

May 17, 2011

Ann Flemer
Deputy Executive Director, Policy
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700

Subject: San Francisco County Transportation Authority Regional Transportation
Plan Call for Projects Submittal

Dear Ms. Flemer:

In response to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Call for Projects, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Authority) administered a robust local process to solicit projects ideas, receiving over 300 ideas from implementing agencies and members of the public in San Francisco. We screened projects to identify those appropriate for inclusion in the RTP/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), also known as One Bay Area, and have developed a list of San Francisco priorities that fall within the \$6.16 billion target assigned to San Francisco. We have developed a draft staff recommendation and submitted the corresponding project information via MTC's web tool. On April 27, 2011, we briefed our Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on the local screening criteria that informed development of our RTP priorities and received the CAC's endorsement of the screening criteria, along with complementary funding principles (See Attachments 1 and 2 respectively). Earlier today, the Plans and Programs Committee recommended approval of the local screening criteria and funding principles and forwarded them to our Board for consideration at its May 24 meeting. If there are any changes to the project list as we continue through our Board process, we will notify MTC immediately.

To accompany our submittal, we wanted to convey some important feedback about San Francisco's transportation infrastructure priorities and needs.

1. Members of the San Francisco Public Strongly Support Investments in Sustainable Modes of Transport

We received over 200 ideas from members of public over a 1-month intensive outreach effort. We focused our outreach efforts on improving low-income and minority communities' awareness of, and access to, the project submittal process, including giving presentations to 14 different neighborhood groups located in San Francisco's Communities of Concern and developing materials in Spanish and Chinese to remove participation barriers. We will submit a full outreach summary in May, documenting our process. The key messages we heard from the public include: 1) support for existing San Francisco priority capital projects such as Caltrain Electrification and the Downtown Extension to the Transbay Terminal; 2) high demand for transit efficiency, pedestrian safety, cycling, and traffic calming improvements such as those we are developing on Market Street; 3) high demand for expansion of transit in dedicated rights-of-way (such as Van Ness and Geary Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)); and 4) demand for roadway capacity reduction projects (e.g. road diets and traffic calming citywide). We believe these desires



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are reflected in the projects we submitted and encourage MTC to consider this input in developing the Alternative Scenarios and Regional Programs.

2. San Francisco's Transportation Needs Exceed Our \$6.16 Billion Target

We recognize that countywide targets provided to Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) was a necessary planning cap and not a guaranteed level of funding for San Francisco in the final financially constrained RTP/SCS. While we were able to accommodate our most ready and high-performing capital projects, and some of our maintenance needs, we wish to note that San Francisco's total infrastructure need for both the existing transportation system and to meet the challenge of planned growth far outstrips the \$6.16 billion target. These needs include: additional State of Good Repair funding for both transit systems and roadways, transit operating needs to address demand and avoid overcrowding, and strategic transit, bicycling and pedestrian investments, demand management programs, and roadway modifications. We encourage MTC to include a vision element to the RTP/SCS to serve as the basis for a regional advocacy platform to secure funding for unmet needs such as these.

San Francisco's estimated State of Good Repair Needs for its baseline transportation infrastructure include but are not limited to:

- \$14.5 billion for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's capital maintenance and rehabilitation needs: \$1.13 billion for transit guideways, \$4.27 billion for vehicles, \$1.41 billion for stations, \$5.81 billion for systems, and \$1.85 billion for facilities.
- \$1.9 for local streets and roads rehabilitation and maintenance.
- \$123 million for Department of Public Works structures such as bridges and stairways.

These numbers do not include San Francisco's contribution to Caltrain or BART capital maintenance or its needs for highway rehabilitation and maintenance. In addition, transit operating service levels in 2035 will need to be substantially increased to keep pace with the growth being planned, even under current Regional Plans, with needs estimated at \$27.5 billion over the 28-year RTP timeframe for SFMTA alone. Even today, there is evidence of latent transit demand, as many of our bus and rail lines operate at loads far beyond capacity during the peak hours.

