



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Agenda Item 2

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Policy Advisory Council
April 9, 2014
Minutes

Chair Cathleen Baker called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m. Policy Advisory Council members in attendance were: Naomi Armenta, Caroline Bañuelos, Jim Blacksten, Richard Burnett, Carlos Castellanos, Chris Coursey, Wilbert Din, Veda Florez, Sandi Galvez, Richard Hedges, Randi Kinman, Jerry Levine, Gerald Rico, Linda Jeffery Sailors, Benjamin Schweng, and Alan Talansky. **Excused:** Bena Chang, Bob Glover, Mark Nicholson, and Mike Pechner, **Absent:** JoAnn Busenbark, Elizabeth Clary, Jack Gray, Timothy Reeder and Mordechai Winter.

MTC Commissioner Dorene Giacomini was also in attendance.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the March 12, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved after a motion by Linda Jeffrey Sailors and a second by Veda Florez. Randi Kinman abstained from the vote, as she was excused from the March meeting.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

Subcommittee Reports

Equity and Access Subcommittee Chair Naomi Armenta reported that the subcommittee met earlier in the day and began a discussion of best practices for paratransit service and paratransit alternatives. Pam Grove of MTC staff provided the subcommittee with preliminary materials from the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan and the paratransit portion of the final report of the Transit Sustainability Project. Ms. Armenta commented that the subcommittee plans to continue their discussion over the next several months, as well as go on fact finding fieldtrips.

Policy Advisory Council Orientation – Operations

Melanie Crotty, MTC's Director of Operations gave the Council an overview of the role and responsibilities of MTC's Operations Section. The Council asked clarifying questions and had the following comments:

- Concern was expressed that open access HOV lanes might make it easier for drivers to avoid paying for usage. Ms. Crotty stated zone-based pricing is one strategy MTC will utilize to attempt to keep drivers honest. In addition, MTC plans to use dynamic tolling where the price will rise when there is more congestion.

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Policy Advisory Council Orientation – Operations (Continued)

- When asked about local street congestion sometimes caused by ramp metering, Ms. Crotty responded that the next generation of ramp metering will be able to do a better job of adjusting wait times if arterials begin to back up. Caltrans regularly monitors the operations of ramp meters in the field, and does follow-ups during their field monitoring, making adjustments when needed.
- In response to a question about how Express Lanes and other operational technologies in other regions are functioning, MTC's Executive Director Steve Heminger commented that our region is behind and has not given these operational strategies enough priority. He also commented that we really need a new business model for how we operate the freeway system, reminding the Council that Express Lanes are not about raising money; Express Lanes are about getting more people through the capacity that has already been built.
- When asked whether there are potential liability issues related to the removal of Call Boxes on the freeways, Ms. Crotty responded that MTC has seen a plummet in Call Box usage, which has led to a change in the liability situation from a system-wide perspective. MTC is looking at the cost to operate the system versus the number of people who actually use it.
- Concern was expressed about the difficulty and danger of using a FasTrak transponder on a motorcycle and a preference for relying solely on cameras to capture the user via a photo of the license plate.
- In response to a comment that ramp metering could be seen as an advantage for individuals who live further away from their destinations and might encourage more cars on the road, Ms. Crotty replied that is somewhat true; but she also commented that local use of local roads to travel to local destinations are a better use of the system instead of taking the freeway.
- In response to a comment about the active management of variable speed limits, Ms. Crotty informed the Council that integrated corridor management is being put into place along the corridor from the Carquinez Bridge to the Bay Bridge. The technology includes adaptive ramp meters, Gantrys will be installed over the freeways for lane-by-lane management, and variable speed will also be utilized as a feature in that corridor. There will be both environmental and safety benefits from evening out the flow of traffic in the corridor. While the variable speed is voluntary and not enforceable by the CHP, this is an important experiment for improving the region's traffic flow.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)/Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and Title VI Update

MTC's Contract Compliance Manager Denise Rodrigues gave the Council an update on MTC's most recent and ongoing DBE/SBE and Title VI activities. The Council asked clarifying questions and had the following comments:

- In response to a comment regarding the need for more public outreach, Ms. Rodrigues commented that MTC will begin the process of revising its Public Participation Plan within the next year.
- In response to a request for the SMART Rail District to be added to the Business Outreach Committee, Mr. Rodrigues replied that she is always looking for additional groups and organizations and would be happy to add them.
- Concern was expressed that more needs to be done by MTC to reach out to Clipper© Card distributors at the store level versus corporate level to ensure that each store has the necessary information to assist Clipper© customers that come into their store.

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One Bay Area Grant Update

Craig Goldblatt of MTC Staff gave the Council an overview of outcomes from the first year of the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program. The Council asked clarifying questions and had the following comments:

- Concern was expressed that, for the long-term, the creation of jobs needs to be considered along with generating housing. Rewarding a city simply for producing housing does not help the city create revenue to help run the city. A balance needs to be created.
- While these funds are currently being given as a reward for new PDA development, future OBAG funds should be distributed as a reward for addressing already existing deficiencies.
- MTC needs to define for the CMAs what “robust outreach” means because what was done at the local level for this OBAG effort was insufficient, and the outreach was not well-advertised. There should be standards and targets that CMAs need to meet, especially in reaching the public. Mr. Heminger responded that MTC will be updating the County Transportation Plan guidelines, which will be one opportunity for the Council to weigh in on this issue. He also commented that perhaps the Planning Directors or CMA representatives should be asked to come to a Council meeting so the Council can comment to them directly as to what is needed.
- A request was made for the recommendations from the CMAs on the County Transportation Plan guidelines to be brought before the Council prior to their finalization.

Staff Liaison Report

Ms. Grove presented her staff liaison report, reminding members to read the documents located at the three links provided in her staff report prior to the May Council meeting. Ms. Grove also noted that May is Bike to Work Month and Bike to Work Day is May 8th.

Council Member Reports

There were no Council member reports.

New Business

- Alan Talansky expressed concern about the lawsuit against the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and stated it would be good for the Council to find out from the Air District what they intend to do after the suit regarding the negative effect on the Air District’s rules on priority development areas.
- Rich Hedges suggested the Policy Advisory Council invite Universal Paragon Corporation (<http://www.universalparagoncorp.com/>) to make a future presentation, as they have many good projects going on in San Francisco.

Adjournment/Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m. The next meeting of the Policy Advisory Council is scheduled for May 14, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium, Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter, Oakland, California.