



Johnnie F. Tinsler, Chair
San Francisco, CA

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MTC PLANNING COMMITTEE
November 4, 2011
DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Chair Sperring called the MTC Planning Committee meeting to order at 10:47 a.m. Planning Committee members in attendance were: Committee Vice Chair Halsted, Commissioners Azumbrado, Giacomini, Green, Haggerty, Liccardo, Mackenzie and Mullin. Commission Chair Tissier and Commission Vice Chair Worth were present in their ex-officio voting member capacity. Other Commissioners present as ad hoc members of the Committee were Bates, Campos, Cortese, and Wiener.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- Minutes of October 14, 2011
- Consistency Findings for 2011 Congestion Management Programs, MTC Resolution No. 3434, Revised

Commissioner Mackenzie moved approval of the Consent Calendar, Commissioner Halsted seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Plan Bay Area: Draft Project Performance Assessment Results

Ms. Lisa Klein and Mr. David Vautin presented slides and tables of draft results from the Transportation Project Performance Assessment for Plan Bay Area.

Ms. Klein explained that the Project Performance Assessment is one of several analysis efforts underway to help the Commission select the projects and programs that will be included in the preferred investment strategy for Plan Bay Area. A couple other elements of this analysis work include the Scenario Assessment and the Equity Analysis, the results of which will be brought to the committee next month, and the Investment Trade-off discussion, which will be getting underway and continue into the early spring.

The Project Performance Assessment is similar to work MTC staff did for Transportation 2035. All the non-committed projects were evaluated based on the policy that the Commission adopted earlier this year, selecting projects that stand out from the crowd—both at the high end and also at the low end.

There are two parts to the Project Performance Assessment: the targets assessment, which identified whether the projects support the ten targets that MTC and ABAG adopted earlier this year and benefit/cost analysis in which staff compared the benefits of the project with the cost.

Mr. David Vautin provided details of the results of the benefit-cost (B/C) results. He said that high performers—those identified as cost effective and supporting targets—are projects that should be included in Plan Bay Area. Low performers are projects that deserve further thought before being included in the Plan. High performers are defined as projects with a target score greater than or equal to 7 and a B/C greater than or equal to 10; low performers are defined as having a target score less than or equal to 1, or that a B/C ratio of less than 1. Staff would like the Committee's feedback on these proposed definitions of performance.

Regarding the timeline ahead, Mr. Vautin said staff has received a large amount of technical feedback from Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs), transit agencies, and the Technical Advisory Group. Staff will be meeting with the Policy Advisory Committee and the Partnership Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) during November, and in December the Planning Committee will hear about the scenario results. There will be an outreach in January 2012 that will consider both the scenario and project-level results, and staff will be producing the final Project Performance Assessment report. In February after the end of the Investment Trade-off discussions, staff will identify a Preferred Scenario, incorporating the results not only of the Project Performance Assessment but also the scenarios and from the trade-off discussions.

Committee Comments

1. Commissioner Wiener questioned the 80 percent of scoring that relates to travel time. He suggested that the Downtown Extension project and the Caltrain Electrification project not be separated.
2. Commissioner Cortese expressed concerns that projects with high target scores but low benefit-cost ratio might be overlooked, particularly projects assessed in isolation rather than a mix of projects in a corridor that mutually benefit from each other.
3. Commissioner Campos asked that equity considerations be taken into account other than the one adopted target that deals with adequate housing.
4. Commissioner Green brought up the issue of weighting the targets—two are state mandated, the other eight are not differentiated as to how important they are. He also suggested changing the definitions of “high-performing” projects from the current ≥ 7 and $B/C \geq 10$ to ≥ 7 or $B/C \geq 10$, and “low-performing” projects be changed from ≤ -1 or $B/C \leq 1$ to ≤ -1 and $B/C \leq 1$.
5. Commissioner Worth requested that gap closure projects, such as express bus projects, could be considered on a corridor basis, not just a county basis. She also asked that road projects that involve goods movement be looked at for an opportunity for some kind of revenue stream that would help pay for the construction as well as operation and maintenance.
6. Commissioner Mackenzie said that projects in Sonoma and Marin County that score high in targets but low in B/C are going to be watched with keen interest, and may make a compelling case on benefits.
7. Commissioner Haggerty said that BART to Livermore Phase I costs should be reviewed further. He added that Alameda County is considering a one cent transportation sales tax that will help fund this project and MTC has an obligation to consider it.
8. Commissioner Bates commented that when we allocate the money to the counties, we have a condition that they have to provide affordable housing.

Staff Response to Committee Comments

1. Mr. Vautin said that the typical project is 80 percent but it varies based on the specific project. Secondly, transit projects get substantial travel time benefits because it gets people out of cars and onto transit. Travel time by itself is not favoring road or transit projects. Steve Heminger responded to the Downtown Extension/Caltrain electrification issue, saying CMAs were provided information quite some time ago, but MTC did not reach out directly to the Transbay JPA. He added that neither electrification nor the downtown extension fare well in benefit-cost ratios, but that adding high-speed rail to the mix makes it a completely different story.
2. Mr. Heminger responded that staff is not suggesting a paint-by-numbers approach. While the burden is on MTC to find a way to fund high performing projects, for the lower performing projects the burden may shift to the project sponsor—why isn't it performing better? Decisions can be informed by the objective information, but not be overwhelmed by it.
3. Ms. Klein said that the adequate housing target calls for housing 100% of the demand by income level. When staff looked at the track record on affordable housing production, it fell in sync with other criteria in terms of total amount of housing projected. Staff will be working on all of these issues over the next few months before the criteria are finalized.
4. Mr. Heminger responded that benefits may be underestimated, but the costs certainly are underestimated. On the question of equity and geographic dispersion of the money, he said that these projects are being evaluated because they are candidates for discretionary funds.
5. Mr. Heminger said that given that two major discretionary funding sources are county-based, the BART to Livermore project would not likely be funded out of either STP-CMAQ or the One Bay Area grants. Projects like this will then be looking for regional discretionary funds that are more in the control of this Commission, or in Washington where we need a regional consensus to go get them. The further away the project is from the funding source, the harder it is to get funding.

Chair Haggerty received public comment from:

Robert Macaulay, Director of Planning at Solano Transportation Authority, who complimented the staff on being responsive on comments already provided and has pointed out weaknesses of the travel forecast model. The model is a good product to move forward with the ensuing months of discussion.

Liz Brisson, SFCTA, complimented staff on their work. She spoke about the investment policy discussions that will happen in Spring 2012 and the need to consider the role of land use within the performance framework. There should be more detailed discussions about the Freeway Performance Initiative (FPI) and its scope.

Stuart Cohen, TransForm, referenced his e-mail to the Committee, complimented the excellent process, including illuminating the weaknesses of the assessment. He also spoke about unavailable funds for expansion projects.

Andy Katz, Breathe California, gave general comments about the overall analysis which has improved over what was presented in the past – particularly the way travel time is addressed. He would like to see an informational tool that helps commission distinguish between different kinds of travel time benefits for projects.

Bob Vinn, assistant city engineer for the City of Livermore commented on the BART to Livermore project being a sustainable project.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 9, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, CA.