

Air Quality Conformity Task Force
Summary Meeting Notes
May 24, 2012
Revised August 17, 2012

Participants:

Mike Brady – Caltrans

Dick Fahey – Caltrans

Ted Matley – FTA

Stew Sonnenberg– FHWA

Ashley Nguyen – MTC

Stefanie Hom - MTC

Amir Fanai – BAAQMD

Andrea Gordon – BAAQMD

Tim Rimpo – URS

Adam Crenshaw – MTC

Sri Srinivasan - MTC

1. **Welcome and Self Introductions:** Stefanie Hom (MTC) called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. See attendance roster above. Stefanie noted that Ginger Vagenas (EPA) was not able to able to join the meeting, but would review the agenda items and provide comments later that week. The Task Force members would provide comments and recommendations on the agenda items, but final determinations would be made after Ginger’s comments were received.
2. **PM_{2.5} Interagency Consultations:** To begin the interagency consultations for PM_{2.5} project level conformity, Stefanie Hom (MTC) asked the project sponsors to give a brief overview of their projects prior to opening up the projects for questions by the Task Force.

POAQC Status Determinations

Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA): New Ferry Service from Berkeley/Albany to San Francisco

Tim Rimpo (URS), representing the San Francisco Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), gave an overview of the project. WETA is proposing to develop a new passenger-only public ferry transit link between the Berkeley waterfront and the San Francisco Ferry Building. The Berkeley ferry terminal would be located adjacent to Seawall Drive, south of the Berkeley Fishing Pier and north of HS Lordships restaurant. WETA would construct a ferry terminal building and associated waterside and landside facilities for berthing ferryboats at the Seawall Drive site.

Tim explained that, while implementation of the new ferry service is a trip generator, it would reduce congestion in the I-80/Bay Bridge corridor by providing approximately 1,716 passenger-trips per day by 2025. Bus service is currently not provided to the terminal location, but would be provided when the ferry service begins operations. Under “build” conditions, diesel powered ferries would arrive/depart the Berkeley terminal at 35-minute intervals during peak commute hours. Approximately 20 diesel buses per day would arrive to deliver passengers to the ferry terminal. The existing car park adjacent to the proposed ferry terminal site that provides parking for HS Lordship restaurant would be reconfigured to comply with BCDC requests and restriped to create more park space.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked where the new Berkeley ferry terminal would be located and where the new bus service would be. Tim indicated that the terminal would be located west of HS Lordships restaurant. The parking lot would be shared and reconfigured to comply with

BCDC requests; it would be slightly smaller in size but would be able to handle 652 vehicles through striping and use of valet parking for the restaurant. The bus service would be an extension of AC Transit service and they would determine the route and location of the stops.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) indicated that project is borderline of not generating a significant amount of diesel.

Ted Matley (FTA) asked how many ferries would run per day. Tim responded that approximately five to six ferries would run per day.

Andrea Gordon (BAAQMD) asked if the buses would be clean diesel buses. Tim responded that WETA would not have control over the buses. Mike added that the bus service would be an extension of AC Transit. Andrea stated that he believes the new AC Transit buses use clean diesel.

On May 31, 2012, Ginger Vagenas (EPA) emailed that she did not have any comments on the project.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that the project is not a POAQC.

PM_{2.5} Conformity Exempt List Review

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked for a definition of “New Freedom” projects. Sri Srinivasan (MTC) indicated “New Freedom” is a federal fund source for small transit projects.

On May 31, 2012, Ginger Vagenas (EPA) emailed that she did not have any comments on the exempt list.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that all projects are exempt from PM_{2.5} project level analysis.

3. Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2013 Transportation Improvement Program (Administrative Draft)

Ashley Nguyen (MTC) provided an overview of the administrative draft of the Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2013 Transportation improvement Program (TIP). The draft lays out the latest planning assumptions, extracted from previous the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and 2011 TIP conformity analysis, and includes data tables and conformity findings. The only new addition is appendix a, which is the 2013 TIP listing. Sri Srinivasan (MTC) and Adam Crenshaw (MTC) have been working with project sponsors to get their amendments into the 2013 TIP. There are no new exempt or non-exempt projects that were not included in the 2035 RTP.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) asked if all the projects listed are included in the current TIP, and if the list includes changes. Sri indicated that the 2013 TIP includes two new non-exempt and three exempt projects. Those projects were included and modeled in the 2035 RTP, but were

not included in the 2011 TIP, so now they will be added in the 2013 TIP. The added projects do not change any conformity analysis years or conformity modeling.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) verified that one of the new non-exempt projects is the regional express lane conversions, but asked what the other new non-exempt project is. Sri indicated that the other new non-exempt project is the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge Gateway Park project, since the project expects to add parking.

Dick asked if the express lane conversions were modeled in the last RTP. Ashley confirmed that the express lane conversions were modeled in the last RTP and will be carried forward into this plan.

Dick indicated that there is a typo in the third paragraph on page 4; references to the "2030" plan should be changed to "2035".

Amir Fanai (BAAQMD) asked if table 3a (Emissions Budget Comparisons for Ozone Precursors), page 7, are based on EMFAC 2007 data. Ashley confirmed that they are. Amir suggested that should be indicated as a footnote. Ashley clarified that the table is an excerpt from the previous report and that the report refers readers to original report which have those details.

