



Two-Year Regional Network Management (RNM) Framework Review

Final Consultant Report

April 17, 2026

Purpose of This Report

In 2023, the Bay Area established a “Regional Network Management” (RNM) framework to help guide the strategic coordination of public transit and drive transformative improvements for riders across the Bay Area. This framework was adopted as a short-term model, designed to rapidly deliver rider benefits while establishing the critical foundations for a longer-term structure.

To ensure the RNM continuously evolves, it undergoes a formal review every two years, allowing regional leadership to assess progress and adjust course. This document represents the first such two-year assessment, completed by consultants from Perkins Eastman and KPMG with support from MTC and transit operators.

This report presents the Consultant Team's findings, which are intended to serve as a foundation for strategic discussion as Bay Area leadership works to gauge progress and chart the future course for the RNM.

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E

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Assessment

In 2021, the Blue-Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (BTRTF) recommended that the Bay Area establish a more formal regional network management model to coordinate public transportation across its many services, operators, and geographies. After examining models from around the world, it was clear that there is no singular prescription for regional network management. The Bay Area must assemble a model that best fits its unique political, historical, and geographic context.

Accordingly, in 2023, the Bay Area established the “RNM framework,” made up of three associated bodies: the RNM Committee, RNM Council, and RNM Customer Advisory Group – supported by a RNM Director and regionally dedicated staff. This model is interim, intended to deliver near-term benefits while further establishing the foundation for a longer-term model.

To ensure its continuous evolution, the RNM is required to go through a formal review process every two years. In 2025, a Consultant Team comprised of Perkins Eastman and KPMG completed the RNM's first review. This report is the result of this consultant review. **The report has been designed so that Bay Area leadership can both objectively gauge progress and chart the future course for the RNM.**

Assessment Findings

Through extensive stakeholder feedback—including surveys and interviews with MTC staff, transit operators, policymakers, and advocates—and peer benchmarking, the Consultant Team concludes that:

The RNM has delivered tangible benefits in line with its mission and vision...

In its first two years, the RNM has made meaningful progress against its mission and vision. Through a successful focus on implementing the Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP), the framework has delivered early wins for customers by advancing initiatives such as the rollout of the Clipper BayPass institutional pass program, adoption of the Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways, and development of prototypes for mapping and wayfinding. The establishment of dedicated coordination roles, like the RNM Director and Co-Project Managers (Co-PMs), has unified these efforts and earned strong stakeholder support. Critically, this structure has helped improve collaboration between MTC and the region's transit operators at the executive, policy, and staff levels, building the trust necessary to tackle more complex undertakings in the future.

...however, it may not be delivering those benefits at the speed or scale necessary.

While the RNM is working, the assessment also reveals concerns from certain stakeholder groups that the framework is not delivering change at the speed or scale needed to meet the region's urgent transit challenges, including a looming fiscal cliff and the need to win back ridership. Five overarching opportunity areas were identified that could help improve the performance of the RNM and its ability to deliver benefits:

- 1 Improve Stakeholder Awareness:** Improve rider knowledge about new benefits and improve stakeholder recognition (e.g., legislators) on the importance and successes of the RNM
- 2 Further Detail the Regional Vision:** Translate the high-level vision into more discrete objectives for service levels and network management integration to measure progress and prioritize investments
- 3 Maximize Utilization of the RNM Structure:** Maximize utilization of the RNM structure by consolidating bodies and increasing the RNM's use for regional policy development
- 4 Increase the Speed & Scale of Delivery:** Address the operational impediments, such as complex approval pathways and limited staff capacity, that slow the delivery of benefits to riders
- 5 Improve the Ease of Collaboration:** Address the operational impediments, such as gaps in collaboration tools and process inefficiencies, that challenge coordination between stakeholders

Considerations for the Future of the RNM

Around the world, regional network management models are not static; they evolve over time to meet the changing needs of each region. As such, the RNM must continually evaluate how it must evolve to meet the Bay Area's current needs. This evaluation is particularly critical as the RNM was intentionally designed as a foundational, short-term model to expedite TAP initiatives, while its long-term vision remains undefined. Further work is needed to define the RNM's roles, responsibilities, and processes to meet the promise of regionally integrated transit in the long term. This report offers two distinct categories of consideration to help leadership chart the course for the RNM's evolution.

First, it presents near-term considerations—the Consultant Team proposes 13 potential actions that could be implemented within the existing RNM framework. Second, it presents longer-term considerations that raise a fundamental question for the region: **Can these incremental, near-term improvements deliver benefits fast enough, or are longer-term, structural changes necessary to address the region's current needs?**

Near-Term Considerations

The following section outlines 13 near-term actions proposed by the Consultant Team for Bay Area leadership consideration. These actions are designed to be implemented within the current RNM framework to improve its effectiveness and are organized against the five opportunity areas identified in the assessment:

Opportunity #1: Improve Stakeholder Awareness

A.1	Develop a Coordinated Stakeholder Engagement Approach	Develop a coordinated approach between the RNM, Operators, and MTC to raise public awareness of rider programs and benefits while building support from key stakeholders on the RNM's purpose and achievements
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Opportunity #2: Further Detail the Regional Vision

A.2	Align on Target Levels of Regional Network Management Integration	Further define the long-term vision for the Bay Area's regional network management model by aligning on levels of integration across core components
A.3	Advance a Regional Transit Network Service Vision	Progress towards the development of an aspirational, customer-focused, regional service vision to provide a clear framework for planning and investment

Opportunity #3: Maximize Utilization of the RNM Structure

A.4	Integrate the Clipper Executive Board into the RNM Council	Sunset the Clipper Executive Board and integrate its duties, responsibilities, and delegated authority into the RNM Council
A.5	Consider "Position Papers" from the RNM Customer Advisory Group	Have the CAG develop written "position papers" on key topics to provide clear, structured input for the Council and Committee to review and consider
A.6	Delegate Authority to the RNM Council on a Discrete Set of Funds	Allocate a pool of funds under the RNM Council's discretion to support future regional transit initiatives or RNM operations

Opportunity #4: Increase the Speed & Scale of Delivery

A.7	Increase Resource Capacity for RNM Activities	Address capacity constraints by increasing the resources available to support RNM administration and the delivery of regional initiatives
A.8	Improve Collaboration Tools	Implement a unified strategy for technology, including a centralized administrative hub, a shared data clearinghouse, and common standards
A.9	Develop a Long-Term RNM Funding Strategy	Jointly develop a long-term funding strategy for RNM initiatives and operations, aligned to the ambitions of the RNM

Opportunity #5: Improve the Ease of Collaboration

A.10	Clarify Decision-Making Authorities	Clarify and document the distinct decision-making authorities of the RNM Council, RNM Committee, other MTC Committees, and the RNM Director
A.11	Conduct Joint RNM Strategy Sessions	Hold joint sessions with RNM Council, Committee, and/or Customer Advisory Group members to improve strategic alignment
A.12	Establish a Work Plan Lookahead	Supplement the RNM Council Work Plan with a more detailed near-term calendar with target dates
A.13	Send RNM Council Meeting Materials Earlier in Advance	Establish a process to distribute meeting materials earlier to allow for more thorough review and substantive discussion

Long-Term Considerations

While the near-term actions offer a path to improve the RNM's effectiveness, they also lead to a more fundamental, long-term consideration for leadership: determining if these incremental improvements can sufficiently address the five opportunities identified in this assessment and position the RNM to address the current needs of the Bay Area.

The feedback gathered in this assessment reflects two distinct perspectives on this question. While many stakeholders see value in the current RNM framework and believe these refinements are the right next step, others feel that the RNM framework's inherent limitations—such as fragmented funding and complex decision-making pathways—will always inhibit the ability of the RNM to meet the needs of the region. Ultimately, determining the right path forward requires leadership to first define the outcomes it wants to prioritize, which will clarify whether these near-term actions are sufficient, or if a more profound structural evolution is necessary to achieve the region's goals.

Next Steps

The findings and proposed actions presented in this assessment represent the Consultant Team's analysis and are intended to provide information for strategic discussion by Bay Area leadership on the future of regional network management and the RNM. The immediate next step is to use these findings, and the lessons from the past two years of RNM operations, to align on prioritized near-term actions, marshal the resources to implement them, and concurrently evaluate the potential rewards and pathways for a more foundational transformation—a process that should be guided by prioritizing the outcomes that evolve the RNM to best meet the needs of the region and its riders.

1

Background: What is Regional Network Management?

1.1 What is “Regional Network Management”?

“Regional network management” is a technical term describing how the public agencies and operators responsible for a region's transit strategically coordinate to deliver services (e.g., bus, rail, streetcar, ferry) across different geographies and/or jurisdictions (e.g., across counties). While the specific approach to this coordination varies, these models typically share a common goal: to create a seamless, integrated, and reliable system that is simpler for customers to navigate.

The way this coordination is delivered, however, takes many forms. Across the globe, models of regional network management—such as Transport for London (London), TransLink (Vancouver), and Zürcher Verkehrsverbund (Zurich)—each comprise a unique blend of responsibilities and decision-making authorities. Differences in their models reflect the governance structures, funding mechanisms, and priorities of their respective regions. Despite real variation in these arrangements, regional transit can be generally described by the level of integration across five common transit components:

Figure 1: Common Regional Network Management Components

Regional Network Management Component	Defining Measure
1 Fares & Payment	The level of integration for fare collection platforms and fare structures across different transit agencies.
2 Customer Information	The level of integration for mapping, wayfinding, rider information, and branding across the region.
3 Network Planning	The level of integration for schedules, routes, transit-priority measures, accessibility services, and shared performance goals
4 Management & Operations	The level of integration for procurement, day-to-day operations, and capital project delivery
5 Governance & Funding	The level of integration for governance structures, policy-making authority, and revenue-sharing mechanisms

Research from organizations like the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), and the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) consistently identifies benefits resulting from network management. This research highlights gains for riders, operators, and the broader public such as:

- **Rider Benefits (Simplicity & Reliability):** A coordinated network makes public transit easier to use. Riders experience more seamless journeys with shorter wait times thanks to coordinated schedules, while universal fare policies and simplified payment methods eliminate the complexity of paying for trips across different systems. Standardized mapping and clear wayfinding create a cohesive and intuitive experience, removing the guesswork from multi-operator travel.
- **Operator Benefits (Efficiency & Scale):** Transit agencies benefit from increased efficiency and a stronger collective voice. A structured framework for collaboration streamlines coordination on complex regional projects, leverages economies of scale to deliver cost savings, and provides expanded capacity

through shared expertise. This unified approach also enhances the power of advocacy for shared priorities and can boost revenue through system-wide ridership growth.

- **Other Public Benefits (Economic & Environmental):** A successful regional transit network delivers significant economic, environmental, and social benefits to the entire region. By making transit a more attractive option, it encourages a shift away from private vehicles, which reduces traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution. Improved connectivity also spurs economic growth by broadening access to jobs and commerce, while more affordable and streamlined transit promotes equity by better serving all communities.

1.2 Regional Transit Network Management in the Bay Area

Spanning over 7,000 square miles and home to more than 7.8 million people, the San Francisco Bay Area is one of the nation's largest and most geographically complex metropolitan regions. In the Bay Area, transit is delivered through a combination of more than two dozen transit operators, with oversight and funding from a mix of local, regional, and state agencies, including:

- **Transit Agencies:** Over two-dozen transit agencies—each with their own board, dedicated funding, and service area—provide public transportation to communities across the Bay Area. Some agencies—such as Muni, and SamTrans—focus primarily on intra-county service, while others—like BART, Caltrain, AC Transit, and Golden Gate Transit—offer cross-county travel options. Many of these agencies were formed through local ballot measures, sales taxes or legislative acts. These funding mechanisms set specific responsibilities and tie funding streams to geographically defined priorities.
- **Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC):** MTC coordinates, plans, and funds the Bay Area's transportation network. Designated as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), MTC takes a long-range view of mobility across nine counties—shaping decisions for highways, transit, local streets, airports, ports, and freight rail. MTC also collaborates with local governments to chart short- and long-term goals such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fostering safer streets, and improving equitable access to transportation. As is typical for MPOs nationwide, MTC's traditional role has largely been one of support and coordination with transit operators rather than one of direct transit operations. MTC does have a role in shaping the transit landscape primarily through its authority over funding for megaprojects, long-range planning (Plan Bay Area), and influencing land use decisions around transit corridors.
- **Counties and County Agencies:** The Bay Area is composed of nine counties—Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma. Each county plays a significant role in shaping local transit as county transportation authorities or congestion management agencies typically administer local taxes, allocate funding for capital projects, and guide transit planning within their jurisdictions.
- **Municipalities:** The Bay Area's 101 municipalities control local streets and rights-of-way, influence land use decisions, and may even operate transit (e.g., Petaluma, Union City, Rio Vista), collectively playing a crucial role in shaping local transit options and connectivity.

- **State Agencies:** The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) sets overarching policy for California's transportation system and provides oversight of related departments. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) is responsible for programming and allocating state and federal transportation funds. Caltrans manages and maintains the state highway system that spans the Bay Area and beyond.
- **Federal Agencies:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)—all under the U.S. Department of Transportation—provide federal funding, set regulatory guidelines, and support planning activities that shape how public transit, highways, and rail systems are developed and operated across the Bay Area.

The concept of regional transit network management is not new in the Bay Area. For years, agencies have collaborated to deliver regional initiatives such as Clipper and timed transfers. However, efforts to create a more formalized structure for regional transit network management have not been sustained.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted both ridership and funding for Bay Area transit agencies. Following an April 2020 action to approve federal emergency funds for public transit, MTC created a 32-member [Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force \(BTRTF or "Blue Ribbon Task Force"\)](#) to steer the Bay Area transit network's recovery. In July 2021, the Blue Ribbon Task Force approved [27 specific near-term actions](#) serving as the foundation for the [Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan \(TAP or "Action Plan"\)](#). Among these recommendations was an action to "develop a transit network management business case and identify specific next steps to deliver public transit network management and governance reforms that will fulfill long-term transit transformation." In February 2023, following the completion of the [Regional Network Management Structures Evaluation Report](#) and the [Network Management Business Case](#), MTC adopted [Resolution 4564](#), establishing a formal regional network model for the Bay Area, called the "RNM" (Regional Network Management).

The RNM was conceived as a collaborative framework, designed to be the connective tissue that links policymakers at MTC, the leadership of the region's transit operators, and representatives for riders and advocates. It is important to note that the designation "RNM" does not refer to one of these bodies individually, but the collection of all the contributors working together within a formal, adaptable structure. Throughout this report, any reference to "the RNM" refers to this collaborative framework, which was stood up gradually throughout 2023 and includes:

- **RNM Committee:** A group of MTC Commissioners (8 members), 2 ex-officio transit agency board members and 1 ex-officio member representing CalSTA (total of 3 members) that provide policy oversight and set strategic priorities (established July 2023)
- **RNM Council:** A group of Transit Agency General Managers (10 members) and the MTC Executive Director (1 member) that recommend and implement regional transit policies and initiatives (established November 2023: [MTC Res. 4622](#))
- **RNM Customer Advisory Group:** A group of stakeholder representatives (e.g., advocacy groups) who bring the customer perspective to RNM deliberations and decisions (established September 2023: [MTC Res. 4610](#)).

- **RNM Director:** MTC individual charged with day-to-day management and coordination between stakeholders across the transit network.
- **Dedicated RNM Section Staff:** This consists of MTC and operator staff dedicated to supporting the implementation of RNM activities and overseeing initiative delivery.
- **Other MTC Sections/Staff:** In addition to its dedicated team, the RNM pulls from expertise found in other MTC sections. This provides expandable support for its various initiatives. These functions currently include Clipper, 511 traveler information, regional planning, and public affairs.
- **Transit Operator Staff:** Operators formally dedicate select staff to serve as Co-Project Managers (Co-PMs) for RNM initiatives. Additionally, other operator staff contribute significant time and expertise for ad-hoc technical and policy support across RNM work items.

1.3 How the Bay Area (RNM) Compares to Other Regions

1.3.1 A Common Language for Comparison: The Regional Network Management Rubric

Just as regions must tailor their network management governance arrangements as described in Section 1.1, they must also build local capacity to vet and efficiently roll out complex network management *concepts and roles* across a broad set of (new or established) actors. We believe this step—creating a common language for comparison—will be essential to both manage and drive change. To provide an example of consistent framing for “regional transit network management,” this report offers- the “Regional Network Management Rubric.”

Drawing from the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force, the [RNM Structures Evaluation](#), the *Network Management Business Case*, academic research, and global case studies, the rubric simplifies, compiles and further defines regional network transit coordination using five common components. For each component, we offer sample measures alongside a sliding scale of conceptual levels of network integration, ranging from “no integration” to “fully integrated.” A common repository for concepts around network management can help those involved assemble leading practices and coalesce on relevant, shared points of reference.

Once sufficiently tailored to the Bay Area's context, this or a similar tool could also empower leadership to compare the status of a “current state” of transit network integration against a target “future state.” This rubric visibly illustrates “gaps” that would need to be closed to achieve the benefit. Figure 4 offers an illustrative assessment of the Bay Area's RNM model, mapping its current state level of integration across each component as based on stakeholder feedback. We also include a theoretical future state, based on peer benchmarking. A similar approach could help ensure future planning efforts can reliably count on a commonly held understanding of benefits, resources needed and potential pathways for regional transit network management’s evolution (See also Chapter 5 Action 2, p 47).

