

**Air Quality Conformity Task Force
Summary Meeting Notes
June 23, 2011**

Attendance:

Ginger Vagenas – EPA
Mike Brady – Caltrans
Stew Sonnenberg– FHWA
Eddie Barrios – Fehr & Peers
Dick Fahey – Caltrans
David Caneer – Parsons Brinkerhoff
Peter Brown – SFMTA
Wells Lawson – SF Office of Economic
Development

Marty Mellerer – SFMTA
Shannon Hatcher – ICF International
Peter Albert – SFMTA
Emily Landin-Lowe - Caltrans
Glenn Kinoshka – Caltrans
Ashley Nguyen – MTC
Adam Crenshaw – MTC
Sri Srinivasan – MTC
Brenda Dix - 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. **May 26, 2011 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary:** The Task Force approved the meeting summary via consensus.
3. **PM_{2.5} Interagency Consultations:** To begin the interagency consultations for PM_{2.5} project level conformity Ashley Nguyen (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

Contra Costa Transportation Authority: I-80/Central Ave Operational Improvement Project

David Caneer (Parsons Brinkerhoff) described the project as an operational improvement to address existing congestion on Central Avenue at the border of Richmond and El Cerrito. The project focuses on the I-80 Central Ave interchange left-turn, west-bound movement. The project will use changeable message signs to temporarily close the west bound on-ramp and redirect traffic to an adjacent interchange a ¼ mile away to the I-580 Eastbound on ramp. One mile south of the interchange the two freeways merge so local street traffic will be redirected but the traveler will not be prohibited from reaching their final destination. Through the project, travel time will be improved along the corridor and vehicle queues will no longer back-up onto the mainline. To reduce the redirected travel time, there is a proposed signalization project at the I-580 interchange which is currently stop controlled to synchronize it with the existing I-80 signals. Eddie Barrios (Fehr & Peers) added that this closure will only be applicable from 11 am to 3 pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Task Force had no questions about the project.

Final Determination TBD: EPA, MTC, FHWA and Caltrans and the remaining Task Force concurred that this project is not a POAQC.

San Francisco Department of Public Works: Bayview Transportation Improvements

Wells Lawson (Mayor's Office of Economic Development) described the project as a package of roadway improvements to connect Hunter's Point/Candlestick Park in San Francisco to the 101 with a major emphasis on the transit and bicycle and pedestrian services. Through the project they hope to double the transit roadshare in the area. The additional service will mostly use existing roadways so it is not capacity increasing, it will simply upgrade the corridors. The project will avoid currently existing residential neighborhoods. The project will be built in line with San Francisco's Better Streets Program. The project will extend 6 Muni lines to the area and will create 2 new Muni lines running through the project area and connecting to the proposed transit center. The average resident in this area currently pays twice as much for transportation as the average San Francisco resident so this project aims to minimize that discrepancy by increasing connectivity to existing transit and roadway services.

Peter Albert (SFMTA) continued to explain that the project conforms to three of San Francisco's local plans: the Transit Effectiveness Plan (TEP), the Better Streets Plan, and the San Francisco Bicycle Plan. The project will add a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line connecting the Balboa Park BART station to Caltrain and ending at the new transit center proposed at Hunter's Point. There it will meet 4 other lines including a new one-seat ride express buss to downtown to help increase economic development in low income neighborhoods. A one-seat ride will also be created from the South end of the project to downtown. The new lines will connect to all quadrants of San Francisco to ensure access to a range of job opportunities. The transit center will allow for maximum choice for reaching destinations since *all* busses run from one location. Transit amenities can also be significantly increased by having all busses run through the transit center.

Marty Meller (SFMTA) stated that in 2004 MTA made a commitment to create and implement a clean air plan which uses bridge technologies for cleaner busses. They also agreed to run the cleanest vehicles in the south-eastern portion of San Francisco which includes the project area. Their fleet now includes hybrid, biodiesel, and electric (with a small generator that provides the electricity) busses. SFMTA has the cleanest bus fleet in the state and has reduced PM emissions by 99% through conversions and plans to adopt even cleaner vehicles as the technology becomes viable.

