

San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project (SFTEP)

MEETING SUMMARY

SFTEP Policy Advisory Group Meeting

February 21, 2007

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Room 278

Participants:

PAG Members

- Wil Din, MTA Board of Directors
- Nathaniel Ford Sr., MTA ED/CEO
- Ed Harrington, Controller's Office
- Boe Hayward (for Bevan Dufty, SF Board of Supervisors)
- Irwin Lum, TWU Local 250A
- Peter Mezey, MTA Board of Directors
- José Luis Moscovich, SFCTA
- Dan Murphy, MTA CAC
- Tom Radulovich, TEP CAC
- Leah Shahum, MTA Board of Directors
- Stuart Sunshine, Mayor's Office

MTA Staff

Julie Kirschbaum
Carter Rohan
Judson True

Controller's Office Staff

Sally Allen
Peg Stevenson

TEP Consultant Team

Julia Salinas,
CirclePoint

PUBLIC OUTREACH DISCUSSION

Julie Kirschbaum opened the discussion by noting that each member around the table is a public outreach resource. PAG members were asked to help with outreach by sharing updates with their constituencies. PAG members were provided with a meeting packet exhibiting TEP outreach activities past and in progress, such as a summary of the December citywide public open houses, the TEP online survey results to date, and the youth and family transit forum flyer. The youth and family forums may be a good model for conducting outreach with other stakeholder groups, such as seniors and riders with disabilities.

PAG Member Comments

- Summarize what has been done to date, what could be done beyond existing efforts and what the possible cost would look like.
- Involve more marketing and strategic communications with the media work to existing efforts. Currently, the project is not scoped to include this, but some effort should be placed on advertising, (e.g. bus shelters).
- Encourage a "buzz" about this project in the media.
- Don't forget to "in-reach" – conducting outreach to MTA's internal stakeholders (employees).

- Look at existing resources for the desired amount of public outreach. Despite existing staff time and budget for consultants, new consultant services, for example, in the area of media expertise will have to be considered.
- Be thoughtful about reaching out to the Chinese community. Translating technical language verbatim does not always make complete sense. Technical language needs to be simplified and told in story form.
- Explore the use of advertisements in newspapers, including ethnic newspapers. Though these were used for the December workshops, with events such as the youth and family forums, outreach efforts were guided by the outreach expertise of event partners such as the Youth Commission and the Department of Children, Youth and their Families.
- Increase the amount of outreach as any routes change. With the objective of the project being to increase ridership, additional emphasis on outreach will occur.
- Continue to present on the TEP to community groups.
- Include regular updates in the newsletters sent from Supervisors to thousands of San Franciscans.
- Communicate, either by flyer, poster, or leaflet in the project area when conducting a pilot program so that the public understands the changes taking place.

PROJECT UPDATE

The project team continues to work on a number of tasks concurrently, including examining the early results of the market research, service analysis, and operations review. Additionally, a policy framework is being developed to guide the system recommendations. The development of the operations and maintenance cost model, which models current and future costs of providing a certain level of service, also continues.

Initial findings of the market research were presented to the PAG members. The goal of this work is to better understand San Francisco residents' existing travel patterns, those of existing transit riders and to determine what attitudinal factors shape transportation decisions. This market research incorporates the US Census 2000 demographics, 15,000 SFCTA on-board transit travel surveys which included important origin/destination data and 579 telephone surveys.

Using random sampling, 579 telephone surveys were completed (in English, Chinese and Spanish) to provide a better understanding of the key factors that shape a person's decisions about how they get from one place to the next. The survey is designed to reveal the respondents' sensitivity to certain factors. The "attitudinal questions" within the survey aim to get at a respondent's true travel preferences. Once the survey was carried out, the analysis identified six key transportation attitudes among the survey respondents:

1. Need for reliability
2. Time sensitivity

3. Need for comfort
4. Need for flexibility
5. Cost sensitivity
6. Need for safety

The consultants carrying out the survey developed a structural equation model to understand how San Francisco as a whole perceives travel and any differences among sub-groups. These groups represent the “market segments” in San Francisco. For some of the segments, transit is a larger percentage of how people travel – things they prioritize are consistent with what transit offers. However, what this research suggests is that transit ridership could increase if MTA focuses on those attitudinal factors that matter most to the adult population – namely reliability and travel time.

