpinnings of the revenue projections would come from a demonstrated history of success. Executive Director Steve Heminger noted that the same forecasting methods were used in the last RTP, in which staff looked at the success rate of previous revenue forecasts and noticed that revenue was consistently undercounted. Ms. Chang asked if – in looking at fuel tax revenue – the shift to more efficient vehicles would be accounted for. Mr. Adamo said yes. Mr. Terplan noted that the projections seem very optimistic. He asked how staff arrived at a three percent federal growth rate, and why revenue projections for high-speed rail (HSR) were based on the number of miles of the system in the Bay Area since it would be more expensive to build the system in urban areas. Mr. Folan noted that staff would reevaluate using track mileage for HSR revenues. Mr. Heminger added that whatever HSR costs, that money would have to be put into the plan.

Ms. Molina asked where local streets and roads revenue comes from. Mr. Adamo replied from 1) gas tax subventions, and 2) cities and counties. Ms. Molina expressed concern that despite all the revenue, low-income people in Sonoma County do not have proper access to transportation. Ms. Jeffery Sailors asked if plans to reconfigure ACE service were taken into account in HSR revenue projections. Mr. Folan said the state estimates do not include comprehensive service from San Joaquin into Alameda County. Ms. Busenbark noted that Napa continues to seek an appropriate time for placing a self-help tax on the ballot. She also noted that decreasing revenues due to fuel efficiency should not be of concern because future supply and demand will keep gasoline prices high.

SCS/RTP Draft Committed Policy

The Council received the report from Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Din suggested that “under construction” should be better defined. Ms. Nguyen noted that various stakeholders have also requested a better definition and staff is working on it. Ms. Kinman asked what percentage of projects would be impacted, and if project timelines would be taken into consideration. She expressed concern

SCS/RTP Draft Committed Policy (continued)

that the deadline might penalize certain projects. Ms. Nguyen clarified that the policy is not meant to penalize projects, but rather to determine which projects should be subject to performance assessment.

Mr. Terplan asked if project scale or funds needed would be taken into consideration. He also noted that PDAs are not mentioned as a criterion. Ms. Nguyen replied that the scale of the project could be taken into consideration. Regarding PDAs, she added that while there are a number of policy objectives, the main consideration is how far along a project is in the development phase, not necessarily geography. Mr. Terplan added that local jurisdictions have spent a lot of time to shift their growth to PDAs; therefore, projects in PDAs should be considered committed. Mr. Terplan also noted that having a sense of scale of the committed dollars would be useful.

Ms. Sandoval asked what concerns other stakeholders have brought up. Ms. Nguyen said staff has heard comments about the deadline and the definition of “under construction.” There are also concerns about what is considered discretionary funding. Mr. Heminger added that the purpose is to increase discussion about uncommitted funding and gauge support for increasing discretionary funding. Mr. Terplan asked if the committed policy would be transformed for the next RTP. Mr. Heminger said that the committed funding policy is more important than the committed projects policy. He added that the vast majority of funding is spent on operations and maintenance, and discussing how to make this spending more efficient is important.

SCS/RTP Draft Project Performance Methodology

The Council received the report from Lisa Klein of MTC planning staff. Ms. Jaquez asked if information from the Transit Sustainability Project (TSP) will play a part in the project performance methodology. Ms. Klein replied yes. Ms. Chang noted the importance of gaining the support of local jurisdictions, and asked when there will be an opportunity for their input. Ms. Klein said that congestion management agencies (CMAs) are helping to facilitate the SCS and they will be engaged in the scenario process. She added that there will be major public outreach efforts throughout the region.

Mr. Robertson asked how often project performance would be evaluated. Ms. Klein said project sponsors will submit ideas through April, and those ideas will be assessed once. Mr. Robertson replied the projects should be continuously evaluated. Ms. Klein responded that there is an aggressive project development monitoring program. Ms. Sandoval asked for clarification on the timeline. Ms. Klein said staff should have a framework for the methodology next month. Ms. Sandoval asked what the risk is in delaying the submittal deadline. Ms. Klein said it would delay adoption of the RTP-SCS. Mr. Heminger added that the RTP expires every four years.

Mr. Terplan said it would be useful to know the dollar figure for the uncommitted funds for this RTP-SCS. Mr. Heminger said approximately 20 percent of the funding goes to expansion and a portion of that is already committed, so it’s more likely in the 10-15 percent range. Mr. Terplan asked if the methodology could also apply to uncommitted funds. Mr. Heminger noted that the qualitative assessment would be largely what the Commission will rely on. The quantitative assessment would be difficult to apply to programmatic expenditures. He added that while the methodology has an important role, it is focused only on a small fraction of the total expenditure.

SCS/RTP Call for Projects Guidelines

The Council received the report from Grace Cho of MTC planning staff. Ms. Chang noted that VTA's timeline does not allow for significant public outreach. Ms. Cho noted that other stakeholders have raised similar concerns, and staff is trying to align the call for projects with the countywide transportation plan updates. Ms. Nguyen said MTC and CMA staff are working closely to ensure robust public outreach efforts. Ms. Molina questioned whether the timeline really allows members of the public to submit their own ideas. Ms. Nguyen said the expectation is for members of the public to work with their local agencies to present project ideas. Mr. Din asked if a pedestrian bulb-out would qualify for this call for projects. Ms. Cho said a project like that would be classified under the general programmatic category.

Chair Branson recognized Duane De Witt of the public, who said that the PDA in Santa Rosa should have a bus rapid transit (BRT) system. Ms. Sandoval raised concern about the ability for members of the public to propose projects to their CMA under the current deadline. Ms. Nguyen said staff expects the CMAs to outreach to the public, including holding public workshops where the public can present ideas. Mr. Castellanos noted the importance of staff going out to the local communities for input and not expecting the public to come to MTC. Ms. Nguyen noted that staff has been talking to all nine CMAs and MTC will hold regional workshops at the same time that the CMAs are holding their countywide transportation plan update hearings.

Ms. Baker also expressed concern over the ability of residents to suggest projects. Ms. Molina said that Sonoma's CMA currently has no public outreach plans. Ms. Reese-Brown questioned why the item had not been brought to the Council before and suggested that the timeline be changed. Mr. Din noted the importance of members' understanding of the county-level processes of participation. Mr. Robertson suggested staff utilize public service announcements to assist with public outreach. Ms. Kinman said the reality is that members of the public cannot raise issues directly to the CMA; she asked staff to get the CMAs to commit to the process. Chair Branson also expressed concern over the timeline. He also expressed concern over the number of items on the Council's agenda, and suggested that MTC take a look at the timelines and allow more time for agenda items. Mr. Terplan said there is a learning curve since this is the first RTP-SCS, and he noted that perhaps a disproportionate amount of time was spent on setting the performance targets. Ms. Busenbark stated that the RTP-SCS has been under discussion in Napa County since fall 2010, and this is not new information in her county.

Staff Liaison Report

Ms. Grove briefly reviewed the items in her written report. She reminded the Council that the deadline for volunteering to serve on the project performance assessment methodology technical committee is today. Interested members need to submit their names by February 9.

Council Member Reports

There were no reports.

Public Comment/Adjournment/Next Meeting

Mr. Robertson suggested allocating time on the agenda for members to meet each other. Ms. Sandoval requested that Ms. Grove poll members about extending the meeting time to 4 p.m., and Ms. Grove suggested perhaps she could poll the group as future agendas warrant. Ms. Kinman requested that general public comment be moved to the front of the agenda.

Chair Branson recognized Duane De Witt, who suggested placing public participation announcements on buses and using public service announcements to inform the public about opportunities to participate.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2011. The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.