Shannon Hatcher (ICF International) prepared a handout demonstrating how the project is not a POAQC. He pointed out that there is no change in truck volumes in the build and no build scenarios at about 25,000 truck AADT. Out of 37 intersections, all but three are improved by the project. At the transit center there will be a peak hour arrival of 52 vehicles but by 2035 those vehicles should be zero emissions thus not result in any hot-spots. The project is not a new or expanded highway project and is well below the truck threshold. The project does not result in changes to land use that would affect diesel use. The nearest PM_{2.5} violation was at Arkansas Street monitoring station, 3 miles to the north.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) expressed her support for the project but requested a clearer timeline of the fleet conversions and information on the funding for the conversions. In order to understand what would happen without those conversions, Ginger requested a "worst-case scenario" calculation of emissions and the difference in emissions between the

best and worst case. Ginger also requested documentation that SFMTA will be directing the cleanest portion of their fleet to the project area.

Marty responded that the conversion funding is secured through 2017 for replacing 45 of the oldest busses and that the new BRT busses will use the same technical specs as the Van Ness BRT bus specs which have gone through a thorough review process. Revenue from the project is projected to be high enough to pay for the rest of the conversions. Also, the biodiesel currently being used is B20 but B50 will be implemented by next year. SFMTA is not permitted to buy any buses less clean than hybrids so there is no way the fleet could get dirtier. Marty agreed to provide documentation of all of these facts.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) also stated that this is a beneficial and well thought out project. He requested more information on the transit center including the potential range of diesel traffic. With that information he believes this project would not be considered a PAOQC.

Shannon noted that he made an error in the summary sheet he handed out. The sheet says that the project is a POAQC while the justification that he has provided is that it is not a POAQC.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) voiced his support for the project and seconded Ginger's request for information on the transition plan and funding for moving retrofits/new vehicles. He also requested a description of what is occurring at the intersections with LOS F in 2035 and verification that there will not be a diesel issue at those intersections due to the industry in the area. SFMTA responded that the LOS changes are due to the development in the area which is not part of the project being brought to the Task Force.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) agreed with all other comments and asked when the transit center and each of the bus lines would be coming online. Shannon responded that the transit center would open in 2020 but the bus lines would be running earlier.

Ginger requested that all project sponsors for all projects send out documents for the meeting before the meeting rather than providing them at the meeting. She also requested that when links to documents are provided in the project assessment form the specific pages that are relevant in the link be referenced.

Ashley summarized by stating that the Task Force was leaning towards approving the project as not a POAQC pending the submission of further documentation for the transit center timing, LOS explanation and diesel split at the intersections, bus fleet replacement timeline and funding.

Final Determination TBD: SFMTA will submit a memo with the information requested by the Task Force and the handouts from the meeting. EPA, MTC, FHWA and Caltrans will confirm the POAQC status after this documentation is provided.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA): Reconstruct I-880/Route 262 Interchange and Widen I-880 from 8 Lanes to 10 Lanes

Emily Landin-Lowe (Caltrans) explained that this project received environmental clearance in 2001. The majority of the project is complete so only a small remaining portion of the project is being brought to the Task Force. The whole project includes widening on I-880 for an HOV lane and an auxiliary lane, reconstruction of Mission interchange with route 262 and widening of Mission Boulevard. This portion of the project includes replacing ramps to Kato Road, widening Mission Boulevard by one lane in each direction, and replacing old railroad bridges over Mission Blvd.

Glen Kinoshka (Caltrans) provided a map of the portion of the project currently being brought to the Task Force. His analysis of the project is based on the fact that all of the work is constructed except for this portion of the project's scope. Going through the requirements for a POAQC, the project is not a new or expanded highway. It does not increase the diesel truck traffic. The diesel traffic on I-880 is at 4.8% at year of opening (8,738) and escalating to 5% in 2025 (11,000). It passes the 10,000 threshold but this project is not doing any work on I-880, the increase is due to natural increases in traffic, not due to the project. The ramps in the project have 5% or 4% truck volumes with no changes in land use. The project is not a bus or rail terminal transfer point nor is it an expanded bus or rail project. There is no SIP in the Bay Area.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) asked about the potential rail yard near the project and how that would affect diesel traffic in the area.

Glen and Emily said that this was not accounted for in the calculations because there is no plan for the rail yard at this point so there is nothing to base the analysis off of.

