# Regional Transportation Plan

### Memo

### 7/17/19

As Bay Area stakeholder prepare to develop a Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan, existing models of regional planning can help us identify potential approaches and processes. This memo describes one such model - the Regional Transportation Plan.

### RTP Overview

- The RTP is long range transportation plan mandated by Federal law and developed by the
  metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in the Bay Area, this is MTC. It specifies how
  forecasted federal, state, regional, and local funds will be spent on transportation projects and
  programs. It does not mandate local action but provides vision and funding incentives. Any
  project requiring federal funding, federal action, or NEPA review not in the RTP cannot be built.
  It is updated every 4 years.
- The RTP utilizes a "hybrid" approach to regional planning, relying primarily on the County Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) to coordinate local responses and submit a constrained list of projects consistent with their County Transportation Plans. This has served as the basis for project nomination. Based on goals, vision and funding levels established by the state and local/regional stakeholders, MTC develops selection criteria and evaluates projects for inclusion in the plan (Figure 1).
- In California, state law requires the RTP be interwoven with regional housing, jobs, and land use plan to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, develop housing component, and protect open space (e.g. Sustainable Communities Strategy), which is called Plan Bay Area. For Plan Bay Area 2050, MTC has made significant changes to the process with the intention for the next regional plan to serve as much more than an RTP, acting as a regional blueprint for growth & investment. This current cycle has included the Horizon pre-planning and visioning process, as well as a Request for Transformative Projects, which has expanded participation for project submission to cities, CBOs, and members of the public.

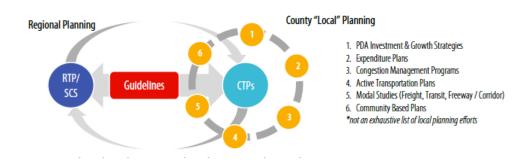


Figure 1: Example of how local congestion management agency plans inform regional transportation plan.

# Implications for Regional Shoreline Adaptation Plan

### RTP process generally works, with some limitations

- The 'Bottom Up' approach to soliciting projects via the CMAs has generally worked well to represent county and local transportation needs. Local capacity to conduct a planning process is supported through a variety of means such as local dedicated transportation sales taxes, vehicle registration fees, and state and federal planning grants depending on the county<sup>1</sup>.
- There is an inherent tension between CMAs and cities, among CMAs, as well as between MTC and CMAs, as the CMAs have the final say in projects submitted to MTC, there is competition among CMAs, and MTC ultimately decides on final project list. Some local projects or other innovative ideas inevitably don't make the list.
- Because of this, the current cycle's Request for Transformative Projects successfully expanded
  this participation. It may be prudent for the RSAP to consider multiple paths through which
  project ideas can be generated in order to get robust, creative and locally-relevant input.
- It is not obvious who could serve the CMA role for the RSAP. CMAs are historically transportation-focused, although some have increasingly expanded their scope to sustainability and housing.
- In the RTP, there is a need for the regional agency overseeing the plan to fill in gaps that naturally occur when most projects are locally generated (e.g. ensuring that a bike lane doesn't stops at a county boundary). For the RSAP, this is an equally crucial role for a regional agency to play.

### Transparent evaluation and participation process are critical

- The development of transparent performance criteria, evaluation methodologies, and technical modeling capacity is a core component of the RTP. Working more collaboratively with the local jurisdictions to develop the methodology for evaluating projects may increase 'buy in' for the RSAP and reduce tensions in project selection.
- The public participation plan for the RTP is required to be laid out in advance of the initiation of the planning cycle. A clear, predictable process from the beginning helps reduce confusion and uncertainty amongst the many stakeholders.

### Federal law and funding are essential to local participation

- The federal law is essential to the RTP model since it mandates that any project requiring federal funding, federal action, or NEPA review not in the RTP cannot be built. This is the major incentive for local participation in the planning process. It is unclear at this point what either the source of funding or other incentive for participation would be in the RSAP.
- Fiscal constraint is an important and controversial aspect of the RTP, since it forces project
  prioritization, but also has the effect of reducing the aspirational nature of the plan. Depending
  on the intended outcomes of the RSAP, the nature of fiscal constraint is an important
  consideration.

