



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700
TEL 510.817.5700
TDD/TTY 510.817.5769
FAX 510.817.5848
E-MAIL info@mtc.ca.gov
WEB www.mtc.ca.gov

Memorandum

TO: Partnership Technical Advisory Committee

DATE: January 22, 2007

FR: Ashley Nguyen

W. I.

RE: **2009 Regional Transportation Plan Approach and Schedule**

Background

MTC's current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the *Transportation 2030 Plan* adopted by the Commission in February 2005. Under SAFETEA (Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act), RTPs are to be updated every four years, so our next RTP update is to be adopted by the Commission in early 2009.

Each of MTC's long-range plans has embodied its own unique strategy to respond to the long-range transportation needs of a dynamic and growing Bay Area region. When the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) instituted a requirement that RTPs be financially constrained (reaffirmed by successive legislation), RTP efforts became largely focused on identifying transportation investments that fit neatly within the envelope of forecasted available revenues. While this approach helps us to refrain from creating lengthy transportation wish lists, it also has its limitations because RTPs do not truly reflect the regions transportation system vision of future growth. In fact, previous financially constrained RTPs have devoted nearly 80 percent of available funding simply to maintain and operate the region's existing road and transit systems. As a result, previous RTPs have included a "vision element" to show the full array of expansion projects needed to address projected population and employment growth.

Since the 1994 RTP, MTC's RTP effort has focused on developing the financially constrained element first and vision element second. For example, the first phase of the Transportation 2030 Plan concluded with Commission approval of regional programs and projects for the financially constrained element of the plan. The second phase focused on local Congestion Management Agency (CMA) board approval of county projects for the financially constrained element of the plan. The final phase consisted of identifying remaining projects for the vision element and crafting Calls to Action for the plan. We propose a different, more holistic approach for the next long-range plan.

Proposed 2009 RTP Approach

There are several planning activities underway that will help inform the 2009 RTP. These activities include: Freeway Performance Initiative, HOT Network Study, Regional Rail Plan, Consolidated Human Services Transportation Plan, 511 Strategic Plan, Joint Policy Committee's (JPC) global climate change assessment, and Focus our Vision effort. In light of these ongoing activities, staff believes that the full RTP vision should be defined first. Subsequent phases would follow-up with identifying a subset of financially constrained program of projects from the RTP vision to satisfy the federal financial constraint requirements.

MTC staff suggests a two-pronged approach for developing the RTP vision—(1) Land Use Strategy and (2) Financial Plan Strategy, as described below.

- **Land Use Strategy:** As ABAG's latest Projections 2007 continues to move us towards a "smart growth direction," staff believes it is important to assess how transportation investments can support this development and growth pattern. In keeping the momentum and progress made by initiatives such as MTC's hallmark Transit-Oriented Development Policy and the ABAG-led Focus Our Vision effort that is underway, we propose to fully assess the land use/transportation connection as part of the development of the 2009 RTP. Questions to address are: where will new housing be produced, what are the future growth patterns, how and where will people travel, what travel corridors will become heavily congested, how will travel demand and traffic congestion impact our air quality, and how can transportation policy not only serve this development but also influence the region in smart-growth directions beyond the policy-based smart growth projections? The land use projections would be based on ABAG's Projections 2007, and to the extent feasible, reflect the priority areas to be identified in Focus Our Vision. The JPC discussed this subject at its January 19, 2007 meeting.
- **Finance Plan Strategy:** MTC will prepare the 25-year RTP financial projections, accounting for those revenues reasonably expected to be available to the region and potential new revenue sources. However, rather than focus our efforts on divvying up uncommitted funds for the financially constrained element of the plan, all decisions on how the RTP finances are invested would not occur until after the RTP vision is fully developed. So, in deciding where to invest and what specific new transportation programs/projects to advance in the plan, we will consider how those investments best perform, respond to, and possibly reshape the assumed future growth patterns that underlie the plan. Further, we may wish to consider transportation investments that serve priority development areas identified in Focus Our Vision effort, which advance the framework of Projections 2007 forecasts. Once we establish the RTP vision, we will then craft the program of projects for the financially constrained and vision elements of the plan.

Proposed Schedule

MTC staff proposes a three-phased strategy for developing the 2009 RTP as shown in the attached process chart. As part of the start-up activities, we will conduct several brainstorming sessions with multiple stakeholders. In particular, we expect the JPC will play a significant role in helping shape the 2009 RTP as required by law.

Next Steps

We welcome the Bay Area Partnership's comments and suggestions and will consult with the JPC on this new approach for development of the 2009 RTP.

2009 Regional Transportation Plan Process

