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

Adrienne J. Tissier, Chair
San Mateo County

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Policy Advisory Council
November 9, 2011
Draft Minutes

Chair Dolly Sandoval 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, Richard Hedges, Dolores Jaquez, Linda Jeffery Sailors, Randi Kinman, Federico Lopez, Marshall Loring, Yokia Mason, Tina King Neuhausel, Kendal Oku, Lori Reese-Brown, Gerald Rico and Egon Terplan. Excused: Sandi Galvez and Tanya Narath. Absent: Evelina Molina, Cheryl O'Connor and Frank Robertson

Approval of October Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the October 12, 2011 meeting were approved after a motion by Mr. Hedges and a second by Mr. Loring. Ms. Baker abstained from the vote as she was not in attendance at the October meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Subcommittee Reports

Equity and Access Subcommittee
Subcommittee Chair Naomi Armenta reported that due to lack of urgent items to discuss, the Equity and Access subcommittee did not meet today. The subcommittee will meet next month to hold elections and discuss future work plan items. She encouraged subcommittee members to attend to ensure there is a quorum. Ms. Armenta also mentioned that members of the subcommittee met as part of the Regional Equity Working Group (REWG), where staff reviewed the equity component of the Plan Bay Area project performance assessment results. They were given the opportunity to provide input to the Sustainable Community Scenario (SCS) indicators and maps related to those indicators. There was also an update to the One Bay Area grant program.

Vice-chair Egon Terplan gave an update on the Transit Sustainability Project (TSP), which he continues to be involved in discussing. The main question is what will MTC's oversight be of the transit operators in the Bay Area? These discussions have been lively, and staff will be presenting recommendations to the Commission soon. He encouraged Council members to let him know if they have input regarding this project.

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Plan Bay Area Project Performance Assessment Results

Lisa Klein and David Vautin of MTC staff presented the results of the project performance assessment for Plan Bay Area. Questions and comments from Council members were as follows.

Ms. Jeffery Sailors inquired if the state of each project was taken into consideration when it was assessed. Specifically she commented that the BART to Livermore project has changed considerably and should be a lot less costly and more productive. MTC staff replied that the BART to Livermore project was assessed with input from BART and ACTC and staff will make any necessary adjustments before finalizing the assessments.

Vice-chair Terplan asked staff to go into more detail on the wide range of cost benefits in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects. Staff noted several contributing factors: 1) land use; 2) lower performing BRTs in Santa Clara county where VTA will not be replacing existing bus routes but will supplement their service, which adds to the cost of the project; and 3) the two BRT projects in San Francisco are very different – one has dedicated lanes throughout and one does not.

Vice-chair Terplan mentioned the role of travel time in the overall cost benefit analysis and how it is weighted more than other factors, resulting in an impact on certain kinds of transit expansion and road projects. He also noted that travel time was not one of the overall targets. Staff responded that the value of travel time was reviewed very closely due to concerns raised last time, and they used best practices for travel time, per US DOT recommendations for benefit cost.

MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger reminded the Council of the need to view both the target results and the cost benefit results together as they compliment each other.

Mr. Castellanos questioned the statement that congestion pricing scored high because its revenues can be used for transit improvement. He asked if this was stated by the agencies and whether they indicated how they plan to use the money. Staff replied that SFCTA has indicated that net revenues would be used for transit improvement. Mr. Castellanos also asked how health costs — one of the factors used in the assessment — was quantified in dollar amounts. Staff used model output based on number of minutes walking and biking to transit to measure how many people would become physically active due to additional walking and biking. Greater than 30 minutes of physical activity due to active transportation = $1000 of annual health cost savings. Mr. Castellanos further inquired about the difference between the T2035 benefit cost analysis and this current analysis. Staff listed several contributing factors: 1) a new travel model was used, 2) a new land use pattern was used, 3) there was a correction made in future projects based on the current economy, 4) and there were changes in project definitions.

Mr. Burnett inquired about the expansion project in Solano County I-80/680 SR12 and asked for more information from staff on its low benefit cost ratio score. Staff indicated that recent improvements in the project area have alleviated much of the congestion.

Ms. Kinman asked if the Freeway Performance Initiative (FPI) and roadway efficiency cost benefits were based on ramp metering and moving freeway traffic faster and smoother. Staff replied that definitions for FPI have shifted from freeway to focus more on arterials. Ms. Kinman also asked if the analysis factored in freeways that get backed up in to neighborhoods due to

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Plan Bay Area Project Performance Assessment Results (continued)

ramp metering. Staff does attempt to capture this, yet not on a micro scale. Ms. Kinman reiterated the importance of MTC capturing the negative impacts of ramp metering. She asked how MTC captures health costs to people who do not walk or bike, such as seniors or disabled. Staff responded that this is not captured as a benefit but has the same valuation as if driving in a car. Ms. Kinman commented further that the analysis was completed for the mass population, but she would like to see analysis targeting only the population affected by Lifeline projects. Staff agreed there should be a process for low-performing projects to be considered.

