

## San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project (SFTEP)

### SUMMARY

#### SFTEP Policy Advisory Group Meeting

December 15, 2006

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

City Hall, Room 278

#### Participants:

##### ***PAG Members***

- Wil Din, MTA Board of Directors
- Nathaniel Ford, MTA
- Ed Harrington, Controller's Office
- Boe Hayward (for Bevan Dufty, SF Board of Supervisors)
- Steve Heminger, MTC
- Kevin Hughes, IBEW, Local 6
- Irwin Lum, TWU Local 250A
- Dan Murphy, MTA CAC
- Tom Radulovich, TEP CAC
- Leah Shahum, MTA Board of Directors

##### ***MTA Staff***

Carter Rohan  
Peter Albert  
Peter Straus  
Paul Bignardi  
Judson True  
Julie Kirschbaum,  
SFCTA

##### ***Controller's Office Staff***

Sally Allen  
Liz Garcia  
Peg Stevenson

##### ***TEP Consultant Team***

Russ Chisholm, TMD

#### Meeting Overview

This document summarizes the fifth meeting of the SFTEP Policy Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG is one of three advisory bodies established to provide input, review, and policy-level guidance during the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP). The PAG's standing meeting schedule is the third Wednesday of the month from 9am to 11am (though meeting dates are subject to change). Ten PAG members, as well as staff from the MTA, the Controller's Office, and the TEP consultant team attended this two-hour meeting, which focused largely on an overview of the draft findings from TMD's review of Muni service management (Task 5) and a preview of possible initiatives for the TEP Early Action Plan.

#### Project Update

##### Project Management

PAG Chair Nathaniel Ford opened the meeting. He first introduced Julie Kirschbaum from the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA), who will be serving as interim TEP program manager for the MTA effective January 2, 2007. The MTA has partnered with the SFCTA until a permanent candidate is selected.

## Activities in Progress

Mr. Ford asked Sally Allen to provide a brief update on the status of the project's key tasks:

- Task 1 - Visioning. A draft vision statement based on input from the three TEP advisory committees was presented to the MTA Board in early November and recently shared at the citywide open houses. Project staff is working with staff guiding the MTA Board's strategic planning efforts to ensure that the TEP visioning process will inform their work.
- Task 2 – Benchmarking & Best Practices Review. Much of this analysis was included in the TEP briefing book that PAG members received in July. The briefing book is also available online.
- Task 3 – Market Assessment. The team completed 579 transit preference surveys to assess the current market for Muni service and identify factors affecting people's transportation choices.
- Task 4 – Service Evaluation. Ridership data collection via 110 Automatic Passenger Counters on buses is continuing through January, and manual checkers are conducting ridership and operations checks for rail vehicles. This will provide extensive data regarding passenger loads and boarding/alighting activity.
- Task 5 – Operations Review. Today's meeting includes a presentation of TMD's draft findings from its review of service management processes and their impact on the delivery of scheduled transit services. Additional deliverables forthcoming under Task 5 include a review of the scheduling function (practices/policies), division management and operator staffing, and absenteeism.
- Task 6 – Early Action Projects. Today's meeting includes a presentation of preliminary candidates for Early Action initiatives, which are near-term service and operational opportunities visible to the public and MTA staff that are intended in part to foster support for future TEP service recommendations.
- Task 8 – Cost Model/Financial Plan. Development of an operating and maintenance cost allocation model is underway to provide projections of the financial impact of service changes. An early draft of the cost model was recently presented to MTA Finance and Operations staff, and will be completed in spring 2007.

## Debrief of December Open Houses

Peter Straus summarized the outcome of the three December TEP public open houses.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 200 people attended open houses held in the Richmond, Downtown, and Bayview districts of the city. We had a better than expected turnout, given that we are at an early stage in the process and the weather was bad that week. The transit issues and concerns raised by attendees were consistent with those that have been shared by TEP advisory committee members. The feedback and input received at this first round of meetings will help shape the next two rounds planned for spring and summer 2007. PAG members suggested strategies to increase the visibility of the project and generate more excitement about the next round of public meetings, for example, a bus shelter ad campaign.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that TEP Open House exhibits and materials are available online at: <http://www.sftep.com/docs.html>

## **Service Management Review**

TMD staff presented its draft findings of the service management review consisting of interviews with key MTA service management staff. The presentation focused on the issues affecting daily operations and service delivery. Preliminary draft findings were organized within one of four key stages of the MTA (Muni) service management process: 1) Division Pull-Outs, 2) Terminal Departures & Line Operations, 3) Incident Response and Service Recovery and 4) Facility Issues.

