



## TRANSIT RECOVERY TASK FORCE

TO: Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force

DATE: February 22, 2021

FR: Steve Kinsey, CivicKnit

RE: BRTRTF Meeting #9 Summary

### **Mutual Understanding from Task Force Meeting #9:**

- 1. Five Equity Principles were adopted unanimously.**
- 2. There is broad support for improving the bus priority approval process.**

### **Additional Information requested to be included in a future Task Force Meeting:**

- 1. The Chair requested Fare Coordination and Integration Study and Mapping & Wayfinding project updates in May.**
- 2. The correct level of authority for network management needs to be decided.**

### **Identified Concerns:**

- 1. Where the division in authority between local and regional service is needed.**
- 2. There is no entity accountable for the effectiveness of the entire transit system.**
- 3. Language communication is important to consider when addressing equity.**
- 4. Elders are not being sufficiently considered in equity discussions.**

### **Meeting Summary**

Chair Sperring began by acknowledging State Senator Dave Cortese to replace Jim Beall and thanking him for continuing to participate in the Task Force from his new office. He also recognized Evelyn Tran, who is replacing Nuria Fernandez due to her new position in the Biden Administration. In closing, Chair Sperring recognized the additional critical federal relief funds coming to the Bay Area. The Consent Agenda was approved without comment.

A primary outcome of the meeting was final consideration and approval of the Action Plan Equity Principles. Wide appreciation was expressed for the CBO representatives who contributed their insight as initial draft Principles were revised. During the discussion leading to unanimous approval, Members mentioned that meeting the language requirements for communicating with the South Bay Vietnamese community was important and that elders are also a marginalized a population. The final draft "Invest Equitably" Principle was revised to cite the importance of incorporating equity practices into both policy and implementation aspects of transit.

MTC Executive Director McMillan, followed by other staff, presented information on the agencies ongoing initiatives focused on fare integration, wayfinding and mapping and bus priority infrastructure. Caltrans Acting District 4 Director, Dina El-Tawansy, expressed her agency's support for "low-hanging fruit" type bus priority improvements on state highways and recognized that bus on shoulder has succeeded in some areas. In response to a question from the Chair, MTC

Deputy Executive Director Fremier stated that design of the presented projects was funded, and that several capital funding sources are being explored, though not secured.

Task Force comments included suggestions for: improved communication in hub locations, the need for much stronger, binding agreements to accelerate transit priority projects, support for MTC's BATA Recovery Task Force, the opportunity for coordinated network management to accelerate all three initiative areas, the equity value that faster bus travel provides, the climate response value of increasing transit speeds, creating public-private partnerships for paratransit and the need for state legislation to extend rule relaxations granted during COVID. Public speakers mentioned that good wayfinding depends upon fare integration, High occupancy toll lanes slow transit and expressed support for CEQA exemptions for rail and bus projects.

The facilitator presented the culmination of research into a draft Problem Statement, thanking the thirteen member working group that met twice and caucused outside of meetings to provide the substance of the draft. Task Force comments included that improved coordination doesn't require entirely new funding, elevating the importance of transit priority bus projects, the need for a long range regional transit plan, the need to address accountability as much as authority and funding, the importance of new funding in addition to other efficiencies to reach world-class capability and that network management could help coordinate the interdependencies between transit, housing and environmental goals. Public comments were received via email and others were invited to comment before the following meeting.

The facilitator introduced a list of 18 possible network management roles developed during the course of presentations and comments at Task Force meetings and asked whether items should be added or removed.

Task force members comments on missing elements included health and safety, equity oversight, network design, customer experience, coordination with 1<sup>st</sup>/last mile options including bike/ped and big data management. Other comments included the need to prioritize from the list, favoring more centralized control of some items, distinguishing between local and regional service, highlighting the value of enhanced transit hubs, capital project prioritization and improved coordination among agencies.

Public comments included that equity and connectivity were key points in Caltrain's recent campaign, BRTF's meeting conflicts with Caltrain's Finance Committee meeting, the challenge of where to provide public comment with numerous efforts underway, encouragement to use agreements more than governance changes and the impact of low frequencies on ridership.

Chair Spering cautioned that network management reforms should be done so as not to make it more difficult for operators to deliver their services. Network Management roles will be discussed further in subsequent Task Force meetings.