

# Memorandum

TO:	Policy Advisory Council	DATE:	February 6, 2019
FR:	Marti Paschal, Staff Liaison	W.I.	1114
RE:	<u>Staff Liaison Report – February 2019</u>		

## MTC Names Therese W. McMillan New Executive Director

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission has named Therese Watkins McMillan as its new executive director. This position also serves as the top executive for the Association of Bay Area Governments. McMillan, who currently serves as the chief planning officer for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, will replace Steve Heminger, who is retiring next month after serving as MTC's executive director since January 2001 and as ABAG's executive director since July 2017.

McMillan is no stranger to the Bay Area or to MTC, having worked for 25 years as a member of the Commission staff, and for more than eight years as MTC's deputy executive director for Policy before her 2009 appointment by then-President Barack Obama to serve as deputy administrator of the Federal Transit Administration in the U.S. Department of Transportation. McMillan subsequently served as Acting FTA administrator from March 2014 to March 2016 before taking the position as LA Metro's planning chief in April 2016. During the final five years of her original MTC tenure, McMillan also was an instructor of transportation funding and finance in the Transportation Management Graduate program at San Jose State University's Mineta Transportation Institute.

“I am excited to return to the Bay Area, and to all its beauty and opportunities,” said McMillan. “One of my primary goals is to make the Bay Area’s transportation and housing opportunities attainable to all people who reside across the Bay Area. Tackling this challenge will take vision. It also will require new and innovative partnerships among Bay Area communities, service providers, and leaders across government and the private sector. Working with the Commission, I will strive to lead MTC forward as an extraordinary visionary and partner.”

McMillan received her Bachelor of Science degree from U.C. Davis in 1981, a master's degree in Civil Engineering Science from U.C. Berkeley in 1983, and a master's in City and Regional Planning from U.C. Berkeley in 1984.

McMillan has served since 2012 as a member of the Advisory Board for the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, and was named a senior fellow for the 2011-12 academic year at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. She received an Alumni Award of Distinction from the U.C. Davis College of Agriculture and Environmental Studies in 2016; a ‘Women Moving the Nation’ award from the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials in 2013; and a Distinguished Alumna Award from the U.C. Berkeley College of Environmental Design in 2011. McMillan has long been active in the Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS) and served as president of the San Francisco Chapter in 1989 and 1990. She was named WTS National Woman of the Year for 2016, and as Woman of the Year for the Washington, D.C., Chapter in 2015 and the Los Angeles Chapter in 2011. WTS’ San Francisco Bay Area Chapter named McMillan its Member of the Year for 2002 and as its Woman of the Year for 2010.

“I would like to thank my colleagues on the Commission for the many, many hours of time put into this national search to find the best possible pool of candidates for us to consider. I am confident that Ms. McMillan is the right person to lead the Commission into the future,” said Jake Mackenzie, chair of MTC.

### **Priority Conservation Area Grant Program – Call for Proposals**

The State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), in cooperation with MTC and ABAG, is pleased to issue a call for proposals focused on the Bay Area’s Priority Conservation Areas (PCA) designated under Plan Bay Area 2040. Bay Area cities, counties, and parks and open space districts in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties will compete for a new round of PCA grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$1 million or more.

MTC set aside \$8.2 million for this second round of PCA grants in these counties. The SCC administers the PCA grant program in partnership with MTC and ABAG for projects in the Bay Area’s five most populous counties, and will contribute up to \$1.8 million in state resource bond funds for new PCA grants. The collaborative evaluation team — comprised of staff from MTC, ABAG and the Coastal Conservancy — will consider awarding grants of more than \$1 million for proposed projects with regional significance. Types of projects to be considered include:

- Protection or enhancement of natural resources, open space, or agricultural lands;
- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- Protection or enhancement of potential or existing green spaces in urban areas;
- Planning associated with natural resource protection, public access to open space, support for agricultural economy, or enhancement of urban parks; and
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas.

