

San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project (SFTEP)

SUMMARY

SFTEP Citizen Advisory Committee August 10, 2006 Meeting
One South Van Ness Avenue, 3rd Floor, Room 3074

Following is a summary of the third meeting of the SFTEP Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The meeting included a brief update on the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) with most time focused on CAC member review and comment on a draft vision statement. The vision statement was compiled by the TEP project team based on input from the CAC, Technical Advisory Committee, Policy Advisory Group, and numerous stakeholder interviews. It is intended to help guide the TEP process and includes four parts: an overall vision, Muni system characteristics, measures of success, and policies to be reviewed. Comments noted below will be folded into the vision statement, and CAC members will have the opportunity to review it again.

PARTICIPANTS

<p><u>CAC Members and Alternates</u></p> <p>Lee Blitch, SFSU Steve Boland, Rescue Muni Joan Downey, MTA CAC Emily Drennen, Walk San Francisco Bert Hill, SF Bicycle Advisory Committee Sarah Karlinsky, SPUR Brian Larkin, SFTA CAC Lauralee Markus, Chamber of Commerce (Alt) Casey Mills, Coalition for Transit Justice Daniel Murphy, MTA CAC</p>	<p><u>CAC Continued</u></p> <p>Gary Noguera, Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods. Bruce Oka, MTA Accessibility Advisory Committee David Pilpel, Sierra Club (Alt) Bob Planthold, Senior Action Network Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr., Municipal Fiscal Advisory Committee (MFAC) Norman Rolfe, San Francisco Tomorrow Howard Strassner, Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee Agnes Ubalde, Small Business Commission</p>	<p><u>Public</u></p> <p>Stuart Matthews</p> <p><u>MTA</u></p> <p>Peter Albert Carl Natvig</p> <p><u>Controller's Office</u></p> <p>Sally Allen Liz Garcia Corina Monzón</p> <p><u>TEP Consultant Team</u></p> <p>Russ Chisholm, TMD Ben Strumwasser, CirclePoint Julie Ortiz, CirclePoint</p>
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PROJECT UPDATE

Peter Straus with MTA Planning noted that installation of 110 new Automatic Passenger Counters (APC) began August 2. The TEP project team was able to modify a procurement already planned and expedite installation on rubber tired vehicles representing about 10 percent of the whole fleet. Human checkers will continue to do special checks and counts on rail vehicles. In the past, all counting was done manually – a time and labor-intensive effort. APCs will greatly enhance MTA's ability to track ridership data on all lines. Funds for the new APCs are coming from the SFCTA and MTA capital funds. All other transit providers involved in all-night service are either making plans to add APCs or have something similar in place. Other key TEP activities in progress include market research and development of a financial model. CAC members asked staff to consider an update on early action items at the September meeting. Several members noted the need for faster, more responsive implementation of

low-cost improvements that haven't been done over time, are in the MTA's charter, and are a major reason why the CAC places such emphasis on reliability. It was suggested that every CAC member could easily bring a list of ideas, which the TEP project team could then consider as they evaluate what could most feasibly be done quickly.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT VISION STATEMENT FOR MUNI

Overall

- Make the vision statement more compelling; several points such as #1 and #4 are very broad and drilling down would provide more meaning
- Combine the first/last bullets that note economic vitality and quality of life
- Generally process is to create vision, then strategies, and then tactics. The TEP vision is inspirational; now have to get more specific.

Bullet #1: The success and economic vitality of San Francisco as a City is closely linked to Muni's success as a transit system)

- Recognize the relationship is two way; the City also contributes to Muni's success in the form of clear traffic/land use policies
- Remove the first reference to "success" and define more
- Call this the Draft Vision for Muni to avoid confusion with the MTA's broader vision, mission, and values.

Bullet #2: Muni, along with and in combination with other sustainable modes (walking and biking) is the first choice of everyone who lives or works in or visits San Francisco for all trips within San Francisco. SF is one of the handful of cities in the U.S. where owning a car is truly optional.

- Pare down to ensure vision is attainable; rather than first choice for everyone, acknowledge there will always be people who choose car travel
- Revise to indicate "all trips not involving good movements." Should be first choice for passenger trips.
- The statement is too narrow and San Francisco-centric, considering how many people come in from the suburbs to use the system

Bullet #3: Muni is a point of pride for riders, for Muni and MTA employees, and all San Franciscans.

- Add for all city employees

Bullet #4: Muni contributes measurably to the quality of life and the environment in San Francisco.

- Make "environment" more prominent; right now it is buried as after thought
- More clearly note concept of equity for those who have no choice.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SYSTEM THAT WOULD FULFILL VISION

Overall

- Indicate these are characteristics for the MUNI system as opposed to characteristics of the other modes mentioned in the vision statement.

