

**Air Quality Conformity Task Force
Summary Meeting Notes
January 24, 2013**

Participants:

Dick Fahey – Caltrans	Ross McKeown – MTC
Stew Sonnenberg - FHWA	Carolyn Clevenger – MTC
Mike Brady – Caltrans	Brenda Dix – MTC
Ginger Vagenas – EPA	Stefanie Hom – MTC
Matt Bomberg – Alameda CTC	Harold Brazil – MTC
Robert (Bob) Beck – TJPA	Sri Srinivasan – MTC
Mary Pryor – TJPA	Adam Crenshaw – MTC
Paul Waddell – UC Berkeley	Miriam Chion – ABAG
Ken Kirkey – MTC	Mark Shorett – ABAG
David Ory – MTC	

1. **Welcome and Self Introductions:** Stefanie Hom (MTC) called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. See attendance roster above. Ted Matley (FTA) was not in attendance and would provide comments through email.
2. **PM_{2.5} Interagency Consultations**
 - a. **PM_{2.5} Conformity Exempt List Review**

Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TBJPA): Transbay Terminal/Caltrain Extension Phase 2

Bob Beck (TJPA) provided an overview of the project. Phase 2 of the Transbay Transit Center program is the extension of the Caltrain commuter rail service from its current San Francisco terminus at Fourth and Townsend Streets to a new underground terminus beneath the proposed new Transbay Transit Center building. It is assumed that the Caltrain extension will be via electrified propulsion and will not result in any increases in diesel emissions. The project includes preliminary engineering; environmental; planning, specifications, and estimate (PS&E); and right-of-way phases of downtown extension (Phase 2a).

Mike Brady (Caltrans) asked for clarification on the scope of the project; is this project considered a transit project or rail project? If it primarily funded with transit funding, it is part of Transportation Conformity. If it is funded with FRA funding, then it is a rail project.

Bob responded that the project is not fully funded yet; the primary funds dedicated to the project are land sale values and tax increments. The City of San Francisco will be establishing a Mello-Roos district around the station to generate tax revenue. Future funding is expected to come from FTA New Starts funding and high speed rail funding.

Mike indicated that this project sounds like it is a transit project, not a rail project, since funding is primarily from FTA and not FRA. The answer determines which type of conformity the Task Force is doing.

Bob confirmed that funding would be more from FTA than FRA.

Mike confirmed that since this project is considered a transit project, then it is part of Transportation Conformity. He did not think this project is a project if air quality concern.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) indicated that he would not consider this a project of air quality concern, since there would be no new bus arrivals as part of this project.

Mike indicated that the project might even reduce buses, since there would not be as many bus stops between the station and downtown.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) indicated that the project assessment form mentions that intersections could experience more delays, but there is no supporting information. There needs to be more information to understand which intersections are being impacted and why. The form also indicated that there would not be any difference in the arrival of buses, but there was no additional information. There is uncertainty about whether Caltrain will be electrified. Electrification seems to be basis of why the project would have a limited impact. The form needs to be clear that the project is for electrification, and if that were to change, the project would need to go through consultation again because that would be significant change in scope.

Mike added that the project assumes the railcars will be electric, but that is not absolute. If the project changes to diesel railcars, it will need to go through consultation again.

Bob responded that funding for electrification is through high speed rail; the assumption is that the project will be electrified. If the project changes to diesel, it would need to be reconsidered. For bus arrivals, the ridership analysis and on-board passenger survey indicates that there would be a significant increase in Caltrain ridership coming into station. The assumption is that most of those riders would be coming into downtown to access the financial district, so intermodal transfers would be limited. Also, this would be the only stop and/or the end of the line for most of the bus operators that come through the station. So the impact of transfers would not likely generate additional bus trips on top of the current level of service.

Mary Pryor (TJPA) indicated that traffic information should be included in the EIS or online.

Mike indicated that the form states that there would be seven intersections that would be affected/worsened by the project, but there is no supporting information.