Figure 2: Regional Network Management Rubric & Preliminary Gaps (ILLUSTRATIVE)

	None (No Integration)	Low	Medium	High (Fully Integrated)
1 Fares & Payment				
Fare Collection	No integrated platform; each agency collects fares separately	Some inter-operator collaboration, limited shared payment methods	Most agencies use an interoperable system with standardized hardware	Fully unified solution delivering real-time, regionwide fare transactions and data
Fare Structure	Agencies set separate fares; no shared discounts or transfers	Limited transfer passes, partial discount alignment across agencies	Mostly standardized fares with reciprocal discounts and capping	Single regional policy; uniform fares and caps
2 Customer Information				
Mapping & Wayfinding	Entirely separate mapping and wayfinding designs	Some corridor-specific or event collaboration but mostly distinct design standards	Common guidelines in high-volume hubs, synchronized regional map	Unified signage, real-time info, and consistent design regionwide
Rider Information	Separate websites or apps; no cross-operator data integration	Separate websites and apps with some multi-operator references, partial real-time feeds	Consolidated apps, broad real-time coverage, standardized layouts regionwide	One unified platform delivering comprehensive schedules, routes, updates
Branding	Numerous distinct identities	Occasional co-branding (e.g., special events)	A few shared brand families emerge, reducing brand fragmentation	One cohesive brand spanning services and operators
3 Network Planning				
Schedules, Routes, Services, & Transit Priority	Fully independent timetables, routes, services, and transit priority routes	Alignment on priority regional routes for key destinations, with inconsistent everyday transfers or transit priority policies	Broad synchronization and transit priority policies, though gaps remain	Fully integrated timetables, routes, and transit priority policies ensure seamless travel across operators
Accessibility Services	No shared guidelines, forcing multiple processes for riders	Basic eligibility reciprocity, yet coverage remains inconsistent	Unified standards across most agencies	Regional framework ensures seamless, regionwide one-seat accessibility service
Service Vision & Performance Measures	No unified network vision, agencies track metrics independently	Vague regional goals exist, lacking enforcement or adoption	Agreed-upon vision and targets guide decisions, but reporting varies	A clearly stated network vision and metrics unify planning
4 Management & Operations				
Procurement	Purchasing yields inconsistent specifications; no volume discounts	Occasional group orders exist but with ad-hoc arrangements	Unified specifications and coordinated timelines achieve bulk savings	Centralized purchasing consolidates orders, maximizing cost reductions
Operations	Agencies manage fleets independently with no shared protocols or resources	Basic event collaboration, minimal data sharing, separate management	Shared scheduling or dispatch, boosting consistency in corridors	Centralized operations unify day-to-day tasks for efficiency networkwide
Capital Projects	Agencies implement expansions separately, lacking oversight or strategy	Occasional corridor-based projects see multi-agency cooperation and standards	Regional master plan guides expansions and design standards	A central agency directs capital projects with funding
5 Governance & Funding				
Governance Structure	Each agency has separate boards with limited shared decision making	Advisory committees exist, but hold little binding power	Regional council oversees select decisions; local boards retain select autonomy	One governing authority oversees all decision making
Funding & Revenue Sharing	Each operator manages finances separately, with no central budget or coordination	Joint grants, but separate accounts remain standard practice	Shared funds exist, some centralized fundings decisions (e.g., capital projects) but agencies control individual budgets	Regional authority controls all funding allocations



= Current Level (Illustrative)



= Theoretical Target Future-State Level

1.3.2 Comparing the Bay Area (RNM) Model to Other Regions

The Regional Network Management Rubric helps benchmark the Bay Area's RNM model against its global peers. When examining other regional transit network management models around the world, few demonstrate full integration across every category. Most have varying levels of integration across the five components; however, they generally fall into one of three categories: (1) Coordinating Bodies that provide umbrella oversight or coordination (often with limited authority) but do not operate any transit; (2) Hybrid Models that operate some portion of regional transit services while also providing oversight or coordination of other operators; and (3) Fully Integrated Models that operate all regional and local transit services.

Figure 3: Categories of Regional Network Management Models



Compared to other regional network models, the Bay Area rests on the lower end of this spectrum, even when compared to the other “Coordinating Body” models. For example, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) (a Coordinating Body) in Chicago has higher levels of responsibilities and authority as it reviews and approves the annual budgets for the local agencies, collects and allocates a regional sales tax among local agencies, issues bonds, develops plans, and coordinates policy decisions among local agency boards. In Berlin, the Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg (VBB) (a Coordinating Body) sets common fare structures, manages a unified fare payment system, coordinates schedules and routes among transit providers, advocates with elected officials and local municipalities, develops long-term transit investment financial plans, and collects ridership and operational data. We have observed an ongoing trend that regions are seeking to move their models up this spectrum over time, increasing the levels of responsibility and authority.

A review of these peers also reveals a consistent trajectory: regional institutions often begin with a narrow mandate and then gradually acquire more responsibilities and authority over time:

Case Study | Chicago: In Chicago, the RTA was founded in 1974 and has evolved from a financial oversight body into a more integrated regional planning agency responsible for coordinating the area’s three service boards: the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra (commuter rail), and Pace (suburban

bus). Initially focused on disbursing tax revenues, its mandate grew to include multicounty strategic planning, capital plan approval, and performance auditing, transitioning it from a mere “pass-through” funding authority to a central convener for regional transit priorities. Now, with the region facing a severe fiscal cliff, this evolution is taking another major step. In response to the crisis, the Illinois General Assembly passed SB2111 in October 2025. This legislation provides critical new funding but ties it to a significant reorganization: the RTA will be replaced by a new entity, the Northern Illinois Transit Authority (NITA). This new body will wield increased authority, charged with establishing a universal fare structure, overseeing coordination of service and capital projects, and creating a regional police force, while the three existing operators will remain responsible for day-to-day operations

Case Study | Greater Manchester: The Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) was founded in 1974 to oversee and enhance public transportation services across Greater Manchester, setting the foundation for a more coordinated regional system. In 2011, GMPTE was replaced by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), which initially focused on coordinating rail, bus, and tram services, including oversight of Metrolink. Over time, the region’s governance structure shifted further under the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), enabling more consolidated planning and policy-setting. Following legislative changes—most notably the 2017 Bus Services Act—Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) was granted broader authority to franchise bus services, set fares, and establish uniform service standards, rather than merely influencing private operators. TfGM’s remit also expanded to include active travel initiatives, integrated ticketing, and longer-term strategic planning efforts through the “[Bee Network](#)” vision. Today, TfGM is moving rapidly toward a unified, London-style transport system, managing everything from fare policy and branding to capital projects and franchise agreements for bus services.

Case Study | Toronto: Metrolinx began as the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA) in 2006 with a mandate to coordinate and plan regional transportation across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Initially focused on high-level strategy and advocacy for regionwide transit solutions, Metrolinx saw its role expand when it assumed responsibility for GO Transit in 2009—integrating commuter rail and regional bus services under one umbrella. Over time, Metrolinx also took over the PRESTO fare-payment system, developed the “Big Move” regional transportation plan, and began to oversee the planning and procurement of key rapid transit projects, such as the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. Legislative updates have progressively granted Metrolinx more direct authority to implement large-scale projects. As part of the [Building Transit Faster Act](#) (2020), for example, it gained the power to manage transit corridor permits and to streamline expropriation, utility relocation, and municipal service access for priority transit initiatives. Through these changes, Metrolinx’s initial mission of regional planning and limited oversight has evolved into a multifaceted organization with both strategic and project-delivery responsibilities, wielding significant control over land use adjacent to transit corridors, capital project timelines, and fare-integration policy.

Taken together, these examples illustrate that increasing integration is a common evolutionary path. For the Bay Area, this raises important questions about its own future: Should the RNM pursue a similar path of increasing responsibilities and authority, and if so, in what timeframe? This assessment and its recommendations are intended to help the region begin to answer those questions.

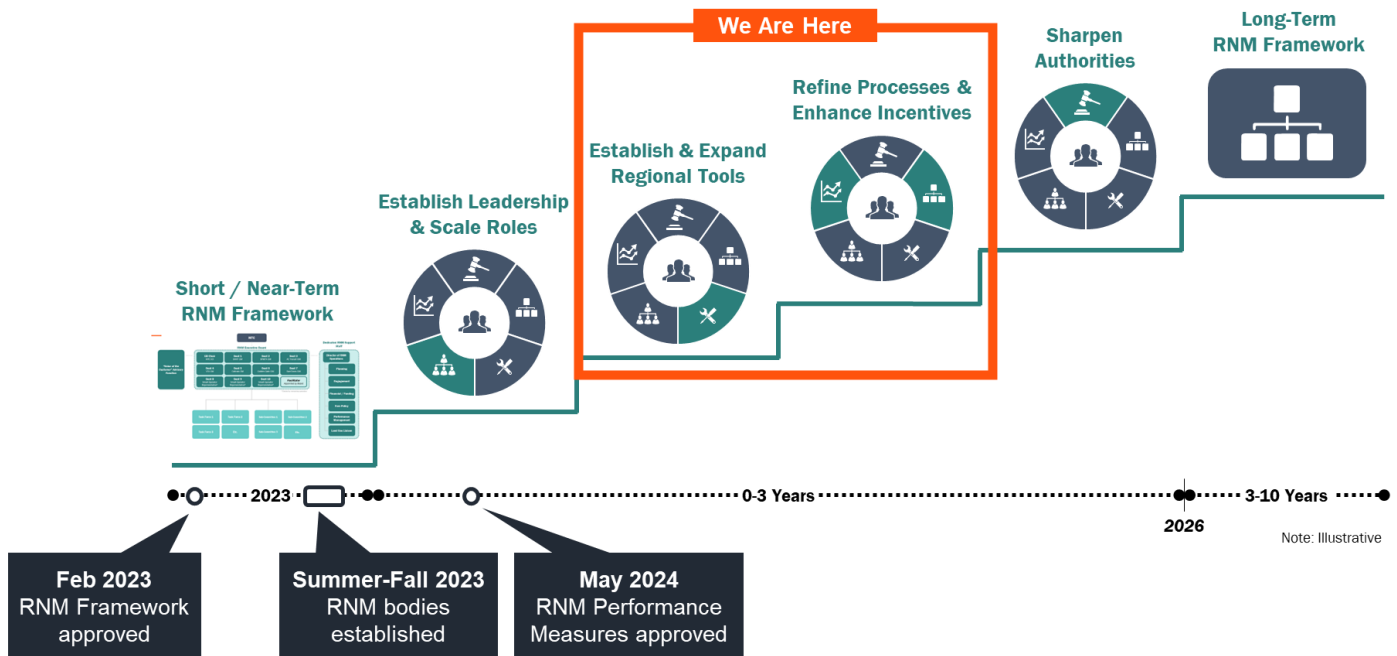
2

Background: Assessment Methodology

2.1 Purpose of the Assessment

In 2023, when the current framework for the RNM was adopted, the Bay Area recognized a critical principle: the region could not copy a structure from another region. Given its unique governance structures, funding mechanisms, and operational realities, a tailored approach was needed. However, establishing a full structure would take time, while the region's transit challenges demanded immediate action. Therefore, in 2023 the RNM framework was intentionally designed as foundational, with the intent that it would grow, adapt, and be improved over time to meet the region's evolving needs.

Figure 4: RNM Evolution Stages



To ensure this evolution occurs, MTC Resolution 4648 established a requirement for the RNM framework's formal evaluation every two years. In Fall 2025, the RNM reached its first two-year milestone, triggering this review. This report compiles the evaluation findings. Completed between April and August 2025, by Consultant Team Perkins Eastman/KPMG, it is intended to provide Bay Area leadership with the information and analysis needed to facilitate meaningful and informed discussions about the future of regional transit network management in the Bay Area.

2.2 Assessment Methodology

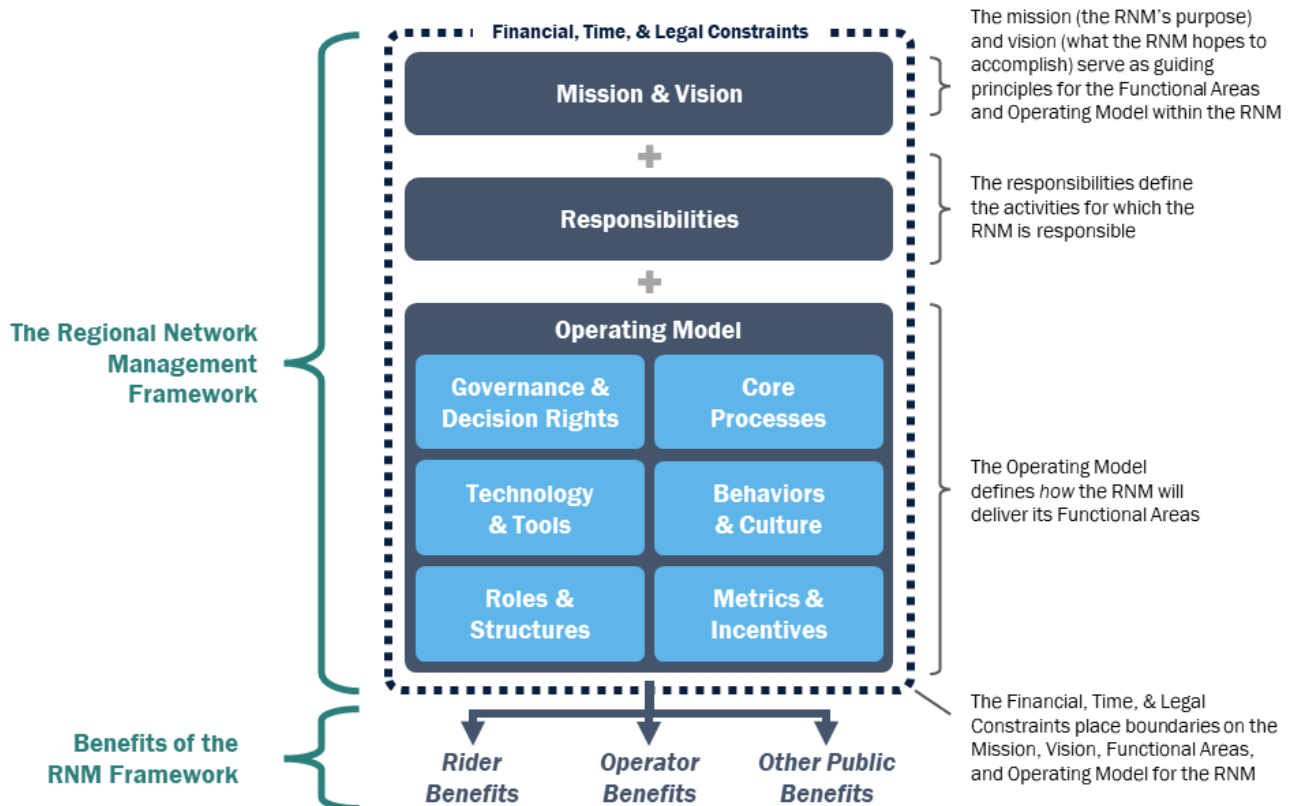
2.2.1 Framework for Assessing the RNM

In May 2024, MTC adopted Resolution 4648 to establish measures to assess the performance of the RNM. These measures are organized into two categories: first, **RNM Council Work Plan Achievement**, which tracks progress against established goals; and second, **RNM Capabilities and Needs**, which evaluates the framework's organizational effectiveness and resource requirements.

We structured this evaluation around three key questions that align with the layers of the adopted RNM Framework (see Figure 7). Across each question, the team also considered the constraints that limit the RNM (see Figure 7):

- 1) **Mission & Vision:** Is the RNM achieving its target benefits?
 - 2) **Responsibilities:** Does the RNM's have the right allocation of responsibilities to best achieve its mission and vision?
 - 3) **Operating Model:** Is the RNM operating effectively and efficiently to deliver its responsibilities?
- + **Constraints:** What are the factors (e.g., financial, time, legal) that limit the RNM's mission and vision, responsibilities, or operating model?

Figure 5: RNM Framework Layers



At the core of the RNM framework is the RNM's "Operating Model". At a high level, the Operating Model defines how people, processes, and technology are combined across six interconnected sub-components to deliver the RNM's responsibilities. The six sub-components of the Operating Model include:

Figure 6: Operating Model Sub-Components



2.2.2 Assessment Inputs

Throughout this assessment, the Consultant Team worked closely with MTC, transit operators, and key stakeholders. The findings and opportunities identified in this report are a direct product of their inputs, which were gathered through four primary methods:

(1) Stakeholder Survey: An anonymous online questionnaire was distributed to over 230 stakeholders who have worked with or led regional transit efforts. The survey captured perspectives on current RNM activities and asked how the RNM should evolve in support of regional transit. A total of 77 individuals responded. The table below lists categories, distribution, and response figures. A summary of results from this survey can be found in *Appendix 1: Summary of Survey Results*.

Figure 7: Survey Participants

Category/Affiliation	# Sent To	# of Respondents
RNM Committee	13	2
RNM Council	11	3
RNM Customer Advisory Group	18	9
MTC RNM Staff	13	3
Other MTC Staff	33	17
Small Operator GMs/Staff	45	7
Other Staff (operators, CTA, etc.)	130	37
CTA Execs / Others	8	5
Total	230	77

(2) Stakeholder Interviews: The consultant team conducted conversations with more than 40 individuals, including RNM Council members, MTC staff, operator staff, and community advocates. These discussions offered informal observations about RNM performance, opportunities and challenges, and potential pathways for evolution from those who work directly in or oversee regional transit.

