



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Planning and Operations Committee

DATE: February 6, 2004

FR: Executive Director

RE: **Public Involvement Program: Phase 1 Summary Report**

The first phase of the development of the Transportation 2030 Plan — concluded in December 2003 when the Commission set the financial parameters for regional priorities and local investment decisions — included an extensive public involvement program over a seven-month period. Attached is the executive summary from the Public Outreach and Involvement Program Phase One Summary Report. The full report and appendices will be available at your Feb. 13 meeting.

The Phase One public involvement program began in June with a day-long summit held in San Francisco, attended by 450 people from throughout the Bay Area nine counties and beyond. At the summit, participants provided input on three key topics that were the focus of the Phase One public involvement effort: new investments versus prior commitments; goals, policies and projects; and land use and transportation.

Beyond the summit, MTC used four other primary methods to engage the public in focused input and discussion to inform the Commission's Phase One decisions:

- A telephone poll of 2,700 voters and 900 residents (both voters and non-voters), providing a representative sample of opinion;
- 6 focus groups held around the region to allow more in-depth discussion on major choices and tradeoffs;
- About 30 targeted workshops held with specific groups and organizations with interests in transportation issues (including 8 meetings held in low-income neighborhoods in cooperation with community-based organizations selected through a competitive process); and
- An interactive Web survey (Budget Challenge) taken by over 530 individuals that included a budget allocation exercise. The Budget Challenge was open to the public.

These methods, in combination with public attendance at your Committee meetings and full Commission meetings, were designed to gather input on regional priorities in a focused, even-handed way that balanced open public input with statistically valid and representative measures.

Major findings from the analysis of the comments we heard were presented to the Commission at its late-October workshop, as well as to this committee at your November and December meetings.

At the end of each public meeting, participants were asked to evaluate nine aspects of the outreach program related to the quality of outreach, meeting handouts, presentation, facilitation, and opportunities for feedback. Evaluation Forms were available in three languages other than English: Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish. A large majority (more than 80%) of the participants responded positively to all nine aspects of the outreach program that were listed on the meeting evaluation form. In addition, written comments provided further positive feedback, with some recommendations for improvement.

Other companion pieces to the report include Appendices I through VI. The first three appendices are charts that depict the Transportation 2030 planning process. Appendix IV summarizes the June summit; Appendix V presents detailed comments in two ways: by topic and by source, be that focus group, targeted workshop, telephone poll or Web survey, etc. Appendix VI is a collection of correspondence received during this period.

The report has been provided to the Bay Area Partnership Board, will be posted on MTC's Web site, and all Phase One participants will be notified of the report's availability. The information also will be used by county congestion management agencies and by MTC to inform the next phase of the Transportation 2030 planning process.

Steve Heminger

SH:CA

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Transportation 2030 Plan

PUBLIC OUTREACH & INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Phase 1 Summary Report

Prepared by

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January 2004



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Acknowledgements

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) wishes to acknowledge the organizations, groups and agencies listed below for contributing their time and resources in making the Phase One Transportation 2030 Public Outreach Program a success.

MTC Advisory Committees

Advisory Council
Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee
Goals Working Group (ad hoc)
Minority Citizens Advisory Committee
Partnership Board
Partnership Technical Advisory Committee
Regional Pedestrian Committee
Welfare-to-Work Working Group

Neighborhood Groups and Community-Based Organizations

Comité César Chávez
Marin County Grassroots Leadership Network
Monument Community Partnership
Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal
San Antonio Community Development Corporation
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation
United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County
Urban Ecology, Inc.
Urban Habitat
Young Developers, Inc.

Interest Groups

Bay Area Bicycle Coalition
Bay Area Council/Regional Transportation Initiative
Bay Area League of Women Voters
California Alliance for Jobs
Regional Bicycle Working Group
Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group
Transportation and Land Use Coalition

Public or Government Agencies

Bay Area Air Quality Management District Advisory Council
Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Napa County Transportation Planning Agency
Solano Transportation Authority
Sonoma County Transportation Authority

And the many members of the public who attended these meetings and workshops, participated through the MTC Web site or sent correspondence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The Transportation 2030 Plan is the principal long-range planning document of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The plan has a 25-year horizon, and specifies investment strategies for maintaining, managing and improving the surface transportation network in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

The plan will determine how MTC will spend nearly \$100 billion in transportation funding that is likely to flow into the region between now and 2030 from existing local, regional, state and federal sources. The public involvement component for the Transportation 2030 Plan spans 18 months, and builds on the values, needs and priorities MTC heard from the public during the 12-month *2001 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) public outreach effort.

MTC, in cooperation with the congestion management agencies in each county, set the following goals for outreach and public involvement for the Transportation 2030 Plan development process: high-quality input and participation; diversity; education; reach; accessibility; impact; and participant satisfaction. The public outreach program is based on the following principles: flexibility; consistency and fairness; inclusiveness; and expectation.

