



METROPOLITAN
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COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Planning and Operations Committee

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FR: Deputy Director, Policy

W.I.:

RE: Transportation 2030 Plan: Preliminary Strategies

Following the Transportation 2030 Plan “Summit” held in June 2003, MTC staff have been working with our transportation partners to refine proposals for addressing the major issues highlighted for the long range plan’s update: Goals and Objectives; Prior Commitments and New Investments, and Transportation and Land Use. These three challenges were discussed throughout the Summit, and form the major platform for Phase 1 of our Outreach Program. As well, our thoughts regarding the overall framework for the scope and direction of the plan were retooled to better address the need for a broader vision and advocacy platform.

Following this memorandum are individual issue papers for the four topics, containing findings suggested options; the summary below outlines key highlights from each. These preliminary strategies are the outgrowth of initial staff proposals that were discussed with the Bay Area Partnership and the Commission’s Advisory Councils in September, which were subsequently refined to present for this Committee’s information. They will then be “taken on the road” as part of an extensive outreach in October and early November, to solicit additional feedback and commentary from a variety of stakeholders and the general public. The Commission will consider this feedback and staff’s next level of recommendations at its workshop on October 29 and 30th, with further discussion and possible draft recommendations to occur at the November Planning and Operations Committee meeting.

Key Topic Highlights

1. “Big Tent”: There appears to be overall consensus that the Transportation 2030 Plan should reach beyond transportation planning issues and the financially constrained emphasis of past long range plans. On a policy basis, such an approach provides a more cohesive framework for recognizing the interrelationships of transportation with air quality, land use, the economy and other sectors. On financial grounds, a “big tent” would anticipate new revenues beyond those assumed in the financially constrained plan, and provide the opportunity to outline priority investments beyond the limits of existing funding sources.

The initial proposals for the public and Commission are:

- Adopt a “Big Tent” strategy that would serve as a “preferred alternative” for the long range plan.

- Identify “most likely” new revenue sources, and an attendant list of investment priorities based on the Transportation 2030 Plan’s overall goals and objectives, to provide a more flexible means to move projects into the financially constrained plan, if new revenues are approved by the voters.
 - Consider and discuss future technological, social, institutional conditions that don’t exist today, but that could alter our transportation decisions in the longer term.
2. Goals and Objectives. The six major goals adopted in the 2001 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) attempt to capture the wide range of purposes that a regional transportation system serves, either directly or indirectly: mobility, safety, equity, environment, economic vitality, and community vitality. We propose alternative goals that we believe are more directed, measurable, and “outcome” oriented, and as such, should better guide transportation policy and investment decisions. They are:
- A Safe and Secure System
 - Keep it Working
 - Making Connections
 - Travel Options that Save Time
 - A Reliable Trip
 - Lifeline Mobility
 - Smart Growth Incentives
 - Clean Air
 - Deliver the Goods

The public and Commission should consider whether these goals improve upon those included in the last plan, and how the goals will inform project selection and program priorities, both for existing and future new funds.

3. New Investments and Prior Commitments. A key question staff has been asked to consider is how much of the funding traditionally assigned to “committed” projects and programs might be freed up for new investments. Under the 2001 RTP, fully 90% of current available Bay Area transportation funding is committed to maintenance and operation of our existing system, projects in the construction pipeline, and fully funded projects from voter approved local expenditure plans. For the Transportation 2030 Plan, the question is raised-- should we revisit this level of prior commitments, and if so, how? Our initial findings include the sobering fact that estimated costs of maintaining and sustaining the system have markedly increased, exerting even more pressure on limited funds. While the “Big Tent” of potential new revenues can be tapped as an overall strategy for addressing major shortfalls, there remains the key question of how we should distribute and spend those remaining resources—10% or otherwise— on new investments in the financially constrained plan: what should we finance, and who makes that decision? How can we expand the pie with new funding?

In tackling these fundamental questions, our initial proposals focus on two primary areas:

- Determine committed projects/programs, using new screening criteria.
- Determine how uncommitted funds should be distributed. There are major decision points in this regard:
 - How much of the local streets and roads and transit shortfalls should be covered—and how much should be left “on the table” to finance with future new revenues?
 - How much of the regional programs like TransLink®, 511, system operations,

TLC/HIP, and Resolution 3434 projects should be covered?

-- With the remaining uncommitted funds, what should be allocated for local investment choices?

-- Should any of these distributions be altered to allow for new program and project investments such as Lifeline Transportation, freight movement, bicycles, improved transit connectivity, etc.?

4. Transportation and Land Use. The approach to land use and transportation in the 2001 RTP was primarily addressed through the Commission's Transportation for Livable Communities/Housing Incentive Programs, and corresponding community based planning objectives. However, the recent conclusion of the Smart Growth Project and growing concerns with the region's jobs/housing imbalance challenge the *Transportation 2030 Plan* to take a new view of the transportation/land use connection.

Building on this expanded foundation, staff's initial proposals for better linking transportation and land use include:

- Adoption of a specific policy that explicitly links transportation planning to Smart Growth objectives.
- Expansion of the TLC/HIP model to provide incentives to local governments to plan and implement more coordinated transportation /land use developments.
- Conditioning the programming and allocation of discretionary funding commitments in Resolution 3434 on local land use changes to support transit oriented development in and around 3434 corridors and station sites.

No actions are being requested of the Committee at this time; we seek your initial reactions and guidance to assist in preparing for the Commission's October workshop, and as we proceed with Phase 1 outreach discussions on these topics.

Therese McMillan