Air Quality Conformity Task Force
Summary Meeting Notes
April 24, 2014

Participants:

Marilee Mortenson – Caltrans
Stew Sonnenberg – FHWA
Andrea Gordon – BAAQMD
Amir Fanai – BAAQMD
Ginger Vagenas – EPA
Cari Anderson – CARB
Christina Jaworski – VTA
Shannon Hatch – ICF
Terry Clem – DKS
Steven Fisher – VTA
Dick Fahey – Caltrans
Harold Brazil – MTC
Adam Crenshaw – MTC
Carolyn Clevenger – MTC
Ross McKeown – MTC

1. **Welcome and Self Introductions**: Harold Brazil (MTC) called the meeting to order at 9:34 am.

2. **$PM_{2.5}$ Interagency Consultations**

a. Consultation to Determine Project of Air Quality Concern Status

i. El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit

Steven Fisher (VTA) began the discussion of the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit project by giving a general description of what the project is trying to accomplish through the various alternatives that were analyzed. Mr. Fisher stated that the project enhances the exiting bus service that VTA currently provides along this corridor by increasing the run time speeds and establishing more amenities at the stops (hopefully attracting more customers). Mr. Fisher went on to indicate that the project is located along El Camino Real (and portions of The Alameda and Santa Clara Street) and the project corridor extends 17.6 miles from east to west, and passes through the cities of San José, Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Los Altos, and Palo Alto.

Mr. Fisher stated that the same diesel-electric hybrid buses were analyzed for all alternative comparisons and the alternatives differ from the no-build by the amount of BRT investment capital put into each alternative and the extent of dedicated lane. (the most controversial part of the project and the reason why so many alternatives were analyzed) Mr. Fisher also said that this is VTA's best transit line carrying between 20% and 25% of the agency's total bus riders and VMT in the corridor is reduced (due to the impacts of the project).

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) asked if there were two new transit center stops included in the project and Mr. Fisher indicated that a decision has not yet been made whether they would be included because VTA is still going through the evaluation phase of the study.

Christina Jaworski (VTA) provided some details of the air quality analysis that was conducted as part of the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit project stating that currently VTA has about 150 bus

visits along the corridor and that the diesel-electric hybrid buses used on this route will be equipped with diesel particulate traps yielding a 95% reduction in PM emissions (from the buses). Ms. Jaworski indicated that VTA did extensive gathering of traffic count data in the spring and fall of 2013 which included the collection of turning movement data and fed into producing the LOS tables. Ms. Jaworski concluded that implementation of the El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit project would not result in the construction of a new or expanded highway system which would have an increase in the number of diesel vehicles. Ms. Jaworski also stated that the truck volume percentages in the project corridor area are very low (around 3%), the truck volumes go down slightly among the various project alternatives and the diverted truck volumes made a minimum impact.

For the intersection analysis portion of the project study, Ms. Jaworski pointed out that most of the intersections along the project corridor improved their level of service (overall) and off-corridor intersections get slightly worse (overall) after project implementation.

Ms. Vagenas asked if the impacts of diverted El Camino Real traffic to surrounding intersections mitigated by signal timing improvements, restriping, and the installation of new traffic signals would occur at these surrounding/off-corridor intersections. Mr. Fisher responded by stating that 75 intersections within the corridor were analyzed and 140 off-corridor intersections were analyzed and there is mitigation planned for some of both intersection types. Ms. Vagenas went on to state that the Task Force needs to look at individual points in the project area and she was not clear what might happen at locations where new signals were installed and whether new emission hotspots would be created. Shannon Hatch (ICF) indicated that attachment A, of the project assessment form documentation, shows improvement and degradation results of the traffic study for LOS and delay for the intersections in the project area and overall most of the intersections show an improvement. Ms. Vagenas pointed out that the Task Force's review includes looking at isolated impacts from the project in addition to overall impacts.

Ms. Vagenas also asked what the emissions impact is when there is a change in the seconds of delay for the intersections analyzed and Mr. Hatch stated that the emissions effect was not quantified because traffic volumes in the project area are primarily passenger vehicles. Ms. Vagenas went on to ask if light-duty diesel truck volumes were quantified and why it was assumed the general number of diesel trucks would decrease through implementation of the project.