 $<sup>^1\,</sup>http://www.vta.org/sfc/servlet.shepherd/document/download/069A0000001EOGZIA4$ 

# Attachment A - Follow a Transportation Project From Idea to Implementation<sup>3</sup>

Get involved in your community!  Follow the work of your city council, county board of supervisors or local transit agency.  Take notice of plans or improvement programs developed by your city, county or transit agency.  Comment on projects proposed by your county CMA or on transportation improvements submitted to MTC for regional, state or	How You Can Make a Difference	Idea  In project dearms the adopted when a transportation need is identified, and a new idea is put forward. The idea can surface in any number of ways —from you, a private business, a community group or a government agency.  To be eligible for certain regional, state and federal funds, projects must be approved by must be cleared through the county congestion management agency (CMA) and become part of the Regional Transportation Plan.	New Project Ideas and Local Review	Attachment A – Follow a Transportation Project From Idea to Implementa
The Regional Transportation Plan is the earliest and best opportunity within the MTC process to comment on and influence projects. A project cannot move forward or receive any federal funds unless it is included in the RTP. MTC support of large projects occurs in the long-range plan and not as part of the TIP.  - Attend public meetings or open houses to learn about plans		The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/ Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Every four years MIC updates the Regional Transportation Plan (RIP), looking forward two to three decades. The plan identifies policies, programs and transportation investments to support the long-term vision for the Bay Area.  The RIP also must identify anticipated funding sources. The RIP can include only those projects and programs that can be funded with revenues reasonably expected to be available during the plan's timeframe. Projects identified in the RIP are generally drawn from the planning efforts of MIC, Association of Bay Area Covernments (ABAG), county congestion management agencies, transit agencies and local governments.  (ABAG), county congestion management agencies, transit agencies and local governments.  State legislation now requires that regional transportation plans incorporate a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) — provisions for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks by integrating transportation, housing and land use planning.	MTC's Long-Term Regional Transportation Plan	ansportation Project Fron
Get involved in planning for the whole Bay Area at MTC!     Comment at MTC committee level and commission-level meetings, special public hearings and workshops.     Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory Council which advises the Commission Leven micro now heart of inforcebacters metro now and the commission Leven micro now heart of inforcebacters metro now and the commission Leven micro now heart of inforcebacters metro now and the commission Leven micro now heart of inforcebacters metro now and the commission Leven micro now heart of inforcebacters metro now heart of the commission leven metro.  - The comment of the whole Bay Area at MTC!  - Comment at MTC we besite for committee level and the capendas and to keep current on activities (www.mtc.agov).  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings, special on activities (www.mtc.agov).  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings, special on activities (www.mtc.agov).  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings and workshops.  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings and workshops.  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings and workshops.  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings and workshops.  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings are not account to the commission level meetings and workshops.  - Follow the work of MTC's Policy Advisory and the commission level meetings are not account to the commission level meetings and the commission level meetings are not account to		Once long-term goals, policies and funding initiatives have been set in the RIP, MIC develops program criteria and funds specific projects.  Project Selection Process Funding Levels Established for RIP Programs/Initiatives: Guided by the RIP and short-term revenue estimates, MIC decides how much funding to apply to programs over a two-to-four-year period at a time. Project Selection Criteria Developed: For competitive programs under its control, MIC is guided by the RIP and develops and adopts minimum projects may be selected using MICs gram, project selection process. A agement agency, the California I tansportation receive federal funds or action Commission or a transit agency board. Some funding programs are non-competitive, meaning projects are funded according to a pre-determined formula or voter-searched initiative.	MTC's Project Selection Process	n idea to implementation
comment on a project's impacts  Comment on the environmental impacts of the project before the environmental document and project receive final approval by the board of the concording apency or in		Environmental Review and Project Development Activities The project sponsor conducts an environmental review, as required by either the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Final approval of the project design and right-of-way is required by the sponsoring agency and appropriate federal agency frederal Highway Administration or Federal Highway Administration or Federal Indis and/or actions are involved. Funding is fully committed by grant approval once the project meets all requirements and moves forward to phases such as preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction.	Construction/ Implementation	

Figure 2: Transportation projects from idea to implementation

# Additional Resources

<u>FAQ</u>

MTC Request for Regionally Significant Projects Guidance

PBA 2050 Timeline