

**Air Quality Conformity Task Force  
Summary Meeting Notes  
April 28, 2011**

Attendance:

Ginger Vagenas – EPA

Ted Matley – FTA

Stew Sonnenberg– FHWA

Dick Fahey – Caltrans

Mike Brady – Caltrans

Jason Crow. – CARB

Val Ignacio – Caltrans

Alan Chow – Caltrans

Lester Lee – Caltrans

Glenn Kinoshka – Caltrans

Joy Lee - MTC

Raymond Odunlami – MTC

John Martin - TAM

Eric Cordoba - SFCTA

Jeff Goodson – AECOM

Corey Lang – AECOM

Brad Leveen – Mark Thomas and Company

John Schwarz – David J. Powers & Associates

Keith Pommerenck – Illingworth & Rodkin

Ashley Nguyen – MTC

Grace Cho – MTC

Adam Crenshaw – MTC

Sri Srinivasan – MTC

Ross McKeown – MTC

1. **Welcome and Self Introductions:** Ashley Nguyen (MTC) called the meeting to order at 9:35am. See attendance roster above. She went immediately into the agenda items for discussion.
2. **March 7, 2011 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary:** Ashley explained MTC staff seeks approval of the Task Force meeting summary held on March 7, 2011. She asked the Task Force if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. Hearing that there were no objections to the summary, she asked for the Task Force to approve the meeting summary. The Task Force approved the meeting summary.
3. **PM<sub>2.5</sub> Interagency Consultations:** To begin the interagency consultations for PM<sub>2.5</sub> project level conformity Grace Cho (MTC) asked each project sponsor give a brief overview of the project prior to opening up the project for questions by the Task Force.

***POAQC Status Determinations***

*Caltrans/Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC): Freeway Performance Initiative*

Val Ignacio (Caltrans) explained the scope of the Freeway Performance Initiative (FPI) is to install ramp meters and traffic operation systems (TOS) along seven freeway corridors throughout the Bay Area region. In addition to the ramp metering and TOS elements, the scope also includes widening a select number of freeway on/off ramps. The FPI is not projected to increase the capacity of ramps or the freeway mainlines. Nor will the FPI increase the percentage of diesel truck traffic on the ramps or on the mainline of the freeways. The level of service (LOS) looks to improve for 133 of the ramps in the opening year and 119 ramps in the horizon year. A small number of ramps will see a slight drop in LOS in the opening year (10 ramps) and horizon year (21 ramps).

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) did not have any further questions about the project and felt this project is not a project of air quality concern (POAQC). Ashley had noted the truck volumes for the entire project is projected to remain very low and therefore she is inclined to agree with Dick the project is not a POAQC. Mike Brady (Caltrans) agreed and said he

appreciated how Caltrans and MTC coordinated to bring this project as a bundle to the Task Force for interagency consultation.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) asked Caltrans if the ramp widening portion would be tapered and contained within the ramp. Val answered the widening elements of FPI would be contained on the ramp and would not touch the mainline. In receiving an answer to his question, Stew agreed with others the FPI is not a POAQC. Ginger Vagenas (EPA) and Jason Crow (CARB) agreed.

**Final Determination:** FHWA, FTA, EPA, Caltrans, CARB and the remaining Task Force members concurred and determined the Freeway Performance Initiative is not a project of air quality concern.

*City of Pacifica/San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA): SR 1 – Fassler to West Port Drive Widening.*

Brad Leveen (Mark Thomas and Company) provided a brief presentation, explaining the State Route (SR) 1 project would widen an existing portion of SR 1 from a four lane highway into six lanes over a 1.3 mile segment. The widening is primarily confined between two signalized intersections between Fassler Avenue/Rockway Beach Avenue and Reina Del Mar Avenue. The widening is intended to help facilitate operations of traffic trying to access the adjacent residential area between the intersections. The traffic decreases beyond the intersections. The purpose of the project is to help relieve the existing traffic congestion, intersection operations and delay which continues to build on project segment.