Figure 8: Interview / Small Group Discussion Participants

Category/Affiliation	Participants
RNM Council Members	- Bob Powers (BART & RNM Council Chair) - April Chan (SamTrans & RNM Council Vice-Chair) - Carolyn Gonot (VTA) - Bill Churchill (County Connection) - Julie Kirschbaum (SFMTA) - Denis Mulligan (Golden Gate) - Seamus Murphy (WETA) - Salvador Llamas (AC Transit) - Nancy Whelan (Marin Transit)
RNM Committee Members	- Alicia John-Baptiste (RNM Committee Chair) - Sue Noack (RNM Committee; Commission Chair)
RNM Committee Members (Ex-Officio)	- Janice Li (BART) - Diane Shaw (AC Transit)
RNM Director & Staff Working Group	- Melanie Choy - Stefanie Hom - Allison Quach
MTC Commissioners	- Gina Papan - Margaret Abe-Koba
Customer Advisory Group Members	- Adina Levin - Charles Lavery - Gerry Glaser - Warren Cushman
Co-PMs	- Ryan Reeves (BART) - Jumana Nabti (BART) - Andy Metz (AC Transit) - Mika Miyasato (AC Transit) - John Sanderson (County Connection)
Operator Staff / Representatives	- Cathleen Sullivan (Marin Transit) - Ron Downing (Golden Gate Transit) - Hannah Lindelof (BART) - Ruby Horta (County Connection) - Liz Brisson (SFMTA) - Sam Sargent (VTA) - Michael Gougherty (WETA) - Millie Tolleson (SamTrans)
MTC Leadership	- Andy Fremier - Alix Bockelman - Lisa Klein - Matt Maloney
Other Stakeholders	- Rick Ramacier - Jeff Tumlin

(3) Peer Benchmarking: To contextualize the Bay Area's RNM model, the Consultant Team conducted a high-level review of comparable regional transit network management models from around the world. This analysis, detailed in Section 1.3, provided insights into common structures, evolutionary paths, and leading practices that informed the assessment findings.

(4) RNM Director & Staff Working Group: In addition to broad stakeholder outreach, the Consultant Team worked in close partnership with the RNM Director and several Dedicated RNM Staff, who provided oversight for the assessment. Throughout the process, the Consultant Team facilitated a series of collaborative workshops and working sessions to help interpret stakeholder feedback and inform the findings presented in this report.

3

Background: The RNM Today

3.1 Defining Today: A Note on Assessment Timing

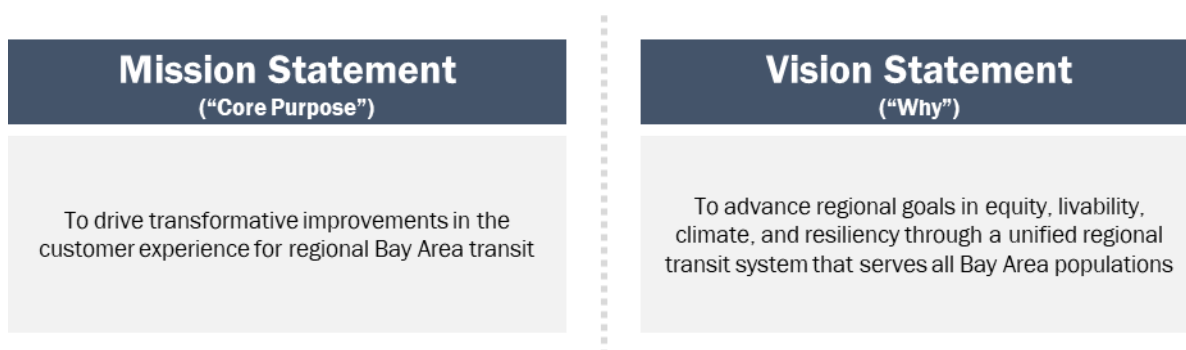
This assessment captures the RNM at a specific point in time. The primary evaluation period, including stakeholder interviews and surveys, took place between March 2025 and June 2025. The subsequent development and refinement of this report, incorporating ongoing stakeholder feedback, occurred between July 2025 and March 2026.

Of note, this period was prior to the passage of California Senate Bill 63, with the region's looming fiscal cliff as top-of-mind for many participants. The acute funding uncertainty is strongly reflected in many of the survey and interview responses gathered during the assessment period.

3.2 Current State: RNM Mission & Vision

The mission and vision define what the RNM is trying to accomplish. They are intended to serve as the "north star" guiding all subsequent decisions about the RNM, including its specific responsibilities and the design of its operating model. When the resolution for the RNM was passed, the RNM established formal mission and vision statements to provide a clear and ambitious mandate for regional transit improvement.

Figure 9: RNM Mission and Vision Statements



In addition to these statements, the mission and vision of the RNM is articulated through its stated goals and outcomes. The RNM has adopted the five key outcomes of the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP), which provides a more detailed roadmap for improving the rider experience. These five outcomes—ranging from fares to funding—represent the critical components of a seamless, integrated transit network that the RNM is tasked with advancing.

Figure 10: TAP Outcomes

Fares & Payment	Customer Information	Transit Network	Accessibility	Funding
Simpler, consistent and equitable fare and payment options	Make transit easier to navigate and more convenient	Transit services managed as a unified, efficient, and reliable network	Transit services for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes are coordinated efficiently	Using resources more efficiently to secure new, dedicated revenue to meet funding needs

3.3 Current State: RNM Responsibilities

The RNM centers its work on two major responsibilities: (1) implementing the Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP) and (2) managing the RNM itself as a new coordinating body.

(1) Implementing Initiatives in Support of TAP Outcomes

To date, the RNM's primary focus has been on implementing initiatives across each of the five TAP outcomes, this includes both the original TAP initiatives and new initiatives. The RNM formally documents these responsibilities in the RNM Council Work Plan (or "Work Plan") as the primary operational blueprint for the RNM Council. The Work Plan translates the RNM's high-level mission, vision, and its alignment with the TAP, into actions across the five TAP outcome areas.

The two-year [Work Plan](#) for fiscal years 2023/24 and 2024/25 spanned fare integration pilots (e.g., Clipper BayPass), improvements to customer information like mapping and wayfinding, and regional paratransit pilots. Items shown below in black directly fulfill established TAP directives, while those in orange reflect some select newer conceived efforts that advance overall TAP objectives.

Figure 11: FY2023 - 2024 RNM Council Work Plan Summary

Transit Transformation Action Plan				
 Fares & Payment	 Customer Information	 Transit Network	 Accessibility	 Funding
- Clipper START Currently overseen by the Fare Integration Task Force: + Clipper BayPass launch and expansion (e.g. for major events) - No-cost/reduced-cost interagency transfers - Refine vision for common fare structure for regional transit	- Prototypes and pilots for regional mapping & wayfinding signage - Availability and reliability of regional real-time transit data + Strategic/cohesive communications + Coordinated customer experience surveys	- Transit priority implementation (e.g., BusAID) - Regional Transit Priority Policy - Transit 2050+ project performance assessment and network concepts	- Standardize paratransit and Clipper RTC eligibility practices - Improve regional paratransit trips through one-seat ride pilot programs, improved cost-sharing, and enhanced transfer policies	+ Develop strategies to fully fund TAP initiatives - Ongoing advocacy for funding
Legend - Ongoing TAP work that creates tangible outcomes for riders - Ongoing TAP work related to planning and policymaking + New activities				

Building on this foundation, the RNM has since gone through its second annual work planning process. An updated two-year Work Plan for fiscal years 2025/26 and 2026/27 has been adopted, continuing to advance initiatives that support the five TAP outcomes.

(2) RNM Management

In addition to managing implementation of TAP and TAP-related initiatives, the RNM's supporting staff coordinate day-to-day governance functions. Their duties include scheduling and facilitating meetings of the RNM Council, Committee, and associated sub-groups; preparing and distributing agendas, presentations, and supporting materials; and overseeing general coordination and follow-up to keep projects on track. The team manages strategic communications and stakeholder outreach—ensuring that insights from transit operators, advocacy groups, local officials, and riders are incorporated into ongoing work.

3.4 Current State: RNM Operating Model

The RNM's operating model defines the way in which the RNM delivers its mission, vision, and responsibilities. The operating model is the combination of six inter-connected sub-components: (1) Roles & Structures, (2) Governance & Decision Rights, (3) Core Processes, (4) Technology & Tools, (5) Metrics & Incentives, and (6) Culture & Behaviors. See Section 1.5 for more details on the operating model.

The following section provides an overview of how each of these six interconnected components are represented in the RNM:

3.4.1 Roles & Structures

The RNM is a composite of:

(1) **RNM Committee:** The RNM Committee is the policy body for regional transit network management. Its charter gives it the responsibility to set the overall vision for “regional network management” and oversee the execution of that vision. It is responsible for overseeing four of the five TAP functional areas: fare integration, improved mapping and wayfinding, transit priority and network coordination, and accessibility and access for all. While the fifth TAP area, Funding, is primarily overseen by MTC's Programming and Allocations Committee (PAC), the RNM Committee has a role in making programming decisions for specific TAP-funded initiatives.¹

The committee was formed from MTC's Operations Committee, which previously focused on regional roadway operations, significantly altering its purview. However, in addition to its new role, the RNM Committee retains the oversight responsibilities of the former Operations Committee. Previous program areas include:

- Clipper transit-fare payment card
- 511 Traveler Information System
- Freeway Service Patrol & Call Box programs
- Highway Operations
- Arterial Operations
- Bay Trail Project

The nine MTC Commissioners are joined by non-voting ex-officio members from BART (Board), CalSTA, AC Transit (Board). It meets in public sessions on the second Friday of each month.

¹ The roles are distinct: The RNM Committee often makes specific programming decisions for TAP-funded initiatives (e.g., approving BusAID awards, funding the Clipper BayPass pilot) and can authorize the Executive Director to enter into related contracts. The Programming and Allocations Committee (PAC) handles broader funding policy and takes action on most programming and all final allocation decisions for regional funds

(2) **RNM Council:** The RNM Council brings transit agency leadership into dialogue with the Commission. It is made up of 11 representatives: the MTC executive director, general managers from the seven largest transit agencies, and three representatives from the remaining transit agencies.

RNM Council actions take the form of (a) recommendations to the RNM Committee (or other MTC Committees) and the MTC Commission for adoption, (b) recommendations to transit agencies for adoption, or (c) guidance to the RNM Director and supporting staff. As established in the adopted [RNM Council Charter](#), the RNM acts by simple majority vote; however, consensus is sought prior to taking each vote. The Charter notes that “voting will be re-evaluated should the Council’s role evolve to include decision authority actions on revenue, expenditures, and fares.”

Council activities are guided by a two-year [RNM Council Work Plan](#), updated annually, with progress against work plan activities tracked quarterly (the most recent is the [February 2026 RNM Council Quarterly Progress Report](#)). The Council is also responsible for establishing [RNM Performance Measures](#) that monitor regional transit performance and effectiveness of the RNM framework (informing required 2-year performance reviews).

The Council meets in public sessions on the fourth Monday of the month, operating under elected leadership with a chair and vice chair serving two-year terms.

(3) **RNM Customer Advisory Group:** The Customer Advisory Group serves as a bridge between Bay Area transit customers and regional transportation policy makers. Established under [MTC Resolution No. 4610](#), this 20-member body provides customer perspectives to help shape regional transit policy and implementation planning. The Customer Advisory Group includes 6 members from local Transit Operators Advisory Boards, 5 MTC Community Advisory Council members, 1 member of a municipal transportation or public works, 3 members from policy organizations, 1 at-large member, and 1 member from Youth organization. Additional members represent the disability community, transit riders, and business. Operating with elected leadership and following an annual work plan developed in collaboration with the MTC’s RNM Committee, the group advises on regional transit network policy items and brings regional information back to their local bodies.

The group meets in public sessions, as needed, on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

(4) **RNM Director:** The RNM Director is responsible for day-to-day program execution. The RNM Director is employed by MTC with a direct administrative reporting line to MTC and an indirect reporting relationship with the RNM Council.² The RNM Director is responsible for the RNM Council Work Plan, managing dedicated staff and consultants, coordinating initiative implementation, and facilitating between the RNM bodies. With oversight responsibilities spanning from budget management to performance measurement, the Director ensures that the Regional Network Management’s mission of driving transformative improvements in customer experience is translated into concrete actions and measurable outcomes across the Bay Area’s transit network.

² Per MTC Resolution [4622](#), “MTC reserves the right to make decisions regarding hiring, promotion, compensation, and removal of the RNM Director, but it shall collaborate with the RNM Council as part of annual performance reviews and when considering potential candidates for RNM Director.”

(5) **RNM Support Staff:** Support staff provide technical expertise and capacity for day-to-day RNM activities including communications, developing recommendations, and implementing initiatives. Support staff include:

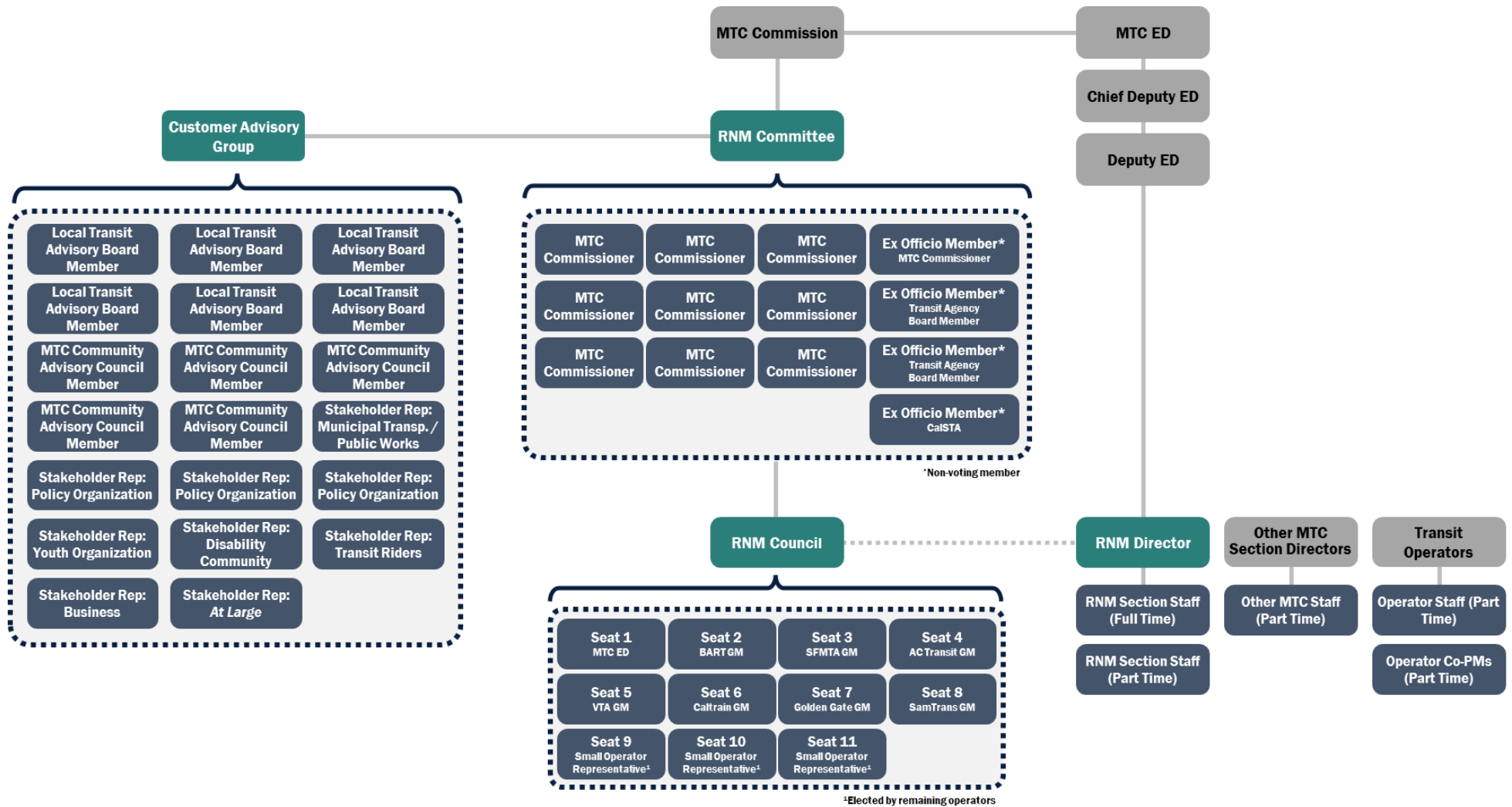
(a) **RNM Section Staff:** Thirteen MTC staff are currently dedicated full-time to RNM activities. They are organized into three major areas: (1) transit navigation and information which includes accessibility programs and mapping and wayfinding, (2) fare policy and partnerships, and (3) transit network coordination which includes transit priority.

(b) **MTC Shared Staff:** In addition to the dedicated MTC staff, the RNM leverages resources from other MTC sections. These staff are responsible for Clipper, 511 and real-time transit data, transit funding, long-range planning and surveys, data visualization, freeway transit projects, transit performance initiatives, regional shared mobility mapping data services, etc.

(c) **Co-PM Staff:** MTC and its operators work under a “Co-PM model.” This pairs a lead from MTC with an operators’ lead to help manage the implementation of TAP initiatives.

