



Transportation Committee
Meeting Date: 9/6/2018
Agenda Item No.: 2018-September-7.

Subject: 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy: Transit Update (Est. time: 15 minutes)

Information

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Approved by: Matt Carpenter

Attachments: Yes

1. Issue:

To brief the board on how future transit assumptions are being developed for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy (MTP/SCS), and to provide information about the transit workshop at the September board meeting.

2. Recommendation:

None, this item is for discussion only.

3. Background/Analysis:

In the current Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy, transit plays important roles in reducing vehicle travel, providing non-automobile options for travel in congested corridors, providing travel options for those who cannot drive or do not own a vehicle, and enhancing and expanding options for transit-oriented development. Fulfilling these roles is an important part of achieving the Senate Bill (SB) 375 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets as well as other performance objectives in the current MTP/SCS. With higher SB 375 GHG reduction targets set for the 2020 MTP/SCS, the role of transit in reducing vehicle travel will be even more important. Two new areas of emphasis for the 2020 MTP/SCS will require a fresh look at transit:

- How can transit investments in the SACOG region be developed and leveraged as part of a strategy to improve economic prosperity and opportunity?
- How can transit adapt to recent and ongoing changes in mobility options, and to future mobility potentially dominated by autonomous vehicles?

This staff report and the committee briefing provides information on how future transit service assumptions will be developed for the 2020 MTP/SCS.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Some aspects of the process of developing future transit service assumptions will be similar to the process used for earlier MTP/SCS updates:

1. Start with what transit service is provided in the MTP/SCS "base year." For this MTP/SCS update, the base year is 2016. SACOG's "base year inventories" also include performance indicators related to transit boardings, land use, demographics, roadway congestion & utilization, and traffic counts.
2. Review transit service improvements planned for the near-term future—largely based on five-year Short Range Transit Plans (SRTPs)
3. Review proposed new transit projects nominated through the "Call for Projects" process for the 2020 MTP/SCS. Identify future improvements, or additions to base year transit service are included in a partial, "first-cut" future transit scenario for the 2020 MTP/SCS. Other future transit services will be added to this "first cut", subject to two constraints:
 - The overall "budget" or cumulative investment level that is reasonable to assume for transit during the MTP/SCS planning horizon; and,
 - Opportunities to improve overall MTP/SCS performance through adding transit service.

Steps 1 and 2 are largely complete, and Step 3 is in process now. For purposes of the Discussion Scenario, SACOG set transit service levels and routes that are consistent with the current adopted MTP/SCS. Staff will be working with transit operators and the Transit Coordinating Committee to get input on the Discussion Scenario, and to develop a Draft Preferred Scenario by April 2019.

Regarding the new emphasis areas for transit in the 2020 MTP/SCS, staff proposes a series of actions to respond to previously identified board interests:

How can transit investments in the SACOG region be developed and leveraged as part of a strategy to improve economic prosperity and opportunity?

- Staff will be including transit access to jobs centers as an important performance outcome for the 2020 MTP/SCS update. In June 2017, William Schroeer (Executive Director, East Metro Strong, Minneapolis/St. Paul) and Mark Fisher (Chief Policy Officer, Indy Chamber, Indianapolis) presented to the SACOG Board, and both emphasized the central place that transit investment played in economic development in their respective regions. The Amazon HQ2 RFP echoed this message by identifying good transit accessibility as an important community asset for the selected HQ2 site.
- Staff will also be including other transit-related performance indicators that relate to economic competitiveness in the 2020 MTP/SCS update. Active technical analysis by staff and collaborations with the Economic Prosperity Partners will inform this work.

How can transit adapt to recent & ongoing changes in mobility options, and to future mobility potentially dominated by autonomous vehicles?

- The launch of a Next Generation Transit study this fall will result in recommendations to

inform policies and strategies for the 2020 MTP/SCS. Attachment A summarizes key challenges identified through input solicited from the board and other stakeholders.

