

## San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project (SFTEP)

### SUMMARY

#### SFTEP Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

Thursday, February 8, 2007

One South Van Ness, Room 3074 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)

Following is a summary of the sixth meeting of the SFTEP Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP). The CAC is one of three advisory bodies established to provide stakeholder input and review during the TEP. Primarily, this meeting provided an update on activities in progress, including public outreach, service review, market research and the Early Action Plan projects. The group discussed their role in the TEP and how to best to contribute their expertise and interests, learn from the project and share information with their stakeholder networks. The discussion is summarized below. The meeting concluded with an opportunity for public comment. Eleven CAC members, as well as members of the public and representatives from the SFMTA, Controller's Office, and TEP consulting team attended.

### PARTICIPANTS

<b>CAC Members/Alternates</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Project Team</b>
Joan Downey, SFMTA Citizen Advisory Committee Becky Evans, Sierra Club Bert Hill, Bicycle Advisory Committee Brian Larkin, SFCTA Citizen Advisory Committee Jim Lazarus, SF Chamber of Commerce Daniel Murphy, SFMTA Citizen Advisory Committee Norman Rolfe, SF Tomorrow Tom Radulovich, Livable City Dave Snyder, SPUR Marc Salomon, Coalition for Transit Justice Andrew Sullivan, Rescue Muni Howard Strassner, Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee	David Pilpel	<u>SFMTA</u> Julie Kirschbaum Britt Tanner  <u>Controller's Office</u> Sally Allen Liz Garcia  <u>TEP Consultant Team</u> Russ Chisholm

### PROJECT UPDATE

The meeting began with the introduction of new members of the TEP project team, including Julie Kirschbaum, the new SFMTA TEP program manager, formerly the Geary BRT project manager for the Authority, and Britt Tanner, an SFMTA traffic engineer and former Pedestrian Master Plan project manager. Julie reviewed the status of the key project activities in progress including the market research, service evaluation, and the operations review.

## PROJECT UPDATE CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

**C:** San Francisco does not seem to have an objective tool for evaluating the appropriate level of capital investment needed in a transit corridor. As a result, we have very large projects but midsize projects are less likely. London has developed a tool that should be considered for San Francisco.

**A:** CAC member agreed to send the materials to the Project Team, who will review and report back at a subsequent meeting.

**C:** To get an understanding of the best long term investment for the City's transit infrastructure, we need unbiased consultants who understand lifecycle costs.

**A:** The O&M cost model we are developing for the TEP will help to address your comment. Other models, such as the one used in the UK [referenced above] that we'll learn more about may also help us look at improvements in an unbiased way.

**C:** Will the team be looking at the capacity of existing trains, and where more growth will occur, making some lines more crowded in the future?

**A:** Yes, the APC data will help identify the hot spots and the overcrowding on the current system. We are also working with the SFCTA and the Planning Department to project where future demand will occur.

**C:** Some people only have a cell phone these days. Did the market research call only land-lines?

**A:** The market research is focusing on a sample of San Franciscans, both Muni riders and non-riders. This was achieved using a random digit dial which included both land-line and cell phone numbers.

**C:** How do we know if the respondents had attitudes shaped by current conditions?

**A:** Respondents were asked about their most recent weekday trip of ½ mile or more within San Francisco, and the actual travel choices they made. We will bring copies of the survey to the next meeting.

**C:** The Department of Public Health has a conducted a survey of youth to find their experiences on Muni, which I found considerably different from adults.

**A:** This survey can be found on the project website:

<http://www.sftep.com/docs.html>

**C:** Is the safety issue cited in the market research one that Muni can do something about or are the perceptions inherent to public transit?

**A:** The project team intends to conduct additional research to understand what is shaping public perceptions of safety related to Muni in order to develop strategies to address them.

**C:** In the service review, how are you looking at Muni from a regional perspective?

**A:** With the Technical/Regional Advisory Committee, the project team is looking at the Muni connections to the regional network. We are also evaluating regional travel patterns using the MTC travel demand model.

