



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE BAY AREA
An Inter-League Organization of the San Francisco Bay Area



February 22, 2006

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 8th Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Proposed Transit Connectivity Plan

Chairman Rubin and Commissioners,

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area supports a multi-modal, efficient, convenient, cost-effective, equitable and safe transportation system for the Bay Area. With regard to the proposed plan, we believe transit systems in the Bay Area should be linked into an efficient, reliable, convenient and affordable regional network that includes good feeder service, extensive hours of service, and easily comprehended directions for routes, schedules and transit hubs with universal rider passes for moving between systems.

Four years ago the League interviewed transit providers throughout the Bay Area and found that there was no overall plan for making the system work as a whole, especially as it affected points of transfer between systems. Decisions were pretty much made on an ad hoc basis; there were no uniform standards for signage, access, etc.

In the meantime, MTC has begun implementing the Trans Link universal pass, established internet and phone information systems that allow trip planning, provided route information, and has funded planning efforts for new station areas to make them more functional and user-friendly, including appropriate land uses in the nearby area.

The proposed connectivity plan would address the needs for improved signage and transit information displays at regional connection points. It provides for signs to have a consistent logo and format to improve recognition, and rider comprehension, as well as information displays with schedules, routes, maps and fares. The plan also addresses the need for schedule coordination, real-time technology for improving the connections and amenities at hubs for riders. These are all important features of a successful, seamless transit experience. LWVBA supports what is being proposed today, and urges adoption of these policies and programs.

A few other aspects need attention in our view:

1. Clear responsibility needs to be assigned for implementation of these features, according to the standards being established. The report talks about MTC working with its Transit System Partners and having the authority to enforce compliance, but it was not clear who is actually responsible, or how this would happen.

2. Information about schedules, fares, etc. needs to be better integrated. While the computer website is great for pre-planning a trip, based on multiple modes of transit, the phone information and maps are still segregated by operator. This is not easy to use by phone, etc. if one is mid-trip, or makes a last minute decision to travel. Not all riders have access to, or know how to use a computer.
3. After the policies have been implemented, it would be valuable to continue to monitor customer satisfaction, to determine that the improvements are working as intended, or to identify additional issues. To some degree your performance measures would address this aspect.

The proposed connectivity plan is an important feature of an integrated regional transportation network, especially one with so many separate operators. The policies, programs and improvements should make it easier for transit users to have easier and more successful trips. We support the adoption of the plan and hope you will consider our additional comments.

Linda Craig, President
League of Women Voters of the Bay Area