San Francisco's long-range vision for transportation includes a next generation of transit expansion and roadway modification projects. These ideas require additional vetting locally but will be prioritized through the development of our countywide transportation plan update, the San Francisco Transportation Plan, but include:

- Rapid transit network improvements, including potentially BRT on Geneva and extension of the M-Light Rail Transit line to Daly City BART Station serving the San Mateo/San Francisco Bi-County area;
- Freeway ramp re-configurations, lane removals or road diets which could potentially include modifications to the US 101 ramps at Cesar Chavez/Potrero ("hairball"), I-280 ramps at San Jose/Monterrey/Guerreo, I-280 ramps at Ocean Ave/Balboa Park Station, or other locations.
- Strategic rail infrastructure investments, such as grade separations, to improve the reliability of San Francisco's existing rail system. We included a portion of such a Transit Performance Initiative in our financially constrained list of projects, but believe the need for these types of treatments far outstrips the amount we were able to represent within our funding target.

We urge the region to advocate strongly for new revenue sources to support investments such as these that are necessary to implement SB 375 in San Francisco.

3. We Strongly Support Regional Investments in the Transbay and Peninsula Corridors

There are several important projects that are being submitted by our partner agencies that we wish to call attention to as priorities that San Francisco shares. These include existing high priority projects such as the Downtown Extension to a Rebuilt Transbay Transit Center and Caltrain Electrification, as well as other expansion projects needed to meet growth and system performance goals such as a potential contra-flow lane for AC Transit on the Bay Bridge, increased BART capacity and demand management in the Bay Bridge corridor; or corridor management on highways US 101 and I-280. With almost 50% of San Francisco employees commuting from neighboring counties, and growing numbers of San Francisco residents commuting to neighboring work centers, these regional corridor management strategies are critical to San Francisco's transportation system performance and economy.

4. We Urge the Region to Lead an Open and Inclusive Process to Develop the Long-Range Transit Network Assumptions for the SCS/RTP Alternative Scenarios

We are supportive of the Transit Sustainability Project (TSP) MTC has been leading and understand the TSP will be used to inform the transit networks modeled for the Alternative Scenarios. CMAs have sub-regional transit planning expertise that can be leveraged to help with corridor-level planning. In addition, CMAs and transit operators have been spending significant time developing transit projects in response to the call for projects and our countywide transportation plans, and hope these projects are considered in developing the Alternative Scenarios. For San Francisco in particular, but also for our more urban counterparts, development of the region's core transit network is critical to our ability to realize our local livability, economic and environmental goals and sustainable growth plans.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit projects for consideration in the RTP/SCS, and look forward to continuing to participate in and support the Plan Bay Area development process going forward.

Sincerely,



Tilly Chang
Deputy Director for Planning



Maria Lombardo
Chief Deputy Director for Policy and Programming

Attachments: 1. Local Project Screening Criteria – RTP/SCS Call for Projects
2. Draft Funding Principles to Support Regional RTP/SCS Advocacy

cc: Com. Mirkinimi, Campos, Wiener
G. Cho, A. Nguyen – MTC
JLM, AL, ZB, AC, LB, File: 2013 RTP/SCS Call for Projects

Attachment 1 Local Project Screening Criteria – RTP/SCS Call for Projects

If approved, the following project screening criteria would determine what projects we will submit to MTC by its April 29 deadline. The project list must fit within an initial target of \$6.16 billion in discretionary dollars that MTC has established for San Francisco. This is not a financially constrained target or a guaranteed funding level for San Francisco.