(d) **Operator Staff:** In addition to project management staff, the RNM relies on transit agency staff as needed for part-time and ad-hoc support on issues such as policy development and subject matter expertise, initiative implementation, and advancement of RNM operations

Figure 12: RNM Organizational Structure



3.4.2 Governance & Decision Rights

The RNM Council brings together executive-level representatives from the transit agencies and MTC to make recommendations on regional initiatives. It promotes collaboration by pooling executives with direct authority over local systems. Meanwhile, the RNM Committee serves as the policy-setting venue. It endorses regional strategies, fiscal decisions, and major initiatives before presenting them to the full MTC Commission or transit boards.

While key decision items are brought to the RNM Council for a formal vote, significant effort is generally made to build consensus before the item is presented. Decision rights are shared among the RNM Council (for programmatic recommendations) and the RNM Committee (for policy-level endorsements); however, authority for funding allocations and major policy changes often reside with MTC's broader governance structure or individual transit boards, especially when regional standards must be adopted locally.

In practice, while each operator may strive to make decisions in the regional interest, each holds fiduciary and interest-based duty to its agency which could ultimately result in a decision in its local/operator interest, delaying action, or requiring additional changes to a proposal. A consensus-based approach is managed through careful negotiation- this practice is responsive to longstanding concerns around the unintended consequence of regional actions that may negatively impact local operations.

During stakeholder interviews some, including operators, expressed concern that decisions require agreement from all parties and issues must be repeatedly revisited rather than resolved quickly.

3.4.3 Core Processes

The RNM has several core processes which define its operations:

(1) Policy Development: Drawing on the RNM's governance structure, staff and participating agency representatives identify areas needing common standards or new regulations—such as fare policies, accessibility protocols, or technology specifications. Through iterative consultation, staff draft policy proposals, gather feedback and revise accordingly. Completed policies are presented to the RNM Committee for endorsement, followed by any necessary review or approvals from MTC's Commission or local boards. Note that some items require discussion at one of MTC's other committees in lieu of, or in addition to the RNM Committee prior to going to the Commission. This cycle ensures that policy-making remains collaborative and guided by both regional goals and on-the-ground operational expertise.

(2) Initiative / Policy Implementation: RNM staff and operators develop detailed implementation plans for regional policies and initiatives—defining scope, assigning tasks, setting milestones, and tracking progress. Often, “Co-PM” teams (pairing MTC personnel with transit operator staff) guide specific projects such as fare integration pilots or mapping/wayfinding launches. They regularly present updates and challenges to the RNM Council and Committee, which in turn monitor progress, provide input on course corrections, and validate that outcomes align with the original policy objectives.

(3) Convening & Coordination of RNM Bodies: The RNM Director and staff schedule, prepare, and facilitate meetings for the RNM Council, Committee, and Customer Advisory Group. During these sessions, members share updates, address unresolved issues, and align next steps for initiatives.

(4) Work Plan Development: Every year, the RNM Director and staff draft an RNM Council Work Plan with a 2-year outlook. The Work Plan outlines priority initiatives and includes high-level performance targets in the form of estimated completion timelines. The RNM Council reviews and refines the Work Plan for technical feasibility, while the RNM Committee validates it from a policy perspective.

3.4.4 Technology & Tools

The RNM does not maintain dedicated technology or specialized tools, relying on MTC's existing resources. Collaboration and information sharing platforms depend on the project: Mapping & Wayfinding uses a MTC SharePoint site, Transit Priority relies on MTC Box folders, and Fares work is primarily housed in MTC Box files with some materials stored on a SharePoint site managed by BART. This approach reflects a reliance on available resources rather than an integrated technology strategy designed specifically for regional network management.

3.4.5 Metrics & Incentives

MTC [Resolution 4648](#) establishes two types of performance measures. The first type, Transit Rider Outcomes, tracks how well Bay Area transit meets riders' needs by assessing reliability, connectivity, equity, and safety/comfort. It also evaluates rider benefits derived from RNM-led initiatives, such as fare-integration pilots or transit-priority projects.

The second type, RNM & Transit Operations, gauges the RNM framework's effectiveness, including Work Plan milestones, current RNM capabilities, and overall regional transit statistics (e.g., ridership figures, operating costs). Taken together, these metrics promote continuous improvement of the RNM framework and strengthen accountability for achieving regional transit objectives.

MTC [Resolution 4619](#) requires that all operators participate actively in the RNM Council and initiatives. This resolution was approved by Programming and Allocations Committee (PAC). Assessing accountability falls under Funding Programs & Policy (FPP) staff.

3.4.6 Behaviors & Culture

The formal RNM structure fosters open communication and mutual accountability. Team members—from MTC staff to transit operators—are encouraged to collaborate across silos and share knowledge. Stakeholders broadly agree that introducing the RNM Director role and Co-PM structure has transformed the way MTC and transit operators collaborate. Stakeholders point to the fare integration study as a good example of staff-to-staff collaboration; critical issues were addressed for operators which made it possible to come to agreement, e.g. revenue protection.

3.5 Constraints

The RNM framework is shaped by a landscape of external constraints that both enable and limit its ability to achieve its mission. These constraints—which can be financial, political, or legal— influence the RNM's feasible scope of responsibilities and the design of its operating model. Understanding this context is critical for assessing the RNM's performance and identifying realistic pathways for its future evolution.

3.5.1 Financial Constraints

The RNM's ability to achieve its mission is fundamentally constrained by its access to funding. Like any initiative, capacity to deliver transformative projects is directly tied to the financial resources available. This constraint also reflects the broader financial reality facing public transit across the Bay Area.

The RNM's current funding structure blends near-term TAP (Transit Transformation Action Plan) dollars—\$85m governed by MTC [Resolution 4519](#)—with select contributions from other regional discretionary funding sources, such as One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) and State Transit Assistance (STA) Regional Coordination funds. See [here](#) for a breakdown of RNM funding as of July 2025.

This situation is magnified by the region's fiscal cliff, brought on by expiring federal relief funds and a slow post-pandemic ridership recovery. In response, the California legislature recently passed Senate Bill 63 (SB 63), which authorizes a November 2026 ballot measure for a new sales tax to fund transit operations and improvements in five core counties. While this provides a potential If approved by the voters, this could provide additional revenue for specific operators for up to 14 years. However, any measure would require financial efficiency reviews and a new oversight committee. The RNM must navigate this evolving landscape, where its own funding needs are intertwined with the region's struggle for financial stability.

3.5.2 Time Constraints

Time is a pressing factor for the RNM, with riders expecting swift improvements to service quality, simplicity, and affordability. State legislators, too, are pushing for immediate action to demonstrate that the region can reshape its transit system quickly and effectively, while operators face a fiscal cliff that demands near-term interventions capable of bolstering ridership and reducing costs. The RNM has little room to plan and deliberate at length; it must show tangible outcomes on an accelerated timeline just to keep pace with public and political expectations.

This heightened urgency is fundamentally about building the public and stakeholder trust necessary to deliver transformation. If the RNM cannot demonstrate timely impacts—such as streamlined fares, coordinated service schedules, or improved technology—then making the case for any new investment, funding measure, or policy change may become more difficult. In this sense, timing is just as critical as the transformation itself; by rapidly signaling progress, the region can build the political and social capital necessary to sustain and expand seamless transit in the Bay Area for years to come.

On top of these structural and financial pressures, the people responsible for implementing regional transit initiatives—RNM Committee Members, RNM Council Members, RNM staff, MTC staff, and operators—are already juggling a range of critical obligations. Layering on additional regional-focused work is seen as competing for limited bandwidth. The current RNM framework relies heavily on part-time or shared staff. Despite widespread recognition of the RNM's importance, it remains one of many parallel priorities that must fit within MTC and the operators' capacity, making timely execution of initiatives even more challenging.

3.5.3 Legal Constraints

MTC, as the nine-county region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and regional transportation planning agency, is legally mandated to conduct long-range planning, distribute certain federal and state funds, and coordinate major infrastructure decisions. However, for transit, MTC's authority has clear limits: it cannot directly operate transit services, does not solely control local or state funding streams, and must often work through cooperative agreements or memoranda of understanding with the several transit agencies. The agency's role is largely advisory or facilitative for unified regional goals, rather than wielding top-down command over service decisions.

The transit operators themselves hold authority over their respective service areas and operations, granted through laws or local funding measures approved by voters. Each agency was formed under unique legislation or local ordinances, meaning their powers can differ; some manage robust capital projects and labor negotiations, while others primarily provide local bus operations. These districts and authorities typically lack the authority to impose taxes outside their designated jurisdictions. As a result, even if the RNM or MTC identify a regional solution, any changes often must pass through individual boards facing distinct legislative constraints and local voter-approved mandates.

Within the current framework, the RNM does not constitute a separate legal entity with standalone authority; instead, it functions through collaborative committees (such as the RNM Council and Committee) affiliated with MTC. Though these bodies can recommend policies, coordinate pilot projects, and influence funding allocations made by MTC, they cannot unilaterally enact binding service changes across multiple operators. Additional legal constraints, such as the region's patchworked funding measures, further limit how taxes or fares might be harmonized. In short, the RNM navigates a web of statutory obligations, decentralized and diffuse decision-making, and jurisdiction-specific revenues, underscoring the importance of consensus-driven strategies for advancing its goals.

Additionally, because the RNM framework leverages a structure with the RNM Council and RNM Committee that includes a majority of public officials, their gatherings qualify as public meetings under the Brown Act. As a result, all RNM Council and Committee sessions must follow open-meeting requirements—providing advance notice, publicly posting agendas, and offering opportunities for public comment. While these provisions promote transparency and accountability, they also introduce procedural steps that require added staff capacity.

4

Assessment Findings

4.1 Overview

This section answers the three assessment questions guiding this review, drawing on evidence from stakeholder surveys, interviews, and peer benchmarking. For each question—addressing the RNM's Mission & Vision, Responsibilities, and Operating Model—the analysis identifies successes and challenges, which in turn inform the opportunities for improvement.

4.2 Assessment Area #1: Mission & Vision

Is the RNM achieving its target benefits?

4.2.1 Successes

Success: Top-Level Mission & Vision Statements

The RNM's formal mission and vision statements establish top-level goals for ambitious improvements aimed at equity, mobility, climate resilience, and economic vitality. Stakeholders agree that these statements reflect the region's needs in a meaningful way. Transit General Managers, MTC officials, policymakers, and advocates have expressed support for keeping the current statements, reinforcing that they capture the RNM's overarching goals.

Success: Alignment to TAP Outcomes

Linking the RNM Council's Work Plan directly to the five outcomes of the Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP) aligns with identified regional priorities. TAP outcomes help translate the RNM's high-level mission and vision into more discrete objectives, creating a strategic foundation to guide daily work.

Success: Delivery of Early Wins

In its first two years, the RNM has delivered wins that align with its mission. A core advantage often noted by stakeholders is improving collaboration and trust between MTC and transit agencies. This partnership has enabled the delivery of tangible projects, such as fare integration initiatives like Clipper START and the Clipper BayPass institutional pass program. The RNM has also progressed initiatives aimed at creating a more unified system, including adopting the Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways, developing regional guidelines for mapping and wayfinding, and regional paratransit pilots.

4.2.2 Challenges & Opportunities

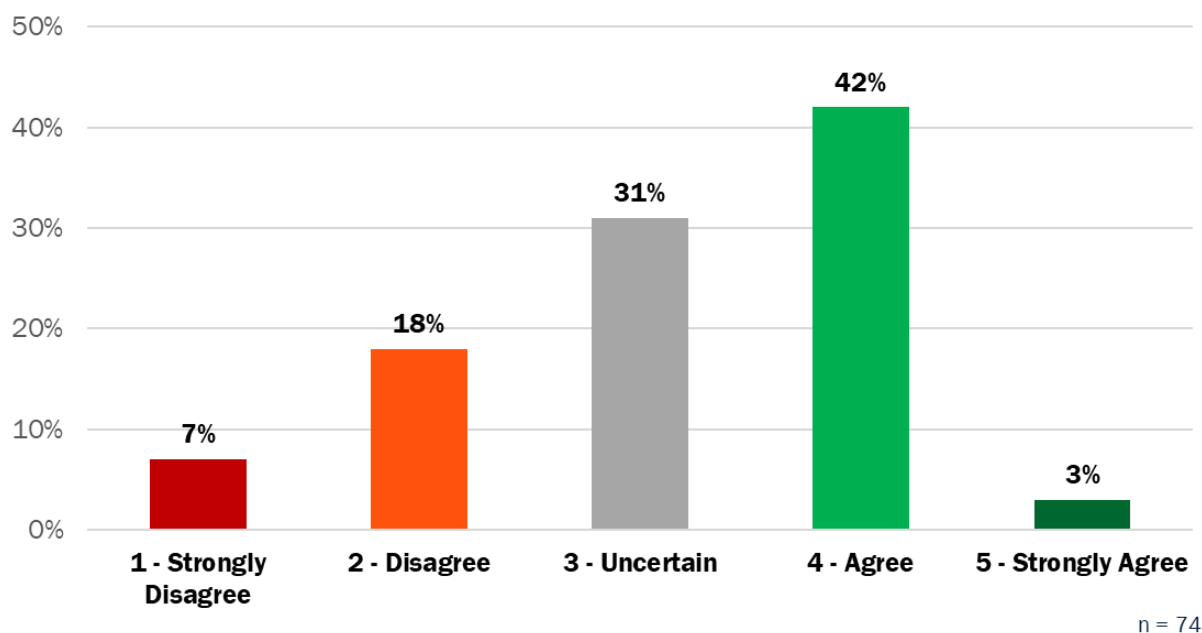
Challenge: Differing Perspectives on Whether the RNM is Achieving its Mission

In its first two years, the RNM Council completed nearly 70% of its Work Plan items. However, only just over half were completed in line with the original target dates, particularly as the RNM ran into capacity constraints. Notably, in this initial period, the RNM also benefited from several key initiatives already underway prior to its formal creation.

This context helps explain why stakeholder sentiment on the RNM's success divides into two broad perspectives. One group, including many RNM Council Members, sees this as making the right kind of progress. This group reasons that it will take time to deliver on tangible rider benefits and recognizes that the improved collaboration and trust fostered by the RNM is crucial for advancing these complex, multi-agency efforts. From this perspective, the RNM is largely on track to achieve its mission and vision within the necessary timeframe, building the foundational relationships and project momentum needed for long-term success.

A second group, however, views these same results with more concern. Considering the head start, they question the speed and scale of benefits being delivered, arguing that the RNM as currently structured—with its limited staff, diffuse decision-making authorities, and constrained funding—is not equipped to achieve new, transformative change at the pace needed by the region's urgent challenges. This fundamental disagreement is reflected in survey results, where fewer than half of respondents feel the RNM is delivering on its purpose.

Figure 13: Survey Results for Whether the RNM is Delivering on its Mission



Challenge: Limited Stakeholder Awareness of RNM Mission, Vision, and Achievements

Stakeholder perceptions of the RNM performance can be shaped not only by the RNM's actual performance but by other factors – such as how well it is communicating its progress and purpose. This is highlighted by the fact that 31% of survey respondents reported being “unsure” whether the RNM is achieving its stated goals.

The communications challenge facing the RNM is multifaceted. The sheer number and diversity of partners involved in regional transit across the Bay Area can make it difficult to effectively communicate which aspects of programmatic or operational change results from the RNM, particularly in messaging to “enabling” stakeholders, like county and state legislators. The “RNM” itself is also ambiguous as a name and identifier, frequently confused with MTC. It leaves open differing ideas about what “regional network management” is and what it does. Without a clear and consistent narrative to address these awareness and branding issues, it is difficult to build broad support and demonstrate that the RNM is an effective mechanism for change.

These communications challenges extend to the public and may directly impact the RNM's ability to deliver on its primary goal: creating customer benefits. Although the RNM is not intended to be a primary customer-facing brand itself, the programs and benefits that result from its initiatives may require straightforward public communication to be successful. If riders are unaware of new programs, the intended benefits may not be realized. For example, the region's Clipper BayPass roll out depends on its visibility and accessibility to eligible riders. To carry this message forward, we understand that the BayPass initiative makes use of communication

capacity from both MTC and individual operator communications teams. Further improvements that anticipate similar robust, regionally complementary approaches are advisable, and could help improve public awareness, while also preventing inconsistent or fragmented messaging.

Challenge: Measuring Success Against a High-Level Mission and Vision

While the RNM's mission and vision provide an effective high-level direction, stakeholders—particularly operator staff, MTC staff, and regional transit advocates feel there is further work to be done to translate aspirational goals into more tangible objectives against which success can be measured. This challenge manifests in two distinct ways:

- First, the definitional work around regional network management's "vision" is arguably, unfinished. Without a shared agreement on the target RNM "future state"—specifically, the target levels of integration for the regional transit network's core components like fares, customer information, and network planning (i.e., components of the Regional Network Management Rubric)—it will remain difficult to measure progress. For example, is the goal to achieve a "medium" level of fare integration, or a "fully" integrated system? The answers to these questions determine which projects are to be prioritized and how success is defined.
- Second, the Bay Area region continues to mature its approach to a customer-focused regional transit network service "vision." In Stakeholder interviews, this type of vision was championed by both transit operator staff and regional transit advocates. Operator staff described an unmet need for a long-term blueprint for how transit services interconnect regionally. To them, this would provide clarity for network planning and investment decisions. Advocates, meanwhile, described an unconstrained, long-term rider-focused "vision." To them, the unmet need is how best to systematize approaches for the ideal customer experience, placing them overtop today's fiscal limitations.

