



Muni Metro Core Capacity Study Community Working Group

November 12th, 2025 6:00 p.m.

Union Square conference room and Microsoft Teams meeting

CWG Members	Project Staff	Other
Cyrus Hall Lian Chang Kath Tsakalakis Karl Aguilar Adrienne Leifer Alice Duesdieker Mark Sawchuk Aaron Leifer Jean-Paul Torres Caitlin Steele Dylan Fabris Tammy Chan	Liz Brisson (SFMTA) David Sindel (SFMTA) Michael Randolph (SFMTA) Fona Ou (HNTB) Sadie Mae Palmatier (HNTB)	Peter Straus (Observer) Paula Katz (Observer) Kathy Seitan (Observer)

Meeting Summary

Icebreaker

The group discussed what they learned during the Working Group process.

- CWG member appreciated how transparent the Study team was and liked that a lot of the feedback was reflected in the Study's recommendations.
- CWG member learned about how many constraints there are that affect feasibility, for example driveways.
- CWG member mentioned how complicated all the parts of the system can be, also about how passionate people are about the system.
- CWG member appreciated how the Study progressed through iterative feedback.
- CWG member felt validated that staff could bring a diverse group of people with radically different viewpoints together, with needs spread out through the city, and reach consensus.
- CWG member noted how making projects happen takes perseverance
- CWG member noted that it seems easier to reach consensus in long range planning and that later stages may be harder

Study Recap

Staff asked whether the term "traction power" was understandable to Working Group members and then clarified that this refers to the system that provides electricity to power the trains.

Outreach Recap

- CWG member asked if the general feedback came from community meetings as well as survey feedback. Staff responded that this was correct.



- CWG member commented that there didn't seem to be anything controversial in the outreach feedback.
- CWG member mentioned that this doesn't mean outreach won't be harder at a later date when more detailed design proposals are developed.

CWG Statement for Final Study Recommendations

- CWG member mentioned that they would be gone on December 2nd, but around to help with drafting and suggestions.
- Two CWG members also volunteered to draft the content. Two other CWG members volunteered to attend the MTAB meeting in-person and comment if needed.
- The group discussed items to include the statement:
 - Supporting all the recommendations
 - Appreciation of the study's focus on infrastructure improvements that are sensible and flexible
 - Future outreach being done in a way that builds consensus, not "zero-sum"
 - Staff should engage with the public early and often.
 - Reaffirm why we are doing this process, why we are prioritizing transit. Emphasize transit first principles and why the changes are necessary for us to grow as a City.
 - How this group functioned, and how the Story Map was created by the group asking questions and getting clarity on technical information that was unclear beforehand. The previous graphic on forecasting was not working, then we came up with a better one that was crystal clear and digestible. This was a good collaboration of technical expertise and the public. A lot of trust was created in the process, this is super helpful and important.
 - Staff came back repeatedly, until the room was satisfied.
 - Process should be highlighted. Staff engaged early when doing long-term planning, and this a thing we always wanted. With last-minute engagement you lack clarity and buy-in. Celebrating the entire process is going to be important. It's what we've been asking for.
- The group discussed outreach in general:
 - CWG member mentioned a SFCTA meeting in the Inner Sunset she had attended and found that outreach model effectively managed challenges. They had posters for each item, spread around the meeting. It was a diffuse and positive vibe.
 - CWG member added that there were post it notes, instead of shouting. They have been to a very poorly run large town halls that didn't go well and it was very sad.
 - CWG member added that "top-down" approaches to outreach fails. Outreach needs to be adaptable to different neighborhoods
- The group discussed the CWG process:
 - CWG member asked how useful the CWG was for staff? It feels consultative, and this isn't a process that would happen in London. Does staff want to do this in the future?
 - Staff said yes, civic engagement where you have enough time to work together leads to better outcomes. Staff can't experience the neighborhoods in the same way as others that live there, and they have valuable expertise. San Francisco is dense and diverse.
 - Staff added that it has been useful for staff while we are doing the study to test if our explanations of the technical details are understandable to a broader audience.
 - Staff said that staff needed to pivot. The project started early during the pandemic, and staff assumed we would go back to exactly how it was before. By 2024, we had a lot more

info, we knew ridership recovery wasn't as fast as we were expecting, and people were asking the right questions to let us know that we needed to pivot. Some feedback is good, but with too much process you are never going to be able to do anything – she sees both sides. The reality is that in a city like San Francisco we need to do outreach.

- CWG member mentioned that there is process for process sake, and then there is good process, and this was useful.