PCAs are open spaces that serve an important agricultural, natural resource, scenic, recreational and/or ecological purpose, and are established through the purchase of key natural lands, or through conservation easements with willing property owners. These sites are identified in partnership with property owners, land trusts, open space districts, cities’ and counties’ parks and recreation departments, and other local jurisdictions. PCAs are a modern expression of the Bay Area’s century-long concern for and protection of our parks and open spaces.

The first round of PCA grants disbursed through the Coastal Conservancy partnership included \$1 million for access improvements at Crane Cove Park in San Francisco; \$100,000 for work on the Milagra-Battery Trail in Pacifica; and \$1 million for restoration and public access improvements at the Dotson Family Marsh in Contra Costa County. Congestion management agencies in Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties administer the PCA grant program for MTC and ABAG in the North Bay, and already have selected projects to be funded with the \$8.2 million allocated by MTC for the second round of grants in these counties. These include \$1.4 million for a pair of Vine Trail projects in Napa County; \$2.1 for bicycle improvements in Solano County’s Suisun Valley; \$1.3 million for the Crocker Bridge bicycle/pedestrian passage in Sonoma County and \$500,000 to the National Park Service for the Fort Baker Vista Point Trail in Marin County.

For details on the grant and the application process, please refer to the [grant guidelines](#). Letters of interest are due on **February 25, 2019**. Any questions may be submitted via email to [PCAGrants@bayareametro.gov](mailto:PCAGrants@bayareametro.gov). [Get more details about PCAs in our current Plan Bay Area.](#)

### **Richmond Ferry Service Sets Sail**

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and city of Richmond marked the launch of Richmond ferry service to San Francisco and the opening of the Richmond Ferry Terminal on January 10, 2019, with a ribbon cutting event. The launch was also a cause for celebration for MTC, which provided \$12 million for the purchase of two ferries for the service, and for local residents, a number of whom jumped at the opportunity to give the new service a spin on the inaugural day.

This new service continues the ambitious expansion of WETA's regional San Francisco Bay Ferry system, helps alleviate traffic congestion and increases WETA's emergency water transit response capabilities. The new San Francisco Bay Ferry Richmond service offers four peak direction and two reverse commute trips between Richmond's Ford Point and the San Francisco Ferry Building during weekday morning and evening commutes. The Richmond Ferry Terminal project included the construction of an accessible gangway with a new ramping system, float and piles, a passenger shelter and the development and reconfiguration of a 362-space paved parking lot. WETA also installed a new ADA-compliant kayak launch ramp and improved shoreline access at Ford Point.

WETA has invested \$465 million in recent years in new ferry assets – including new terminals, maintenance facilities and vessels – to support its mission to expand regional ferry service in the San Francisco Bay Area. Over the last two years, WETA has added three new vessels to its fleet, opened the Ron Cowan Central Bay Operations and Maintenance Facility in Alameda, and experienced unprecedented demand for ferry service, now carrying nearly 3 million passengers annually. Two new vessels are on track to join the San Francisco Bay Ferry fleet in the first quarter of 2019, and three more are currently under construction. Looking to the future, WETA has developed a 20-year strategic plan with an ambitious vision that would expand WETA's regional ferry system to include 44 vessels, 16 terminals and 12 routes that would serve to increase peak period capacity 740 percent by 2035.

The Richmond Ferry Terminal project was funded by State Proposition 1B and U.S. Department of Transportation funds, along with MTC-administered funds from Regional Measure 2. The total project cost for design and construction was \$20 million, with MTC providing \$12 million in RM 2 funds to help acquire vessels. Passed by Bay Area voters in 2004, RM2 raised tolls by \$1 on the region's seven state-owned toll bridges in order to finance highway, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian projects to relieve congestion in the bridge corridors and their approaches. Contra Costa's Measure J transportation sales tax will fund operations of the Richmond ferry service for at least 10 years through an agreement between CCTA and WETA.

### **MTC to Work with Startups to Tackle Transportation Challenges**

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has selected four firms to work with in an effort to collaborate on innovative technological solutions to public sector challenges.

