

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This memorandum organizes and summarizes the key points from the August 16, 2007 Regional Pedestrian Committee's discussion of the Regional Pedestrian Planning Assessment concept. The discussion focused on work plan Task 2 - Existing Conditions. The session was facilitated by Ana Validzic and John Brazil. Conversation focused on which existing conditions should be addressed (What?) and why they are important to this process (Why?). This interim work product will be synthesized with five other memoranda as a white paper that assesses the need for regional pedestrian planning in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### What?

While the geographical extent of a regional pedestrian plan precludes an exhaustive inventory of all pedestrian resources in the nine-county bay area, a summary of more regionally-oriented Existing Conditions will inform the need and direction for such a plan. The Existing Conditions chapter of a Regional Pedestrian Plan could include the following sections:

- (1) Facilities: The geographical extent of a Regional Pedestrian Plan precludes an exhaustive inventory of all pedestrian facilities. However, a summary of the existing conditions that are regionally significant is needed to inform decision-making. In particular, the total financial need for pedestrian facilities is unknown at this time and a regional planning effort would develop an estimate to fill this gap. Given the infeasibility of a total inventory, the following two approaches could be used to develop such an estimate:
  - a) A sample inventory based on MTC's Pedestrian Districts Study would develop generalized cost estimates for various types of districts that could then be summed over the number of such districts planned in the region. This approach dovetails with the MTC's involvement in station area planning.
  - b) A summation of countywide pedestrian plans would provide a regional perspective on overall need. Additionally, the Alameda Countywide Strategic Pedestrian Plan could be used to extrapolate to other counties without pedestrian plans in that the geographical variations in Alameda County are suggestive of the region.
- (2) Data: Data helpful to pedestrian planning includes pedestrian counts, pedestrian collision and injury analysis, pedestrian mode share information, pedestrian facility and program inventories, and other related research. MTC's Pedestrian Tool Box provides a helpful collection of data sources addressing many of these needs. The Tool Box identifies a variety of data sources including those of federal and state government agencies, local agencies, and non-governmental organizations. However, these data are neither uniformly nor consistently collected across public agencies, and data required for effective pedestrian planning are often unavailable. A comprehensive assessment of available data could inform the design and frequency of future data collection efforts.
- (3) Plans: Existing plans include local and countywide pedestrian plans, station area plans, Bay Trail Plan, Ridge Trail Plan, amongst others. For example, MTC's *Pedestrian Districts Study* explores the use of pedestrian districts as a concept for creating better pedestrian environments in the Bay Area. However, this study is not a regional vision and the absence of such a plan impedes the development, funding, and implementation of a cohesive regional network of pedestrian facilities and programs. For example, regional transit stations often straddle municipal borders. Without a regional pedestrian plan, pedestrian station access from multiple jurisdictions is often

inconsistently planned or not addressed at all. Without an unconstrained needs inventory, funding shortfalls are neither identified nor addressed. A regional pedestrian plan would inventory the planning to date, identify gaps, and make recommendations for future planning.

- (4) **Capacity:** A regional pedestrian plan would inventory the capacity of agencies to deliver pedestrian facilities and programs. Amongst local jurisdictions, a lack of capacity is a key barrier to improving pedestrian safety and walkability. Key aspects for such an inventory include staffing (pedestrian planners, pedestrian/bicycle coordinators), citizen advisory committees, and training opportunities. A portion of this information is available from MTC's routine accommodation study.
- (5) **Policies, Standards & Guidelines:** The Existing Conditions include applicable policies, standards, and guidelines at the national, state, and regional levels. These include policies of intent to accommodate pedestrians, as well as standards and guidelines to provide that accommodation.

Examples of such policies include:

- **National:** US DOT's *Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidance* stating "walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects..."
- **State:** Caltrans *Deputy Directive 64* indicates Caltrans shall "fully considers the needs of all non-motorized travelers (including pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) in all programming, planning, maintenance, construction, operations, and project development..."
- **Regional:** MTC's *Routine Accommodation policy* requires local agencies to complete a check list that determines how MTC-funded projects will accommodate pedestrians. Some local and countywide agencies have also established pedestrian accommodation policies.

Examples of such standards and guidelines include:

- a) **National:** *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities* (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials), Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
  - b) **State:** Caltrans' *Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in California, A Technical Reference and Technology Transfer Synthesis for Caltrans Planners and Engineers, California Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD)*
  - c) **Regional:** MTC's *Pedestrian Districts Study*
  - d) **County:** Valley Transportation Authority's *Pedestrian Technical Guidelines*.
- (6) **Programs:** Programs of regional significance include education, encouragement, and enforcement that is either regional in scope or provides a model of best practices. For example, 511 is a regional program with a pedestrian aspect, especially in connection to transit. Best practices may include local programs on Safe Routes to School, pedestrian stings (enforcement), or traffic calming that could serve as models throughout the region. A regional pedestrian plan could also identify programs that may be most suited at the regional scale (like mass market advertising, for example). Similarly, MTC also sponsors continuing education and professional training courses, such as its *Regional Pedestrian & Bicycle Training Workshops*, that emphasize pedestrian access and accommodation in transportation.
  - (7) **Funding:** A variety of federal, state, regional, and county sources fund pedestrian projects. Most of these emphasize capital improvements, not programs. Examples of funding sources include:

- Federal: Transportation Enhancements Activities (TEA), Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Safe Routes to School (SRTS) from SAFETEA-LU
- State: State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Safe Routes to School (SR2S), Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), Transportation Development Act Article III (TDA-3)
- Regional: Regional Measure 2 (RM2), Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA), Safe Routes to Transit (SR2T), Traffic Engineering Technical Assistance Program (TETAP), MTC's Regional Bicycle Pedestrian Program (RBPP), Transportation Livable Communities (TLC), Housing Improvement Program (HIP)
- County: Several counties have enacted local sales tax measures that fund transportation projects, including pedestrian facilities.

A survey of existing funding sources could lead to recommendations in a regional pedestrian plan regarding outstanding needs. While the financial need likely exceeds available resources, there may also be important projects and programs that do not have an appropriate funding source. For example, there is no funding source intended to rectify problems with pedestrian safety and access on the Metropolitan Transportation System (MTS). Similarly, there is an ongoing lack of funds for education, encouragement, and enforcement, even when such programs have direct transportation benefits.

### **Why?**

Without a regional vision for pedestrian accommodation, resources in the Bay Area have not been allocated with a full accounting of the needs and potential benefits. The lack of a regional vision and plan leaves a void in identifying and justifying the need for pedestrian accommodation. Anyone who walks or uses a wheelchair has experienced the negative consequences: inability to safely and conveniently access transit stations, travel across jurisdictional boundaries, or reach regional destinations without a car.

The development of a regional pedestrian plan would address many of these issues by developing methodologies to identify, prioritize and fund pedestrian needs. It would also facilitate a consistent and cohesive system of pedestrian facilities and programs, as well as equitable distribution of resources and sharing of best practices. The existing conditions for such plan would provide an inventory of where the region is at, both in terms of needs and best practices. This memo suggests topic areas and methods for completing such an inventory in a manner that would provide critical information without requiring an overly ambitious planning effort. Financial needs may be extrapolated from other planning documents completed to date while a survey of selected jurisdictions would provide local details, including best practices. This perspective on existing pedestrian facilities and programs would provide the necessary basis for policy recommendations in a regional pedestrian plan.