**C:** BART has extensive data that may complement the regional look.

**A:** The project team will coordinate this data sharing.

## **ROLE OF CAC IN THE TEP**

Julie reminded the group that the CAC was envisioned as a “brain trust” where a constituency and an understanding for recommended service changes could be built by interested and committed organizations representing Muni’s diverse ridership. The CAC is one of three advisory bodies helping to shape recommendations, promote awareness of the project and identify strategies for successful implementation. The CAC is also intended as a “forced multiplier,” meaning that CAC members should be sharing the conversations and information from meetings with their respective networks. CAC members were asked to take advantage of having a TEP briefing (please contact Julie or Liz to set one up).

## **ROLE OF THE CAC CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

**C:** How do we include the riders, those that cannot/do not attend the CAC meetings in the process?

**A:** The CAC is only one avenue for participating in the TEP. The others include an on-line survey, a paper version that can be distributed, citywide public meetings, and smaller forums such as the youth and family forms in March.<sup>1</sup> If CAC members have any other suggestions, please share them with a member of the project team.

**C:** I ride the 1-California all day and see many riders that appear to not speak English. The TEP should figure out what they think.

**A:** Public outreach (e.g., the website, public meetings, informational line) is being conducted in Chinese, Spanish and English.

**C:** The survey and information gained at the public meetings are good ways to find out if we are asking the right questions and reaching out in enough languages so that we are inclusive. Could the link to the survey tool be sent out to the committee?

**A:** Yes.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sftep.com/files/Tri-lingual%20Transit%20Forum%20Flyer.pdf>

**C:** Could all the EAP suggestions be posted on the website?

**A:** The project team is working with SFMTA Operations and Communications to finalize the Early Action Plan and develop promotional strategies to build public knowledge of and support for these efforts. This will likely include regular updates on the SFTEP website.

**C:** How can we be sure the CAC is putting forth a vision that reflects the interests and needs of the City's diverse population?

**A:** The CAC is not intended to be a one-size-fits-all-solution to outreach. Last summer, the project team contacted more than 20 community-based organizations that represent various populations to discuss their possible involvement with the TEP. Some told us that their stretched resources pose difficulties in participating in regular advisory processes, but expressed interest in keeping informed and providing input through other public forums such as focus groups, briefings at their groups, and neighborhood newspaper coverage. We hope to use the forum model (for example the upcoming family and youth forums) to reach out to those groups not currently represented on the CAC.

Focus groups (where attendees are paid for their participation) are another way to solicit input from specific constituencies. The more specific the criteria, the more time and money required. In one neighborhood study containing a Spanish-speaking focus group we found out a lot about people who commuted in off hours and the swing shift, etc., for example the need for more security on late night routes.

**C:** When the TEP staff go out to community presentations, please allow time for residents to share their concerns and ideas so it is not a one-way conversation.

**A:** The team will try its best to work with community groups to understand what the group is most interested in and shape the presentation accordingly.

**C:** At a recent TEP Policy Advisory Group meeting, someone suggested using bus shelter ads to inform the public of what's happening with something along the lines of: "Thanks for your suggestions, X# of people replied, and this is what we heard..."

**C:** Many CAC members could use their organization's communications tools (e.g., forums, newsletters, email blasts) to help distribute information about the TEP. It would be helpful if the project team could set up a workplan and timeline so that members could reserve space in upcoming newsletters for such content.

**A:** The project team will work on developing a newsletter series and provide it to any interested CAC members.

**C:** City Supervisor offices and local libraries have lists of community organizations that can also be reached out to.

**A:** The current TEP mailing list includes all of the City's neighborhood associations and a significant number of community organizations.

## **EARLY ACTION PLAN (EAP)**

Julie presented the draft Early Action Plan, including the outcomes of the two projects that have been completed (i.e., the automatic passenger counters (APCs) and the 1-California On-Time Bus Performance Pilot Project).

