

San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project (SFTEP)

SUMMARY

SFTEP Citizen Advisory Committee September 6, 2006 Meeting One South Van Ness Avenue, 3rd Floor, Room 3074

Following is a summary of the fourth meeting of the SFTEP Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP). It included a project update, review of the revised TEP visioning document, and brainstorming on potential early action projects. Comments on the visioning document will be folded into the version provided to the MTA board and posted on www.sfteped.com.

PARTICIPANTS

<p><u>CAC Members and Alternates</u> Steve Boland, Rescue Muni Joan Downey, MTA CAC Emily Drennen, Walk San Francisco Becky Evans, Sierra Club Bert Hill, SF Bicycle Advisory Committee Sarah Karlinsky, SPUR Brian Larkin, SFCTA CAC Jim Lazarus, Chamber of Commerce John Noguchi, SF Convention Facilities/Property Management Gary Noguera, Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods Bruce Oka, MTA Accessibility Advisory Committee</p>	<p><u>CAC Continued</u> David Pilpel, Sierra Club Bob Planthold, Senior Action Network Guillermo Rodriguez, Jr., Municipal Fiscal Advisory Committee Norman Rolfe, San Francisco Tomorrow Howard Strassner, Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee Jordanna Thigpen, Small Business Commission</p>	<p><u>MTA</u> Ross Maxwell Peter Straus</p> <p><i>Controller's Office</i> Sally Allen Liz Garcia Peg Stevenson</p> <p><i>TEP Consultant Team</i> Russ Chisholm Bonnie Nelson Jay Primus Julie Ortiz Ben Strumwasser</p>
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PROJECT UPDATE

Ross Maxwell, MTA's project manager for the TEP noted that the visioning process is almost complete and the current vision statement reflects input from the CAC, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Policy Advisory Group. Market research is underway, including a statistically accurate citywide telephone survey of San Franciscans. Findings will be analyzed and summarized as the study progresses. Installation of Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) on buses to aid in counting the passenger boarding and alighting is in process. It is anticipated that all 110 will be in place by mid-October. Extensive operations analysis continues and has involved discussions with numerous management and operations staff. Development of the cost model continues, as well.

The following comments (**C:**) and responses (**R:**) were raised during the review of the project status.

C: Include broad ways to solicit public input into the TEP in addition to the market research. Consider post cards on Muni buses and prizes. Everyone has opinions about Muni and we could obtain valuable input through tools like this.

C: Merchant associations would like to send a survey to their members if this can be made available for general distribution. Provide dates for the public meetings as soon as possible so CAC organizations can get this out to members.

C: My experience with merchants is that they don't use Muni and don't believe that shoppers use Muni.

C: Share more information with the CAC about preliminary findings and upcoming efforts so these aren't news to us before they reach the media. **R:** We are still collecting data and no recommendations have been made. All draft plans will be shared with the advisory groups and the public.

C: The TEP process needs to integrate with other city agencies such as the police department on items like street permit times.

VISIONING DOCUMENT

Following are CAC comments on the draft, revised visioning document. The document includes four parts: Draft Vision for Transit in San Francisco (Mission Statement), Muni System Characteristics, Draft TEP Measures of Success, and Policy Areas to be Reviewed.

Draft Vision for Transit in San Francisco (Mission Statement)

C: The first statement is one of fact whereas the others are things that should happen. Change "will" to "should" to imply action on part of MTA rather than something that might occur in the future.

C: Stick with "will" because "should" implies maybe, maybe not; consider "shall" that is even more emphatic.

C: "Shall" is mandatory and legally binding and we may not be able to say this if we aren't able to ensure the vision happens.

C: Use present tense to help show these as affirmations. Right now the vision statement bounces among three frames; tense should be "is" and not "should" or "will."

The group agreed to stick to "will."

CHARACTERISTICS

C: Add the word "continued" to the top of page 3.

Financially Sustainable/Efficient

C: The sustainability definition seems limiting and implies we will let Muni shrink rather than seeking more funding sources. **R:** Sustainable in this context refers to working within available funds and doesn't preclude us from looking for more money.

C: Replace "available" with "achievable."

C: San Francisco has official policies on sustainability and explicitly mentions Muni in these.

C: The City charter includes a policy to aggressively pursue new revenue sources. This is very different than what has been done historically, and this should be an outcome of the TEP. **R:** The basic goal of the TEP is to help develop a system that people want to fund. The recommended service plan will outline what can be done with money available today and what it would take to do the rest.

C: The TEP is an audit authorized through Measure C and diligent pursuit of new revenue sources is explicit in the City charter and thus should be the focus of this study. **R:** The TEP is not an audit but a unique partnership and opportunity to look at how to invest our resources in doing a comprehensive review of the transit network.

C: I support the concept of achievable financial revenue. The TEP analysis must grapple with the current financial situation and the need for more revenue.

C: In addition to looking at what customers want and financial stability, we also need to analyze how much the City has changed in the last 20 years from a land use perspective. The mission of the TEP should not just be where the customer wants to go but also where future land use will go.

C: Explain the difference between financial stability and financially efficient. **R:** The first means sustainable enough so we can continue to provide services and the second means, being able to manage unit costs.

C: Call out operations and capital in the fourth bullet.

Seamless Integration

C: Add the word “timely” to “transferring between Muni lines is easy, and convenient.”

Safe and Secure

C: Clarify the difference between safe and secure. For example, is it really MTA’s responsibility to ensure a safe walk home from the bus stop? **R:** MTA is held accountable for this now.

Independent

C: Add the word “and” between “its riders” and “the agency.”

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Transit Travel Speed

C: Use “transit travel time” instead of “transit travel speed.”

