



Memorandum

Date: 01.08.15 **RE:** Finance Committee
January 13, 2015

To: Finance Committee: Commissioners Cohen (Chair), Wiener (Vice Chair), Christensen, Farrell, Tang and Avalos (Ex Officio)

From: David Uniman – Deputy Director for Planning *DUE*

Through: Tilly Chang – Executive Director *TJC*

Subject: **ACTION** – Recommend Approval of the Scope of Work for the Improving West Side Transit Access Strategic Analysis Report

Summary

At the November 18 meeting of the Finance Committee, Commissioner Tang requested that staff conduct a Strategic Analysis Report (SAR) to investigate options for improving access to alternative modes, especially transit, on the West Side of San Francisco. She cited the 2014 Sunset District Blueprint that identified the need to improve transit service quality in the west side, which is less convenient and reliable than in the eastern core of the city. As a result, a disproportionate share of west side residents and employees choose to drive. Equity analysis conducted for the San Francisco Transportation Plan identified that transit access in the city's west side is poorer than in other parts of the city. As part of the SAR scoping process, we have consulted further with Commissioner Tang and with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency on relevant issues that should be addressed in the SAR. The proposed SAR will identify recommendations for improving the alternative transportation options available in the west side, focusing on one or more specific travel markets (e.g. west side to downtown or west side to south bay) as well as one or more target groups of travelers (e.g. students, commuters, or other). The SAR will identify the current travel patterns of those in the target market; identify the transportation options already available to them and those planned for the future, and make strategic recommendations regarding possible additional improvements that would serve their travel needs and encourage use of sustainable modes of travel. The effort is intended to be completed in approximately six months for an expected cost of \$30,000. We budgeted for two SARs in Fiscal Year 2014/15. If approved, this would be the first SAR authorized this fiscal year. **We are seeking approval of the scope of work for the Improving West Side Transit Access SAR.**

BACKGROUND

Strategic analysis reports (SARs) are prepared periodically by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Transportation Authority) to shed light on key issues and to assist the Board in the development of policy with regard to specific transportation topics in San Francisco that do not appear to be adequately addressed by existing regulations or activities.

At the November 18th Plans and Programs Committee, Commissioner Katy Tang requested that we initiate a SAR to investigate options for improving access to alternative modes, especially transit, on the West Side of San Francisco. Equity analysis conducted for the San Francisco Transportation Plan (SFTP) identified that transit access in the city's west side is poorer than in other parts of the city. As a result of this and other factors, a disproportionate share of west side residents drive alone to work and for shopping and errands. The Sunset District Blueprint, completed in 2014, identified concerns with unreliable or infrequent transit service as a top community concern.

Work is underway to improve the quality of access options from the west side, including the Muni Forward project, development of the bicycle network and many other initiatives. To inform these

ongoing studies and trends, the West Side needs a vision for what it would take to create the kind of high-quality transportation offerings that would reduce reliance on private vehicles and shift additional trips to transit, focusing on one or more specific travel markets.

DISCUSSION

As called for in the Transportation Authority's procedures governing the development of SARs, the scope of work must be presented to the committee on which the requester sits (in this case, the Finance Committee) and the Transportation Authority Board for approval. The committee and Board will review and provide guidance on the scope of work and schedule before staff proceeds further with SAR development.

The SAR will identify the top priority travel market(s) of interest; explore the current travel patterns of those in the target market; identify the transportation options already available to them and those planned for the future; identify strategic issues and opportunities for each of the selected travel markets; and make recommendations for follow-on work to advance one or more specific project concepts.

The identification of new opportunities for improving alternative mode access for one or more specific travel markets and groups of travelers in the short and medium-terms will be a core part of the SARs analysis. The SAR will examine:

- What additional specific strategies could the city pursue to raise the attractiveness of transit in the selected markets, beyond those that are already planned?
- What types of projects would best achieve this, by addressing the gaps or enhancing existing offerings, in the short- and medium terms?
- What are potential new policies or roles should be considered along with these projects, for the public and/or private sectors?

Possible travel markets of focus could include: improving options for students seeking to access San Francisco State University or other major educational institutions in the west side; improving options for commuters bound for the south bay; or improving options for commuters bound for downtown. The final area(s) of focus will be confirmed through analysis.

We estimate that the SAR could be completed in approximately six months for a total expected cost of \$30,000. We anticipate performing most of the work in-house, with some consultant assistance (about \$10,000) from our on-call planning contracts, which is the subject of a separate agenda item for the January 13 Finance Committee meeting.

We budgeted for two SARs in Fiscal Year 2014/15. If approved, this would be the first SAR authorized this fiscal year.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approving the scope of work for the Improving West Side Transit Access SAR, as requested.
2. Recommend approving the scope of work for the Improving West Side Transit Access SAR, with modifications.
3. Defer action, pending additional information or further staff analysis.

CAC POSITION

Due to the year-end holidays, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) does not meet in late December and therefore, did not take a position on this item. If the Board approves the scope of work, we will present it to the CAC on January 28 as an information item and seek the CAC's input.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The adopted FY 2014/15 agency budget and work program assumed preparation of two SARs. If approved at the estimated cost of \$30,000, there would be no impact on the adopted budget. SARs are funded through Prop K and/or federal Congestion Management Agency planning funds.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend approving the scope of work for the Improving West Side Transit Access SAR.

Attachment:

1. Improving West Side Transit Access SAR Scope of Work

Attachment 1.