Ashley went over the timeline for the release of the 2013 TIP and conformity analysis. It will be presented to MTC Programming and Allocations committee on July 13, 2012 to authorize release of both documents, which will start the 30 day review period. The final conformity analysis will be approved by the Programming and Allocations committee and the Commission in September 2012.

Stew asked Ashley if she foresees any problems with not getting the conformity analysis submitted in advance that would prevent the determination from being made by end of the year. Ashley indicated that she foresees no issues. The conformity analysis and 2013 TIP is a streamlined process and there are no new projects or programs that have not been vetted in the past.

Stew indicated that they are still waiting for EMFAC 2011 to be approved by EPA and asked if the 2040 RTP will use EMFAC 2011. Ashley confirmed that the 2040 RTP will use EMFAC 2011. Stew asked if the RTP is still scheduled to be released in April 2013. Ashley confirmed that it is.

On May 31, 2012, Ginger Vagenas (EPA) emailed that she did not have any comments.

4. Consent Calendar

- a. April 26, 2012 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary*
- b. Proposed TIP Revisions to Air Quality Exemption Codes*

The Task Force did not have any comments on the consent calendar.

On May 31, 2012, Ginger Vagenas (EPA) emailed that she did not have any comments on the consent calendar.

5. Other Business

Mike Brady (Caltrans) indicated that the new 8-hour ozone designations were released by the Federal Register.

On May 31, 2012, Ginger Vagenas (EPA) emailed that she discussed with OTAQ and Karina O'Connor whether road diet projects with traffic less than 20,000 ADT could be considered exempt under 40 CFR 93.126 – Safety Improvement Program. She provided the following information:

“No. These types of projects are neither air quality neutral for an exemption under 40 CFR 93.126 nor do these projects fall under the definition of a safety project. The information provided in FHWA’s “Evaluation of Lane Reduction ‘Road Diet’ Measures and Their Effects on Crashes and Injuries” did not make a compelling case that these projects have a significant safety benefit. (See the Summary of Findings from the report, which is included below.) Therefore, while we would expect the vast majority of these projects will not need a hot spot analysis, they are not eligible for treatment as exempt projects under 40 CFR 93.126 – Safety Improvement Program. As a result, these projects will need to be included in a transportation plan/TIP regional emissions analysis and brought forward to the AQCTF for POAQC determination. We note that the information required to make a determination on these projects is likely to be relatively straight-forward and would include the level of service at affected intersections and the amount of diesel traffic.

Summary of Findings

1. Crash frequencies at road diets in the after period were approximately 6 percent lower than at the corresponding comparison sites.
2. Crash rates did not change significantly from the before period to the after period. Although crash rates were lower at road diets than at comparison sites, road diets did not perform better or worse (from the before period to the after period) relative to comparison sites.
3. Road diet conversions did not affect crash severity.
4. Road diet conversions did not result in a significant change in crash types.”

On May 31, 2012, Ashley Nguyen (MTC) emailed: “Road diets are typically on local arterials. They are not considered to be regionally significant projects, and we would not typically code them in our travel model. Therefore, while they may be included in the Plan/TIP, they would not necessarily be reflected in the emissions analysis. She asked Ginger to clarify what she meant by having road diets be included in the emissions analysis.”

On May 31, 2012, Mike Brady (Caltrans) emailed: “If a project is not regionally significant (i.e. if not on a Principal Arterial or other route included in the modeling network) wouldn't they be like other non-exempt but not-regionally-significant projects? Even exempt projects usually need emissions assigned to the group when a full RTP analysis is done. TCMs can have emission reductions assigned as a group if the individual projects are too hard to figure out. Would these projects be treated similarly? Essentially, these are non-exempt projects that change capacity, so they probably have some emission effect -- though if LOS is good and doesn't change perhaps the effect is minimal. Our problem is that FHWA's study doesn't convince EPA that 20K is the magic number where such projects become de minimus. Perhaps the <20K AADT (or some other number to represent the upper bound of what's not included in

regional modeling ... on minor collectors/local streets for instance) diet projects could be considered "traffic control devices (other than signals and channelization)?" That's also an exempt category, and has been used in the past for neighborhood-scale traffic calming projects. It might be easier to fit some of the projects into than the "safety" category which has different justification criteria." On June 1, 2012, Ginger emailed that yes, if a project is not regionally significant, it would be like other non-exempt but not regionally-significant projects.

On June 8, 2012, Ginger emailed the following additional comments regarding road diets:

"OTAQ discussed road diets with FHWA and both agencies agree that you have to consider road diets on a case-by-case basis, and that we can't say that they all fit under a particular exempt category. FHWA did not think they were safety projects in general, and also thought that trying to fit them under the exempt category of "traffic control devices" wasn't workable -- it would stretch the meaning of that particular item beyond what it's meant to cover.

In summary:

-- Road diets should be considered on a case-by-case basis, and unless there's something unique, they're probably not exempt. In general, projects that change the number of lanes on a facility aren't exempt. While EPA is not completely shutting the door on a road diet ever being exempt, we think in most cases it would not be.

-- If road diets are on facilities that are not regionally significant, the MPO would include VMT from such projects in the same way that the MPO includes VMT on other non-regionally significant projects, per 93.122(a)(1)."

Stefanie Hom (MTC) concluded the meeting at 10:00 am.