

Date: March 23, 2022
W.I.: 1517
Referred by: PAC

ABSTRACT

MTC Resolution No. 4512

This resolution adopts the Short-Range Transit Plan Guidelines for FY 2022-23.

Further discussion of these actions is contained in the Programming and Allocations Committee summary sheet dated March 9, 2022.

Date: March 23, 2022
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RE: Short Range Transit Plan Guidelines

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 4512

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the regional transportation planning agency for the San Francisco Bay Area pursuant to Government Code Section 66500 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, MTC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the San Francisco Bay Area, charged with carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning and fund programming processes required to maintain the region's eligibility for federal funds for transportation planning, capital improvements, and operations; and

WHEREAS, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires MPOs to work cooperatively with the state and public transit operators to develop regional transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) for urbanized areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, MTC has developed, in cooperation with the State, and with public transit operators in the region, a work program for carrying out continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning; and

WHEREAS, an Overall Work Program (OWP) for planning activities in the Bay Area is annually prepared by MTC, the Association of Bay Area Governments, and the California Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the OWP describes MTC's annual unified work program to achieve the goals and objectives of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), also known as Plan Bay Area 2050; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the goals and objectives of the RTP, MTC's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes funds programmed for projects sponsored by public transit operators in the MTC region; and

WHEREAS, MTC, in cooperation with the FTA Region IX office requires that public transit operators in the MTC region which are FTA grantees prepare and regularly update a Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) as input to regional transportation planning programming activities; and

WHEREAS, MTC enters into a funding agreement with each public transit operator required to prepare and update an SRTP; and

WHEREAS, MTC desires to promulgate detailed SRTP guidelines that more precisely explain the scope of work included in the SRTP funding agreement, are supportive of the recovery of public transit agencies from the COVID-19 pandemic, and which are in accord with and the planning, fund programming and policy requirements of the TIP and the RTP; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that MTC does hereby adopt the “Short Range Transit Plan Guidelines,” attached hereto as Attachment A to this Resolution and incorporated herein as though set forth at length.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Alfredo Pedroza, Chair

The above resolution was adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission at a regular meeting of the Commission held in San Francisco, California and at other remote locations, on March 23, 2022.

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Attachment A
Resolution No. 4512
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Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP): Bay Area Transit Recovery Scenario Planning Guidelines

1. BASIS OF THE SRTP REQUIREMENT

Federal statutes require that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in partnership with the state and with local agencies, develop and periodically update a long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which implements the RTP by programming federal funds to transportation projects contained in the RTP. To effectively execute these planning and fund programming responsibilities, MTC, in cooperation with Region IX of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), requires each transit operator receiving federal funding through the TIP (federal grantees within the MTC region) to prepare, adopt, and submit an SRTP to MTC. Transit operators are required by MTC to prepare an SRTP every four years in order to remain eligible to receive federal funding.

2. REIMAGINED APPROACH

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted transit operations, ridership, and revenues. The decrease in ridership, changes in travel patterns and uncertainties in farebox revenues have created enormous planning and operational challenges for Bay Area transit operators. While federal relief funds provided a significant stop gap, it is anticipated that these funds will be exhausted within the next two fiscal years for most transit operators. In light of the current crisis, the SRTP is being reimagined and restructured for FY 2022-23 to help plan for and navigate through the continued uncertainties.

The revised approach narrows the scope to a five-year planning horizon with a focus on financial and service planning. In another departure from past practice, all transit operators will be required to prepare an SRTP in this cycle to facilitate a regional understanding of transit priorities and plans over the next five years. This revised approach will also include scenario planning, which asks operators to consider how service plans might be adapted under different revenue scenarios. This reduction in the scale of the deliverables is intended to facilitate the development of a more narrowly focused SRTP for this planning cycle on a much shorter timeline than has been required for traditional SRTPs.

3. SRTP PURPOSE

- A. To serve as a management and policy document for the transit operator, as well as a means of providing FTA and MTC with information necessary to meet regional fund programming and planning requirements.

- B. To understand the status and outlook of transit service in the Bay Area, both by operator and regionally
- C. To understand the impacts of varying levels of funding on transit service
- D. To develop actionable information to support funding advocacy, including the ability to articulate service benefits and tradeoffs at different funding levels

4. SCENARIO PLANNING

Core to this revised SRTP approach is developing an understanding of how service plans might be adapted under different revenue constraints. Accordingly, this SRTP asks operators to consider and make projections of service levels under three scenarios:

1. **Robust Recovery:** There is adequate funding to return overall revenue to 100% of pre-pandemic levels, with escalation. This would not assume proportionate recovery across all revenue sources.
2. **Revenue Recovery, with Fewer Riders:** Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted, although other funds recover to pre-pandemic levels. However, farebox revenue remains stagnant (20-50% below pre-pandemic levels, depending on current status) for the next five years.
3. **Some Progress:** Federal relief funds are eventually exhausted and total revenue available to the agency is 15% below pre-pandemic levels for the next five years.

5. SCOPE

The deliverables include data on service and operating projections and a brief supporting narrative document to describe pre-pandemic service, changes made since the pandemic, and priorities and plans in the next five years. A data response template and specific revenue forecasts for each operator and for each scenario will be distributed directly to operators.