- There are numerous examples of innovative new mobility services being tested across the region. Attachment B offers a summary of opportunities that include many initiatives SACOG is actively participating in.
- Numerous transit operators are re-examining their fixed route transit networks. Optimized service route changes will be incorporated into the updated 2020 MTP/SCS transit network. Attachment B includes examples of active or planned service planning efforts where SACOG staff is also engaged.

Transit is the theme for the September board meeting, and a workshop is being organized that will be interactive and include external experts. Staff will provide a briefing on the planned workshop at the upcoming board policy committee meetings.

[1] For more detail see: https://www.sacog.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sacog_presentation_st._paul.pdf

[2] For more detail see: https://www.sacog.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/sacog_presentation_indianapolis.pdf

[3] For more detail see: https://images-na.ssl-images-amazon.com/images/G/01/Anything/test/images/usa/RFP_3._V516043504_.pdf

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to SACOG's operating budget beyond the staff and consulting resources already included in the board adopted agency budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Goals:

6. Help the Region Advance a Vision for "Next Generation Transit"

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Attachment A: Challenges Facing Transit in the SACOG Region

Attachment B: Opportunities for Future Transit in the SACOG Region

Attachment A: Challenges Facing Transit in the SACOG Region

Following each adoption of the MTP/SCS, SACOG focuses on working with the SACOG Board and local jurisdictions on implementation. At the same time that federal and state requirements are increasing performance expectations, most of the region's transit agencies are experiencing decreased ridership, and not contemplating significant service expansions.

A vital and robust transit system is a key ingredient for realizing the performance outcomes of the region's MTP/SCS. Innovations in public transportation services and technologies are leading to new approaches to public transportation in the SACOG region and other areas of the country. Based on input from Board members and stakeholders, staff has identified a number of issues facing transit in the region:

- Transit capital and operating costs are increasing, while productivity for most transit agencies in the region has been declining in recent years.
- Many transit agencies are dependent on funding sources that are volatile and at-risk.
- Transit mode share is low across the region. While there is congestion, it is nowhere near as severe as in the Bay Area or Southern California, and parking is largely free outside downtown Sacramento and a few college, university, and medical campuses.
- The region includes many low-density suburban and rural areas that are challenging to serve with traditional fixed-route transit.
- Public services are sometimes sited in locations that are difficult to serve by transit. For example, over the last decade, a number of state offices have relocated out of downtown Sacramento to scattered suburban office park locations across the region.
- Public perceptions of transit, especially light rail, are not universally positive.

- The light rail system operates on 15-30 minute frequencies, but the majority of bus routes across the region operate on 60-minute frequencies. Many rural routes tend to offer service that is limited to a few days per week or a few trips per day.
- Other than commuter service to downtown Sacramento, there are limited bus routes that cross transit agency boundaries.
- Transfers are not uniformly coordinated across service area boundaries for traditional or paratransit services.
- The Connect Card, a card-based fare medium, is accepted by nine transit operators in the region. Only Sacramento Regional Transit has a mobile ticketing app, ZipPass, but it could have potential for broader regional use.
- Some agencies offer real-time tracking. Others do not yet have automatic vehicle locators (AVL), limiting their ability to provide real-time information.
- Companies, including Google and Trapeze, offer transit trip planning information, but there are currently no integrated apps in the region that link information or payment across transit and other modes such as bike share, car share, and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs).

Attachment B: Opportunities for Future Transit in the SACOG Region

In the last few years, there has been an increasing number of transit-supportive programs and pilots that have been completed or are underway in the SACOG region.