Brad turned over the remainder of the presentation to John Schwartz (David J. Powers & Associates) and Keith Pommerenck (Illingworth & Rodkin Inc.) to provide the environmental and air quality conditions of the project. Keith and John reiterated the purpose of the project is to relieve congestion in to corridor which is projected to worsen and deteriorate the LOS at the intersections. Keith then explained there is no projected change in vehicle mix, but the average daily traffic (ADT) is projected to increase with or without the project at the same rate. The truck percentage is expected to stay the same at 2.7%. With the implementation of the project the LOS is expected to improve from LOS F to C or D rating.

Upon opening the project for questions, Mike asked the project sponsor if the additional lane is to function essentially as an auxiliary lane since the widening is only for a short segment. Brad, John, and Keith agreed the additional lanes would ultimately function in an auxiliary lane capacity. Ginger asked for clarification as to whether the widening of the roadway would extend beyond the signalized intersection. Brad said the project does extend the widening of the lanes for a very short segment beyond the intersections but tapes back to four lanes. Upon receiving clarification, no additional questions were asked. All Task Force members came to consensus that the project is not a POAQC.

**Final Determination:** FHWA, FTA, EPA, Caltrans, CARB and the remaining Task Force members concurred and determined the SR 1 – Fassler to West Port Drive Widening project is not a project of air quality concern.

San Francisco County Transportation Authority: Yerba Buena Island (YBI) Ramp Improvements

Eric Cordoba (SFCTA) explained the Yerba Buena Island Ramp Improvement project is to replace the existing westbound on and off-ramps located on the eastern side of YBI with new expanded westbound on and off-ramps. The purpose of the replacement is to improve safety and operation. The expansion of the ramps would increase the deceleration length for the off ramps and increase the merging distance for the on-ramps. The project scope also includes adding a ramp metering component. From the environmental analysis conducted, the project is not projected to increase vehicle capacity and will not change the existing traffic mix currently utilizing the ramps. Without the construction of the project, the projected level of service (LOS) for the ramps in 2035 is expected to fail at an F rating.

Once the project was opened up for comments, a question posed by the Task Force was whether the analysis took into account the projected population due to the planned development for Yerba Buena Island. Eric responded the analysis did take the future population from the planned development was taken into consideration. Since no further questions were asked, Ashley asked for a motion for a POAQC determination. The Task Force came to consensus the project is not a POAQC.

**Final Determination:** FHWA, FTA, EPA, Caltrans, CARB and the remaining Task Force members concurred and determined the Yerba Buena Island Ramp Improvements project is not a project of air quality concern.

**Exempt Project List from PM<sub>2.5</sub> Project Level Conformity**

Grace Cho (MTC) explained the project list submitted to the Task Force are those which the individual project sponsors identified as exempt from PM<sub>2.5</sub> project level conformity. The projects being presented to the Task Force seek concurrence that they are exempt from project level conformity. Grace also explained there were a small subset of projects which had been viewed at the previous meeting and required further information. Those projects indicated with an astrix had been carried over to the list being viewed and the additional information was included in footnotes. Ashley asked the Task Force if there were any further questions regarding the projects. Seeing there were none, the Task Force concurred the projects were exempt from PM<sub>2.5</sub> project level conformity.

**Final Determination:** FHWA, FTA, EPA, Caltrans, CARB and the remaining Task Force members concurred the list of projects as exempt from PM<sub>2.5</sub> project level conformity.

- 4. Guidance on PM<sub>2.5</sub> Project Level Conformity Exemption Code 40 CFR 93.126 – Safety – Road Diets Qualification:** Sri Srinivasan (MTC) explained a question was raised at the previous Task Force meeting whether road diets can be considered exempt under 40 CFR 93.126 through the safety category. MTC staff was tasked at the last meeting to provide a working definition of safety and traffic calming, which staff believed road diet projects could be categorized under for an exemption. Sri presented the research completed by staff by first explaining that safety projects have a wide definition as illustrated by the current projects deemed exempt in the 2011 TIP. She then presented information about the effects of road diet on facility capacity and circulation. Based on the research, road diet projects completed on a road facility under a certain average daily traffic volume did not change capacity, increased the safety for other users, and did not impact air quality.