The following recommendations were identified as the MTA's most urgent needs:

- Designating a member of senior operations management to lead efforts in addressing service delivery problems.
- Bringing supervisory and training staffing to the levels needed to meet service management roles.
- Addressing operator availability.
- Increasing fleet availability and reliability.
- Increasing fleet storage and maintenance bay capacities.
- Bringing staff levels in line with the preventative and corrective maintenance needs of each fleet group.

PAG members offered suggestions for addressing the agency's urgent needs. These included:

- Study further the impact of workers out on long-term sick leave;
- Implement two training courses simultaneously for operators or coordinate with other Bay Area operators to provide a regional training program through the community college system;
- Reorganize work schedules to increase nighttime maintenance on vehicles;
- Avoid the maintenance bays for storage to increase ability to work on buses;
- Design an aggressive game plan to hire operators that also works within HR, union and Controller's Office constraints;
- Investigate offering part-time operator and maintenance positions to retired employees; and
- Investigate the positive impact of offering incentives such as monthly bonuses for lack of absences.

## **Update on Early Action Candidates**

TMD staff presented the draft proposed Early Action Plan (EAP) Initiatives, which focused on service reliability, improved customer information and service management. Within each of these initiative areas, pilot projects are being developed to help demonstrate operational

practices or techniques that address existing concerns (TEP issues) or to revitalize processes within MTA (Muni) to support a stable and successful future. These are projects that can be implemented in advance of the full set of TEP service recommendations.

The service reliability pilot projects under consideration include enhanced bus service on Geary Boulevard and the application of the findings from the 1-California pilot project (which began at the end of October) to other high ridership routes (for example the 14-Mission). The improved customer information pilot projects under consideration include expanded deployment of NextBus, introduction of new wayfinding at Muni metro stations, and improved web information availability. Possible projects under the service management initiative area focus on scheduling and assignment of vehicles and operators, the management of Muni metro surface operations, and staffing. The project team is also generating a list of smaller projects (based on input from the public and MTA employees) that could be implemented relatively quickly to improve service (previously referred to as the "Muni 100" but to be changed per PAG suggestion discussed later in summary).

PAG members stressed the need for EAP projects to be visible to the rider. Requests were made for a checklist to help the public gauge the progress of projects. PAG members highlighted the importance of "branding" TEP projects and raising the visibility of projects in progress. Ways to accomplish this might include writing feature stories, taking journalists along for rides, and posting "TEP in Progress" ads in bus shelters. Questions were raised about the adequacy of the TEP's public relations budget to this end.

One PAG member asked why bus stop changes were not considered as part of the early action plan. The project team indicated that more analysis was needed and that the study team will be taking a comprehensive look at bus stops citywide.

One member suggested that the TEP findings will be an opportunity for the public to learn more about transit; some findings may challenge existing perceptions. Another suggested studying proof of payment (POP) on a pilot basis. However, the group also discussed the value of the pilot bus being clearly marked and easy to distinguish, to prevent riders from becoming confused if a pilot POP was only rolled out on one line.

Regarding the customer information initiative, PAG members discussed possible collaborations between Muni metro stations, BART and MTC. The PAG chair also noted that a Beta-version of a new Muni website is almost ready. Another member requested that the new site be linked to the 311 project website.

Finally a request was made by members to rename the "Muni 100" to define this set of activities more precisely and positively.

## **Next Steps**

Staff asked PAG members to hold the following standing 2007 PAG meeting dates (3rd Wednesdays at 9-11am) until further notice:

- January 17<sup>2</sup>
- February 21
- March 21
- April 18
- May 16
- June 20

## **Public Comment**

One member of the public, Bob Planthold spoke. He took issue with the following: 1) the lack of public notice for the PAG meeting, 2) the use of maps with small fonts during the TEP open houses, 3) the clustering of staff members during the open houses which led to the obstruction of exhibits, and 4) the consideration of Proof of Payment/back-door boarding, which he raised as a potential safety concern for people exiting the bus.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Policy Advisory Group meeting has been cancelled.