Ginger indicated that it would be helpful to have all information included in the project assessment form.

Bob provided background on the level of service (LOS) around impacted intersections; the City of San Francisco looked at these intersections in conjunction with the Transit Center District Plan. The intersections immediately around the transit center are mostly LOS D, E, or F today. Projected out to 2030, the intersections would be at LOS F in the no project scenarios, and LOS "more F" with the project. There are impacts at the intersections, but they are incremental in the project vs. no project scenarios.

Mike indicated that if the project is making something worse in a non-attainment area, then the Task Force needs to know about it and understand what the effects of the project really are.

Ginger indicated that the project is probably not a project of air quality concern, but she did not feel comfortable making that determination without seeing supporting information.

Carolyn Clevenger (MTC) suggested that the project sponsor email a more complete project assessment form for the Task Force to review.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) agreed that the project sponsor should provide more information on the project assessment form then email it to the Task Force.

Mike asked if the traffic impacts are for the entire Transbay Terminal project scope.

Bob responded that the analysis in the EIS/EIR related to traffic does not segment traffic by different phases.

Stefanie indicated that the project sponsor will modify the project assessment form and email it to the Task Force.

On January 28, 2013, Brenda Dix (MTC) emailed Ted Matley (FTA) Task Force comments on the project.

On January 30, 2013, Tina Spencer (TJPA) emailed Stefanie with updated information on the project. Stefanie emailed that information to the Task Force.

On February 4, 2013, Mike emailed the following comments to the Task Force:

“I think that it might be a project of concern because while it may reduce localized bus emissions in downtown SF the EIR materials circulated seem to show that it will contribute to worsening traffic at several major intersections -- unless those intersections don't have a significant number of diesel vehicles. Can't tell what's happening about that from the EIR excerpts because the fleet mix is not discussed.

Also, the EIR excerpts show that the project will not cause substantial CO problems (good) but CO isn't what we're looking at -- we're looking at PM, which I didn't see much analysis of. Again, qualitatively, the project may at least locally to the station and downtown reduce diesel emissions from shuttle buses, but that particular traffic volume wasn't documented in the EIR excerpts (or at least I didn't see it).

With a little more attention to documenting diesel traffic it might not be a project of concern -- but it still needs that for the record. I suspect it will not be a POAQC but that depends on showing that the project effect is minimal on diesel emissions -- with those "adverse" intersection effects and no discussion of vehicle fleet mix we don't know that yet.

Construction: will it be under construction for more than 5 years? If so, construction emissions need to be included in the hot spot analysis and the RTP conformity analysis.”

On February 4, 2013, Ginger emailed the following comments to the Task Force:

"I agree with Mike's comments. It would be helpful to have more information on the localized impacts. They make a good case for an overall air quality benefit, but that isn't the deciding factor. They don't really get into the details that would allow us to figure out whether this might have localized impacts - i.e., whether the project creates "hot spots.""

On February 12, 2013, Tina called Stefanie and indicated that she spoke with Mike and Dick about the project. Mike and Dick indicated that the project would not be a project of air quality concern; Tina would email a memo and additional information about the project to the rest of the Task Force so they could make a final determination about whether the project is a project of air quality concern.

Final Determination: TJPA will provide a memo with more information on the project to the Task Force. The Task Force will make a final determination about whether the project is a project of air quality concern via email (meeting notes will be updating accordingly).

b. Confirm Projects are Exempt from PM2.5 Conformity

There were no comments on the exempt list.

On January 28, 2013, Ted Matley (FTA) emailed Brenda Dix (MTC) and indicated that he did not have any comments on the exempt list.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that all projects on the exempt list are exempt from PM2.5 project level analysis.

3. Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Transportation 2035 and TIP 2011

a. Redetermination Update

Stefanie Hom (MTC) indicated that closing date for comments on the Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis Redetermination for Transportation 2035 and TIP 2011 was January 14, 2013; there were no comments received. The Conformity Analysis Redetermination will be brought back to the Planning Committee for approval on February 8, 2013, and to the Commission for final approval on February 27, 2013.

b. Lapse Grace Period

Sri Srinivasan (MTC) indicated that the latest Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis which conforms Transportation 2035 (the most recent RTP) and TIP 2011 will expire in June 3, 2013, and MTC will be in a conformity lapse grace period until the next Plan is adopted in June 2013 and the TIP and conformity are submitted to the federal agencies. No TIP amendments can be processed during the conformity lapse grace period. Sri is requesting that FHWA, FTA, Caltrans, and EPA do an expedited review on the upcoming Transportation Conformity Analysis to minimize the length and effects of the conformity lapse grace period.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) indicated she is not aware of the conformity lapse grace period.

Carolyn Clevenger (MTC) indicated that this issue came up at the last Task Force meeting during the discussion of the conformity redetermination. Mike had indicated that the RTP may expire since it has been four years since the plan was adopted. Since then, MTC has had conversations with Stew and FHWA to clarify.

Ginger asked if MTC is asking the federal agencies to do an expedited review of the upcoming RTP.

Sri indicated that she is asking for an expedited review of the conformity determination. The federal agencies do not review the RTP.

Carolyn indicated that the conformity lapse grace period will begin June 3, 2013. MTC is anticipating the Commission approve the RTP the third week of June. But it usually takes a while for federal agencies to approve transportation conformity, so they are requesting the expedited review.

Sri indicated the conformity lapse grace period will possibly be in effect from June to August and she wants to minimize the effects it has on project sponsors during this time.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) clarified that conformity will be in a grace period, not an actual lapse yet. So projects in the previous RTP and TIP can still move forward and obligate improvements.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) indicated that there are two timelines: the conformity timeline and RTP timeline. Conformity will not expire in June, but the RTP will. A TIP amendment cannot be processed after the RTP is expired because it would need to declare that those projects are consistent with the RTP, but there would not be a current RTP. Only projects in the existing TIP can be advanced, no amendments.

Mike clarified that projects in existing RTP and TIP would not be stopped, but if changes are needed, then they would be held up.

Sri indicated that she is concerned about project sponsors not being able to make changes to projects.

Stew indicated that the conformity grace period can go for up to 12 months, but they are only anticipating it to go on for a few months at the most.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked if projects in TIP can still advance beyond the next federal approval during this grace period lapse.

Stew responded that, yes, project sponsors just cannot make any changes to projects, administratively or otherwise.

4. Permittance of Multiple Air Quality Exemption Codes

Brenda Dix (MTC) indicated that at the December 2012 Air Quality Conformity Task Force meeting, EPA staff requested that projects with scopes that span multiple exemption codes

have a way to indicate that multiple codes apply. After considering the options for implementing this request, MTC staff recommends that they continue the current practice of using only one exemption code per project to ensure a consistent approach is applied to all past and future projects and minimize burden on the Task Force and MTC staff. Selecting the most appropriate exemption code would continue to be the responsibility of the project sponsor and would be done by selecting the exemption code based on the most substantial or costly element in the project.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) suggested that the project sponsor should indicate other exemption codes. There are times when a project scope falls under multiple exemption codes, but there is only one exemption code identified. Consistency with past practice is not a major issue.

Brenda indicated that selecting multiple exemption codes is difficult because of the way the system is set up. Project sponsors would not be able to select multiple exemption codes; it would need to be done by MTC staff after the additional codes were identified and agreed to by the Task Force.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) indicated that there are times when the project description does not fit the exemption code listed. The issue is making sure the Task Force understands the full scope of a project and ensuring that the appropriate exemption code is selected.

Brenda indicated that MTC staff consults with the Task Force to ensure that the most appropriate code is selected. If there are questions, they consult with the project sponsor to get more clarification on the project.

