

## **San Francisco Transit Effectiveness Project Summary of December 2006 Public Open Houses**

### **Overview**

The Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP), led by the Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) and the Controller's Office, is an 18-month study to evaluate and recommend ways to increase the effectiveness of the Muni transit system. To help inform this process, the TEP project team is gathering and considering input from the public through multiple channels: e-mail, phone, survey, postage-paid reply cards, community group briefings and public meetings. A first round of public meetings was held in December 2006 to introduce the public to the project and gather broad input on desired improvements. Additional rounds of public meetings will be held in 2007 to get public feedback on key data findings and draft recommendations. As of January 2007, nearly 1,000 people have commented by survey, e-mail, and reply cards, and more than 200 comments were submitted by attendees at the December public meetings.

### **Notification**

The public meetings were held on December 9th, 11th, and 12th, in the Richmond District, Civic Center, and Bayview, respectively. They were noticed through a variety of means in English, Chinese and Spanish:

- Direct mail to the project mailing and email list
- Notice on the project website, [www.sftep.com](http://www.sftep.com)
- Advertisements and Take-One cards on Muni vehicles
- Newspaper ads, including neighborhood newspapers
- Press release to local media
- Announcements on transportation-related list serves

### **Format**

The meetings were held in an open house format, allowing people to drop in at any time over a three-hour period to view exhibit boards and discuss issues with project staff. Opportunities to provide input at the meetings included talking with staff and submitting written comments on cards, a comment wall, and/or a map of the existing Muni system.

### **Attendance**

Close to 200 people signed-in -- approximately 110 at Civic Center, 55 at Richmond, and 30 at Bayview, representing residents from numerous neighborhoods, a number of interest groups, and transit riders in general. Several representatives from the local media attended, as well, including the SF Chronicle, SF Examiner, World Journal, Sing Tao Daily, and KCBS.

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### Summary of Public Comments

A variety of concerns and suggestions for improvement were raised at the public meetings, ranging from very specific recommendations for particular lines to broad policy improvements. Interest in improved reliability was a common theme, along with shorter travel time, more frequency and capacity, better customer experience, and greater cost efficiency. Following is a general summary of broad topics raised at all the meetings, including those that may not be addressed by the TEP. In addition to the overview below, several neighborhood-specific issues were raised at the meetings in the Richmond and Bayview, including comments on the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project along Geary, and concerns about safety in the Bayview related to existing stops and the opening of the T-Third Street Light Rail service.

Comments and recommendations included the following:

#### Improve Reliability

- Buses do not stay on schedule, often bunching (2-3 buses in a row) and then not arriving for long periods of time. As a result, people wait a long time for overcrowded vehicles, cannot get to where they are going in a predictable amount of time, and are discouraged from using transit
- Information on actual bus arrival times is not readily available, making it hard for people to plan ahead. Advertise NextMuni so people are aware of it and implement it on all lines
- Provide automated stop announcements and detailed bus maps onboard to help passengers know where to disembark or transfer
- Improve preventative maintenance of Muni vehicles to avoid technical malfunctions
- Ensure availability of spare vehicles in case of breakdowns
- Get more drivers to cover temporary shifts
- Increase number of overlapping transit lines so that more than one line can be taken to arrive at a destination
- Increase monitoring of vehicles at all times to enable quick response to incidents

#### Decrease Travel Time

- Increase the number of transit-only lanes (especially on major routes)
- Implement bus rapid transit
- Provide more and better express service and transit signal priority
- Enforce double-parking laws
- Improve transit stop placement for maximum flow
- Allow rear door boarding (with proof of payment)
- Space bus stops farther apart than every block
- Add more limited bus lines to increase speed without affecting existing bus stops
- Coordinate bus transfers (i.e. timed transfers), especially between cross-town to downtown routes and feeders to main routes
- Coordinate connections between other transit providers, such as Caltrans

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### Increase Frequency and Capacity

- Reduce overcrowding. It occurs frequently, is uncomfortable for passengers, and frustrating for people unable to board
- Increase frequency and capacity during both peak and off-peak hours
- Extend peak-hour service for the large number of people who commute outside of the current times
- Make Muni more “elastic” so that it can respond to ridership trends quickly and efficiently (e.g., increasing/decreasing frequency on lines based on demand)
- Respond proactively to transit demand: integrate transit & neighborhood planning
- Maintain frequent bus stops to ensure accessibility for seniors and persons with disabilities

### Improve Customer Experience

- Riders feel insecure due to frequent theft, fights, and vandalism. Add a security presence onboard and at bus stops to improve safety
- Prevent sudden starts and stops that can result in onboard injuries
- Improve accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities (e.g., lowering the wheelchair lift sufficiently, pulling up to the curb completely, helping wheelchair users board the bus, and enforcing senior and disabled priority seating)
- Improve accessibility for non-English speaking people by providing more information and instructions in other languages
- Improve accessibility for bicyclists by allowing bikes on Muni Metro cars
- Improve customer service skills of Muni drivers, such as giving inexperienced riders directions on how to pay or where to get off. Ensure good customer service by training and evaluating drivers on customer service skills and procedure
- Educate riders on rules of conduct onboard, such as giving seats up for seniors and the disabled and moving to the back of the bus
- Improve the Muni complaint system by providing follow-up so people can know when their complaint has been addressed
- Increase options to pay for Muni service, such as buying Fast Passes and tokens in vending machines in Muni stations
- Increase types of passes, such as non-time sensitive (pay as you go) passes
- Make info on payment options readily available for regular riders and tourists
- Expedite implementation of Translink, which allows one pass to be used on multiple transit providers

### Improve Cost Efficiency and Financial Sustainability

- Increase funding by implementing a new tax or fee, such as a downtown tax, gas tax, vehicle registration tax, or new residential development fee
- Increase revenue by preventing fare evasion when people board the back of the bus and drivers do not require payment
- Increase cost efficiency by removing unnecessary positions or incompetent staff