Mike understood that if there was no news on the rail yard then nothing in the analysis needed to be changed.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) notified the Task Force that the assumption that local land uses will not be changing would not be factored into their determination but the project is still not a POAQC.

Final Determination: FHWA, EPA, Caltrans and the remaining Task Force members concurred that this project is not a POAQC and if information was discovered about the rail yard then it should be sent to the Task Force.

Exempt Project List from PM_{2.5} Project Level Conformity

The Task Force approved the exempt project lists via consensus.

Final Determination: FHWA, EPA, Caltrans and the remaining Task Force members concurred the list of projects as exempt from PM_{2.5} project level conformity.

4. Proposed TIP Administrative Modification 2011-08: Revisions to Air Quality Exemption Code

Adam Crenshaw (MTC) stated that this is a continuation of MTC staff's review of the air quality exemption codes for projects in the 2011 TIP. Due to inconsistency in the identified exemption code for 11 projects, staff would like to revise/correct the exemption codes, and seek agreement on those revisions by the Task Force. In addition, staff is also looking for confirmation that the revisions do not require a new conformity determination.

Ashley Nguyen (MTC) stated that the Incident Management Project (090044) has 2 potential exemption codes and MTC would like guidance on which code is best.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) requested that the Traffic Control Devices code be used since the Safety Improvement Program exemption applies exclusively to projects funded out of the HSIP program.

Ashley agreed to this code selection.

Sri Srinivasan (MTC) said that Caltrans requested that the Safety Improvement Program code also be used for the SHOP projects on the review list.

Mike has been told by Caltrans that HSIP is the primary criterion for the Safety Improvement exemption. Mike will talk with the programming team and SHOP team to confirm that Safety Improvement Program exemptions be used only for HSIP and the other projects should use a different safety related code.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) and Mike will check on this classification issue and Mike will email the responses he receives to all members of the Task Force to confirm the usage.

MTC will move forward with these revisions other than the SHOP projects which will be reclassified after Mike receives information on how the Safety Improvement Program exemption can be used.

5. Minor Fleet Expansion

Ashley Nguyen (MTC) communicated that since Ted Mately (FTA) could not join the discussion today this item will be delayed until the next meeting. Ashley requested that Ginger Vagenas (EPA) share the memo and supporting documents with EPA staff for comments prior to the next meeting. Ginger had already shared the information.

6. Progress Report on Plan Bay Area

Ashley Nguyen (MTC) presented the latest work on the proposed alternative scenarios analysis. Staff wants to keep the Task Force apprised of key developments in the Plan Bay Area process, particularly since the work will affect the modeling, land use and transportation assumptions to be used in the regional conformity analysis.

Peter Brown (SFMTA) commented that the Task Force should weigh in to encourage a more robust definition of pricing rather than just parking pricing. He suggested that demand pricing be used which could also include road pricing. He believes that the Task Force's goals related to air quality would be helped if this definition of pricing was adopted. Also, with regard to the

GHG emissions goals, he believes they cannot be achieved if all the onerous for change is placed on new development since there is not high enough of a turn over rate in the build infrastructure. Therefore, there needs to be a deeper policy change.

Ashley responded that MTC is very interested in parking pricing due to MTC's previous work in this area. Due to these previous efforts, there is engagement from local governments and the potential should be explored further. When discussing road pricing with the Commission, staff was directed to only look at HOT lanes. However, MTC would like to track and learn from any pilots that San Francisco performs related to pricing and MTC could potentially use those results when testing various scenarios.

Peter still requested that parking pricing be renamed to demand parking but with the emphasis remaining on parking. In the San Francisco Climate Action Plan, road pricing proved itself again and again to be the best way to reduce GHG emissions.

Ashley addressed the comment that the emphasis for GHG emissions was being placed on new developments by restating that this work is a combination of all the available tools, including land use, infrastructure, and policy initiatives. MTC believes land use can still get us farther and therefore it is being pushed the hardest.

Ashley asked FHWA, EPA and potentially Caltrans to participate in a consultation meeting to review assumptions being used in Plan Bay Area to ensure that when regional conformity is analyzed for the plan, the assumptions will have already been vetted. Ashley would like to target this meeting for early 2012.

7. Other Business/Adjourn

With no other business, Ashley Nguyen (MTC) adjourned the meeting at about 11:00 a.m.

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