- **Supports the goals and performance targets of the RTP/SCS**, which is focused on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions per capita and on planning for the region's housing need at all income levels, as well as more transportation-oriented goals such as transportation system effectiveness, safety, and equity of access.
- **Is appropriate for submission to MTC through the RTP/SCS process.** Through our public outreach, we received several proposals for policy changes or non-transportation projects that would not typically be addressed in the RTP/SCS. (See Attachment 3 for a list of these projects.) The policy proposals will not be forwarded to MTC for the RTP/SCS, but will be considered in the SFTP process later this summer unless they are inconsistent with existing City policy.
- **Derives from an adopted plan, corridor study, or project study report** (e.g., countywide transportation plan, regional bicycle plan, Freeway Performance Initiative corridor study, etc.). Projects we submit to MTC for potential inclusion in the RTP/SCS must have already been vetted publicly and be part of the City's agreed-upon list of transportation priorities. More visionary projects that do not have plan status will be evaluated and prioritized through the SFTP, potentially setting them up to have plan status in time for the next RTP/SCS process.
- **Will seek federal, state, or regional funds or a federal action (such as environmental clearance) through 2017.** While the RTP/SCS offers the opportunity to shape the region's long-range vision for how it will grow and establish supporting transportation investment priorities, inclusion in the RTP/SCS (whether as an individual project or through a programmatic category) is a critical milestone for projects. For instance, projects cannot obtain federal, state or regional funds or a federal action such as environmental clearance, if they are not included in the financially constrained element of the RTP/SCS. Since our transportation funding needs far outstrip available revenues, we have to focus our efforts on ensuring that the transportation projects most likely to move forward through the RTP/SCS time period (i.e. through 2017) appear in MTC's final financially constrained list of projects.
- **Expands transportation capacity or is a regionally significant component of the regional transportation network.** These projects must be listed individually in the RTP/SCS as required by MTC and federal air quality conformity laws.
- **Has an appropriate cost estimate.** This screening criterion meets an MTC requirement and informs project readiness.

Attachment 2
Draft Funding Principles to Support Regional RTP/SCS Advocacy

1. **The regional discussion of transportation investment policies should begin immediately in order to clarify the link between RTP/SCS funding policy and regional land use growth plans and policy.** San Francisco and other jurisdictions can provide a more informed response to MTC and ABAG on how the region should transition from the Initial Vision Scenario (IVS) to the Alternative Scenarios with a better understanding of the policies that will be available to support the local growth plans. Currently, the RTP/SCS schedule calls for development of the Alternative Scenarios starting this month, but the transportation investment strategy discussion is not scheduled to start until October 2011.
2. **Regional investment should have a stronger nexus with transit system demand.** The IVS directs growth in the region to Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and other growth opportunities areas, trying to achieve more compact growth. San Francisco and other core urban are expected to absorb a significant amount of the regional growth and to accommodate as much of the new travel demand by transit as possible. These growth patterns and associated greenhouse gas reductions cannot be realized without significant investment in transit, both to maintain the infrastructure in a state of good repair and to accommodate additional demand. We should revisit current formulas and policies practices for existing discretionary sources and for new revenues sources. Formulas that allocate funding based on share of population and/or lane miles would not support this principle; e.g. while San Francisco is only 11% of the region's population, it is 16% of its employment, 14% of overall trip ends, and 61% of its transit trip ends (SF-CHAMP, 2010).
3. **Regional investment should have a nexus with Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and should recognize that not all PDAs are created equal.** Regional policy needs to consider factors of quality and quantity, such as the overall amount of growth being planned for, how much of that growth is affordable housing, the level of transportation and transit development, and the amount of local contribution, such as local and private matching investment.
4. **Regional investment should have a nexus with affordable housing production** to send a strong message about the relationship between the RTP/SCS and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). This type of policy could be achieved by establishing a funding mechanism that considers a jurisdiction's track record for affordable housing development and preservation, and/or the number of lower income housing units that is planned. It could also consider the policies the jurisdiction has put in place that indicate a higher likelihood of meeting affordable housing goals, such as inclusionary zoning.
5. **Project performance must be seriously considered to ensure the region is investing cost-effectively.** In particular, given the severely limited transportation funding environment, and the challenge of achieving the performance targets for the RTP/SCS, it is especially important to scrutinize large capital investments where lower cost capital or management options may be equally or similarly effective.

6. **The RTP/SCS process should include advocacy for new revenue opportunities and advance innovative funding strategies.** Advocacy for new regional revenues sources should include development of new regional transportation revenue sources to fund transportation needs, in particular to address chronic transit operating and infrastructure State of Good Repair (SOGR) shortfalls (e.g., the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's SOGR needs are estimated at more than \$10 billion). We strongly encourage MTC to include a vision element of the RTP/SCS that would identify projects and programs that exceed the resources currently available which could demonstrate how new revenues could be used to support RTP/SCS goals and benefit the public. Innovative funding strategies that should be considered include road user fees and public private partnerships.
7. **New non-transportation revenue sources should pay for the non-transportation infrastructure** needed to support the RTP/SCS goal of accommodating the region's entire housing need, including affordable housing production and "complete communities" amenities such as high-quality schools, access to groceries, and others.