Carolyn Clevenger (MTC) indicated that they would like to avoid a situation where project sponsors select an excess of exemption codes that they think apply to their project. They do not want to be too inclusive.

Mike agreed. He indicated that he does not have problem with keeping the same process of identifying one exemption code for the primary scope of a project. He just wants to ensure that the project description covers everything involved so the Task Force can ensure that the appropriate exemption code is selected.

Sri Srinivasan (MTC) indicated that the exempt list now includes expanded project descriptions to provide more information. MTC staff does an internal check to ensure that the most appropriate code is selected.

Carolyn suggested that MTC staff continue the same process and continue to include the expanded project descriptions and see how that works. The Task Force can revisit the issue in a few months if there are still problems.

Mike indicated that that is the process in other places in the state. They pick the one most appropriate exemption code. Logically there only need one code to be exempt.

Brenda indicated that attachment A of the memo lists the exempt projects from last month's meeting where the Task Force requested multiple exemption codes. She asked for

confirmation that they will not be selecting multiple exemption codes for these projects, and that the Task Force is comfortable with the exemption codes listed.

Ginger indicated that she is comfortable with keeping the current approach and revisiting the issue again if there are problems.

5. Plan Bay Area Modeling Tools (presentation)

MTC and ABAG staff presented an overview of the modeling tools used to forecast travel and land use assumptions for Plan Bay Area, the upcoming Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The models include:

UrbanSim (presented Paul Waddell, UC Berkeley): Land use simulation model, created by UC Berkeley Professor Paul Waddell, that simulates future urban development patterns;

MTC's Travel Model One (presented by Dave Ory, MTC): MTC's activity-based travel model that integrates with UrbanSim land use outputs to forecast future travel patterns; and

EMFAC2011 (presented by Harold Brazil, MTC): ARB's latest model for estimating emissions from motor vehicles that uses outputs generated by Travel Model One.

Ken Kirkey (MTC) and Miriam Chion (ABAG) presented an overview of the preferred land use and transportation network currently under evaluation.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked how UrbanSim was calibrated/validated.

Paul indicated that there was a short period of time to do the calibration/validation. Once they put all the micro-simulation patterns together, they observed the patterns. Ideally, there would be a 20 year horizon to back cast, but historical data has been hard to come by.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) indicated that it is good EMFAC2011 is being used for the Plan, but should be cautious since EPA has not approved its use yet.

Carolyn Clevenger (MTC) indicated they are hoping EPA will make a final determination by February.

Mike observed that Plan Bay Area will continue to invest in transit maintenance, which is good.

Mike asked if the HOV lanes will convert to HOT lanes in the Plan.

Carolyn responded that the express lane network is included in the Plan.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked if revenue from pricing programs is included in the Plan.

Ken confirmed that revenue from pricing programs is included in the Plan.

Mike asked if revenues from HOT lanes are considered anticipated funds or are they part of the regional/local collection.

Carolyn indicated that the revenue from HOT lanes is part of the regional/local collection, except for VTA. Revenue from VTA HOT lanes do not go back to MTC.

Dick noticed that there was more housing production between 2000 and 2010 than in the previous decade. Is that because of the recession?

Miriam responded that some of the growth in housing production is a result of the lagging time between receiving entitlements and construction. There was also an increase in the construction of multi-family housing.

6. Consent Calendar

- a. December 6, 2012 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary**
- b. Vasco Road Truck Climbing Lanes Exemption**
- c. Interagency Consultation on HSIP Road Diet Projects**

Mike Brady (Caltrans) asked if the two HSIP Road Diet projects (item 6c) were changing the number of lanes. Are these regionally significant facilities? If they are not, then it would not be a problem.

Adam Crenshaw (MTC) responded that the average daily traffic affected by these projects is low and they would not model them for regional conformity. This change is just for regional conformity. The project sponsors will still need to go through project level conformity.

7. Other Items

There were no comments.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 28, 2012, from 9:30 to 11:30 am.