

Regional Network Management Customer Advisory Group

January 26, 2024

Agenda Item 5a

Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project Update

Subject:

Update on the development of prototype signage for the Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project (RWMP).

Background:

The Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (Task Force) recommended a regionally harmonized mapping and wayfinding system as a key action item in the Task Force's Transformation Action Plan. The goal of the RWMP is to develop and deploy fully standardized wayfinding, mapping, and transit information throughout the Bay Area in all transit environments, while also providing guidance for pedestrian wayfinding and first/last mile opportunities extending from transit areas, to retain existing and attract new transit riders.

In 2022, MTC approved a contract with Applied Wayfinding, Inc. (Applied), to design and support implementation of the new wayfinding system. In early 2023, the project team completed a review of wayfinding existing conditions, including but not limited to a framework of national and international best practices, review of digital technologies in wayfinding and trip planning, an audit of current Bay Area wayfinding signage, documentation of signage procurement processes, and assessment of potential governance strategies for a regional wayfinding program.

Given the complexities of transit service in the region, the RWMP is taking an iterative design approach. The first stage is to install prototype wayfinding signs and materials at two regional transit hubs for public input and evaluation. The two locations, El Cerrito del Norte BART station and the Santa Rosa Transit Mall and SMART station, are served by a variety of transit agencies, offer transfers between bus and rail modes, and are within or near MTC Equity Priority Communities (EPCs). In spring and summer 2023, the project team gathered feedback from transit operator working groups, transit riders and non-riders, and members of EPCs to develop initial design specifications for a family of wayfinding signs ("standards"), some of which will be tested at prototype locations. Likewise, a new "regional network identity" composed of Bay

Area inspired colors, transit modal icons, and a hierarchy of information that prioritizes modal icons over individual operator logos is intended to create a consistent and intuitive customer experience at all regional transit locations. Prototypes are expected to be installed by mid-2024. MTC will solicit public, stakeholder, and transit agency feedback on the prototype signage (including the regional network identity) to inform a revised set of standards for the next development stage, the pilot projects. Expected to be rolled out in 2025 and 2026, the pilots are intended to test the operational feasibility of widescale production, installation, and maintenance of the new wayfinding system. Similar to the prototypes, feedback gathered from the pilot stage will inform potential improvements for expansion throughout the region.

Based on feedback from the Policy Advisory Council subcommittees, MTC has hired Ron Brooks, an accessibility consultant, to advise the project team and provide valuable perspectives from the local disability community. As the project progresses, staff will provide updates and solicit feedback from the RNM Council, RNM Customer Advisory Group, RNM Committee, and other stakeholders at key milestones.

Next Steps:

Project staff are currently working to finalize the prototype wayfinding signage design for installation later this year. In the next few months, staff will work with transit agency staff to refine service-related prototype signage and materials, such as bus stop markers and maps. MTC is also developing a prototype evaluation and public engagement plan, and coordinating with prototype partner agencies to facilitate new signage installation by mid 2024. Public engagement and evaluation of the prototypes will take place in summer 2024.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

None identified.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Presentation