

# ALAMEDA-CONTRA COSTA TRANSIT DISTRICT



## STAFF REPORT

---

**MEETING DATE:** 10/27/2021

**Staff Report No. 21-456**

---

**TO:** AC Transit Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Michael A. Hursh, General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force

### BRIEFING ITEM

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

Consider receiving an update on the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force and the Transit Transformation Action Plan. [Requested by Director Shaw - 8/11/2021]

#### **STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:**

Goal - Convenient and Reliable Service  
Initiative - Service Quality

The intent of the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (BRTF) is to guide the Bay Area through transit recovery during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary focus of the BRTF is improved regional transit connectivity for riders and the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP) lists actions to help achieve this goal.

#### **BUDGETARY/FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no budgetary or fiscal impact associated with this report. Implementation of the TAP will require funding and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has set aside approximately \$85 million of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 funds toward this effort.

#### **BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:**

In May 2020, MTC created the 32-member BRTF to guide the future of the Bay Area's public transportation network as the region adjusts to new conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force, chaired by MTC Commissioner and Solano County Supervisor Jim Spering, included other local elected officials as well as advocates for people with disabilities; representatives from the California Senate and Assembly; the California State Transportation Agency (Cal STA); transit operators; business and labor groups; and transit and social justice advocates.

The BRTF's final meeting was in July of 2021. In its fifteen months in existence, the BRTF:

1. Adopted TAP Goals & Objectives in November 2020, which include:

- Recognize critical recovery challenges facing transit agencies
- Advance equity
- Identify near-term actions to implement beneficial long-term network Management & Governance reforms
- Establish how current MTC and state transit initiatives should integrate with Network Management & Governance reforms

2. Approved Equity Principles in January 2021 for its actions, which include:

- Invest Equitably
- Increase Accessibility
- Be Inclusive
- Use Data to Inform Decisions
- Advance Health & Safety

3. Adopted a problem statement in March 2021 to identify issues that transit network management reforms could help resolve.

- Problem Statement Summary: Public transit services in the San Francisco Bay Area are operated by 27 agencies, each with its own unique policies, procedures, and operating practices best suited for their immediate service areas and local priorities; and not organized to support customer-friendly, interagency travel. Strong collaborative action is needed to restore and grow transit ridership to reach the ambitious targets associated with Plan Bay Area 2050's vision of a more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant Bay Area for all.

4. Approved the TAP in July 2021 that will be implemented by MTC and other agencies during COVID-19 recovery and beyond.

### **Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP) (Attachment 1)**

With the intent of transit recovery and regional connectivity, the TAP focuses on the actions the region can take in the next three years to begin transforming the Bay Area transit network to achieve these goals. The plan identifies five transformational outcomes and 27 associated actions. The five outcomes are:

- Fares and Payment
- Customer Information
- Transit Network
- Accessibility
- Funding

#### Accelerated Actions

The TAP recommends that MTC accelerate 12 of the actions in the immediate term that will help meet the first three outcomes above. Those 12 actions are:

Table 1: Accelerated Transformational Actions

Outcome	Accelerated Action
Fares and Payment	1. Act on the Fare Coordination and Integration Study (FCIS) recommendations 2. Determine whether existing authority is sufficient for FCIS implementation 3. Seek state legislation for additional authority, if needed
Customer Information	4. Fund and finalize regional mapping and wayfinding standards 5. Fund and complete 1-3 sub-regional mapping and wayfinding pilot projects 6. Fund and develop a regional mapping data services digital platform
Transit Network: Bus Transit Priority (Speed and Reliability)	7. Request a Caltrans Deputy Directive on Design Exceptions 8. Sponsor legislation to remove barriers to implementation 9. Fund design and delivery of prioritized transit corridor projects 10. Select near-term HOV lane operating policies to advance to the State 11. Define a Cooperative Agreement process 12. Fund, develop and adopt a Transit Priority Policy and Corridor Assessment

MTC, on its own, can accelerate the first six action items through its Resolution 3866, which gives MTC the authority to implement: 511 traveler information, regional transit hub signage, Clipper, transit rider surveys and regional transit information displays. Per the resolution, transit operators must abide by this authority in order to receive any MTC discretionary funds.

Over the years, Resolution 3866 has led to a number of results for the region including the implementation of Clipper and transit information displays at hubs and stations. The resolution has also allowed MTC to initiate and lead the current FCIS, which will produce a set of regional fare coordination recommendations this fall. Part of the \$85 million in ARP funds dedicated toward BRTF efforts and regional connectivity will be used to fund the FCIS recommendations and address Action #1. The ARP funds will also help advance MTC's existing regional mapping and wayfinding program and will address actions #4-6.