Mr. Din questioned all-door boarding —a measureable benefit — and how it was factored in on the benefit costs. Staff responded that the model doesn't get to that level of granularity, but benefits for projects that have all-door boarding are captured. There weren't any situations where there was a project to implement an all-door boarding program.

Ms. Neuhausel questioned the models used in target assessments, particularly the adequate housing outcome and if it was based on the 2008 ABAG housing projections or on the current economy. Staff responded that the housing income used is recession adjusted, is more current than 2008, and also looks forward into the future.

Ms. Baker inquired about projects overlapping in the assessments. Staff responded they are aware of projects overlapping and overlaps will be resolved when it comes time to make trade-offs and select projects for inclusion in the plan.

Mr. Terplan asked staff if they were satisfied with how the targets performed in the assessment. Mr. Heminger reiterated the importance of looking at both the targets and benefits costs and how they compliment each other. He suggested the Council focus on the projects that are on the top of list and how we can get those projects done.

Chair Sandoval recognized Lindsay Imai from Urban Habitat for public comment. Ms. Imai expressed her appreciation to staff and noted the concerns and questions raised by the Council, including the overweighting in travel time and high-scoring projects that increase VMT. She made two suggestions to strengthen the qualitative side: 1) regarding adequate housing, preventing displacement should be added as a scoring criteria, and 2) under equitable access, the mode of transit should be accounted for in the ratings.

Chair Sandoval commented that projects should be evaluated using the same information and criteria and if a project doesn't make it to the top of the list, and it is a project that is good and affects our community, then it's up to leaders to step up and defend and fund the project.

Ms. Kinman moved that the Council agree with the overall evaluation process, yet express concern to the Commission about the weighting of projects that affect low-income, minority, senior and disabled communities, such as bike networks, Lifeline and TLC projects. The motion was seconded Lori Reese-Brown, and was approved unanimously.

Draft 2012 Legislative Program

Randy Rentschler, Legislation and Public Affairs Director, presented MTC's 2012 Draft Legislative Program to the Council.

Council members had comments and questions on the following topics:

- New High Speed Rail business plan
- SB 375 – CEQA benefits only for 50 percent or larger residential projects
- Car pool lanes – full lane pricing would serve other goals; a state bill would be needed
- AB 57 prognosis
- Goals for the legislative program (defined by the Legislation and Public Affairs section)
- TOD performance
- Council members asked to be notified of hearings related to AB 57 (the next one is scheduled for December 8th in San Francisco)

Call Box Evaluation

Stefanie Pow, MTC's Call Box Project Manager, gave a report on the recent evaluation of the region's call box system. Staff is making recommendations based on a 40% decline in call box volumes, and seeks input from the Policy Advisory Council on those recommendations. Policy Advisory Council members had the following comments:

- MTC should work with Caltrans to utilize their message boards to remind people they can call 511 from their cell phone for roadside assistance
- The proposed recommendations make sense, including new 511 signage for freeway aid
- Concern was expressed over removal of call boxes in urban areas without good cell coverage; MTC should ensure adequate cell coverage in the area before removing a call box
- Consider the possibility of issuing emergency phones to be issued on request to those in need
- Prioritize the lowest used call boxes for removal first
- The call box number is useful in assisting the CHP in locating individuals who need assistance – this should be considered before completely dismantling the system
- Lighting is important to maintain at remaining call boxes
- Continuing to have a call box system – especially as a Lifeline system – is important
- MTC should not eliminate every other box indiscriminately; if certain areas need a box because there is no ability to walk to the next call box, consideration should be given to keeping those boxes
- Suggest advertising prior to eliminating 50% of the call boxes, and not limit it to the message boards (should reserve those for important messages)

Staff Liaison Report

Leslie Lara, acting as staff liaison, gave the report on behalf of Pam Grove.

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Council Member Reports

Marshall Loring and Rich Hedges reported that they walked from the new Regional Agency Headquarters facility at 390 Main Street to the Embarcadero Caltrain station and found it to be a reasonable walk.

Lori Reese-Brown mentioned that the City of Richmond has established a "green prints" transportation program for which they will station hybrid vehicles in low-income residential apartment complexes. Participants in the program can register to use the vehicles for a low cost. She plans to invite Policy Advisory Council members to the ribbon-cutting ceremony in the near future, and she agreed to supply further information on the program to the Council.

New Business

Chair Sandoval suggested a future presentation of a PowerPoint by Mr. Loring and Mr. Hedges on mobility access to a number of BART stations around the region.

Mr. Hedges requested a future presentation from MTC staff on its conflict of interest policy. Chair Sandoval suggested this presentation be made as part of the orientation for the advisors who will be appointed as a result of the recruitment in early 2012.

Adjournment/Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m. The next Policy Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2011 in the MTC Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, California.