B. Phase One Public Outreach Program

MTC conducted an extensive public involvement program to solicit input in Phase One of the Transportation 2030 planning process. The program began in June 2003 with a widely attended Summit in San Francisco, and concluded in December 2003 when the Commission set the parameters for regional priorities and local investment decisions. MTC used five primary methods to engage the public in focused input and discussion to inform the Commission's Phase One decisions:

- A day-long regional summit held in San Francisco and attended by more than 450 people from throughout the Bay Area nine counties and beyond kicked off the Phase One dialogue to update the regional transportation plan;
- A telephone poll of 2,700 voters and 900 residents (both voters and non-voters), providing a representative sample of opinion;
- 6 focus groups held around the region to allow more in-depth discussion on major choices and tradeoffs;
- About 30 targeted workshops held with specific groups and organizations with interests in transportation issues (including 8 meetings held in low-income neighborhoods in cooperation with community-based organizations selected through a competitive process); and
- An interactive Web survey (Budget Challenge) taken by over 530 individuals that included a budget allocation exercise. The Budget Challenge was open to the public.

These five methods, in combination with public attendance at Planning and Operations Committee and full Commission meetings, were designed to gather input on regional priorities in a focused,

even-handed way that balanced open public input with statistically valid and representative measures.

C. Major Findings

The Phase One outreach effort led up to a series of decisions made by the Commission in December 2003. These decisions will influence Phase Two of the outreach effort that will be conducted primarily by the county congestion management agencies. As identified at the start of the public involvement campaign, there were four topics to be resolved at the conclusion of Phase One. These are described below, including a brief summary of MTC Resolution No. 3609 that documents the Commission's December 17, 2003 decision.

- 1. Goals and Objectives** – the Commission approved six goals for the Transportation 2030 Plan. Compared to the 2001 RTP goals, the new goals are more specific, make clearer connections to current and future planned regional activities and investments, and include outcome-oriented key measures of progress by which to gauge achievement. The six goals are: A Safe and Well Maintained System, A Reliable Commute, Lifeline Mobility, Livable Communities, Clean Air, and Efficient Freight Travel. An initial vision statement is part of the goals, and during Phase Two staff will continue the development of an overall “vision” statement, to be included with these goals when the final plan is ready for adoption in early 2005.
- 2. Prior Commitments and New Investments** – the December 17, 2003, Commission's action, contained in MTC Resolution No. 3609, approved two elements of the Transportation 2030 Plan: one, criteria to evaluate prior committed funding sources and projects carried over from the 2001 RTP, estimated to total \$100 billion; and two, approval of an investment strategy for an estimated \$9 billion in new investments, with specific financial targets for transit and local road rehabilitation, regional programs (including transportation/ land use and planning programs), and discretionary investments for county-based decisions during Phase Two.
- 3. New Investments (Big Tent)** – Phase One discussions on the Big Tent explored potential new funding and plan priorities to meet continuing transportation demands that clearly can't be met with reasonably expected resources. MTC identified an initial set of fund sources that could be achieved through either legislative action or voter mandate, and identified how that funding might be distributed to deal with the shortfalls in rehabilitation and regional programs, and yet to be determined new expansion needs. Further discussion of these “Big Tent” choices will be part of the Phase Two deliberations at the regional level.
- 4. Transportation and Land Use** – the Commission approved a Transportation-Land Use Platform as the basis for pursuing further coordination of transportation and land use, and directed staff to develop implementation strategies for each of the five platform elements during Phase Two, in collaboration with the Association of Bay Area Governments, county congestion management agencies, local governments and other partners. The platform proposes to: develop a transportation-land use policy statement; supplement MTC's neighborhood-oriented programs with planning incentives that support a broader set of land use objectives; condition regional discretionary funding for MTC's Resolution 3434 regional transit expansion program to the provision of supportive land uses in those transit corridors; support transportation-land use coordination beyond major transit corridors; and coordinate transportation-land use issues with regional neighbors.

Below are the major findings for each of these topics from Phase One Public Outreach.

1. Goals and Objectives

Comments from the 6 focus groups, 30 targeted workshops, letters and e-mails, and Web survey

- There was general support for the initial set of nine proposed goals; many participants indicated that this was a significant improvement over the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan goals.
- Participants felt that the goals were a mix of strategies and outcomes, rather than a statement of MTC's vision, and that key terms like "mobility," "congestion," or "alternatives to driving" were not mentioned in the goal titles. Improving mobility should be MTC's primary focus. The goals are not prioritized and are too numerous to provide real direction and set criteria for project selection.
- Participants asked how the goals would be used for ranking and rating projects, forecasting results, evaluating and reporting progress.
- Participants wanted "truth in advertising" on what could be accomplished with the plan, realistically.
- Participants expressed the need for overall measurable objectives, not standards or targets such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita, or percent of persons using transit.
- Key suggestions for new goals include: services for seniors and persons with disabilities, financial stability and sustainability; efficiency in the transportation system; creating alternatives to driving; and improving traffic flow and reducing congestion

2a. Prior Commitments

Comments from the 6 focus groups, 30 targeted workshops, letters and e-mails, and Web survey

- Participants felt the need for re-evaluating committed projects based on a cost-benefit analysis and consistency with the plan's goals.
 - Participants wanted to take a critical look at the 90% of available revenue going towards committed projects, out of which, 80% would be spent on operations and maintenance.
 - Participants wanted careful consideration of the type of transit (bus, BART, Caltrain, ferry, etc.) for maximizing cost-effectiveness in a given corridor.

2b. New Investments

Comments from the 6 focus groups

- Overall, participants ranked the three investment categories in the following order: Expansion; System Management/Livable Communities; and Operations and Maintenance.
- Top investment priorities (participants chose six out of seventeen specific investments) include rail expansion, traffic flow improvements (coordinated traffic signals), TransLink®, and highway and freeway maintenance.
- Top regional needs/issues (from open-ended responses) include seamless transit system (less fragmented); reduced congestion and improved mobility, and BART expansion.

Comments from 30 targeted workshops

- Overall, participants equally ranked Expansion, System Management/Livable Communities and Operations & Maintenance as top priorities for funding.
- Top investment priorities (participants chose six out of seventeen specific investments) include operating transit services, expanding buses and paratransit services, and livable communities.
- Top regional needs/issues (from open-ended responses) include senior and lifeline transportation; transportation to school and child care; to hospitals and medical services; for the disabled; safety on transit, while walking and bicycling; connectivity, seamlessness, and “last mile” transportation; reducing congestion; more funding to implement Regional Bicycle Plan; and restructuring of transportation decision-making and funding.

Feedback from the telephone poll

- Existing transportation programs that were top priority include bus service to link low-income communities with jobs (24%); local streets and roads maintenance (23%); bicycle, transit and pedestrian friendly communities (16%); and improving coordination among transit agencies (14%)
- Transportation expansion priorities that are most important include BART (30%), freeway widening (20%); rail (13%); local bus (10%); and bicycle lane (6%)

Feedback from letters and e-mails

- Reduce the number of transit agencies or connect transit services better; especially for trunk line services like BART and Caltrain.
- Try new approaches and make better use of technology over the next two decades to improve both transit and driving.
- Develop long-range transit plans based on needs, not ballot box measures.
- Widen roads where they are heavily congested.

Feedback from the Web survey (Budget Challenge)

- 43% of the Budget Challenge respondents selected Operations & Maintenance as their top priority for new investments. Within this category, preferences for transportation investments include replacing transit vehicles and facilities (46%) and maintaining local roadways (44%)
- 23% selected System Expansion as their top priority for new investments. Within this category, preferences for transportation investments included rail transit (19%); bus transit (including paratransit) (17%); freeways and bridges (13%); and local roads (12%)
- 17% selected System Management as their top priority for new investments. Within this category, preferences for transportation investments included; livable communities (neighborhood street, bicycle and transit improvements (31%)); traffic flow controls (traffic signal modernization, freeway ramp metering, etc. (18%)); and TransLink® (12%)
- Participants expressed the need for a truly regional, well-connected, first-class public transit system that offers frequent service and real travel alternatives.

3. New Revenue Sources

Comments from the 6 focus groups, 30 targeted workshops, letters and e-mails

- Participants generally supported raising new revenue for new projects. There was wide support for extending and/or initiating county 1/2-cent sales taxes for transportation. In addition, participants from the targeted workshops supported a 5-cent regional gas tax and \$1 hike in bridge tolls. Participants in the focus groups did not support these new revenue sources.
- There was a common concern with focus group participants that existing revenue should be spent more efficiently before raising new revenue, and that there is enough revenue already for all the transportation needs if spent efficiently on appropriate projects.

Feedback from the telephone poll

- Telephone poll participants were split in their decision to support a regional gas tax; 24% said definitely yes, 22% said probably yes, 13% said probably no, and 35% said definitely no.

Feedback from the Web Survey (Budget Challenge)

- Web survey respondents expressed the highest support (62%) for a regional gas tax. They also supported county half-cent sales taxes (61%), followed by bridge tolls (59%) and a vehicle registration fee increase (52%).

4. Transportation and Land Use

Comments from the 6 focus groups, 30 targeted workshops, letters and e-mails, and Web survey

- Participants were generally positive about MTC's transportation-land use proposals; they were seen as good first steps. Many participants were interested in this topic but had less of an understanding of the key issues.
- While most participants encouraged the use of incentives to condition regional funds to maximize transit investments, some felt that MTC should not dictate land use planning to local governments.
- Two separate coalitions of interest groups — the Regional Transportation Initiative (led by Bay Area Council) and the Transportation and Land Use Coalition — each supported MTC's five draft proposals, but felt they did not go far enough. Both groups expressed the belief that land use is the key to significant transportation improvement in the region.

Feedback from the telephone poll

- 68% of participants agreed with a regional approach to transportation planning, 64% support local control of land use; and 64% support financial incentives to local governments for development along transit lines.

D. Outreach Program Evaluation

At the end of each public meeting, participants were asked to evaluate nine aspects of the outreach program related to the quality of outreach, meeting handouts, presentation, facilitation, and opportunities for feedback. Evaluation Forms were available in three languages other than English: Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish.

A large majority (more than 80%) of the participants responded positively to all nine aspects of the outreach program that were listed on the meeting evaluation form. In addition, written comments provided further positive feedback, with some recommendations for improvement.