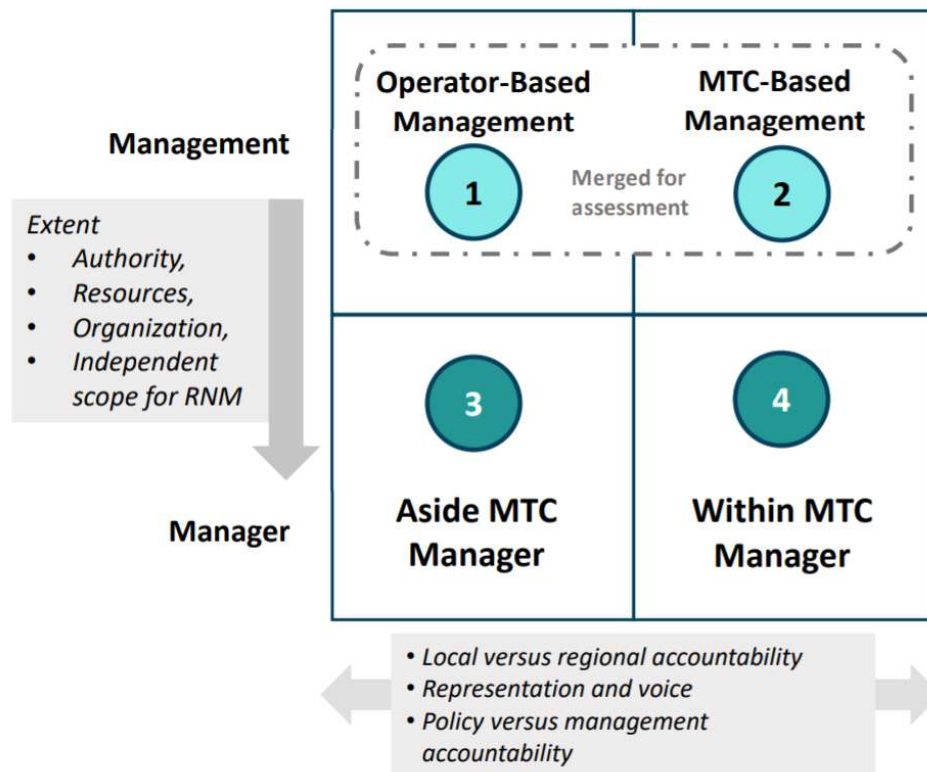
The transit operators collectively encouraged MTC and the BRTF to accelerate the Bus Transit Priority actions. The operators advocated that transit priority should be one of the top outcomes of the BRTF's efforts to improve the regional transit network, especially with transit speed and reliability worsening over time and Bay Area traffic quickly returning to pre-pandemic levels. The operators intend to work closely with MTC to implement these actions, which includes a combination of planning, project delivery and policy development.

### Network Management Reform

Perhaps the most significant charge of the BRTF is transit network management reform. As a result, there are

a series of actions in the TAP that revolve around establishing a new network management structure as an outcome. The primary action is to fund and complete a business case analysis of new network management alternatives, including two network *management* proposals using existing governance structures and two network *manager* proposals that would create a new governing body.

Figure 1: Network Management Alternatives Matrix developed by Evaluation Consultant



The two network *management* proposals would use a combination of a transit operator executive board and the MTC commission to manage the regional transit network, with the premise being improved collaboration among the existing Bay Area agencies that deliver transit for the region. The difference between these two alternatives is the amount of authority given to the MTC commission compared to the operator executive board and vice versa.

The two network *manager* proposals would include a new governing body with its own staff to oversee the regional transit network. The difference between the two proposals is whether the new governing body and organization would live under MTC or be its own separate entity.

With input from the transit operators, MTC plans to hire a consultant to conduct the business case analysis for the four alternatives identified above. The consultant intends to complete the analysis by mid-2022 under the guidance of a proposed Network Management Business Case Advisory Committee consisting of 14 members, including seven transit agency general managers. MTC plans to select a consultant and establish the committee this fall of 2021.

On October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of this year, MTC will hold a workshop focused on advancing the work completed by

the BRTF. In addition to an update on transit recovery and the development of the business case, the workshop will focus on refining the TAP, including the identification of staffing, funding, prioritization and target completion dates. Lastly, MTC approved the TAP in September, prior to the workshop.

**ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:**

While the TAP proposes many actions that could improve the regional transit network, the over-arching tradeoff is local control with the potential establishment of a transit network management governing structure, which is of particular interest to AC Transit because, along with its governing body consisting of a publicly elected Board of Directors, the District was legally established by the State of California.

**ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:**

There are no alternatives associated with this Briefing Item.

**PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION/POLICIES:**

SR 21-100 - Update on the Blue Ribbon Task Force - Regional Transit Coordination.

SR 20-352 - Resolution No. 20-042 endorsing the Riding Together: Bay Area Healthy Transit Plan

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan

**Prepared by:**

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development & Planning

**Approved/Reviewed by:**

Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations

Chris Andrichak, Chief Financial Officer

Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications

Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering