

Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund

P.O. Box 151439 San Rafael, CA 94915 415-460-5260

January 20, 2009
By E-Mail

Steve Heminger, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Draft Conformity Analysis

Dear Steve:

The Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund, TRANSDEF, is pleased to offer the following comments on the Draft Conformity Analysis for the Transportation 2035 Plan and the 2009 TIP Amendment #09-06:

The Dumbarton Rail Corridor Phase 1 is an element of Phase 2 of TCM 4 in the Bay Area 2005 Ozone Strategy. The proposed transfer of \$91 million in RM 2 funding for the construction phase of this project will affect the timing of the implementation of TCM 4. Unless there is a commitment to the timely replacement of these funds by the time the project is ready for construction, MTC will have interfered with the Air District's statutory responsibility to implement "all feasible measures" to reduce ozone. While not directly related to the proposed Conformity Findings of timely TCM implementation, MTC's proposed funding action will have a significant impact on the commitments of a sister agency.

As regards the TIP Amendment, what due diligence has been performed on the cost estimate for the "BART Warm Spring to San Jose Extension" (sic) project that makes up over half of the Grand Total of \$11.69 billion of projects being added to the TIP? What was the year of the cost estimate that was escalated into \$6.1 billion in Year of Expenditure dollars? Can MTC confirm that this is the most recent cost estimate? We are aware that VTA completed 65% design-level cost estimates last year, which were withheld from the public during the campaign for Santa Clara County's Measure B.

In looking at Appendix B, the listing of projects is very heavily front-loaded. It seems highly unlikely that so many projects can be "Complete and Operational by 2015." Please advise as to whether the phasing of projects will affect the model outputs for the various analysis years enough to change the Conformity Analysis.

We believe a better choice for the gasoline price assumption used in modelling would be the result from the 5 year linear regression model. This 5 year period has had far greater gas price volatility than the 10 year period that was chosen for the Conformity Analysis and RTP EIR. We expect gas prices to fluctuate much more in the future than they have in the past, due to the clash between the flattening of global oil production and exponentially growing demand.

The issue here is not accurate prediction--the issue is risk management, and making sure that MTC has created the most resilient plan possible to enable Bay Area residents to cope with large changes in the cost of transportation. Please remember that many consider the root of the current home foreclosure crisis to be the extraordinary jump in gasoline prices, which made mortgages unaffordable for many when coupled with the high cost of commuting from the urban fringe.

We are pleased to see that MTC has agreed with our suggestion that bridge tolls should escalate with inflation, in the same manner as transit fares are escalated.

We raise again the comment we have raised in past plans: Using VMT derived from ARB data sources places larger traffic volumes into speed buckets for the EMFAC model than are derived from the model at equilibrium. We therefore don't have confidence in the emissions projections, because we don't believe that these traffic volumes can physically occur as modelled.

We never accepted the MTC assertion that the programming of funds for the Express Buses under TCM A constitutes full implementation of the TCM. Knowing that "the buses ordered ... will be redeployed in alternate services" is inadequate for us. Please provide a listing of where the Express Buses purchased under TCM A have been deployed, as well as the number of vehicle revenue hours each of them has accumulated.

Table 6 is incorrect when it comes to TCM E. Changes in service to Millbrae and other Peninsula stations on the BART SFO extension bring into question whether TCM E is still fully implemented. Please provide a complete narrative of changes in service on the SFO extension, and correct the statement "Service was maintained through 2006 and is continued."

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft Conformity Analysis.

Sincerely,

/s/ DAVID SCHONBRUNN

David Schonbrunn,
President