C: Use “improved transit travel time.” The biggest problem is decrease in speed.
R: We are referring to the average speed of the system, not vehicle speed.

C: Consider “improved schedule speed.”

Service Delivery

C: Incorporate the idea of time competitiveness with other modes, like cars or key express routes.

C: There are contradictions inherent in some measures; for example the main way to increase speed decreases accessibility.

C: Some locations take longer to reach because of transfer time even though they may be closer than other areas that can be accessed on just one line. Transfers have a much bigger effect on transit time than speed of the vehicle and are a key reason people drive.

C: Does crowding take into account measures of frequency? **R:** Crowding measures capture what Muni currently reports in Prop E data for passenger load. “Pass ups” also indicate the number of times a person couldn’t get on vehicle because it was too full.

C: Include “bunching” as a measure given that it is a frequent problem. **R:** On-time performance measures will capture this.

C: Quantify auto time. Identify sticking points, such as “right at this intersection where speed drops dramatically”; speed up process of installing Next Bus system. **R:** This is addressed under the system characteristics.

C: Try to measure accessibility. It would be interesting to see where we are at now and what percentage of stops is accessible.

Customer Experience

C: Conduct customer satisfaction surveys more frequently than annually. Revise to say “on a regular basis.”

C: Look at passenger service reports (PSR) for data and measures.

POLICIES

C: Move parking and land use policies higher up in the document; they appear to be lower priority listed on the back page. There can be no vision for Muni without sound parking and land use policy. **R:** The policy statements are not lower priority but rather what we need to do once we get into the TEP.

C: Under pricing, higher prices for certain services like cable cars is a concern. Cable car and express bus service should be the same fare as the rest. If you receive federal money, you can't compete with private charter trips. But because no other operator has trolley cars, MTA has been able to do this. **R:** What are presented in the visioning document are alternatives to how things are done now suggested by participants of the three advisory groups. MTA is not endorsing any one in particular and no recommendations on any of these policy suggestions have been made at this point.

C: Under communication with customers, insert “signage”

DISCUSSION OF KEY TRADEOFFS

Following are points made during discussion of the key tradeoffs that the TEP will have to address. *See Attachment A for CAC member results of the tradeoff exercise.*

C: Some of these tradeoffs should not be written in stone and are not either/or scenarios. For example, I'm uncomfortable with the suggestion you can't speed things up without affecting bus stop spacing. **R:** None of the decisions we'll have to make will be simple bifurcated choices. For this exercise, we've broken these down on a very simple level just to give people idea of the policy tradeoffs. By noting them, we are not advocating one option or another.

C: CAC members may feel differently about the tradeoffs in six months after we are more educated and have reviewed more data.

C: We are looking at this through the eyes of today, but we also need to keep in mind the significant anticipated future growth in the number of seniors.

C: A more accessible fixed route might attract more para-transit riders and we should flag this, considering para-transit is growing. We need to look at whether everyone who uses para-transit needs to, or whether we might be able to make fixed route transit more attractive. It costs \$37 to \$40 a ride each way for para-transit.

INPUT ON EARLY ACTION ITEMS

Following is CAC member input on potential early action items to consider. Items marked with an asterisk * reflect comments multiple people made.

Street, Parking, Transit Speed Policy

- Implement Transit Preferential Streets (TPS) improvements *
- Enforce TPS to reduce illegal double parking and auto use of transit only lanes by installing enforcement cameras on the outside of buses, and coordinating with DPT and the police *
- Coordinate with DPT regarding signal timing and priorities *
- Coordinate signal pre-emption with stops on far sides of intersections
- Remove stop signs on trunk routes. Either signalize or turn 4-way stops into 2-way stops
- Conduct exercises with the public to assess how much transit first changes people are willing to support vs. maintaining auto speed, convenience, access

Transfers

- Analyze where people coming from/going to and where they transfer to determine what the base point is
- Conduct a timed transfer demonstration such as at Forest Hill or Balboa Park

Location-Specific Improvements

- Provide the CAC real world examples of tradeoffs such as investing in the 26 Valencia versus improvements on Mission Street
- Develop a near term implementable Market Street closure plan that includes enforcement and signage
- Make roundabouts in West Portal that Muni can go through
- Add bulb outs on west side of Sunset tunnel where people park and block the N Judah

- Support Telegraph Hill dwellers efforts to remove visitor parking at Coit Tower so people take the 39 bus from Fisherman's Wharf to the tower

Pricing/Funding

- Examine the feasibility of fare free transit *
- Allow transfers among cable cars
- Charge a quarter for everyone who rides
- Pass the parking tax in November

Customer Experience

- Implement Next Bus as soon as possible *
- Improve way-finding; marketing for visitors; and communication with customers *
- Provide more operator training to help them provide clearer directions to passengers
- Prevent off-shift operators from sitting in front seats where seniors belong and blocking entrances and slowing things down
- Standardize maps and make them to scale. Make sure tourists get accurate transit info *
- Clean up stations and examine partnerships with DPT and DPW to confirm who staffs and is responsible for stop maintenance
- Prohibit cell phone use by drivers

Other

- Conduct a complete, independent evaluation of all rubber tired routes
- Improve maintenance for longer reliability of vehicles in service
- Evaluate staffing needs to identify marginal avoidable costs and those that are order of magnitude

NOMINATION OF SECOND CAC DELEGATE TO PAG

CAC members were asked to nominate a second delegate to attend Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meetings on behalf of the CAC. Bob Planthold, Steve Ferrario, and Tom Radulovich were nominated. Tom Radulovich, receiving the most votes, was selected. Tom will join Dan Murphy, who was previously appointed as a CAC representative on the PAG.

NEXT CAC MEETING

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for November 9 from 5 to 7 at One South Van Ness Avenue, 3rd Floor Conference Room.