

Regional Network Management Customer Advisory Group

October 20, 2025

Agenda Item 4a

Draft MTC Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways

Subject:

Overview of a proposed regional Transit Priority Policy that is intended to support the implementation of transit priority projects in the Bay Area.

Background:

Staff presented a preview of the Transit Priority Policy for Roadways (Policy) at the July 22, 2025 Regional Network Management Customer Advisory Group meeting. This summary expands on information provided in July regarding the policy background and its relation to other regional transit efforts. It also includes new information regarding how the policy would be implemented, and feedback heard from stakeholders.

As part of Action 12 of the Transit Transformation Action Plan, MTC is developing Policy to enhance the transit rider experience by supporting the implementation of transit priority infrastructure and policies that improve transit travel times and reliability, and promote active interagency engagement necessary to be successful. The goals of the Policy are to:

- establish a common definition of transit priority;
- reinforce and strengthen interjurisdictional coordination;
- guide agencies to consider transit priority when making roadway improvements; and,
- inform prioritization of funding for transit priority projects.

Overall, the intent of the Policy is to help transit better serve people's needs and move more people in the Bay Area.

Proposed Policy Elements:

The purpose of the Policy is to promote stronger interagency coordination during project development, by encouraging early and proactive coordination between project sponsors, transit agencies, and roadway owners/operators. In particular, it would guide interagency coordination during project development, and provide more opportunities for transit agencies to offer feedback on projects to ensure the needs of transit are considered.

MTC is proposing to add additional transit-focused elements to the existing MTC Complete Streets Checklist process, which is required for any project requesting an MTC endorsement or more than \$250,000 in MTC discretionary funding, regardless of project type or sponsor agency. The Policy would expand the transit coordination requirements for all projects on roadways with scheduled public transit service (existing or planned) as projects apply for MTC discretionary funds. The Policy also calls for the development of a regional Transit Priority Network (TPN), which would have additional Policy expectations.

Proposed Policy Implementation

This proposed policy approach provides structure for more effective interagency coordination, resulting in better projects with improved outcomes for transit, without stepping into local decision-making or conflict resolution. The Policy would be implemented in phases to give affected agencies the opportunity to gradually adapt to new Policy criteria:

- (1) Upon adoption of Policy (anticipated late 2025 or early 2026): All project sponsors with projects along roadways with transit service would need to review the project with affected transit agencies to consider impacts to transit service, via the Complete Streets Checklist process.
- (2) After adoption of the regional TPN (anticipated late 2026 or early 2027): All project sponsors with projects along the TPN would need to consider incorporating reasonable transit-supportive design elements into projects. The TPN will be developed through a separate data-driven process, the Transit Priority Roadway Assessment, in 2026.

The Policy would promote broader local support of transit priority by encouraging local jurisdictions to adopt resolutions in support of the regional Policy, adopt standalone local transit priority policies, or modify existing related local policies or plans (e.g., complete streets policies) to include language on transit priority. Staff are considering how funding incentives could be provided to encourage local jurisdictions to adopt local transit priority resolutions or policies, such as awarding bonus points to MTC transit priority discretionary funding applications from jurisdictions that have adopted a resolution or policy. Any funding incentives would be implemented through MTC funding programs, not through the Policy.

Transit Priority Roadway Assessment:

The TPN would be developed as part of a related but separate effort: the Transit Priority Roadway Assessment (Assessment). The Assessment will build upon the high-level portfolio of capital, operating, and programmatic investments recommended in Plan Bay Area 2050+/Transit 2050+. It will assess current roadway transit delay and reliability and include detailed analysis of individual roadway transit corridors in the region, including transit frequency/ridership, approved local transit or transportation plans, equity, and other contextual considerations. The Assessment will use these analyses to identify “hotspot” locations with transit delay and reliability issues and develop the TPN, which will identify key roadway transit corridors in the region that should be prioritized for transit priority investments. Once the TPN is adopted, the Policy proposes that projects located on TPN corridors should work to incorporate best practice transit-supportive design into projects. The Assessment kicked off in August 2025 and is anticipated to conclude with the adoption of the TPN by early 2027. It will include coordination and outreach with transit agencies, local jurisdictions, county transportation agencies, interest groups, and other stakeholders.

Relation to Other Regional Transit Efforts:

The Policy would support the transit-related vision and goals of Plan Bay Area 2050+/Transit 2050+ (in-progress), developed by MTC and partner agencies to improve the vitality and viability of existing transit services in the Bay Area by enhancing transit frequency, capacity and reliability. The Policy would also support the Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan (2021), developed in response to the pandemic through the region’s Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force, which sets a course for transit’s recovery and long-term improvement, including several actions to improve bus speed and reliability. Further, the Policy would support other MTC regional transit efforts, including Resolution 4493 Complete Streets Policy (2022) – which works to ensure people biking, walking, rolling, and taking transit are safely accommodated within the transportation network – by emphasizing the needs of transit throughout the region and encouraging interagency coordination during project delivery. Additionally, the Policy would complement several state-level initiatives, including Senate Bill (SB) 125 Transit Transformation Task Force transit policy recommendations (in-progress),

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Director's Transit Policy transit policies/processes along the State Transportation Network (in-progress), and the Caltrans Bay Area Transit Plan strategies for transit priority improvements in Caltrans District 4 (in-progress).

Stakeholder Engagement:

A variety of stakeholder feedback has informed the development of Policy content. Staff engaged with various groups in early 2025 - including staff working groups, county transportation agency (CTA) committees, and city staff - receiving over 500 individual comments from stakeholders at more than 50 cities, counties, transit agencies, CTAs, Caltrans, MTC, and advocacy organizations. For details on the feedback heard and how comments were incorporated into the policy, see Attachment C, Stakeholder Engagement Summary. The Policy was also discussed at the July 2025 meeting of the RNM Customer Advisory Group, August 2025 meeting of the Bay Area Partnership Board, and September 2025 meetings of the RNM Council and Bay Area County Transportation Agency Executive Roundtable. These groups gave the following feedback:

- Encouraged inclusion of policy elements that incentivize local jurisdictions to adopt their own local transit priority policies or resolutions in support of the regional Policy to promote coordination between project sponsors and transit agencies, especially for projects not seeking MTC regional discretionary funding.
- Expressed interest in building upon the county-level transit work being led by CTAs and continued involvement as the regional Transit Priority Network is developed during the Transit Priority Roadway Assessment.
- Desired reinforcing the principle that projects along transit routes should aim to “do no harm” to transit where impacts can be mitigated.
- Expressed interest in MTC helping with discussions between cities and transit agencies to develop a consensus design.

Next Steps:

Staff will incorporate feedback received from all RNM advisory bodies into the proposed final Policy and anticipates returning to the Customer Advisory Group in late 2025. Upon adoption by

the Commission, the Policy would be updated as needed in coordination with updates to the MTC Complete Streets Policy and Checklist.

Issues:

There were differing perspectives on the strength of the policy and whether there should be any ties to funding. The policy attempts to balance these perspectives; potential funding incentives are subject to future discussion through MTC discretionary funding programs.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: MTC Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways (Draft)
- Attachment B: Primer for Public Agency Staff Implementing Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways (Draft)
- Attachment C: Stakeholder Engagement Summary
- Attachment D: Presentation