February 23, 2026   **Agenda Item 3b**

Regional Mapping & Wayfinding – Initial Standards Releases & Project Updates

Subject:

Request the RNM Council approve the use of initial Regional Network Identity and Transit Stop Signage Design Guides for pilot projects and voluntary agency use, and provide other updates on the Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project.

Background:

In collaboration with Bay Area transit agencies, MTC initiated the Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project in 2021, following recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force. The Task Force identified a regionally harmonized mapping and wayfinding system as a key strategy for improving transit usability and supporting ridership. In a poll commissioned by the Task Force, 92% of respondents indicated that easy-to-use and uniform maps and signage are important. The project aims to establish a unified regional approach to maps, signs, and navigation tools that can be applied consistently across all Bay Area transit agencies. Key outcomes include implementing prototype design tests, pilot installations at nine major transit hubs and along select North Bay bus corridors, and developing comprehensive Regional Wayfinding Standards.

Regional Wayfinding Standards

The Regional Wayfinding Standards will establish a unified approach to presenting service and navigation information across the Bay Area transit network. Published as a comprehensive standards guidebook, it will cover a range of environments—from individual stops to complex multi-operator hubs—and define the core principles, required information, shared design language, and implementation guidance needed to ensure clear, consistent, and easy-to-use signage throughout the region. The Standards are being developed iteratively, so practical lessons learned from the implementation of the prototypes and pilot projects can be integrated into the final product, a full "Version 1" that will cover all Bay Area transit environments. Beyond the project, the Standards are envisioned to be a living document that will grow and change with the regional transit network over time.

Initial Standards Releases

MTC has prepared two initial releases from the Standards in response to requests from transit agencies who have near-term wayfinding projects. Staff is requesting that the RNM Council approve agency voluntary use of these releases, which include:

1) The **Regional Network Identity Design Guide** includes specifications for the colors, symbols, and information hierarchy that forms the consistent visual language of Bay Area transit, supporting general agency customer messaging and/or time-sensitive temporary wayfinding projects.

2) The **Transit Stop Signage Design Guide** provides guidance for designing, installing, and maintaining transit stops—typically bus stops—using the new regional design. Its development was prioritized to support agency-funded sign replacement projects and upcoming service restructures. The guide defines:

   - Standard sign sizes and layouts
   - Specifications for service information (routes, destinations, and frequency)
   - Approaches for stops served by multiple agencies

   The new regional transit stop sign uses a single, flexible design that works across rural, suburban, and urban environments while accommodating stops with many routes, special services, or multiple operators. A white background with high-contrast color and typography maximizes visibility in low-light and busy environments, exceeds Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) contrast guidance, and remains legible for riders with most color vision deficiencies. Modular route and footer areas simplify maintenance and service changes, and the use of one shared sign with standardized layouts and agency logos help riders quickly understand routes operated by multiple agencies at the same location.

   Each of the region's approximately 21,000 transit stops is a gateway to the regional network. Consistent signage at these locations is expected to improve legibility for riders and is intended to reduce long-term design, fabrication, and maintenance costs for agencies. Voluntary agency use of this Guide during the pilot period is intended to support learning, testing, and refinement prior to final Standards approval/adoption.

Collaborative agency and public engagement

Development of the signs and standards after the prototype implementation has been shaped by extensive collaboration that informed key design refinements related to visibility, accessibility, modularity, and shared-stop identification. Engagement included:

   - Multiple workshops and ongoing coordination with transit agency staff;

- Input from the project's Accessibility Working Group;

- Engagement with RNM Council, RNM Committee, and RNM Customer Advisory Group; and

- Public outreach at prototypes and a fall 2025 public survey for input on final transit sign design options.

Current or prospective agency collaborations include:

- SFMTA Muni signage improvements at Castro station (installed);

- BART installing loading zone signs and bus bay numbers, and testing tactile wayfinding panels at transit hubs;

- County Connection (with WestCAT and Tri Delta Transit) testing new sign designs at three-agency shared stops in Martinez; and

- SolTrans and WestCAT implementing new signage for 2026 service restructures.

Planned refinement through pilot projects

While the initial Transit Stop Signage and Network Identity Design Guides are ready for agency use, additional transit stop signage refinement will occur during the pilot projects. Pilot implementation will inform potential approaches to address remaining agency concerns—such as developing a regional service term glossary, maintenance and service change updates, and sign installation and clearance constraints—and identify any related updates to the designs. Other elements, including markers for limited-stop service and tactile/QR code panels, will also be developed and refined with further engagement and agency input. Lessons learned during the pilots will inform the full Version 1 Regional Wayfinding Standard.

Impacts of approval

Approval would:

- Allow MTC to use, and participating agencies to voluntarily use, the Regional Network Identity and Transit Stop Signage Design Guides during the pilot period; and

- Support time-sensitive agency-led sign replacement projects, including comprehensive service changes.

Next steps

Over the coming months, MTC will continue procurement and onboarding of the progressive design-build construction vendor for the pilot projects and advance sign planning in coordination with pilot site agencies. In parallel, MTC will assist agency-led signage and service restructure projects using the Regional Network Identity and Transit Stop Signage Design Guides as needed, if approved by Council. The project team will return to Council later in 2026 with updates on pilot progress, schedule, and a proposed strategy for Version 1 Regional Wayfinding Standards approval/adoption.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Staff recommends the RNM Council approve MTC use for pilot projects, and voluntary agency use, of initial Regional Network Identity & Transit Stop Signage guidance during the pilot period.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Presentation
- Attachment B: Links to Transit Stop Signage Design Guide and Regional Network Identity Style Guide