Ms. Jaworski answered Ms. Vagenas' question about diesel truck volumes decreasing with project implementation by stating that the reduction in capacity with the project build scenarios reduces travel throughout the project corridor and trucks are included in this travel.

Carolyn Clevenger (MTC) suggested that the project sponsor follow-up and provide some more detailed truck count information and the diversion mitigation pieces will be handed. Ms. Vagenas agreed that this follow-up data would be helpful.

Andrea Gordon (BAAQMD) asked where is this project located in respect to the Santa Clara Light Rail line and Mr. Fisher responded by indicated that this project would include a transfer to the light rail line in downtown San Jose.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked if the same number of bus trips would occur in the corridor with project implementation and Mr. Fisher stated that the service levels would remain exactly the same.

> ***Final Determination*:** The Task Force will defer the project of air quality concern determination until receipt of the detailed truck count and diversion mitigation information from VTA staff.

b. Confirmation of the list of exempt projects from $PM_{2.5}$ conformity (2b_Exempt List 040814.pdf)

Ms. Vagenas asked if the Ocala Avenue Improvements project (TIP ID SCL110135) included the proper exemption code and if it could be considered exempt (due to a new traffic signal being included in the project). The Task Force decided to not make an exempt determination on the Ocala Avenue Improvements project and wait for clarification from EPA on how to classify HSIP signalization projects.

> ***Final Determination:*** With input from FHWA, FTA (via email), EPA, Caltrans and MTC, the Task Force agreed that the the Suisun-Fairfield Intercity Rail Station Access Improvement project (TIP ID SOL130003) was exempt from $PM_{2.5}$ project level analysis. After this April 24th Task Force meeting, via email Ms. Vagenas provided guidance from EPA indicating that the Ocala Avenue Improvements project is not exempt from a conformity determination as per 40 CRF 93.126 and the project will go through consultation at an upcoming meeting.

3. Approach Draft Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Plan Bay Area

a. Proposed Approach to Conformity Analysis for the 2015 Transportation Improvement Program

Harold Brazil (MTC) discussed the development of the 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Plan Bay Area (Plan) conformity analysis. Mr. Brazil also indicated that the revisions requiring a new conformity analysis are primarily minor changes related to changes in project schedules that result in changes to the analysis years and asked the Task Force if there were any questions and/or comments. Mr. Fahey, Ms. Vagenas and Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) stated that they had no comments with the conformity analysis approach and it looked fine.

Amir Fanai (BAAQMD) asked (for clarification) if there was a more recent ozone precursor emission budgets for conformity than the 2001 Ozone Attainment Plan. Mr. Brazil stated that the emission budgets from the 2001 Ozone Attainment Plan (completed during 1-hour ozone standard time period) are still the applicable budgets that apply for the region's non-attainment area currently.

4. Projects with Air Quality Conformity Concerns

a. Interagency Consultation for Non-Exempt and Non-Exempt, Not Regionally Significant Projects in Proposed TIP Amendment 2013-15

Adam Crenshaw (MTC) asked for the Task Force's concurrence that certain changes staff proposes to make to the 2013 TIP in May as part of TIP Amendment 2013-15 will not significantly impact regional transportation air quality and that these changes will not trigger a revision to the Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for Plan Bay Area and the 2013 TIP.

Mr. Crenshaw requested the Task Force's concurrence that the following projects:

1. 37th Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Richmond
2. 70 19th Street & Illinois Street Sidewalk at the Port of San Francisco
3. Devlin Road and Vine Trail Extension in American Canyon

be considered a 'Non-exempt, Not Regionally Significant' project for regional air quality conformity purposes and that the addition of this project to the 2013 TIP will not require an update to the current conformity analysis.

Mr. Crenshaw also requested that the update in the programming of construction funds (reprogramming of the construction funds from FY2017/18 to FY2015/16, which would include this project in the four active years of the 2013 FSTIP, but not affect the years modeled in the conformity analysis) for the I-680/SR-4 Interchange Reconstruction – Phase 3 project not require an update of the conformity analysis (itself).

Final Determination: With input from FHWA, FTA (via email), EPA, Caltrans and MTC, the Task Force determined that (for regional conformity purposes) these four projects will not affect the regional transportation model used in analyzing regional air quality conformity.

5. Consent Calendar

a. March 27, 2014 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary

Final Determination: With input from all members, the Task Force concluded that the consent calendar was approved.