### **EAP CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

**C:** Would more Parking Control Officers (PCOs) pay for themselves?

**A:** It depends upon how/where they are deployed. PCOs that issue parking tickets typically generate more revenue than PCOs focusing on double parking and other enforcement needed to improve transit reliability.

**C:** Can the TEP get us to systemwide NextBus?

**A:** This is not an EAP item but as of February the NextMuni implementation schedule calls for the remaining trolley lines to be online in Spring 2007 and all diesel lines online in Fall 2007.

**C:** Why don't we place cameras on the buses, like they do in London?

**A:** SFMTA has considered this strategy, because of its potential to efficiently enforce the transit only lanes. State law would have to be changed to allow for this type of monitoring.

**C:** For the rail project, why not use the J-line as it is the worst performer and create some good media around it.

**C:** Does the 1-California pilot suggest that you can get 8% improvement on any line after similar investment or would you get more improvement on a lower performing line?

**A:** That's an excellent question and a something we hope to learn from the rail pilot.

**C:** Can fare inspectors also serve as safety monitors? Seniors do feel safer with a uniformed fare inspector on board.

**A:** The team can look into this.

**C:** We should have a stronger SFPD presence on Muni—since SFMTA pays for this.

**C:** Regarding a Proof of Payment (POP) pilot, CAC members raised several concerns including:

- The need to monitor the safety of back door boarding

- The potential for increased of fare evasion
- The possible confusion of only rolling out a limited POP program

They also suggested:

- Having driver assisting at the back door checking for passes and transfers on stops where many board
- Hiring “transit ambassadors” similar to those in Los Angeles

**A:** The project team will continue to refine this potential EAP project.

**C:** Regarding the flashing red light, the following concerns were raised:

- Will drivers know what that is?
- Why not use a “yield to buses” sign instead?

CAC members also suggested that an existing signal that is only warranted in the peak period might be used to test the flashing red light concept in the off-peak. This would complement the new installation and lead to quicker results.

**A:** Signage and education can help build a common understanding.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH UPDATE**

The project team is continuing to analyze all comments received by email, as well as those from the December public workshops and the online survey.

CAC members were encouraged to send their respective constituencies and networks to [www.sfstep.com](http://www.sfstep.com) and to arrange project briefings for interested community organizations.

As part of the outreach conducted within SFMTA, a half-day retreat for the Project Team is planned. The project team is developing a more comprehensive internal outreach program to ensure the TEP reflects the input and expertise of all levels of the SFMTA, including the bus and rail operators.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Muni Operations staff should have a high-level liaison to the TEP CAC. If Operations is not part of the process, they may not be as responsive as they could be, making this entire exercise for naught.

SFMTA should advocate for part-time operators, which could potentially save \$3-6 million dollars for the agency. I’m looking forward to a recap of where the consultants are with their projects. There was an early schedule put together and it would be useful to have an updated version.

## **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ABOUT THE NEXT MEETING**

**C:** If no CAC meeting is held, can a status report be sent to members regarding the status of various tasks?

**A:** Yes.

**C:** The group discussed whether or not they should elect a chair. Some thought it would be helpful to ensure that the CAC had a role in shaping the agenda. Others felt comfortable giving staff their suggestions and/or working through the two CAC members that sit on the Policy Advisory Group (Dan Murphy and Tom Radulovich).

**A:** Staff followed up by indicating that a passive meeting body, the CAC is not subject to any City requirements such as electing a chair. Historically, this group has made decisions by consensus. If the group would like to reach a consensus on whether or not a chair would be beneficial, it can be discussed at a future meeting.

**C:** Can CAC members suggest items to be added to the agenda or build time for “new business”?

**A:** Yes, members are welcome to add items to the agenda by phone or by email. We will also try to allow time at the end of the upcoming meetings to identify possible agenda items.

**C:** Could the CAC meet as a group without staff present?

**A:** Each member has the contact information of other members to arrange for further communication or information sharing. It may be more meaningful to have staff present at meetings to avoid working at cross purposes.