Improving West Side Transit Access Strategic Analysis Report (SAR)

Draft
Scope of Work
January 8, 2015

I. Background

- A. About SARs:** This is a standard section included in all Strategic Analysis Reports (SARs). It describes the SAR development and review process and the role of the document in facilitating policy-level decision-making.
- B. History/Context:** Equity Analysis conducted for the San Francisco Transportation Plan (SFTP) identified geographic disparities in transit access in the city's outlying neighborhoods including the west side. As a result of this and other factors, a disproportionate share of west side residents drive alone to work and for shopping and errands. The Sunset District Blueprint, completed in 2014, identified concerns with unreliable or infrequent transit service as a top community concern.

Major strides are being made to improve the quality of transit services serving the west side through the Muni Forward project. Muni Forward will result in frequency, speed and/or reliability improvements to eight transit lines (L-Taraval; N-Judah; 16X-Noriega Express; 18-46th Avenue; 28/28L-19th Avenue; 29-Sunset; 48-Quintara; and the 71L-Haight Noriega). Other studies such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) upcoming Bay Area Core Capacity Transit Study offers an opportunity to study M-Oceanview improvements and regional express bus services for the west side, to destinations within San Francisco or across the bay to Oakland. Finally, the successful piloting of bike-sharing, citywide focus on improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and proliferation of new shared-use and privately provided mobility options on the west side present opportunities for improving transit access.

To inform these ongoing studies and trends, the West Side needs a vision for what it would take, beyond what is already planned, to create the kind of high-quality transportation offerings that would reduce reliance on private vehicles and shift additional trips to transit.

C. Purpose of the SAR:

This SAR will build on work prepared for the Sunset Blueprint, Muni Forward, SFTP and other efforts, to examine high-level options for improving transit access to the west side, focusing on one or more specific travel markets and groups of travelers, which will be identified through analysis.

D. Review of Other Studies and Documents:

Several relevant documents will be reviewed as part of this SAR. They include:

- The **Sunset District Blueprint**, which identified key transit hubs within the district that need improvement. These include stops on the N Judah

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(where Judah intersects La Playa and 46th); the L Taraval (at Wawona and 46th, Taraval and 22nd, and Taraval and 46th), and several others along the 28L, 29 Sunset, and 71 Haight. The Blueprint also notes several pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns that may present barriers to transit access.

- The **Muni Forward project**, which includes conceptual plans for transit upgrades on key transit lines throughout the city, including the N Judah, L Taraval, and others in the district. Any specific improvements already planned for major transit hubs will be inventoried. Boardings by west side transit stops will also be reviewed to ensure focus on the most used stops.
- The **San Francisco Transportation Plan (SFTP)**, which identified a geographic disparity around transit reliability and access to regional services for neighborhoods like the west side of the city. Since the study was published, issues around turnbacks have abated and the SFMTA successfully introduced popular new services like the NX express bus.
- **SPUR's Ocean Beach Master Plan**, a comprehensive vision to address sea level rise, protect infrastructure, restore coastal ecosystems and improve public access, will be reviewed, along with any relevant follow-on studies.
- Professor Susan Shaheen's **Shared Use Mobility Summit White Paper**, which documented the policy issues and opportunities for shared use mobility discussed at a summit held in San Francisco in October 2013.

II. Strategic Analysis

A. Existing Conditions: This section will summarize existing travel data and collect new data, e.g. through focus groups and interviews, to better understand west side travel markets, particularly automobile trips, in an effort to improve the competitiveness of transit and alternative modes. It will examine the following questions:

- a. What are the top travel markets to and from the west side? This analysis will examine the major origins of destinations of west side residents and identify top destinations for different types of trips. For example, the analysis could identify downtown and the south bay as top destinations for commuters. The analysis will also identify the current mode choices of travelers in these markets (e.g. what share of travelers are using transit versus driving alone, walking, or bicycling). One or more top travel markets will be identified as a focus for the remainder of the SAR. For example, options for focused travel markets could include student trips to major educational institutions; commuter trips downtown; or commuter trips to south bay.
- b. What options do travelers in the selected markets currently have for completing their trip, and how competitive are these options with the private automobile? The SAR will also take a special look at the rise of shared mobility services and how these are changing travel habits.
- c. What plans are already in place to improve the quality of alternatives to the automobile in the selected market(s), through projects such as Muni Forward, regional transit improvements, major bicycle network improvements, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and other freeway

Attachment 1.

management treatments, fare policies, or other relevant options? Are these improvements expected to be sufficient to result in a significant reduction of reliance on private automobiles for this trip?

C. Strategic Issues and Opportunities: This section would identify new opportunities for improving alternative mode access for one or more specific travel markets and groups of travelers in the short and medium-terms. It will examine:

- a. What additional specific strategies could the city pursue to raise the attractiveness of transit in the selected markets, beyond those that are already planned?
- b. What types of projects would best achieve this, by addressing the gaps or enhancing existing offerings, in the short- and medium terms?
- c. What are potential new policies or roles should be considered along with these projects, for the public and/or private sectors?

III. Next Steps/Recommendations

The SAR will develop a set of recommendations for follow-on work to advance one or more specific project concepts, including likely order-of-magnitude cost and level of effort, responsible agencies, and possible funding sources for implementation.

IV. Bibliography

This section will identify the bibliography as well as individuals and organizations consulted in the process of developing the SAR.