A. Data Request

Complete the data template which requests the following categories of data:

- Revenue Vehicle Hours
- Revenue Vehicle Miles
- Number of Routes Operated
- Total Route Miles
- Ridership
- Total Operating Budget
- Total Revenue Vehicles
- Vehicles Required for Maximum Service
- Employees

Criteria

- Data should be separated by mutually exclusive and comprehensively exhaustive modes (no overlap between modes and sums to operator totals)

- Data should be completed for FY19 (pre-pandemic), FY23 (since the pandemic), and for FY24-28 for each of the three revenue scenarios
- Data should be provided in whole numbers and dollars
- The Excel document should be completed as provided. Fields may be left blank if not applicable, but the document, fields, rows, and columns should not be altered

B. Narrative

The supporting narrative document is an opportunity to expand upon and contextualize the responses to the data request. It should briefly describe pre-pandemic service, discuss service and operations changes since the pandemic, and elaborate on the considerations that drive the service projections made in the data request. The document should be structured as follows:

1. Pre-pandemic State of Service – FY 2018-19

- What did operations look like before the pandemic?
- How much service was available?
- Where, when, and how was service deployed?
- What did ridership levels and travel patterns look like?

2. Current State of Service – FY 2022-23

- How have service and operations changed since the pandemic?
- What were the priorities, goals and processes that informed decisions to adjust service or for budgeting decisions in FY23?
- How much service is available now?
- How has the distribution of service changed by geography? Time of day? Mode?
- Describe changes to ridership and travel patterns since the start of the pandemic.
- How have equity priority communities been considered in service planning or changes?
- How has the operating budget changed?

3. Scenario Planning Concepts – FY 2023-24 through FY 2027-28

For each of the three scenarios, questions to consider include:

- How would priorities and goals change with revenue constraints? What would inform or trigger service change decisions?
- How much service would be available?
- How would the deployment of service change by mode? Geography or route? Time of day or week?
- How would equity priority communities be considered under each scenario?
- How would these revenue constraints impact staffing and budgeting?
- How would different service levels impact fleet requirements or spare ratios?

6. FUNDING

MTC has budgeted approximately \$640,000 to support SRTP development. The seven largest operators will receive \$40,000 each, and medium and small operators will receive \$20,000 each. If operators or county transportation authorities elect to submit a combined SRTP, the funding for which each operator is eligible will be pooled at the county level. Submissions from combined SRTPs must still include data responses and narratives for each participating operator.

7. TIMELINE

1. Draft SRTP: September 30, 2022
2. Final SRTP: December 29, 2022

This schedule reflects the urgency established by the rapid exhaustion of federal relief funds, as well as the opportunity to articulate regional transit funding needs in advance of the FY2023-24 state legislative agenda.

Both drafts and final versions should be submitted to MTC staff electronically srtp@bayareametro.gov. The narrative may be provided in PDF format, but the data request should be in MS Excel format.

8. REQUIRED APPROVALS

The operator's governing body must adopt the SRTP.

9. MINOR REVISIONS TO THESE GUIDELINES

Modifications to these guidelines may be approved by the Programming and Allocations Committee.

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Programming and Allocations Committee**

March 9, 2022

Agenda Item 5a - 22-0273

**MTC Resolution No. 4512
Short Range Transit Plan: Bay Area Transit Recovery Scenario Planning**

Subject:

Guidelines for a revised approach to Short Range Transit Plans, and funding allocations to support this work for FY2022-23.

Background:

MTC provides Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5303 funding to transit operators to support the development of SRTPs. These plans assist agencies with operations and capital planning in the interest of meeting federal planning requirements related to the Regional Transportation Plan/Plan Bay Area 2050 (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The amounts recommended for each agency are listed below. Operators may elect to coordinate and submit a combined SRTP, in which case the funding for which each participating operator is eligible will be pooled.

Reimagined Approach:

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted transit operations, ridership, and revenues. The decrease in ridership, changes in travel patterns and uncertainties in farebox revenues have created enormous planning and operational challenges for Bay Area transit operators. While federal relief funds provided a significant stop gap, it is anticipated that these funds will be exhausted within the next two fiscal years for many transit operators. In light of the current crisis, the SRTP is being reimagined and restructured for FY 2022-23 to help plan for and navigate through the continued uncertainties.

The revised approach narrows the scope of the SRTPs from a ten-year to a five-year planning horizon with a focus on financial and service planning. In another departure from past practice, all transit operators will be required to prepare an SRTP in this cycle to facilitate a regional understanding of transit priorities and plans over the next five years. This revised approach will also include scenario planning, which asks operators to consider how service plans might be adapted under different revenue scenarios. This reduction in the scale of the deliverables is intended to facilitate the development of a more narrowly focused SRTP for this planning cycle on a much shorter timeline than has been required for traditional SRTPs.

Funding:

\$640,000 of FTA 5303 funds have been budgeted to support SRTPs, with the seven largest operators receiving \$40,000 each, and small and medium-sized operators receiving \$20,000 each. These funds have a local match requirement of 11.47%. Operators may elect to coordinate and submit a combined SRTP, in which case the total amount of FTA 5303 funds for which operators are eligible would be pooled for the group of operators. Submissions from combined SRTPs must still include data responses and narratives for each participating operator.

Issues:

None identified.

Recommendations:

Refer MTC Resolution No. 4512 to the Commission for approval and authorize staff to enter into funding agreements with operators based on funding levels detailed in Attachment 2.

Attachments:

MTC Resolution No. 4512

Attachment 1: Proposed Short-Range Transit Plan Funding by Operator

Attachment 2: Presentation Slides

Therese W. McMillan