Next Steps for Study Recommendations

- CWG member asked what environmental review would be required.
 - Staff explained the projects would need to comply with both NEPA and CEQA, though the level of documentation is unlikely to require full environmental impact statement/environmental impact report. Staff have just begun to consult with our internal environmental review team on what is needed.
- CWG member commented that with projects like L Taraval and Van Ness, “Dig Once” has been a part of the discussion. Are you discussing that on big projects like this to shrink project time? It has been challenging for SFMTA to address delays and cost overruns for work that is not done by SFMTA.
 - Staff replied that there are different ways of setting up a construction contract. The L Taraval and Van Ness projects had multiple types of infrastructure work all together in one construction contract. For the Geary Rapid Project, the SFPUC’s construction work was in its own contract separate from most of SFMTA’s work which was contracted by Public Works. This can help control cost with fewer disciplines needed, but also creates additional coordination challenges. The SFMTA has undergone reorganization recently, and the new Planning and Project Delivery group brings all of the project delivery professionals together. We are working on institutionalizing the lessons learned in past construction projects.
- CWG member responded that for the L Project, because Muni tracks are so visible, SFMTA got the blame on issues that had more to do with PG&E and sewer upgrades. Is there a way to do this so the public understands?
 - Staff said that SFMTA tries to communicate about all the different work and encourages other agencies to do so as well.
- CWG member commented that often responses from different agencies sounds like everyone is making excuses and doesn’t care about the effects. Another CWG member added that voters don’t have the time to disentangle complicated cause and effect.
- CWG member said he tracked the Van Ness project closely as a nearby resident. He felt that SFMTA did good outreach, but other agencies did not. This made people fully believe it was an SFMTA project. Outreach from other partners is a solution.
- CWG member commented that they were very involved in L outreach related to the construction phasing. When they were involved, they had heard the two segments of work would be done concurrently, but then it changed to sequentially, and those involved in the process did not hear about it. They said that SFMTA indicated the “community” said that they wanted it split up, but they could not find any community members who preferred it that way. Regardless, the SFMTA should have circled back with the community members who were involved in the early discussions.
- CWG member mentioned that taxpayers like when you say “Dig Once” – it’s how you save money and get projects done quicker.

Post-Study Outreach and Engagement

- CWG member commented that they loved the idea of updates and emails, as well as reconvening as long as it's useful for the project team.
- CWG member added that it doesn't need to be hybrid, a remote teams meeting would be fine.
 - Additionally, general discussion that the group enjoys in person meetings.
- CWG member said that e-mail updates were good, especially closer to the actual grant submission. The group could be tapped for letters of support and they could pull from their networks.
- CWG member offered to review draft language/grant materials anytime.
- Two CWG members mentioned they could help with any further outreach staff has to do, such as blurbs in their local newsletters.
- CWG member asked in chat: Will there be pilot projects or quick build elements that could be done ahead of the larger project to support near-term capacity needs?
 - Staff responded that there are nearer term projects on many segments of Muni Metro being advanced through Muni Forward. Further improvements to portions of the J, K N, M, and T are in the works.

Observer Comments

Observer #1

- Observer #1 noted that some of the reason the L Taraval construction took so long was because of the delay between when the first phase was completed and the time it took to bid and award the second phase. A different contracting approach should be taken for future projects.
- Observer #1 said it felt like the L project was not well coordinated with other infrastructure components like PG&E and sewer. They said merchants saw the street dug up three separate times.
 - Staff responded that they will share an outreach blog post on why residents and businesses may see the street dug up multiple times for a project: <https://www.sfmta.com/blog/why-does-construction-take-so-long>
- Observer #1 asked clarification questions on implemented timing, in reference to Slide 21.
 - Staff responded that the slide was saying what staff has to do next to pursue the grant. It would be years before we get project approvals.
 - Observer #1 asked about this in the context of ridership projections.
 - Staff explained that the SFMTA would begin readying these projects, and will monitor ridership trends in parallel. They are aiming to sync up our recommendations for the N Judah with re-railing that does not have a firm schedule but is expected to be needed in the late 2030s.
- Observer #1 asked whether the Study considered the upzoning under discussion. They commented that may mean more transit riders and more stresses on parking. They said that lack of parking is a big issue in the Sunset, and that a 3-car train would reduce parking.
 - Staff clarified that the high-end of the high ridership forecast represents the return to pre-covid ridership and the production of housing consistent with the current zoning plan under discussion.
- Observer #1 noted that during the L Taraval Project outreach, residents did not understand what was at stake (e.g. removal of parking for safe boarding areas). SFMTA outreach materials should let residents know how a project may both positively and negatively impact them.

- Staff responded that they heard the Observer's concerns, staff has to strike a balance between being upbeat and being clear about trade-offs.

Observer #2

- Observer #2 commented that this was an interesting project to watch evolve. The working group and final product turned out significantly different from where they started, and they are pleased about it. They still have reservations, but believe this is a reasonable outcome. They haven't yet decided if they will send a letter to the board.

Observer #3

- Agreed with Observer #2's comments, agreed that the project has made a positive pivot, and thanks staff for leading the project. They are looking forward to discussing further details after the meeting. On lessons learned, they mention the current pending Islais Creek Bridge Replacement Project, they feel Muni hasn't learned the lessons of previous projects. A two-year shutdown of the T Third would be bad.

Chats Log

Wednesday 6:57 PM

I would take a tube stop over consultation

Wednesday 7:12 PM

This all sounds well and good—but the pending Islais Bridge replacement project, in my humble opinion, is a pending disaster: 2-year T shutdown.

Wednesday 7:13 PM

Will there be pilot projects or quick built elements that could be done ahead of the larger project to support near-term capacity needs?

Wednesday 7:32 PM

Family Zoning Plan proposed map, for everyone's reference: 😊

https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/documents/citywide/proposed_zoning_map_local_program.pdf

The typical max height in the Richmond and Sunset under the Family Zoning Plan is 8 stories, e.g. along Judah, and at a handful of intersections, it's up to 16 stories. But large majority of the westside sees no height increases above the current 40'.

For context, a recent poll found that 1/4 of San Francisco respondents didn't know who Daniel Lurie is. 🙄 Public education and outreach campaigns aren't easy.