

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Policy Advisory Council**

January 26, 2024

Agenda Item 7b

Staff Liaison Report

Subject:

Overview of recent MTC policy decisions and other activities.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Staff Liaison Report – January 2024

Staff Liaison Report – December 2023

Follow up from Presenters

CHIRAG:

- **Charley Lavery** requested more information on Priority Development Areas (PDAs), including a key to provide definitions, etc.
 - Please see the *Attachment C - Draft Blueprint Growth Geographies*, as well as the following link: [Priority Development Areas](#)
- **Jeff Rhoads** was curious about whether there was an opportunity to identify new Priority Production Areas (PPAs). I mentioned that the nomination window was currently closed, but the following resources might provide some more context on the program.
 - [Priority Production Areas \(PPAs\)](#) and [Priority Production Area \(PPA\) Grants](#)
 - [Link to MTC Open Data Portal](#) for PPAs + the full list of current PPAs (attached)
 - The Attachment C ([linked](#) in the response to Charley Lavery) may also be of interest as well as the link to the PDA website.
- **William Goodwin** wanted to see the list of new PDAs and modified PDAs
 - See the attached items 6bi and 6bii for more information, including the full list and map.

MTC Staffer Judis Santos, project manager for the Community Action Resource Empowerment (CARE) program, had this response to a request for an update on the program: “The priority for CARE is to get the “Call for Projects” launched and Category 3 set up to be further developed by stakeholders. There is nothing new to report.

I will go back to the Council once the call for projects is launched. All this is on [MTC’s CARE website](#).”

Pamela Campos asked about Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project prototypes to be displayed outside of the two named locations in the North and East Bay in Santa Rosa and Del Norte BART in El Cerrito. The RMWP team will address the questions raised by Vice Chair Campos at their upcoming presentation to the RNM Customer Advisory Group meeting on January 26.

Executive Director's Report:

The following items are excerpts from the December 2023 Executive Director's Report to the Commission. To read past reports in their entirety, check the agenda for a given Commission meeting (search for past meetings on [MTCs Legistar webpage](#)).

Key Updates:

DOT Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant

- MTC received a \$10 million grant through U.S. DOT's Safe Streets and Roads For All program to advance MTC's Regional Vision Zero work, one of the five largest planning grants in the nation. The goal of this project is to lead our partners in improving safety in their communities, without duplication of their own efforts.

Clipper® BayPass Welcomes Aboard UCSF

- UCSF will provide up to 6,000 of its employees with passes for unlimited free travel for one year on any of 24 Bay Area transit agencies beginning Jan. 1. UCSF is the first Bay Area employer to join Phase 2 of the Clipper® BayPass program, which is jointly managed by MTC and BART.

New State Grant for Hwy. 37 Upgrades

- The California Transportation Commission approved a \$50 million grant to help MTC, Caltrans and project partners advance transportation and ecological resilience along State Route 37 between Vallejo and Sears Point. This includes restoration of the tidal marsh known as Strip Marsh East in Solano County and replacement of the existing Highway 37 bridge over Tolay Creek in Sonoma County with a much longer bridge that will promote restoration of the historic San Pablo Baylands.

State Transformation Task Force

- On December 10th, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) Transportation Secretary Toks Omishakin appointed MTC's Chief Deputy Executive Director Alix Bockelman to the state's Transit Transformation Task Force, which will be charged with developing policy recommendations to grow transit ridership, improve the transit experience for riders and address long-term operational funding needs throughout California. The 25-member task force includes several Bay Area representatives, including the executive directors of Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority (ECCTA/Tri Delta Transit), Napa Valley Transportation (NVRTA/Vine Transit), the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and the San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA/SF Bay Ferry), as well as policy directors from Seamless Bay Area, SPUR and the Bay Area Council.

Funding Opportunity: Call for Letters of Interest for Priority Sites

- BAHFA released a Call for Letters of Interest/Funding Application Notice to support housing developments on Priority Sites. BAHFA's new \$28 million pilot program will offer low-interest loans to buy land for affordable housing, construct new housing, complete necessary infrastructure and/or cover predevelopment fees, legal expenses or environmental reviews. Borrowers able to start construction within 24 months may seek loans of up to \$5 million. To submit an Interest Letter, review the [Letter of Interest/Funding Application Notice](#), then visit the [Priority Sites Nomination and Application Portal](#). The deadline to submit Letters of Interest is January 15, 2024.