PAG Member Comments

- Don't treat preferences as fixed as they could change once use transit increases. People's preferences are based on their modes.
- A lot can be learned about people's perceptions by asking why they *don't* ride Muni. It is especially useful to see the difference between riders and non-riders.
- Regarding time sensitivity, sort between wait time and travel time as wait time is weighted much more heavily than moving time. People resent waiting time more than when they are actually traveling.
- It is possible to create a set of improvements that appeal to many different segments as most market segments hover around the median, for example, providing service that was perceived as frequent and fast.
- The system appears to already be working for the outliers, so it is important that in our redesign we remember to keep it working for them.
- We have a large Asian population currently relying on their children to take them to their appointments because they need to get there on time. They rely on transit for all other needs except medical because need to arrive on time – need reliability.
- If Muni were to become more convenient for folks, fewer would chose to drive and reduce the amount of congestion on the roads, which benefits everyone.
- Other complementary modes to contribute to reduced congestion include reliable cab service, carshare programs, paratransit, cycling and walking. This could be the next step of the TEP.

Through the TEP service analysis, baseline data on all bus routes will be available. Currently data on rail and F line is being collected. This will allow MTA to understand variability of service and travel times. One problem identified so far is that operators are leaving early and doing so because operators feel they won't have enough time to get to the end of the line. Coverage of the system such as gaps and redundancy in service will also be evaluated through this work. A variety of issues, such as whether or not a community route is more

appropriate than a cross-city line for a particular area or how regional centers (i.e. Balboa BART) are served will be considered. Passenger activity on each line, at each stop will be reviewed as will the adherence of lines to published schedules.

PAG Member Comments

- Maintain high levels of communication with SF school district, as there is not enough service when school lets out. Use the APC data to show what times of the day face the heaviest burden and then talk to the district or Supervisors.
- Invest in bus terminals so that buses are able to run more efficiently. Currently, operators face issues such as not enough space to turn the buses around and/or line up.

The operations review is in the midst of looking at how operator availability fluctuates over various time periods. The review will also look at how proactive our scheduling team can be to fill in the gaps created by these fluctuations. This review will also help Muni to have more precision on recovery time after an emergency or meltdown.

PAG Member Comments

- Compare MTA's MOUs regarding scheduling, mandatory breaks, etc. to MOU's from other systems
- Make a distinction between cable car and rail operations when measuring performance, as historic cable cars and new vehicles should be weighed differently.

EARLY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The procurement and installation of the Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) is considered to be the TEP's first EAP. This is allowing the MTA to collect ridership reports every month instead of every 6-8 years, including details such as how often wheelchair lifts and bike racks are deployed. This data will be presented at the next round of public workshops and potentially on the website. As other EAP projects are carried out, more thought is being given to how it is shared with the public. The team is looking into the suggestion of a "TEP dollars at work" campaign. The team will continue to encourage all of our committee members to take this information their constituencies, and networks. Data collected from the 1-California project will be compiled and brought to the March 20th MTA board meeting.

PAG Member Comments

- Spend time to educate the general public on the transit concepts we are learning more about through the TEP.

- Look into SFGo, which many cities are using to look at their own efforts to improve reliability.
- Roll in next fall's full deployment of NextMuni and NextBus into the TEP.
- Learn from the pilot projects to consider how much can be gained through efficiencies using the existing funds and budgets.
- Learn about what efficiencies can be gained from increases in specific trainings.
- Commit resources to all EAP projects to maintain improvements beyond a pilot phase.
- Bring load factors down to a reasonable level as a strategy to improve the rider experience and reduce the opportunities for fare evasion.
- Carefully package and market any Proof of Payment pilot to reduce possible passenger confusion and avoid setting up a pilot for failure.
- Invest more resources into the quick-fixes.
- Invite media to future PAG meetings to continue the information sharing.
- Involve the front-line staff in the identification of "quick-fixes."

NEXT STEPS

- The next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2007 from 9am-11:00am in Room 278 on the second floor of City Hall.