The impact of not having resolutions for the items described above may ultimately lead to a misalignment of expectations, leaving the definition of RNM "success" open to interpretation. For example, it may make it difficult to prioritize initiatives, as members of the RNM Council and Committee hold differing views on which actions are most critical. Indeed, without agreement on a clear destination, it will remain challenging to identify the gaps between the current and target future state. As a result, decisions risk becoming reactive rather than being guided by a coherent, long-term strategic plan.

While foundational efforts like Transit 2050+ (an MTC/Transit Agency coordinated process that added post-pandemic, targeted refinements to the transit-related strategies in Plan Bay Area 2050) and sub-regional plans such as [Marin-Sonoma Coordinated Transit Service Plan](#) MASCOTS demonstrate the region's strong commitment to both defining, and crafting a holistic, connected transit service "vision," large questions remain. What role should the RNM play in facilitating the development of a truly unified and actionable regional vision? How can this be used as a tool to inform measures of success and accountability?

Key Takeaways | Assessment Area #1: Mission & Vision**Opportunity #1: Improve Stakeholder Awareness**

The RNM's early successes present an opportunity to improve stakeholder awareness through a more coordinated communications approach. This effort can build on the tangible benefits the RNM has already delivered, addressing a somewhat limited public awareness of its achievements. This is particularly important given that the number of partners makes it difficult to effectively communicate with key stakeholders. Compounding this, the "RNM" brand is ambiguous and frequently confused with MTC, making it difficult to build broad support for its work.

Key Takeaways | Assessment Area #1: Mission & Vision**Opportunity #2: Develop a More Detailed Vision**

While the RNM's mission and vision provide an effective high-level direction, there is a need to translate these aspirational goals into more tangible objectives. Without this next layer of detail against which success can be measured, it is difficult to strategically prioritize initiatives, track meaningful progress, and communicate a compelling story of achievement.

4.3 Assessment Area #2: Responsibilities

Does the RNM's have the right allocation of responsibilities to best achieve its mission and vision?

4.3.1 Successes**Success: Focus on TAP Implementation**

MTC leadership and RNM Council members alike emphasize the importance of completing TAP initiatives. This tangible progress is vital for building public and policymaker trust, which in turn paves the way for stable and secure funding. Stakeholders consistently highlight that successful TAP implementation strengthens the RNM's credibility as a regional coordinator and signals its potential to drive broader reforms.

Success: Dedicated Roles for RNM Coordination Duties (RNM Director + RNM Staff)

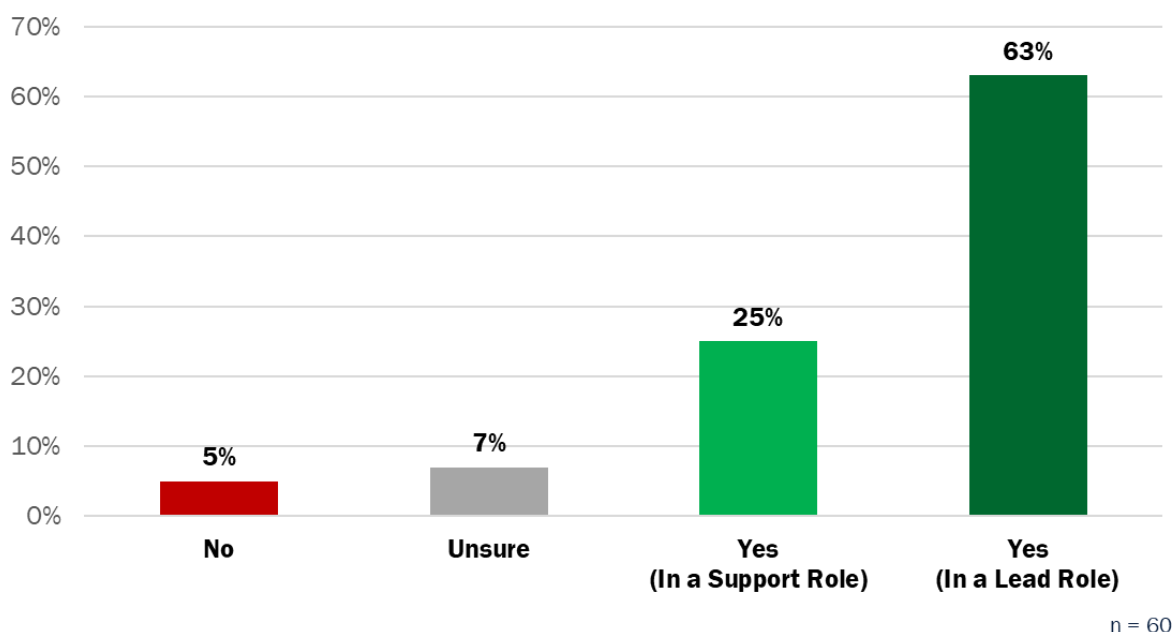
The establishment of a dedicated RNM Director and full-time support staff (i.e., RNM Unit Staff) unifies the administrative and coordination duties essential for regional transit network management while ensuring a more integrated effort across agencies and interest groups. When prompted, stakeholders across the board express overwhelming support for these positions—particularly the RNM Director role—citing their importance in driving collaboration, streamlining processes, and laying the groundwork for subsequent expansions in the RNM's capabilities.

4.3.2 Challenges & Opportunities**Challenge: Untapped Potential for Regional Policy Development**

While the RNM has proven effective at implementing its project-based work plan, there is untapped potential to elevate the RNM as a forum for substantive regional transit policy development. Stakeholders relate that by concentrating on the execution of pre-defined TAP initiatives, the RNM functions more as a project management body than a strategic one. This focus may limit capacity to address larger challenges that depend on new or modified regional policies.

Stakeholder feedback suggests an expectation for the RNM to expand its scope beyond executing its project-based work plan to proactive regional agenda setting. This might include tackling complex issues like establishing a long-term, unified service vision; creating coordinated operational structures for things like emergency response; or policy levers to standardize performance and customer experience across operators. This sentiment is reflected in survey data: 63% of all respondents believe the RNM (Council/Committee) should be leading these strategic policy efforts.

Figure 14: Survey Results on Whether the RNM Should be Responsible for Setting the Regional Vision for Transit



To unlock this potential, a variety of stakeholders suggested holding dedicated, high-level sessions—perhaps joint meetings of the RNM Council and Committee—to formally clarify and reaffirm the RNM's role as a strategic, policy-setting body. By deliberately evolving its responsibilities in this way, the RNM could transition from its current implementation-focused role to become the engine for policy innovation capable of driving the durable, systemic improvements to the Bay Area's transit system.

Challenge: Overlap Between RNM Council and Clipper Executive Board

Given the overlap in membership between the two bodies, many stakeholders have called for merging Clipper activities into the RNM by sunsetting the CEB and transitioning its duties to the RNM Council. They see this as a logical step toward simplifying governance and accelerating progress on fare integration. CEB, made up of 22 agencies (as opposed to broader representation by the RNM) is singularly focused as a product and operational body including overseeing the Clipper 2.0 rollout.

Challenge: Inconsistent Scope Between RNM Bodies

A core challenge within the RNM's structure is the inconsistent scope between the RNM Committee and the other RNM bodies. When the Committee was formed from a predecessor, it retained oversight of several legacy programs—such as the Freeway Service Patrol, highway operations, and the Bay Trail Project. While these regional programs require continued MTC oversight, they also fall outside the transit-focused mission of the RNM, contributing to a split focus for the RNM Committee. Committee members observed this dynamic can make their role feel less like a cohesive transit policy forum and more like a venue for updates on a mix of unrelated topics.

Key Takeaways | Assessment Area #2: Responsibilities**Opportunity #3: Maximize Utilization of the RNM**

The expertise brought together by the RNM's Committee, Council, and CAG members presents a real opportunity to use the RNM as a central resource for regional transit coordination. There is opportunity to optimize the RNM Committee focus and/or integrate duties from other regional bodies, such as the Clipper Executive Board.

4.4 Assessment Area #3: Operating Model

Is the RNM operating effectively and efficiently to deliver its responsibilities?

4.4.1 Successes

Success: Rapidly Established Structures & Processes

The RNM was built on an accelerated timeline, establishing governance bodies, appointing an RNM Director, and standing up staff support while simultaneously implementing the Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP). From developing meeting protocols to coordinating multi-agency pilot projects, the RNM has been “built as it’s flown,” requiring ongoing adaptation. Stakeholders view the very formation of the RNM—particularly its quick assembly of leadership and staffing—as an achievement and a vital step toward delivering a more integrated regional transit network.

Additionally, stakeholders are generally satisfied with the RNM’s operations, especially given its recent formation and capacity constraints. They point to a solid foundation of collaboration and tangible benefits in terms of communication, shared goals, and coordinated efforts. While stakeholders do highlight areas to refine and grow—such as clarifying decision-making or strengthening staff resources—they view these as extensions of a continuous improvement process rather than criticisms of the underlying framework.

Success: Unanimous Support for Co-PM Model

The Co-PM model—pairing operator representatives with MTC staff—received unanimous stakeholder support for ensuring transit operator insight is included right from a project's start. This approach promotes shared ownership, builds trust, and has opened crucial communication channels between MTC and the operators. As a result, many stakeholders suggest continuing and/or expanding this model to support the RNM's growing portfolio of projects.

Success: Building a Culture of Trust and Collaboration

Operator representation on the Council, and of their boards as ex-officio members on the Committee, supplies substantial operational and delivery expertise for regional transit initiatives and builds MTC-operator policy linkages. Stakeholders acknowledge and complement this relationship-building. This aspect of the RNM is working—at the executive level with the Council, at the policy level with the Committee, and at the project/staff level with Co-PMs—where operator transit expertise is paired with MTC staff.

4.4.2 Challenges & Opportunities*4.4.2.1 Operating Model Component: Roles & Structures***Challenge: Limited Staff Capacity**

The RNM's ability to deliver initiatives at the necessary speed and scale is tied to directly to its resource capacity, which includes the dedicated RNM section, Co-PMs, and other supporting staff from MTC and operators. Over the first two years, limited resource capacity across this structure has acted as a constraint on the RNM's speed and scale of delivery. This is part of a region-wide challenge, where MTC and Operators face limited capacity and competing priorities.

Challenge: Navigating a Complex Governance Network & Organizational Structures

A fundamental challenge for the RNM is navigating the Bay Area's federated transit model, a complexity inherent in its landscape of numerous agencies and governing bodies. For example, at MTC, key transit functions are distributed across various internal sections—such as those managing Clipper or long-range planning—and different policy items are routed through separate committees. As a result, operators must learn and navigate MTC's complex internal structure to advance regional initiatives.

Conversely, MTC faces the challenge of engaging with many transit operators and their respective boards, each with its own unique reporting structures, local mandates, and fiduciary duties. The RNM sits in the middle of this complex web, relying on staff from both MTC and the transit operators who do not report directly to it. These individuals have their own full-time responsibilities and competing priorities set by their home agencies, creating a constant tension for resources.

4.4.2.2 Operating Model Component: Governance & Decision Rights

Challenge: Time-Consuming or Unclear Decision Processes

Stakeholders express a consistent desire for more streamlined approvals, pointing to multi-layered decision pathways that can slow the pace of RNM initiatives. Within MTC, the formal reporting structure requires multiple levels of executive sign-off. Similarly, transit operator staff representing their agencies on RNM initiatives must navigate their own internal, multi-step approval processes before committing them to regional actions.

The approval pathways between the RNM's own governance bodies and MTC's broader committee structure are not always clear or linear. The relationship between the RNM Council and the RNM Committee can be confusing to observers, as some items are presented to one body but not the other.

While appreciating the need for executive buy-in and thorough vetting, many stakeholders question how to speed up this overall process. Given the range of approval pathways, some advocate for delegating increased authority, where appropriate, directly to the RNM Director, the RNM Council, or the RNM Committee as a method to expedite.

4.4.2.3 Operating Model Component: Core Processes

Challenge: Maximizing Use of RNM Council & Committee Meetings

While most stakeholders applaud the regularity of RNM gatherings, some inquire whether the meeting format maximizes productivity of RNM Council and Committee members. Many stakeholders would like to pursue more substantive discussions versus progress reporting or information sharing. This ties directly back to the items identified in the RNM Council Work Plan.

Challenge: Projecting RNM Activities & Progress

In line with the rollout of performance measures, stakeholders believe that the RNM should be setting more robust timeline targets within the RNM Council Work Plan as a mechanism for accountability.

While the RNM Council Work Plan provides a high-level view of activities and the target timeline for completion, stakeholders across the RNM—including the RNM Committee, Council, Customer Advisory Group, and Co-PMs—indicated a desire for a Work Plan lookahead that provides (a) detailed targets for the completion of work plan items (e.g., the month or quarter versus the year), and (b) a lookahead on the planned topics for the upcoming meetings of the respective groups.

Challenge: More Time Needed to Review RNM Council Meeting Materials in Advance

RNM Council members and operator staff indicate a need to receive Council meeting materials further in advance. They explain that a longer review period is crucial for their internal processes, as it would allow for respective staff time to conduct a thorough analysis, prepare briefing documents, and adequately prepare the Council member for a meaningful and substantive discussion. While current practices meet the legal minimum required by the Brown Act, stakeholders feel this does not provide sufficient time for this preparation.

*4.4.2.4 Operating Model Component: Technology & Tools***Challenge: Gaps in Regional Collaboration Tools**

The RNM has an opportunity to improve regional coordination by establishing a more robust and unified set of collaboration tools. The opportunities for these tools fall into three distinct categories: (1) centralized administrative tools for project management, (2) shared datasets for planning and performance monitoring, and (3) common technology standards for transit operations.

First, stakeholders identify a need for more unified administrative tools to reduce friction in their day-to-day collaboration. Currently, operator staff and Co-Project Managers (CoPMs) must often access multiple project-specific sites (e.g., different SharePoint or Box folders) to find RNM-related materials like presentations and reports. They express a strong desire for a single, central location where RNM-related materials are accessed.

Second, stakeholders stress that critical datasets for planning and performance monitoring remain siloed across MTC departments (e.g., 511, Clipper, rider surveys), inhibiting both real-time planning and longer-term service integration. Many propose the creation of a centrally managed data clearinghouse where various MTC and RNM data could be aggregated, standardized, and then made accessible to operator staff to support analysis and planning efforts.

Finally, there is unmet demand to facilitate the adoption of common technology standards to improve interoperability between operator systems. Stakeholders call for protocols covering everything from transit signal priority (TSP) hardware to consistent data formats. This would help ensure that each agency's systems can support coordinated schedule cycles each January and August. For example, tools like the Transit Transfer Analysis Tool (TTAT), which help operators analyze connection times, could be more effectively leveraged across the region to streamline schedule coordination if supported by common standards.

4.4.2.5 Operating Model Component: Metrics & Incentives

Challenge: Gaps in Performance Measures to Assess Ongoing Progress

Many stakeholders observe that the RNM would benefit from expanded performance metrics, seeking more frequent collecting, reporting, and resultant improvement in the ability to react and change course. In the absence of full reporting, stakeholders also worry that the RNM, MTC, and/or agencies cannot be held accountable, ultimately delaying achievements that matter to riders and the public. Additionally, stakeholders view the collection of performance measures as critical to communicate its tangible benefits and outcomes.

Stakeholders disagree on the best way to use metrics. Some believe the RNM should strongly apply existing mechanisms through MTC, such as resolutions [4619](#), [4060](#), and [3866](#), to compel operators to rapidly adopt and implement regional policies and standards. In this view, the RNM would set performance benchmarks and then use these measures to withhold funding from operators that do not meet the benchmarks.

Other respondents warned against using this type enforcement as (a) withholding funding from an agency that is not meeting performance standards likely only makes it more difficult for that agency to meet any performance standards and (b) if MTC were to utilize punitive mechanisms on operators, it could have an adverse impact on trust that has been built over the last few years through the RNM. As such, the Consultant Team does not recommend strict funding enforcement mechanisms. This recommendation could be achieved through (a) the full collection of existing approved performance measures and (b) the establishment of more discrete interim target milestones in the RNM Council Work Plan. At the time of this report, the RNM engaged external consultant support to help with item (a).

4.4.2.6 Operating Model Component: Culture & Behaviors

Challenge: Limited Direct Engagement Between RNM Council, Committee, and CAG

Under current RNM meeting protocols, there are limited opportunities for RNM Council, Committee, and CAG members to formally interact with their other RNM counterparts. This separation was particularly called out by RNM Committee members, who expressed an interest in participating in joint sessions with the RNM Council to improve alignment and foster strategic discussion.

4.4.2.7 Other Challenges (Across Operating Model Components)

Challenge: Long-Term Funding Resources for RNM

The long-term sustainability of the RNM is challenged by the absence of a defined, dedicated funding strategy for regional initiatives. The current model, which relies on a patchwork of near-term grants and pilot program dollars, makes it exceptionally difficult to plan for the larger, transformative projects that the RNM's mission requires. The short-term funding cycle limits its potential and may contribute to uncertainty about its capacity to deliver on its vision over time.

The recent passage of SB 63 introduces a new dynamic to this challenge, presenting a potential pathway to financial sustainability while also demanding proactive adaptation from the RNM; however, the funding and governance impacts on the RNM are awaiting input from MTC legal.

Key Takeaways | Assessment Area #3: Operating Model**Opportunity #4: Improve Speed & Scale of Delivery**

The RNM's operating model presents several challenges that constrain the speed and scale of its delivery. Progress is impacted by limited staff capacity across the RNM structure, a region-wide issue that results in longer timelines for high-priority items. Additionally, multi-layered and sometimes unclear decision pathways, both within MTC and between the various regional bodies, can contribute to a slower pace of approvals for RNM initiatives.

Key Takeaways | Assessment Area #3: Operating Model**Opportunity #5: Improve Ease of Collaboration**

While the RNM has successfully built a strong collaborative foundation, some structural complexities and procedural gaps can create friction that hinders efficient coordination. Procedural refinements can support alignment across the various groups and agencies involved in the RNM's work.

5

Considerations for the Future of the RNM

5.1 Summary of Assessment Findings

By examining regional network management models from around the world, it is evident that there is no perfect model; each region must tailor a version that best fits its unique political, historical, and geographic context. Furthermore, these models are not static but engage in cycles of adaptation. The Bay Area's journey is no different. The RNM was intentionally designed as a foundational, short-term model that could be implemented rapidly while evolving over time. This two-year assessment of the RNM framework is a step in this ongoing process, providing the analysis needed for leadership to define the path forward. The assessment concludes that:

The RNM has delivered tangible benefits in line with its mission and vision...

In its first two years, the RNM has made meaningful progress. The framework has delivered early wins for customers by advancing key elements of the Transit Transformation Action Plan (TAP). It has been instrumental in improving collaboration between the region's transit operators and MTC and building foundational trust for more complex undertakings.

...however, it may not be delivering those benefits at the speed or scale necessary

The assessment also reveals some tension: while the RNM is working, there are concerns from many stakeholders that it is not delivering change at the speed or scale needed to meet the region's urgent transit challenges. In analyzing the root causes of this challenge, the Consultant Team identified five opportunity areas where targeted improvements could help improve the RNM's performance:

- 1) Improve Stakeholder Awareness**
- 2) Further Detail the Regional Vision**
- 3) Maximize Utilization of the RNM Structure**
- 4) Increase the Speed & Scale of Delivery**
- 5) Improve the Ease of Collaboration**

To address these opportunities, this report offers two distinct categories of recommendations for leadership consideration. First, it presents near-term considerations—13 potential actions that could be implemented within the current RNM framework. Second, it poses longer-term considerations to evaluate if the current framework is the best long-term fit for the region, particularly as the long-term vision for the RNM remains undefined.

This assessment raises a strategic question for Bay Area leadership: Can these near-term, incremental improvements deliver benefits fast enough, or should more substantial structural changes to the RNM be considered? The decision is not whether to pursue these near-term refinements or larger-scale transformation, but rather to define the appropriate pace and scale of change required to best serve the region and its riders. The task for regional leaders, therefore, is to align on which near-term actions should be prioritized, marshal the resources to implement those achievable refinements, and concurrently evaluate the potential rewards and pathways for a more profound transformation of the region's transit governance.

5.2 Near-Term Considerations for the RNM Framework

The following section presents **potential near-term actions** to improve the effectiveness of the RNM framework without requiring significant changes. Organized against the five opportunity areas listed above (and described more fully in Chapter 4), this section first summarizes underlying challenge and then recommends 13 potential actions for consideration. The feasibility and desirability of each action will require evaluation by regional leadership. The Consultant Team believes that together they represent a toolkit of targeted improvements that could be achieved within the current structure.

Opportunity #1:

Improve Stakeholder Awareness

How can the RNM better communicate its vision and achievements?

Challenges to Address

The assessment revealed a consistent awareness gap regarding the RNM, its purpose, and its accomplishments. This challenge manifests in two distinct ways:

- A) With the Public:** There is limited public awareness of the tangible benefits the RNM has helped deliver (e.g., fare pilots, mapping improvements). There is a risk of a public perception that regional coordination is not making progress
- B) With Key Partners:** The diversity of stakeholders in the Bay Area—including legislators, county officials, and advocates—makes it difficult to consistently communicate the RNM's importance and successes and generate necessary support

Proposed Actions:

Proposed Action 1

Develop a Coordinated Stakeholder Engagement Approach

A unified communications and engagement approach could be developed to proactively communicate the purpose and achievements of regional network management. This might involve coordinated marketing campaigns for the public to promote new rider benefits and/or developing a unified strategy for engaging with key partners like county officials and state legislators. A key component of a more unified approach could be standard talking points, fact sheets, or presentation materials that Bay Area leadership use in meetings and presentations.

Crucially, the development of this approach could also take on identifying the resources required to support its delivery. Leveraging the RNM as a forum, MTC and operator communications teams could coordinate their existing capacity to begin this work, while the plan itself could outline a longer-term resourcing strategy to ensure these coordinated activities are sustainable.

Opportunity #2:**Further Detail the Regional Vision***How can the RNM better communicate its vision and achievements?***Challenges to Address**

The assessment found that while stakeholders agree on the RNM's high-level mission, there are differing perspectives on whether it is achieving that mission at the optimum speed and scale. This is partly because there is a limit to regional agreement around an appropriate, holistic, shared vision against which progress can be measured. This challenge manifests in two ways:

- A) For Regional Network Management:** The region has not yet fully aligned on the target levels of integration for core components like fares, branding, and network planning. Without a shared definition of what "successful" regional network management means, it is difficult to prioritize initiatives and measure progress.
- B) For Regional Service:** The region is still maturing its approach to a detailed, customer-focused regional transit service vision that sets clear, measurable standards for the rider experience (e.g., maximum transfer times, minimum service frequencies).

*Proposed Actions:***Proposed
Action 2****Align on Target Levels of Regional Network Management Integration**

The RNM framework could be used as a forum to further define the region's long-term vision for network management and facilitate alignment on target levels of integration across its core components. This would directly address challenges related to ambiguity- creating a robust, shared understanding of what the region is collectively trying to build. Furthermore, consensus around targets for items like fare structures, branding, and capital planning would provide a clear destination against which the success of future regional efforts could be measured.

One method to achieve this could be to use a tool like the "Regional Network Management Rubric" (see Chapter 1 Figure 4, Page 10) in workshops or with members from the RNM's three bodies. This or a similar exercise could help clarify gaps between the current state and a target future state for each component of network management. Clearly defined gaps would, in turn, help leadership to strategically prioritize future initiatives and investments.

**Proposed
Action 3****Advance a Regional Transit Network Service Vision**

The RNM could be developed as a forum to contribute to and define objectives for the next iteration of a Regional Transit Network Service Vision. Building on past efforts like Transit 2050+, this process could provide an aspirational, customer-focused blueprint for how the regional transit system might function, or establish standards for service quality such as speed, reliability, and frequency. It should be noted that developing such a

process would be a significant undertaking that could require substantial resources, including dedicated staff time from both MTC and operators for technical analysis, modeling, and planning support.

One idea proposed during stakeholder interviews is that the process could begin via sub-regional service visions as a manageable first step. By starting at a smaller scale, operators and partners could more easily build consensus on local integration priorities, potentially reducing the initial resource requirements. These sub-regional plans could then be woven together to form the foundation of a more comprehensive, unified regional vision.

Opportunity #3:

Maximize Utilization of the RNM Structure

How can the Bay Area best utilize the collaborative structure of the RNM to advance regional transit?

Challenges to Address

The assessment revealed that while the RNM has been successful in its initial responsibilities, the region may be underutilizing the framework's full potential. Three primary challenges contribute to this:

- A) Untapped Potential for Strategic Work:** The RNM's current focus on implementing pre-defined projects underutilizes its potential as a forum for broader strategic and policy work
- B) Overlap Between RNM Council and Clipper Executive Board:** Overlapping membership and responsibilities between the RNM Council and the Clipper Executive Board create inefficiencies and fragment decision-making for fare integration
- C) Inconsistent Scope Between RNM Bodies:** The RNM Committee's scope retains legacy responsibilities (e.g., Freeway Service Patrol) that are inconsistent with the scope of the RNM Council or CAG

Proposed Actions:

Proposed Action 4

Integrate the Clipper Executive Board into the RNM Council

If the Clipper Executive Board were to sunset, its duties, responsibilities, and delegated authority could be integrated into the RNM Council. Many stakeholders observed this as a logical step toward simplifying governance, improving efficiency, and better aligning the region's fare payment system with the RNM's broader strategic goals for fare integration. This integration would, however, require dedicated staff time to navigate the necessary changes to the respective charters and MOUs of the agencies involved.

Proposed Action 5

Consider "Position Papers" from the RNM Customer Advisory Group

To improve the strategic impact of the RNM Customer Advisory Group, the CAG could develop written "position papers" on select topics as coordinated with the RNM Work Plan. This could help formalize CAG input, providing a clear and documented record of its analysis and recommendations for the RNM Council and Committee to

review. This might better leverage the breadth of experience on the CAG and provide a more structured way for the customer's perspective to inform policy.

**Proposed
Action 6**
Delegate Authority to the RNM Council on a Discrete Set of Funds

A pool of MTC funds could be allocated under the RNM Council's discretion to support future regional transit initiatives or RNM operations. This could be achieved through various means, such as a formal delegation of authority from MTC, or a process where the Council proposes a budget for the RNM Committee's approval. Granting Council members more direct authority over discretionary resources could improve buy-in for regional activities. This budget might be used for pilots, studies, or shared operational resources, and could also help set realistic expectations about what is feasible within current funding levels.

Opportunity #4:
Increase the Speed & Scale of Delivery

How can the RNM deliver benefits to riders more quickly?

Challenges to Address

The assessment found that while the RNM has delivered early wins, there are concerns that it is not delivering change at the necessary speed or scale. This opportunity is constrained by three resource-related bottlenecks:

- A) Limited Staff Capacity:** The RNM's ability to deliver is directly constrained by limited staff capacity, a region-wide issue affecting both MTC and partner operators
- B) Gaps in Regional Collaboration Tools:** A lack of common technology standards, shared datasets, and centralized administrative tools creates inefficiencies that slow down coordination and delivery
- C) Securing Long-Term Funding:** The absence of a defined, long-term funding strategy for regional initiatives makes it difficult to plan for larger, transformative projects

Proposed Actions:
**Proposed
Action 7**
Increase Resource Capacity for RNM Activities

A variety of mechanisms can be explored to increase available RNM resources. Leadership could continue and expand the Co-PM model, as a proven structure for pairing MTC and operator expertise. But beyond project management, and RNM initiative implementation, we see a basis to look for resources that will extend core RNM administration in areas like communications, data analytics, and service-based network planning.

Leadership could work with both MTC and transit operators to identify how resources could best be deployed to support shared objectives. For example, one option might be a formal or informal "rotational" staff program. This type of program could support staff from transit operator agencies to be embedded within the MTC RNM team for defined, short-term assignments. Such a program could provide the RNM with invaluable, on-the-ground

operational expertise while giving operator staff direct experience in regional policy. A co-benefit is fostering mutual understanding and generating a talent pool of professionals with a regional perspective.

**Proposed
Action 8****Improve Collaboration Tools**

Develop and implement a unified collaboration, data, and technology strategy for the RNM. This strategy could be executed through three core components:

- **Centralized Administrative Hub:** Establish a single, central location for all RNM-related materials. This could help to accelerate project timelines by streamlining day-to-day project management and reducing the time spent searching for information across a patchwork of sites
- **Shared Data Clearinghouse:** Create a centrally managed data clearinghouse. This would aggregate, standardize, and provide direct access to critical datasets from siloed MTC systems like Clipper and 511. This would speed up planning and analysis by empowering operators with on-demand information and eliminating delays from ad-hoc data requests.
- **Common Technology Standards:** Facilitate the adoption of common technology standards, such as transit signal priority (TSP) hardware and consistent data formats. This is essential for scaling-up coordinated regional initiatives, as it ensures different operator systems are interoperable and can more effectively support regional tools like the Transit Transfer Analysis Tool (TTAT).

**Proposed
Action 9****Develop a Long-Term RNM Funding Strategy**

To enable an expanded scale of delivery, a durable, long-term funding strategy for regional network management could be jointly developed by MTC and transit operators. This action is especially helpful to anticipate long term access to the budget necessary for both a larger portfolio of regional initiatives, and the ongoing operations of the RNM framework itself - such as initiative implementation, technical support, and data analysis among others.

Opportunity #5:

Improve the Ease of Collaboration*How can the RNM bodies, MTC, and Operators work better together?***Challenges to Address**

This assessment identified several operational and structural challenges that create friction, making collaboration less efficient than it could be. Three challenges hinder the ease of collaboration:

- A) Unclear or Complex Decision Pathways:** Navigating the Bay Area's complex, federated governance network and an unclear relationship between RNM and MTC committees creates inefficient and opaque approval pathways
- B) Limited Interaction Between RNM Bodies:** The current framework lacks formal opportunities for direct engagement between its core bodies (Council, Committee, and CAG), limiting strategic alignment and cross-body collaboration
- C) Administrative Friction:** Process gaps, such as the need for more detailed work plan lookaheads and earlier distribution of meeting materials, create administrative friction that can hinder coordination.

*Proposed Actions:***Proposed
Action 10****Clarify Decision-Making Authorities**

To address confusion and improve transparency, the distinct decision-making authorities of the RNM Council, RNM Committee, other MTC Committees, and the RNM Director could be better clarified and documented. A guide could also map common decision pathways to show how a typical item progresses through the structure. As part of this clarification, the RNM Committee's oversight of legacy programs (e.g., Freeway Service Patrol) could be reviewed to determine if these responsibilities should be retained or transitioned, which would allow the Committee to shift away from less relevant items and sharpen its focus on its core transit mandate.

**Proposed
Action 11****Conduct Joint RNM Strategy Sessions**

To improve strategic alignment across the RNM's core bodies, regular joint strategy sessions could be established. These sessions could be held between two or more of the RNM's core groups: the RNM Council (technical leadership), the RNM Committee (political leadership), and the Customer Advisory Group (rider perspective). Building on the Council Chair's existing annual presentations to the Committee, these sessions might offer a structured venue for leaders to collaboratively discuss the state of regional transit, reaffirm long-range goals, and ensure a shared vision.

This process could be tied to the Work Plan cycle to ensure the RNM's operational activities are grounded in a shared, high-level strategy. For example, an initial session could set broad strategic objectives to guide the development of the Work Plan, while a latter session could serve as a checkpoint to evaluate progress and reprioritize initiatives as needed.

**Proposed
Action 12****Establish a Work Plan Lookahead**

To improve predictability and transparency, the annual RNM Council Work Plan could be supplemented with a forward-looking calendar. A “lookahead” could outline key topics and milestones with discrete target dates, providing members and the public with a clearer roadmap to monitor the RNM's progress. This could improve coordination by allowing members to better prepare for significant discussions and understand key timelines in advance. Additionally, it could provide a new tool for tracking performance against timelines, generating better data on the speed of delivery by showing where initiatives are on schedule and where they are falling behind.

**Proposed
Action 13****Send RNM Council Meeting Materials Earlier in Advance**

Procedures could be established for distributing RNM Council meeting materials on an earlier schedule—for example, five business days in advance. This could give transit operator staff time to conduct a thorough review, formulate thoughtful responses, and brief their General Manager or RNM Council member ahead of the meeting.

5.3 Long-Term Considerations for the RNM Framework

Around the world, regional network management models are not static; they transform, typically moving up a scale of integration over time. Regions like London, Vancouver, New York, and Chicago have evolved over decades, intentionally consolidating functions and authority to create more integrated regional management models. Moving up this scale can benefit riders. However, centralization also comes with a trade-off, potentially giving up some degree of local control, direct accountability to local communities, and the nuanced local knowledge held by individual agencies.

As it stands today, the RNM framework is on the lower end of the integration spectrum compared to other regional network management models. It has low formal authority, operating primarily as a coordinating body that relies on voluntary consensus rather than direct control over funding, fares, and service standards. With each transit operator retaining its own autonomy, the RNM's primary function is to facilitate and align—not to direct or enforce.

The assessment reveals two distinct perspectives on this model. Many stakeholders—including many RNM Council members and MTC leaders—value the consensus-driven progress made to date and see the value in maintaining the current structure, especially given that the framework is only two to three years into its implementation. However, another group, including many transit advocates and some operator staff, believes the model's inherent limitations—such as complex decision-making and fragmented funding—will always inhibit the speed and scale of delivery required to meet the region's urgent challenges.

This raises a fundamental question for Bay Area leadership: can the near-term actions outlined previously deliver the required benefits quickly enough, or is a more transformational change to the RNM framework necessary?

5.4 Next Steps

The findings and potential actions presented in this assessment represent the Consultant Team's analysis and are intended to provide a basis for strategic discussion. The immediate next step is for Bay Area leadership to use these findings to begin a dialogue about the future of regional transit governance. These discussions should focus on defining the best-fit regional network management model for the Bay Area and determining which actions should be taken to achieve that vision in both the near and long term. Ultimately, this process of weighing near-term refinements against the need for more foundational, structural changes should result in a clear plan for evolving the RNM to best meet the needs of the region.

A1

Appendix 1: Summary of Survey Results

Summary of Survey Results

An anonymous survey was conducted with various RNM stakeholders. The following section provides a summary of the results of that survey for each question.

Q1

In the past two years, which of the following roles have you had? You may select more than one.

Category/Affiliation	# of Respondents
RNM Committee	2
RNM Council	3
RNM Customer Advisory Group	9
MTC RNM Staff	3
Other MTC Staff	17
Small Operator GMs/Staff	7
Other Staff (operators, CTA, etc.)	37
CTA Execs / Others	5
Total	77

Q2

If you had to describe to a neighbor what the RNM does, what would you say?