The initiative is part of the national [Startup in Residence \(STIR\)](#) program offered by City Innovate, a San Francisco-based nonprofit dedicated to improving efficiency and accountability in governments and their services. STIR bridges the gap between the private and public sectors, promoting partnerships to create technology solutions for government-defined issues, which ultimately benefits the public.

The MTC-selected organizations will complete a pro bono residency over 16 weeks starting in February. Among the challenges: crafting a new incident dashboard to measure response to traffic incidents; creating a regional standardized feed for transit agency schedules; helping write software to reduce traffic delays and increase reliability for AC Transit; and enabling immediate internal customer feedback on information technology difficulties. If a participating organization's solution is approved by MTC at the conclusion of the residency, an expedited procurement process will commence, leading to a contract for the product.

MTC's selected startup firms for the challenge are:

- Traffic Incident Dashboard: mySidewalk <https://mysidewalk.com/>
- Regional GTFS Feed: Interline Technologies LLC <https://www.interline.io/>
- Dynamic Transit Routing: Quant Collective <http://quantcollective.com/>
- Voice-enabled Tech Support: Elite Automation (no website)

MTC joins 31 government partners participating in the Startup in Residence program this year. Since 2014, nearly 50 startups from around the world have provided technology solutions to cities including San Francisco, Oakland, Miami and Houston. Last year was MTC's first year participating in STIR. After a successful residency, [Gruntify](#) came under contract with the Commission for its proposal to improve the exchange of real-time traffic incident information to help first responders safely and quickly clear roadway emergencies.

### **New Subsidy Program Fuels Bay Area Vanpooling**

For drivers frustrated with a long, grueling commute, it's never been a better time to look into vanpooling, thanks to the new Bay Area Vanpool Program, which provides direct subsidies to both new and existing vanpools. A \$9.5 million commitment approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in July 2018 allows qualifying vanpools that rent their vehicles through Commute With Enterprise, a service of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, to reduce the cost of their van rates by \$350 a month, initially for the next five years. More than 500 commute vanpools currently operate in the nine-county Bay Area, and MTC hopes the subsidy will grow the fleet to more than 800 vans over the next several years. The first Bay Area Vanpool Program subsidies were distributed in November 2018 to 71 separate vanpools, a number that rose last month to 88 vanpools.

"Vanpooling is a good option for commuters traveling 20 miles or more each way and who have pretty regular schedules," said Megan Nangle, program manager for MTC's Bay Area Vanpool Program. "More and more people are needing to commute farther given the Bay Area housing market, so vanpooling is becoming a good choice for more commuters."

A vanpool typically consists of seven to 15 people commuting to and from home to work; often with two or three participants sharing the driving. If the vanpool includes seven people, the Bay Area Vanpool Program subsidy would average \$50 per person per month. Participants can use pretax dollars to pay for the remainder of their vanpool expenses, further reducing the cost of their shared commute.

Commuters who do not already have a group with which to vanpool can learn how to join a vanpool or start a new one by visiting [511.org/carpool-vanpool/vanpool/overview](http://511.org/carpool-vanpool/vanpool/overview). Vanpools can apply for the Bay Area Vanpool Program subsidies on the Enterprise site at [www.commutewithenterprise.com/en/partners/mtc.html](http://www.commutewithenterprise.com/en/partners/mtc.html). The program is funded by MTC with federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) transportation dollars and a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. The Commission selected Enterprise as the program vendor through a competitive process.

### **Causes and Cures for Transit Center's Cracked Beams Come into Focus**

At the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) meeting on December 13, 2018, TJPA's consultant presented preliminary findings on the cause of the beam fractures. In summary, flame cutting of slots in the bottom flange of two beams above Fremont Street introduced surface micro-cracks. At radii of the slots, where stress concentrations were higher, and the mid-thickness of the steel plate, where fracture toughness was lower, micro-cracks grew due to subsequent welding nearby. After the beams were installed over Fremont Street, loads on the Transit Center drove these cracks through the flanges.

The proposed repair would bridge the fractures and the slots with steel plates bolted to the flanges. TJPA consultants are still analyzing the two beams that have a similar design over First Street but did not fracture, and will evaluate whether there are other locations in the Transit Center are susceptible to brittle fracture. TJPA did not announce a date for reopening the Transit Center.