Transit Priority Workshop in Oakland

- On December 12, MTC and AC Transit hosted a workshop in Oakland to kick off a regional transit priority policy. The workshop was well attended by transit agencies, county transportation agencies, cities, Caltrans, and interest groups. It was energizing to see and be with such a diverse array of stakeholders to tackle the barrier on transit priority.

Regional Network Management Meetings

- This fall, we completed the setup of the Regional Network Management framework, which will oversee efforts to improve the regional transit system. Back in July, MTC's Operations Committee transitioned into a new Regional Network Management Committee. In October, the Regional Network Management Customer Advisory Group, comprised of a variety of customer-focused transit advocates, met for the first time. Also in October a standalone Regional Network Management section was created within MTC, with staff devoted exclusively to carrying out initiatives from the Transit Transformation Action Plan. Most recently, the Regional Network Management Council, comprised of large and small transit operator general managers, was formalized and held its first two meetings in November and December.

MPO Executive Directors meeting in Sacramento

- On December 4th, I attended meetings organized by the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) with my MPO executive director colleagues from the state's largest regions (San Diego, Southern California, and Sacramento) to discuss on the relationship between state agencies and metro regions, particularly how we develop and implement our long-range plans. As you know, the strategies included in Plan Bay Area 2050 require a ton of partnership at all levels of government and currently state policy provides conflicting direction. We met with key state officials including CalSTA Secretary Omishakin, Office of Planning and Research Director Assefa, and Caltrans Chief Deputy Director Kever. I was joined by Alix Bockelman, Matt Maloney, and Rebecca Long.

Recent MetroTalks

- On November 29, MTC hosted an online MetroTalk webinar "Advancing Health and Equity in the Bay Area's Quest for Climate Resilience" featuring Chanell Fletcher, California Air Resource Board (CARB); Matt Wolff, San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH); Melissa Jones, Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII); and Elle Chen, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN). Josh Bradt from the Bay Area Regional Council moderated the discussion.

- On December 14, a MetroTalks event at the BAMC featured *San Francisco Chronicle* urban design critic and author John King talking about his latest book, *Portal: San Francisco's Ferry Building and the Reinvention of American Cities*.

News Headlines from [The Bay Link Blog](#):

- [Recap: Plan Bay Area 2050+ summer engagement](#): Nearly 3,000 Bay Area residents participated in this summer's first round of engagement for Plan Bay Area 2050+, a limited and focused update to [Plan Bay Area 2050,\(link is external\)](#) the long-range plan for transportation, housing, the economy and the environment that was adopted by the MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in late 2021.
- [MTC mourns loss of "Mr. Roadshow," Gary Richards](#): MTC is [mourning the loss of Gary Richards\(link is external\)](#), known to legions of readers as "Mr. Roadshow," who spent more than three decades writing about the trials and tribulations of Bay Area transportation in his Q&A column that appeared in daily newspapers across the Bay Area, including the Mercury News.
- [SMART east-west rail corridor receives federal recognition](#): The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART) announced Monday that its east-west rail corridor, connecting Novato to Suisun City, has been designated for inclusion under the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) program.
- [South Bay levee breach creates 300 acres of wetlands](#): The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority — co-staffed by the [San Francisco Estuary Partnership\(link is external\)](#) and the State Coastal Conservancy — and other partners opened a 300-acre former industrial salt pond to San Francisco Bay this week as part of ambition plan to restore wetlands.

- [Bay Area gets millions from state to improve transportation infrastructure, includes climate change resiliency funding](#): The [California Transportation Commission\(link is external\)](#) (CTC) last week allocated \$1.1 billion for projects that will repair and improve the state's transportation infrastructure. The funding includes more than \$300 million for projects across California that will make the system more climate resilient while investing in bike and pedestrian pathways and increasing natural disaster preparedness.

The [Bay Link Blog](#) offers a more in-depth look at these topics, often in the context of the work that the ABAG and MTC are doing, along with other stories of interest to Bay Area residents and professionals. The Bay Link Blog E-Newsletter, with the top Bay Link features of the week, is distributed every Tuesday. You can find more newsletters to subscribe to at this [link](#).

Have a Question? Ask a Librarian

If you need assistance locating information or are having difficulty navigating the MTC-ABAG websites, please feel free to contact the MTC-ABAG head librarian. Reference assistance is available by telephone (415-778-5236), or email library@bayareametro.gov Information can also be found on the [MTC-ABAG library webpage](#).

For MTC and Plan Bay Area Glossaries:

- [Glossary of Transportation Planning Acronyms & Terms](#)
- [Plan Bay Area Glossary](#)