Finally, Sri provided information for three road diet projects which seek project level conformity determinations. These projects were: Petaluma Boulevard south Road Diet, Palo Alto California Avenue Transit Hub, and Delaware Street Bicycle Lane and Streetscape. With the information provided for the Task Force, Sri asked if road diets can be considered exempt from either regional and/or project level conformity.

Ginger mentioned she took this issue to OTAC and their response was that EPA does not believe road diets can clearly fit under the existing CFR exemptions and therefore road diet projects needs to be reviewed through consultation. Mike mentioned in other regions within the state road diets are being reviewed through consultation so this approach would remain consistent. Conclusion by the Task Force determined road diets are not exempt from project level conformity and must undergo interagency consultation to receive a POAQC status.

Sri followed up by asking the Task Force whether road diets are exempt from regional emissions analysis. Ashley said she believed they would because the road diet projects, as exemplified, are not deemed regionally significant and would not be coded into the emissions analysis model. Mike responded saying road diets, depending on the project scope and context, may fit under regional exemption 40 CRF 93.127 as a lane channelization, however consideration as to whether the project is regionally significant needs to be taken into account. Ashley explained in the Bay Area the road diet projects funded were not considered regionally significant.

As a procedural streamlining of reviewing road diet projects, Mike suggested MTC bring all road diet projects before the Task Force in a list style format and clearly indicate the projects are non-exempt from regional emissions analysis and not regionally significant. The Task Force can then make a project level POAQC determination. Task Force members Jason Crow (CARB), Ted Matley (FTA), and Stew liked the streamlined approach presented by Mike. MTC staff agreed from the meeting forward, road diet projects would be presented to the Task Force in the streamlined listed format for POAQC consultation. Additionally the Task Force made a final determination that the example road diet projects are not a POAQC.

- 5. Proposed TIP Amendment 11-06 – City of Santa Rosa – Sixth Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Linkage Project (SON090031):** Ashley explained the federal and state partners of the Task Force had conducted an offline interagency consultation for the City of Santa Rosa on the Sixth Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Linkage project. As a result of the consultation, the project sponsor and MTC staff agreed to conduct a TIP amendment to reflect the exempt elements in the scope of the Sixth Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Linkage project. Additionally, the parent project, Sonoma US 101 HOV - SR 12 to Steele & Steele Lane I/C (TIP ID: SON010001) will be amended to include the non-exempt elements. The intention of the item was to document the offline consultation and demonstrate a new regional conformity analysis will not be triggered by the amendment actions. The conformity analysis conducted for the 2011 TIP included both projects and TIP Amendment 11-065 will not change the exempt and non-exempt status of either project.
- 6. Other Business:** Sri provided a short update in regards to the transit fleet analysis MTC staff was tasked to conduct for the Task Force. The purpose of the transit fleet analysis is

Task Force meeting scheduled in May.

Ginger also provided a short update on an item she was tasked to ask QTAC. Ginger posed the question to OTAC if park and ride facilities could fall under an exemption for project level conformity. From OTAC's review, park and ride facilities do not clearly fit under on the exemptions outlined in the CFR exempt from project level conformity and therefore would need to undergo interagency consultation.

Adam Crenshaw (MTC) also brought an item before the Task Force regarding TIP Amendment 11-06. Adam explained MTC staff plans to proceed with a TIP Amendment 11-06 to program existing funds from FY2009-10 to FY2011-12 for the Oregon-Page Mill Expressway (TIP ID SCL050080). In the 2011 TIP the project does not have any programmed funding for the four-year cycle. MTC staff wanted to present the item to confirm the action will not trigger a new regional conformity determination. Mike and the rest of the Task Force confirmed the action will not trigger a new conformity analysis.

With no additional business items, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45am.