### **New Bus/Carpool Lane Open on West Grand Avenue Approach to Bay Bridge**

MTC, Caltrans and the City of Oakland recently completed work on the addition of a dedicated bus and carpool lane to the West Grand Avenue approach to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The new lane opened to the westbound morning commute traffic on Thursday, January 3. The lane, which begins just west of the intersection of West Grand Avenue and Maritime Street, is open to buses 24/7 and also can be used weekdays from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. by carpools with three or more occupants, by motorcycles and by qualifying clean-air vehicles.

Designed both to speed travel for buses and carpools, and to improve safety for all vehicles approaching the Bay Bridge toll plaza from West Grand Avenue and Interstate 880, the \$2 million project involved the conversion to a traffic lane of a quarter-mile stretch of the right shoulder of the West Grand Avenue on-ramp as well as a portion of the right shoulder of the Bay Bridge approach from northbound I-880. In addition to the opening of the new bus/carpool lane, a former cash lane near the right side of the Bay Bridge toll plaza was converted to a FasTrak-only lane.

The West Grand Avenue approach to the Bay Bridge is used by AC Transit's transbay NL line as well as by thousands of carpool vehicles each day. The opening of the new bus/carpool lane creates an alternate routing option, when traffic conditions warrant, for other AC Transit transbay lines that normally approach the Bay Bridge via westbound Interstate 580 from the State Route 24/Interstate 980 interchange. To further improve travel times and reliability for San Francisco-bound buses, MTC is working with Caltrans and the City of Oakland to implement signal-priority for transit vehicles along the West Grand Avenue corridor.

### **Executive Director's Report**

The following items are excerpts from the February 2019 Executive Director's Report to the Commission. To read the report in its entirety go to:

<http://www.mtc.ca.gov/whats-happening/news/executive-directors-report>.

#### **Newsom Releases First Budget, January 10, Sacramento**

Governor Newsom released his FY 2019-20 budget proposal and, not surprisingly, it featured a number of new funding and policy proposals in the fields of housing and homelessness. With respect to increasing housing production, the budget proposes \$1.8 billion in one-time General Fund spending to incentivize local governments to build more housing (a la our HIP program), to finance additional construction of moderate-income housing in particular, and to expand the state's housing tax credit program. In addition, the governor proposed a new long-term housing production strategy that would significantly re-shape the RHNA process as well as link the allocation of state transportation funds to housing production in as yet unspecified ways.

#### **CALCOG Meeting, January 15, Sacramento**

As a parting gesture of both aggravation and affection, I was asked to chair my final meeting of the California Councils of Government director's association. The meeting was part business/part roast, and a good time was had by all.

#### **Greenbelt Alliance Event, January 15, San Francisco**

I was invited to speak at a Leadership Circle event sponsored by Greenbelt Alliance to review recent MTC/ABAG activities. My remarks focused primarily on next steps for the CASA Compact.

### **Map of the Month**

February's Map of the Month shows the locations and number of households that receive housing aid through a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD) program known as the Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Program. Funding that goes to families within these households has expired or is set to expire by the end of February 2019. Under the program, rental assistance contracts provide housing aid to seniors or individuals with disabilities with average incomes typically below the federal poverty limit. Due to the recent shutdown, roughly 1,150 contracts between HUD and private owners of multi-tenant buildings were in limbo across the U.S. Another 500 contracts were set to expire in January, with another 550 contracts to follow in February. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, if shutdown had persisted into February, an estimated 1,500 Bay Area households could face the real prospect of eviction.

[Visit our Map of the Month](http://gis.mtc.ca.gov/home/motm.html) page at <http://gis.mtc.ca.gov/home/motm.html> to review not just our current map, but those presented at previous Commission meetings as well.





## Where Low-Income Renters Face Eviction Due to Government Shutdown

HUD Project-Based Rental Assistance Contract Expirations (December 2018-February 2019)

Map of the Month: January 2019

