



December 7, 2023

Re: December 8, 2023 Regional Network Management Committee Meeting, December
Item 3A: Regional Network Management Charter and Work Plan
Item 4A Transit Transformation Action Plan Two-Year Status Update Update

Honorable Network Management Committee Members,

Thank you for considering the two year status update for the Transformation Action Plan. We are glad to see staff providing this report summarizing the welcome results for riders, as well as behind the scenes progress being made.

We applaud progress on fare integration, mapping and wayfinding pilots, connected network planning, the groundwork for a regional funding measure and more.

Also, we agree with the remarks of several transit general managers at the Nov 27 Network Management Council meeting seeking concrete actions, goals, metrics and timelines in the work plan, based on delivering outcomes that improve lives for transit riders, and with communication that tells the story to the public.

Joint ABAG/MTC Legislation Committee staff report item on Regional Measure points to additional important focus areas for Network Management work plan

The [staff report about the Regional Transportation Revenue Measure Update presented at this morning's Legislation Committee](#) has a robust and pointed assessment of the progress which, while notable, is happening more slowly than needed.

“Given the seriousness of the financial challenges facing public transit (with structural annual deficits in the \$600-\$750 million range) and the urgent need to deliver noticeable, customer-facing improvements to attract more riders and build public support toward a regional measure, we need a decision-making structure for key customer-facing elements that delivers what is in the best interest of the Bay Area public as opposed to serving the financial needs of each individual transit agency.”

This morning's staff report calls out the need for “An empowered network manager responsible for advancing policy to create a seamless Bay Area transit system”...that... “will help deliver the measure's outcomes by expediting customer-facing initiatives.”

This morning's staff report also calls out findings from several studies about transit integration, including recent studies that are part of the Transformation Action Plan.

However, the clear and pointed assessment included in this morning's staff report is not reflected in this afternoon's Transit Transformation Action Plan Two-Year Status Update and Regional Network Management Charter and Work Plan.

On the topic of Bus/Rail Network Management, slide 7 of the status update identifies "standing up Regional Network Management and concluding the Rail Partnership Study" as accomplishments. But the Work Plan does not include next steps on strengthening network management nor next steps for the previous transit integration studies.

Update Work Plan and Transformation Action Plan

We are glad to see the schedule calling for an early 2024 update to the Transformation Action Plan.

We strongly urge the Network Management Committee and Council to update the Work Plan and Transformation Action Plan with more specific, measurable, timely customer-facing outcomes. And we urge that the updated TAP and Work Plan include next steps in the areas identified by this morning's Legislation Committee staff report to strengthen network management and take appropriate next steps regarding system integration to deliver more convenience and efficiency for the public.

At a finer-grained level, some of the progress report items called out as "results for riders" are behind the scenes steps that, while important, have not yet delivered rider-facing results. For example, the outcome of the Transit Priority initiative is a Call for Projects delivering funding in 2024. This is a good step, but the RFP doesn't yet make the bus go faster. TAP Equity Principles are listed as rider-facing results, but a low-income senior cannot get shelter from the rain in an Equity Principle, she needs a bus stop shelter.

Essential for voter confidence

These steps are critically important for public confidence, as shown in poll results presented this morning.

When asked about the types of items that might be included in a regional measure, a whopping 80 percent of voters believe "requiring oversight and accountability to ensure effective and efficient management of public transit" should be a priority of the measure. Bay Area voters continue to strongly support "creating a seamless Bay Area transit network with coordinated fares, routes, schedules and signage" with 73 percent of all voters finding this important, including 83 percent of weekly transit riders. A substantial majority also favor establishing "one regional agency for the Bay Area responsible for setting transit fares, coordinating different service schedules and creating consistent transit maps and signage" at 61 percent of all voters and 71 percent of weekly transit riders.

In order to gain voter confidence to secure funding, it is essential to make clear and prompt progress on providing a well-coordinated system for riders that includes accountability to deliver these outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Adina Levin, Advocacy Director
Seamless Bay Area