

Regional Transit Network Management Board Proposal

Proposal to create a customer focused, coordinated, regional transit network in the Bay Area

Introduction: Bay Area transit operators recognize that the establishment of a new network management board would enable better coordination and integration of our regional transit network. The network is currently managed by numerous operators focused on delivering service to their rider base and local communities at the direction of Governing Boards. Transit ridership in the Bay Area has thrived under this model, and the network performs very favorably when compared to other US regions, but given the ambitious goals in Plan Bay Area 2050, a network management function would enhance coordination in a way that delivers customer-focused regional benefits.

Each transit operator is situated within a unique array of labor agreements, funding sources, policy guidance and regulations that are derived at local, regional, state and federal levels. Given the jurisdictional complexities, regional mobility may be challenging for our riders and creates barriers for new customers and visitors who must navigate a complicated service structure. A better integrated network would help address these issues and would be consistent with the need to address social inequity and climate objectives.

Implementing strategies that lead to a more integrated network will require agencies to collaborate to overcome many challenges, with the need to create new revenues being the most critical. A network management board will identify opportunities for improved integration of the region's services, but without new revenue, implementation of those opportunities will be compromised by trade-offs that limit their viability.

Vision: Transit in the Bay Area will provide a customer-focused riding experience that is safe, comfortable, equitable, efficient, affordable, and competitive with driving. The system will be coordinated across jurisdictions and integrated in a way that enables convenient freedom of movement across the region, is easy to navigate, and enhances accessibility to all.

Proposed Solution: Establish a new regional **Transit Network Management Board**, designed as an association of large and small transit operator general managers and MTC, bringing the expertise of their local agencies, riders, and boards, and understanding of respective funding structures with them. Transit operators and MTC would provide staff resources to the Board with expertise in the core function areas with a phased approach to recover, analyze and realign management of the Bay Area's transit network. This proposed solution:

- **Formalizes the unprecedented coordination among transit agencies** that has been happening during the pandemic to ensure transit provides essential service throughout the Bay Area for those who rely on it the most.
- Provides a practical framework for regional coordination through a phased approach that would result in **immediate benefits to riders**. More in-depth analysis can be completed in parallel on longer-term initiatives or reforms while funding is identified for more transformative efforts.

- Sets the region on a path toward transit transformation through **achievable near-term priority action items**. These actions will focus on enhancing the customer experience of riding public transit in the Bay Area, increasing transit ridership, and setting forth a long-range plan to guide future efforts in a manner that is consistent with both Plan Bay Area and the State Rail Plan. Priority action items would be informed by the emerging MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force Transformational Action Plan, expected to focus on the following policy areas:
 - Service coordination
 - Transit fare policy coordination
 - Fare payment technology
 - Accurate, real-time transit information
 - Comprehensive mapping, wayfinding, marketing and branding
 - Advancing equity
 - Developing performance metrics
 - Long-range planning to guide future efforts
 - The Board would serve as a **regional forum** for:
 - Implementation of AB 629
 - Completion of a Transit Network Management Business Case
 - Implementation of the Transformational Action Plan
 - Takes advantage of **existing governance structures and authorities** of MTC and transit agencies, along with the technical skills of experienced staff to ensure coordinated work begins immediately with formal public reporting processes.
 - Leverages the existing accountability of existing transit boards and **expands accountability** by providing structured coordination on regional transit planning. The proposal includes a Policy Advisory Council that would provide stakeholders, advocates, riders, and the public with a formal venue to advise the Transit Network Management Board.
- Recognizes the financial realities** facing transit agencies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledges that many important improvements cannot be initiated ahead of a significant infusion of **new funding**, while also identifying initiatives and strategies that are less dependent on new investment.