Theme #1: RNM is widely recognized as the coordinator between Bay Area transit agencies, working to create a seamless transit experience

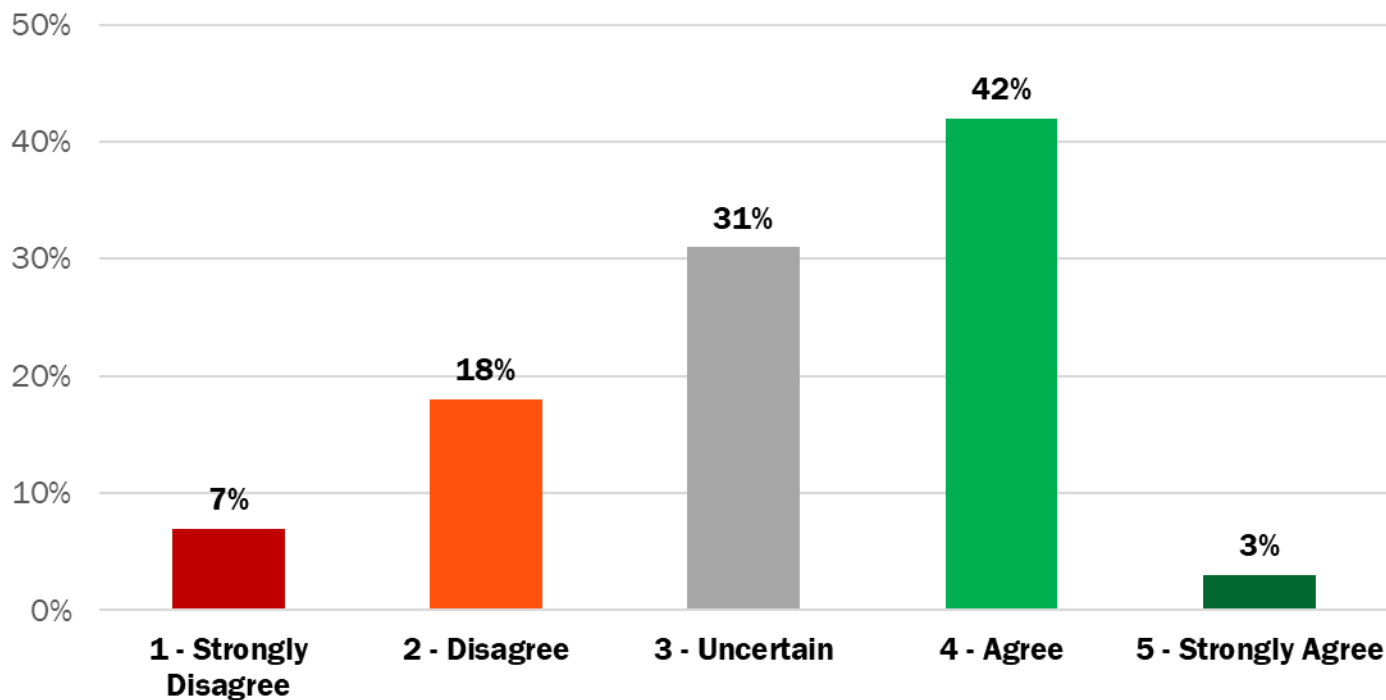
Theme #2: Stakeholders split between seeing RNM as a driver of wholesale regional transit transformation versus a manager of discrete projects

Theme #3: Inconsistent descriptions of RNM's role suggest an opportunity to develop a simpler, coherent story about its purpose and value

Answered: 68; Skipped: 9

Q3

On a scale of 1-5, indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: To date, the RNM has been delivering on its mission to “drive transformative improvements in customer experience for regional Bay Area transit.”



n = 74

Q4

Provide the reasoning behind your response to Question #3

Theme #1: Stakeholders cite specific wins in fare integration, Clipper, and BayPass as evidence of RNM's potential

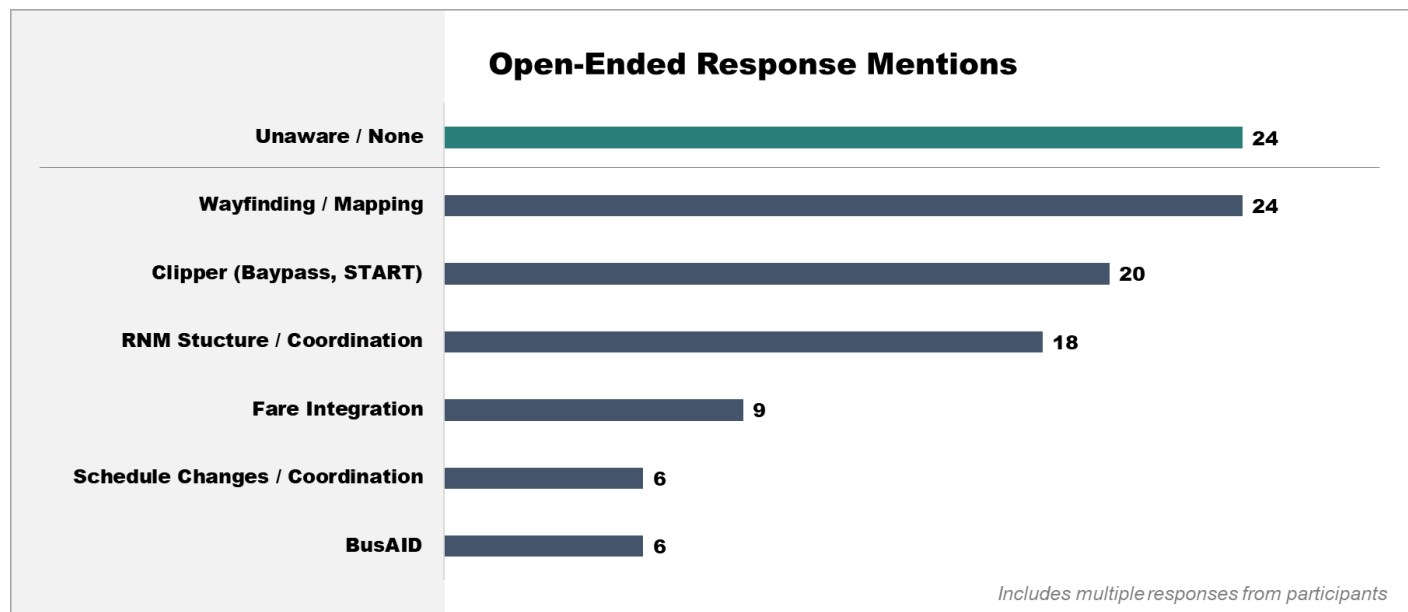
Theme #2: Despite these achievements, stakeholders feel the pace of transformation is falling short of expectations, and hasn't yet translated into customer-facing improvements

Theme #3: Stakeholders recognize that it is early in the process and the RNM has not done a sufficient job of communicating its wins

Answered: 62; Skipped: 15

Q5

What do you think are the greatest accomplishments of the RNM to date?



Answered: 62 Skipped: 15

Q6

What do you think are the biggest challenges or obstacles the RNM has faced to date?

Theme #1: Top cited challenges:

- Stakeholder Coordination (~30%)
- Process/Bureaucracy (~25%)
- Funding Constraints (~20%)
- Communication Gaps (~15%)

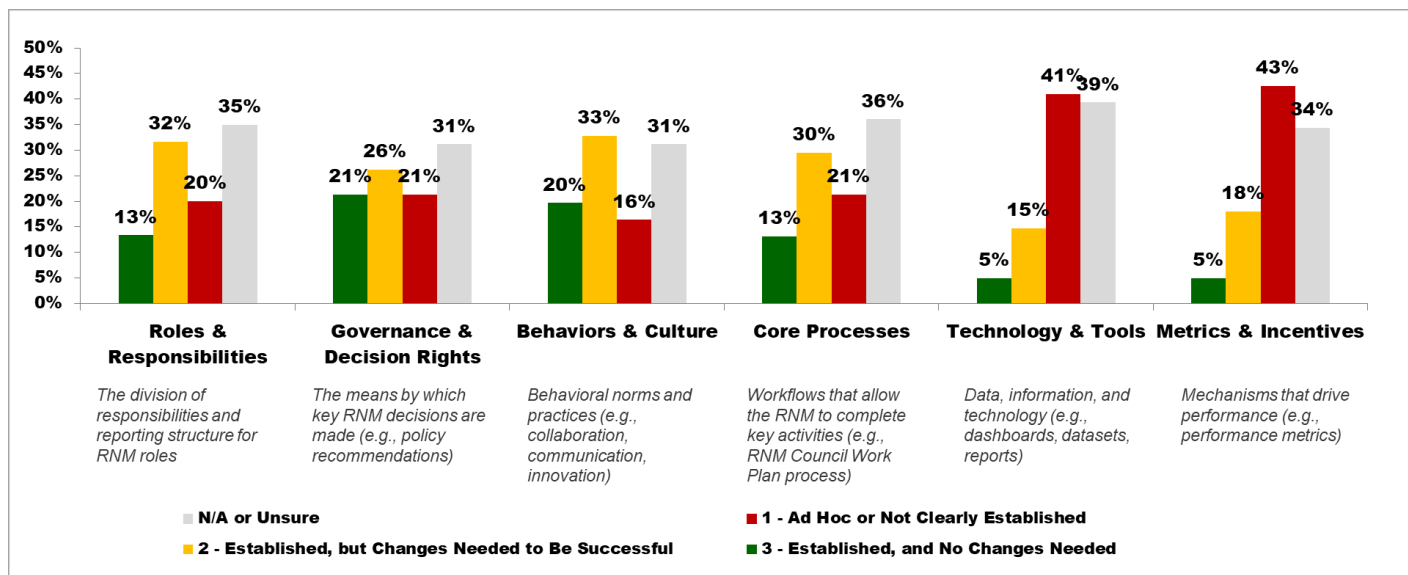
Theme #2: Respondents are concerned that the RNM is saddled with navigating a complex web of institutional relationships, aligning different agencies' interests, and overcoming institutional inertia

Theme #3: Respondents note the need to accelerate decision making and implementation

Answered: 61; Skipped: 16

Q7

The RNM operating model is made up of six components listed below. For each of these components, how would you define today's operations?



Answered: 61 Skipped: 16

Q8

Based on your response to Question #7, are there any specific opportunities for improvement you would like to highlight?

Theme #1: RNM's role and authority in regional decision-making remains unclear

Theme #2: Confusion on responsibilities and relationships between RNM's various bodies (CAG, Council, Committee), suggesting need for organizational clarity

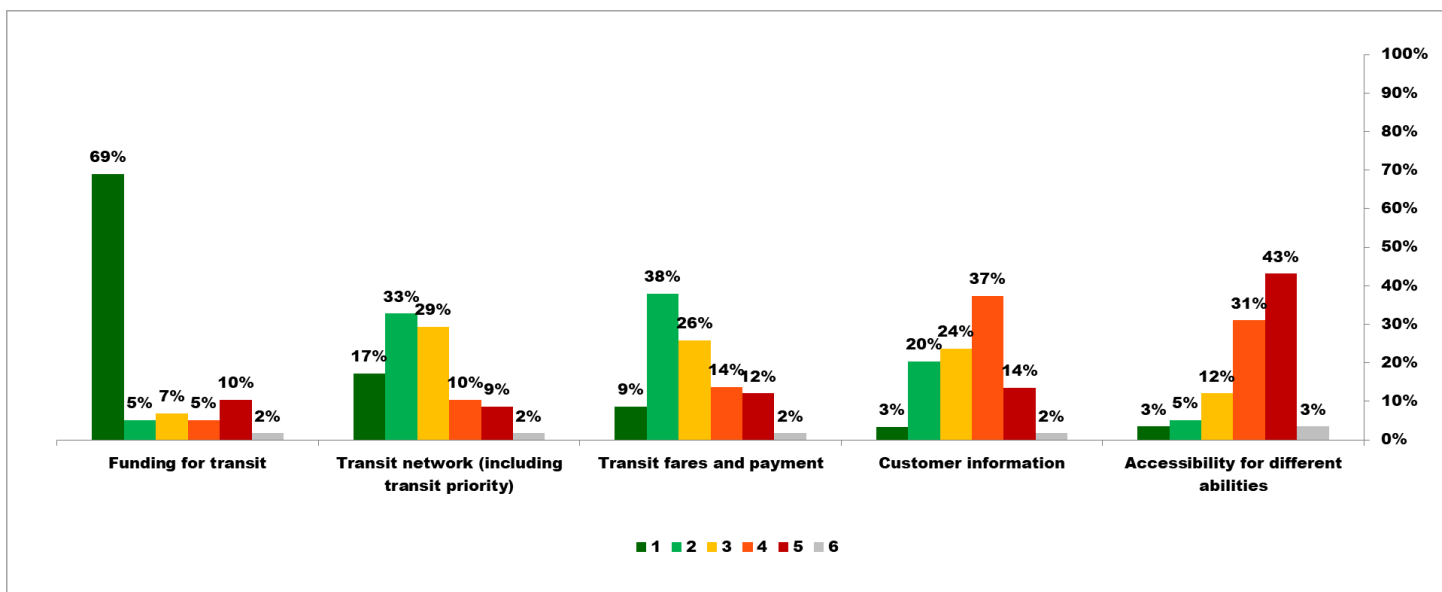
Theme #3: Information sharing appears inconsistent and limited to select groups, hampering broader stakeholder engagement and understanding

Answered: 32; Skipped: 45

Q9

The RNM was created to help drive transformative improvements in the rider experience in the Bay Area. Given this purpose/objective, which of the following areas should the RNM prioritize its efforts over the next 2-3 years?

Please rank these in order of importance, with #1 being the most important.



Answered: 59 Skipped: 18

Q10

Based on your response to #9, what specific actions do you think the RNM should take to advance these priorities?

Theme #1: Stakeholders consistently focus on the need for unified advocacy approach, seeing sustainable funding as foundation for all other network improvements (~40% of responses)

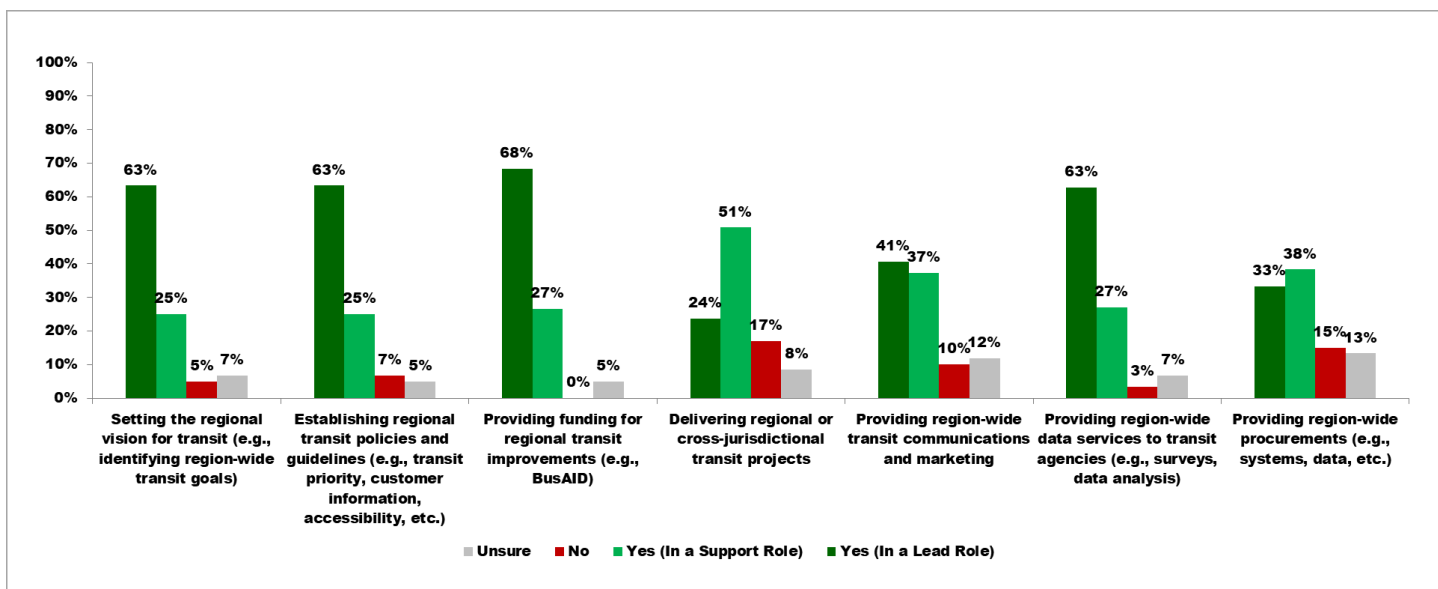
Theme #2: Support for prioritizing lower-cost, high-impact solutions like fare integration and schedule coordination to demonstrate value

Theme #3: Calls for RNM to move beyond coordination to take "stronger hand" in regional decisions

Answered: 39; Skipped: 38

Q11

To deliver transformational improvements to riders, what do you think the RNM should be responsible for over the next 2-3 years?



Answered: 60 Skipped: 17

Q12

Are there any other activities you think the RNM should be responsible for (supporting or leading) over the next 2-3 years?