- SACOG implemented the Connect Card and an electric-assist bike share system for portions of Sacramento, West Sacramento, and Davis.
- SACOG's year-long "Civic Lab" effort has spawned work towards piloting a number of services, including an autonomous shuttle between the 65th Street light rail station and Sacramento State University campus; and several other on-demand services.
- SacRT undertook a six-month pilot called Station Link, partnering with TNCs (Uber, Lyft) and taxi companies for first mile/last mile service to encourage light rail use to and from the Golden 1 Center, downtown Sacramento's sports and entertainment center.
- The City of Citrus Heights has partnered with SacRT on SmarT Ride, a new on-demand microtransit service in that city. SacRT recently received \$12 million to expand the SmarT Ride program and implement 10 additional microtransit pilots elsewhere in Sacramento County.
- The City of West Sacramento is partnering with Via on a one-year pilot of an on-demand microtransit service within the city.
- The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) has piloted an EV car share service at several affordable housing complexes. Electrify America is expanding car share in the city of Sacramento through two new electric car sharing services, one a free-floating service, and the other based at apartment complexes.

SACOG has several partnerships and active efforts focused on integrating new transit technologies, and improving data collection and access:

- The Smart Region Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan effort, now underway, will develop a new ITS regional architecture and master plan for what and how ITS technologies in the region should be implemented to coordinate and communicate with each other. This multi-modal effort, including transit, will be a foundation for planning and prioritizing technology investments in the region.
- SACOG currently provides transit information to the region's 511 system and Google trip planner. Future improvements are being identified through the Smart Region plan, and through work with the 511 contractor.
- SACOG is beginning a partnership with the California Air Resources Board and Caltrans for pilot testing a transportation planning application of Big Data. Also, SACOG is part of a partnership with the three other large MPOs in California, MTC, SANDAG, and SCAG. Some of our joint efforts include how we can address emerging technologies; obtaining more data from Lyft and Uber; and modeling and off-model assumptions for shared mobility options and connected/autonomous vehicles.
- Informed by outcomes from this Next Generation Transit work, the Smart Region ITS Plan and Civic Lab, SACOG expects to launch in 2019 a Transportation Technology Action Plan focused on tailored implementation strategies for how smart mobility technologies can be integrated to advance Infrastructure, Data and Mobility as a Service concepts. The Action Plan will identify model regional and local ITS ordinances, policies, pilot/testing opportunities, and next steps to deploy and support advanced technologies. Improvements applicable to urban, suburban, and rural communities in the region will be identified.

A number of efforts in the region are focused on transit system modernization:

- In 2017, Elk Grove completed a Comprehensive Transit Analysis which it is now implementing. Citrus Heights is completing a transit study for the city, and Rancho Cordova, Folsom, and YCTD all anticipate undertaking similar planning updates. To

date, these service redesign efforts are largely limited to jurisdictions or single-operator service areas, and not focused on regional connectivity issues.

- Pending new requirements from the California Air Resources Board for transit bus fleets to transition to all zero emission vehicles by 2040. SACOG and the Sacramento Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) have been working with transit operators on early planning for the transition. New investments in ZEV fleets and charging infrastructure are also being supported through expanded eligibility of the Sacramento Emergency Clean Air Transportation Program (SECAT) program and the launch of a new funding program, Green Region, at SACOG.
- SacRT and YCTD have actively been exploring electric buses and charging infrastructure. They have submitted funding applications for electric buses for services, including to/from the Sacramento International Airport. Electrify America has agreed to fund electric buses for SacRT's microtransit service in the Franklin/South Sacramento neighborhood; and for expanding service between the UC Davis main campus in Davis and the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento through a collaboration between the two agencies.
- In partnership with SACOG, SacRT obtained a large Caltrans planning grant to undertake a Route Optimization Study for its bus network. The planning effort is called SacRT Forward and involves consulting services by Jarrett Walker + Associates, using Remix software for planning scenarios. The SacRT Forward planning effort also includes developing a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Action Plan for how to encourage more development around existing light rail stations. SacRT Forward builds on SacRT's earlier Transit Action Plan, and planning for potential future light rail extension, such as to the Airport.
- SacRT received \$84 million in new funding through 2018 Senate Bill 1 competitive grant programs to improve light rail connections to Folsom along the Gold Line, and to begin updating its decades-old light rail system with modern, low-floor vehicles and stations. Three years ago, SACOG provided early funding towards the low-floor vehicle conversion effort that will now advance somewhat further with the additional funds.