Reliable, Fast, Competitive

- Fold “transit travel times” into the “reliable” bullet; “competitive” is not a separate quality. Use “speed” to replace “competitive.”
- Highlight need for speed; frequency is implied but not made explicit. “Fast” and “frequent” needs to be clearly spelled out.
- Competition should refer to travel time and Muni’s competitiveness with the private auto.
- A lot of things feed into being competitive. Break out speed, and note that Muni should operate at a “safe” speed.

Enhanced Network

- Change to “seamless network” to reflect the fact most regions of this size have only a single regional transit system and we have extensive interaction with other operators.

Egalitarian

- Change “choice riders” to “riders with choice” or “discretionary riders.”

Organizationally Focused

- Address accountability more directly; for example in regard to drivers who ignore “tagging” (graffiti).

Safety

- Include how safe a person feels on a vehicle.

Strategic

- Tone down goal of leaping to the top of the industry and put something more realistic and attainable.

Affordable

- Clearly highlight that service is accessible to lower income levels.

Environmentally Positive

- Add “and practices” in reference to “promote land use and other policies...”

Complementary

- Reference existing Transit First policy as means to prioritize street space.
- Recognize superiority of transit and other modes in conjunction with car uses on street.

- Use words “incorporates the needs of...” instead of “works together.”

Understandable and Legible

- Combine understandable and informative and note that not everyone in SF understands English
- Maximize real-time technology on all vehicles

Additional characteristics to include:

Sound Maintenance/Good Neighbor

- The concept that Muni should be a good neighbor by considering neighbors when planning service design and maintain all vehicles and facilities in good state.

Proven Technology

- Consider new bullet or fold in elsewhere prioritization of proven technology; in past we often have used unproven technology and suffered consequences.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Russ Chisholm with TMD provided an overview of the tensions inherent in the measures of success. There are no simple solutions without tradeoffs, and given financial constraints, prioritizing what's most important will be critical. Russ also explained that not all the measures are the same. Some things, like positive mode share, are outcomes of doing things right. Other things, such as better management of how service runs on the street, must be done no matter what. Customer satisfaction, quality, and safety are givens, too. Some of the tensions to consider include the relationship between reliability and commercial and other vehicular travel. Who gets priority in a transit first city? Transit speed is another big issue. Data shows transit speeds are declining throughout the nation. How can Muni get back to the point of more competitive travel times? Findings show ridership increases with time reductions. But increased speed may require actions some find controversial like reducing the number of stops, and this in turn gets into issues of coverage and accessibility. Crowding effects resources, convenience, and quality of service. The more crowded the vehicle, the slower the run. Financial sustainability means doing things right and planning service that can be maintained for the long term. Transit agencies handle this a variety of ways; some are OK with ups and downs, others are not.

Follow are comments from CAC members:

Customer Experience

- Combine quality of experience and crowding and just put under customer experience
- Assess customer satisfaction more than yearly, given that everything comes down to satisfaction and quality of experience.

Reliability

- Add reference to streamlining connections to no more than two and improving timing and synchronization of transfers. Major time loss comes from the number of connections riders must make and not so much from vehicle speed or distance to stops.
- Remove crowding as a separate bullet; it is negative and all others are positive. Crowding is mitigated if frequency is reliable.
- Increasing frequency won't draw more riders if crowding not addressed. But address crowding only where it exists while maintaining coverage per established frequency standards. Avoid providing more night service where it won't be used, but don't want to go below 20 minutes. Put more resources into heavily used lines such as the 38.

Transit Travel Speed

- Highlight reduction of travel time rather than transit vehicle speed to make sure we aren't implying unsafe speeding.

Coverage and Access

- Revise to say "all San Franciscans" rather than "nearly all ..." that implies some are left out.
- Revise to say bus stops within "reasonable distance" rather than within a block of every house, so as to not raise unrealistic expectations.
- Include reference to making Muni available to visitors and commerce.
- Make hours of service for late-night, and off-peak travel more explicit.

Financial Sustainability

- Include diligently seeking new sources of revenue.
- Everything rests on financial sustainability; all other measures deteriorate in its absence.

Affordability

Break out as a separate item, given that it is distinct from other measures that pertain to service design and customer experience.

- Make a distinction between "affordable to low income people" but not to the exclusion of all riders who can pay.
- Include reference to looking at peak/off peak fare schedule such as in NYC where rail is cheaper on off-peak.

Below is a summary how CAC members ranked their top three priorities. Blank boxes denote that a characteristic did not receive a vote.

MEASURE	# 1 RANKING	#2 RANKING	#3 RANKING
Reliability	5 people	6 people	6 people
Transit Speed	5	2	2
Mode Share	4		1
Financial Stability	2	4	4

Affordability	2		1
Customer Satisfaction	1	1	3
Coverage and Access		3	
Quality of Service		1	
Safety			1
Crowding			
Cost Effectiveness			

ACTION ITEMS

- Agendize the assignment of a second CAC delegate to the Project Advisory Group for the next CAC meeting.
- Provide any additional comments on the vision document before the September meeting to Ross Maxwell.