Theme #1: Moving beyond traditional lead/support dichotomy to create a more nuanced approach that emphasizes facilitation and enablement of transit improvements

Theme #2: Development of robust systems and processes for inter-agency collaboration, including shared data platforms and communication channels

Theme #3: Expanding capacity to provide specialized technical assistance to agencies, particularly in implementing new policies and technologies

Answered: 26; Skipped: 51

Q13

What are the most important things that can be done to improve the RNM's ability to deliver transformative improvements to riders over the next 2-3 years?

Theme #1: Top cited:

- Securing Funding (~35%)
- Enhanced Authority/Speed (~20%)
- Clearer Priorities (~15%)
- Communications/ Information (~15%)
- Fare Integration (~10%)

Theme #2: Emphasis on the need for funding both to operate the RNM and implement regional initiatives and policies

Theme #3: Respondents note the need for increased authority levels to improve decision making speed

Answered: 41; Skipped: 36

Q14

What do you think the RNM looks like 10 years from now? What would be different from today (e.g., changes in focus, changes in structure, etc.)?

Theme #1: Vision of RNM evolving beyond coordination to create truly seamless regional transit, where riders experience one unified system

Theme #2: Future-state RNM evolves into an empowered regional body with through federation model with strong vision, flexible implementation

Theme #3: After transformation period, RNM's role shifts to sustaining improvements and ensuring system stability

Answered: 37; Skipped: 40

Q15

If you were going to design the RNM of your dreams (i.e., with no concern for feasibility), what would it look like?

Theme #1: Clear regional authority

Theme #2: A stable funding framework

Theme #3: A strong team of subject matter experts

Theme #4: Consistent service standards and customer interfaces

Theme #5: Continuous adaptation of successful elements from well-functioning transit systems globally

Answered: 39; Skipped: 38

Q16

Is there any other feedback regarding the RNM (not covered in this survey) that you would like to provide?

Theme #1: Multiple respondents mentioned concerns about meeting efficiency

- Only holding meetings when there's substantive material to cover
- Broadly too much energy and focus spent on public meeting schedule at the expense of actual progress
- "Updates on work for sake of filling a meeting agenda is not a good use of time"

Theme #2: Critical need to improve both internal coordination (between RNM and other MTC departments) and external communication (with the public and stakeholders), including more accessible updates about actions and impacts

- RNM suffers from low public visibility and unclear accountability, making it difficult for the public to understand the RNM's role and responsibilities
- Better articulate and measure the RNM's concrete achievements and outcomes, both for internal performance management and external stakeholder confidence

Answered: 18; Skipped: 59

A2

Appendix 2: Detailed Regional Network Management Rubric

Preliminary Detailed Regional Network Management Rubric (ILLUSTRATIVE)

	None (No Integration)	Low	Medium	High (Fully Integrated)
1 Fares & Payment				
Fare Collection	- Each agency employs its own distinct fare collection system with no interoperability - Contactless, mobile, or smart card solutions differ across each operator - Hardware (e.g., validators, turnstiles) differs across each operator - No central clearinghouse exists; each agency keeps separate records - No coordination on fare collection technology upgrades or standards between operators	- A few agencies adopt a limited interoperable platform, allowing riders to pay with one card or app in certain cases - Some agencies have standardized contactless or mobile solutions - Basic hardware alignment occurs for a few operators, though most still rely on their own devices - A centralized clearinghouse is used by some agencies - Some discussions between operators on technology upgrades or standards occur, but remain minimal	- Most agencies rely on a largely interoperable system, enabling common payment methods (e.g., one card or app) - Standardized contactless, mobile, or smart card solutions are used by most operators - Core hardware (validators, turnstiles) is standardized across most agencies - A centralized clearinghouse is used by most agencies - Most agencies coordinate fare collection technology and standards with a structured, regular processes	- All operators utilize a single fare collection platform, covering every mode in the region - Every agency uses standardized contactless, mobile, or smart card solutions - Core hardware (validators, turnstiles) is standardized across all agencies - A unified clearinghouse handles transactions in real time for all agencies - All agencies have fully aligned policies to ensure collaborative planning, funding, and implementation of technology upgrades
Fare Structure	- Each agency determines fares independently - Passengers must pay separate fares for every transfer - No common discount categories (e.g., senior, youth, or low-income fares) - Complex fare tables (e.g., by route, distance, or time of day) with no integration for multi-agency trips - No uniform definitions of eligibility for reduced fares	- Limited transfer discounts or flat-rate passes exist between certain agencies, but not regionwide - Some standardization of discount categories for a few agencies - Passengers can purchase some specialized multi-use passes, although coverage remains restricted - Interagency fares require separate tickets, often resulting in partial or ad hoc discounts - Some common definitions of eligibility for reduced fares between a few agencies	- Most agencies follow standardized fare bands or distance-based pricing with recognized transfer rules - A near-regionwide system of reciprocal discounts for key rider categories (e.g., student, elderly, disabled), though some gaps persist - Multi-agency passes or capping schemes exist - Agencies coordinate on fare policy changes	- A single, fully integrated fare system applies to all modes—bus, rail, ferry—under a consistent fare policy framework - Uniform definitions of discounted fares - Automated fare capping across all operators and modes - Operators or a central body regularly review performance data to refine fares based on equity, ridership, and revenue goals
2 Customer Information				
Mapping & Wayfinding	- Each operator maintains distinct, uncoordinated maps, signs, and design standards - Wayfinding elements (e.g., color schemes, icons) differ across systems - Individual websites or printed materials lack consistency for trip planning	- Some collaboration for certain events or major corridors, but most design elements (e.g., signage style, color coding) remain unique to each operator - Shared maps occasionally appear on joint websites, though updates may not be frequent or widely adopted - On-site signage sometimes references other agencies / services	- Common design guidelines have been adopted for high-volume stations and corridors, though some agencies keep local signage or layouts - A regionwide map is available in digital form—including an online trip planner—with partial synchronization across operator websites - Signage at key transfer points follows fairly consistent symbols or style choices	- All stops and stations across operators follow the same visual design conventions (e.g., color palettes, icons, and layout standards) - Clear, coordinated signage appears at each location, allowing riders to navigate seamlessly across multiple services - Real-time information is integrated into a single mapping system, giving travelers up-to-date route and schedule data in a consistent format everywhere they go

	None (No Integration)	Low	Medium	High (Fully Integrated)
Rider Information	- Each operator maintains entirely separate websites or apps, with minimal or no cross-linking to neighboring agencies - Real-time data, if available, remains confined to individual systems, forcing riders to piece together multiple sources of information - No standardized layout or features exist, creating widely different experiences and confusion for travelers attempting multi-agency trips	- A few agencies incorporate partial inter-operator information—a shared online trip planner or a reference to another agency's website—but full coverage is limited - Limited real-time feeds may be embedded in certain apps, though updates or accuracy can vary by operator - Websites and apps have some integration, but there is no consistent look or feel across platforms	- Most agencies use at least one shared platform or data feed (e.g., a consolidated trip planner that includes network-wide schedules) - Real-time data is integrated for the majority of operators, enabling riders to see approximate arrival times in one place - Websites and apps adopt a largely consistent layout and core features, making it easier for riders to compare and plan inter-operator trips	- All agencies feed into a single, comprehensive platform—available both online and via a unified mobile solution—that covers every schedule, route, and real-time update - Users can seamlessly switch between different agency services within the same app, receiving up-to-the-minute alerts regardless of operator - The interface, features, and data formats are fully standardized, ensuring a uniform experience whether riders use buses, trains, or ferries in any county
Branding	Dozens of entirely distinct agency brands exist, each with their own logo, style, and naming conventions	Many agencies still maintain separate identities, though a few may share co-branding on select routes or corridors (or special events)	A handful of broader “families” of brands emerge, reducing fragmentation and giving riders fewer but still multiple operator identities.	Only one overarching brand operates regionwide, with individual agencies presented only as subsidiaries or service branches under the unified identity
3 Network Planning				
Schedules, Routes, Services, & Transit Priority	- Agencies develop timetables, routes, and service frequencies independently, with minimal or no alignment for transfers - Passengers attempting multi-operator journeys face long or unpredictable wait times due to uncoordinated schedules - Duplicated or overlapping routes are common in certain corridors, while other areas remain under-served - Transit-priority treatments (bus lanes, signal priority) are not coordinated or widely implemented, leaving services vulnerable to general traffic congestion	- Some alignment exists during special events or peak periods (e.g., coordinated timetables for big sports games), but consistent scheduling remains rare - Inter-agency route planning occurs on a limited or trial basis, reducing—but not eliminating—duplicated services - Wait times and transfer points improve marginally for certain high-demand corridors, but remain inconsistent elsewhere - Small-scale transit-priority measures (e.g., selected bus lanes, targeted traffic-signal priority) are introduced on a few corridors, but remain spotty and uncoordinated across agencies	- Agencies synchronize schedules partially for key transfer points or high-traffic routes, allowing more reliable connections - Route overlaps and duplications are systematically reviewed and minimized, leaving most gaps and redundancies addressed - Coordinated planning processes are in place, but not yet universal, meaning some areas fall short of fully integrated timetables - Transit-priority measures (dedicated lanes, queue jumps, coordinated traffic-signal priority) expand to a cohesive set of major corridors, though not fully standardized or region-wide	- Schedules are fully integrated across the region, ensuring seamless transfers practically everywhere - Routes are systematically planned to reduce duplications, optimize coverage, and maintain a cohesive, network-wide service pattern - Frequent, well-synchronized services (including first/last mile solutions) offer a consistently reliable experience, making multi-operator travel nearly frictionless - A comprehensive network of transit-priority infrastructure (dedicated lanes, robust transit-signal priority, consistent design standards) is implemented region-wide, ensuring effective, quick movement across jurisdictions
Accessibility Services	- No shared accessibility guidelines exist, leaving each operator to set its own policies for ADA compliance and eligibility - Riders with disabilities may face multiple eligibility processes across agencies - Coordination for cross-jurisdictional or inter-agency paratransit trips is nearly non-existent, often requiring separate vehicles and transfers	- Basic reciprocity for paratransit eligibility is in place, but coverage remains inconsistent across service areas - A few operators work together on limited “one-seat ride” pilots or shared service zones, though these programs remain small-scale - Some agencies publish standardized information on accessible routes, yet details can be scattered or incomplete	- Most agencies follow a unified set of accessibility guidelines and mutually recognize paratransit eligibility - Collaborative paratransit options exist for cross-county or inter-operator trips, reducing the need for multiple transfers - Shared data systems and consistent communication tools inform riders about accessible vehicles, stops, and timetables	- A regionwide, fully integrated accessibility framework ensures aligned standards and comprehensive paratransit coverage across all operators - One-seat rides between agencies are standard, with real-time trip coordination that seamlessly accommodates cross-jurisdictional travel for riders with disabilities - Consistent, up-to-date information on accessible routes, vehicles, and schedules is universally available

	None (No Integration)	Low	Medium	High (Fully Integrated)
Service Vision & Performance Measures	- Each agency pursues its own localized plans, with no overarching statement of regional transit goals or priorities - Performance metrics, if any, are defined and tracked individually, making cross-operator comparisons difficult	- A loosely articulated regional concept exists in policy documents, but it remains general, seldom enforced, and inconsistently adopted by operators - Limited standards or metrics (e.g., on-time performance or ridership targets) may be shared by a subset of agencies	- A defined regional transit vision is accompanied by some jointly agreed-upon performance frameworks (e.g., reliability, accessibility) - Most agencies measure and report on these metrics, but full transparency and consistent frequency of reporting still vary	- A clearly articulated regional vision underpins all planning, funding, and operational strategies across the Bay Area - Well-developed performance measures (e.g., service quality, equity, sustainability) are uniformly tracked, reported, and used for regional decision-making
4 Management & Operations				
Procurement	- Each agency buys vehicles, parts, and technology completely independently, with no volume discounts - No communication occurs prior to placing orders - Equipment and specifications vary widely among operators	- Some agencies conduct small-scale joint purchases (e.g., bulk ordering a limited set of items) on a trial basis - Occasional ad hoc arrangements exist to share resources, but they lack regular coordination or standardized processes - Different technical requirements remain in place, hindering the possibility of more comprehensive group buying agreements	- Most agencies utilize unified specifications for common equipment or technology - A central coordinating body helps negotiate group purchasing contracts, though involvement may be optional - Aligned timelines for key procurements allow operators to batch orders, achieving moderate savings and reduced administrative overhead	- A dedicated entity or process governs nearly all major procurements, pooling purchase volumes to maximize discounts - Uniform requirements and technical standards ensure seamless interoperability across vendors and equipment lines - Agencies experience streamlined ordering cycles and consolidated contracts, substantially lowering cost per unit and minimizing administrative complexity
Operations	- Each agency runs its own day-to-day services and maintains vehicles independently, with no shared operational resources - Limited or no coordination on schedules, staffing, or maintenance practices across operators - Performance tracking and service adjustments happen in isolation, leading to disjointed standards and potentially inefficient operations	- Basic coordination exists for certain corridor overlaps or major special events, but most agencies continue managing operations and maintenance solely for their own fleets - Operators may occasionally exchange best practices on vehicle maintenance or staff training, though these interactions remain informal - Minimal joint performance reviews cover select routes, yet limited data sharing restricts broader collaboration	- Significant synchronization of some services and maintenance, with agencies implementing shared scheduling or dispatch systems for overlapping routes - Common operational protocols begin to emerge (e.g., uniform safety standards, staff training modules) - Jointly monitored performance metrics allow for periodic adjustments, optimizing service quality across multiple operators - Some back-office functions are completed centrally (e.g., IT, finance, data analytics, procurement)	- Operations and maintenance activities are integrated under a single, cross-agency framework (or agency), leveraging centralized dispatch and resource allocation - A standardized set of protocols governs day-to-day tasks, from vehicle readiness checks to customer service training, ensuring seamless rider experiences regardless of operator - Ongoing, systemwide performance monitoring drives collective adjustments, fostering continuous improvement and high operational efficiency - Many back-office functions are completed centrally (e.g., IT, finance, data analytics, procurement)
Capital Projects	- Each operator independently plans and executes capital projects (e.g., new stations, fleet expansions) with no regional oversight - No shared standards or priorities exist, leading to inconsistent designs and potential duplication of facilities - Agencies vie separately for funding, resulting in fragmented grant applications and piecemeal investments	- Occasional collaboration occurs for corridor-level or major event-based projects, but most are still handled agency by agency - Workgroups sometimes coordinate technical aspects (e.g., design guidelines), though formal agreements remain limited - A modest degree of information sharing helps reduce obvious overlaps, but no overarching strategy aligns project selection	- Most operators align on a regional master plan that prioritizes key corridors and scheduling for major capital improvements - Multi-agency steering committees oversee specific large-scale projects, facilitating coordinated design and procurement processes - Funding bids or grants are sometimes pursued jointly, though each agency may retain a degree of autonomy in delivering its portion	- A central entity handles the planning and implementation of all major regional capital projects, ensuring uniform standards - Operators collaborate under a unified budgeting framework, pooling resources to avoid redundant facilities or capacity mismatches - All grant applications and capital funding proposals are consolidated, making strategic investments more competitive and cohesive

	None (No Integration)	Low	Medium	High (Fully Integrated)
5 Governance & Funding				
Governance Structure	- Each operator has its own board (or similar authority) with minimal or no shared decision-making on regional issues - No centralized entity exists to set regionwide policies or reconcile conflicting priorities - Agencies coordinate only on an ad hoc basis, if at all, resulting in a fragmented governance landscape	- Informal or advisory groups bring multiple agencies together for discussion, but with weak or non-binding authority - Some recurring meetings address specific regional topics (e.g., funding, route overlaps), though decisions largely remain at the local board level - Agencies may agree on high-level goals, but there is no unified governance structure for implementing those objectives	- A regional committee or council has partial binding authority, overseeing certain cross-jurisdictional transit matters (e.g., fare policy, major capital projects) - Operators maintain their local boards but delegate specific decision rights—like setting technology standards—to a central body - A shared vision or plan is intermittently enforced, with most agencies required to align major initiatives to regional goals and standards	- A single regional governing body holds ultimate authority over transit planning, budgeting, and policy across all operators - Individual agency boards still manage day-to-day administration, but strategic decisions and final approval rest with the central entity - Regionwide mandates on service standards, funding allocations, and performance metrics ensure cohesive, integrated governance
Funding & Revenue Sharing	- Each operator relies on its own funding streams—local taxes, farebox revenue, state or federal grants—without any pooled or shared mechanism - No collective budgeting process or resource allocation, leading to uneven service expansions and capital investments across the region - Limited communication on fundraising or advocacy, causing fragmented efforts to secure outside funding	- Occasional cooperation on select grants or capital projects exists, but each agency retains separate budgets - Cost- or revenue-sharing arrangements may emerge for one-off initiatives (e.g., new facility in a joint corridor) - Any regionwide funding approach remains informal or pilot-based, lacking a structured mechanism for ongoing resource distribution	- A shared fund or partial revenue pool supports some cross-operator initiatives (e.g., technology upgrades, major express route expansions) - Agencies collectively apply for large grants or bond measures, though each maintains autonomy for local spending decisions - Basic formulas or agreements provide for recurring cost- and revenue-sharing, ensuring at least some equity among operators	- All transit revenues (fares, taxes, grants) flow into a unified regional fund managed by a central authority - Systemwide budgeting aligns closely with integrated network planning, distributing funds according to regionwide priorities and performance targets - A transparent revenue-sharing formula ensures consistent, needs-based allocations, fostering equitable investment across all agencies

