



# Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

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To inform the visioning and goal setting process, 20 opinion leaders were interviewed. These stakeholders included transit advocates, members of the Board of Supervisors, members of the MTA Board, executives from neighboring transit agencies and MTC, advocates for specific population groups, as well as business, tourism, and labor representatives.

This chapter anonymously summarizes the results of these conversations. The chapter is organized around a list of scripted questions asked of each stakeholder. Comments mentioned by more than one person are bolded with the number of people that made similar comments in parentheses.

**Note: The content of this chapter has been taken directly from stakeholder interviews. The factual accuracy of this content has not been analyzed. These comments are not necessarily the opinion of anyone other than the stakeholder making the comment.**

## What is your vision for transportation in San Francisco?

- **MTA should adopt a comprehensive multimodal vision that balances all modes, realizes the existing Transit First policy, and can be measured. (9)** As a multi-modal transportation agency, MTA is in a unique position to shape the City to make Muni work. Decisions for public right of way need to follow the Transit First policy, which dictates that more right of way should be dedicated to transit, walking, and biking. MTA may have more of a sense of a vision for Muni, but there is no overall vision for transportation in the City. There is a need for “complete streets.” DPT needs to be a full partner in MTA and with a shared vision. MTA’s success at moving people must be evaluated with performance measures. There is a need to increase the amount of dedicated right of way for Muni vehicles in congested areas. All transportation policies should seamlessly support Muni as the primary operator in a Transit First city.
- **A city where it is very viable for most people to live without cars. (8)** There needs to be a drastic improvement in the attractiveness of Muni. Muni should be much easier, faster, and cheaper to use than cars, as well as provide seamless connections to all major destinations in San Francisco and region. MTA needs to create the perception within and outside San Francisco that within our city it is very easy to get around by transit (like New York City).
- **Provide a reliable, fast, and competitive transit service while retaining comprehensive service network. (8)** Muni should be a system that balances the needs of people with several transportation choices with the safety net function required of an urban transit system. Muni should efficiently deliver commuters and all other types of riders to wherever they are going in the City. There should be a focus on equity that improves service to all riders. Muni should carry more people, be reliable, safe, efficient, and clean.
- **A viable public transportation system that supports the City’s economic vitality and growth. (6)** We can’t move people effectively on the limited roadway system – the City can only be viable if Muni is viable. Muni is part of our economic competitiveness within the City, as well as helping to attract businesses to the City.

- **A system that supports beautiful, livable street design. (4)** Manhattan achieves low rates of car use, but is not a model for San Francisco. European cities are more successful at combining successful transportation design with beautiful, livable, pedestrian-oriented streets. In this sense, we need “complete streets” that work well (for transportation) that are also well-designed and beautiful places for people. More of the public right of way needs to be reclaimed to create wonderful public spaces and enable walking, biking, and public transit.
- **Mobility and access is provided equally and affordably to all citizens. (2)** Transportation is a right. All people, regardless of income, need to have equal access to superior transportation services that include good mobility for all, equal access to opportunities, and affordable cost. People should not need to own a car to have mobility and access.
- A sustainable transportation network: clean energy, zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, financially sustainable.
- That the visitor experience of San Francisco include public transportation (outside of cable cars and historic streetcars) because it is so clean, easy, and useful (fast, frequent, and convenient).
- Land uses for San Francisco and the region that support sustainable transportation design. Concentrate jobs and housing in downtown San Francisco (locally) and regionally in downtown San Francisco and Oakland.
- A system with adequate equipment that is safe, functional, reliable, and ergonomically correct; operated by schedules that can be maintained humanely.

## What is the ultimate measure of the MTA’s success?

- **Percent of all trips made on transit; number riders on transit. (12)** Changing the mode split to more sustainable modes must be accompanied by improvements in the public realm (e.g., better street design).
- **Rider satisfaction on Muni. (8)** Focus on the customer (use quantitative and qualitative measures of customer satisfaction). The ultimate measure of success is a system with happy workers and riders who love and “own” their system. Muni should be recognized as part of the fabric of the City.

- **Door-to-door travel time.** (5) Muni needs to be competitive with auto travel times.
- **On-time performance.** (3)
- **Ensuring the benefits of Muni accrue to all San Franciscans, especially vulnerable populations.** (3) Muni should be accessible to all.
- **A system that encourages ownership by everyone – one that is valued as being as important as fire and police service** (2)
- The absolute number and rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities.
- The percent of household budget being spent on transportation.
- The number of people moved by corridor without massive congestion.
- Exceeding goals outlined in Proposition E.
- Unit costs that are no higher than the average of the largest systems in the Country.

### What should be, if any, the MTA's targets for mode share and/or car trips in San Francisco?

- **35-40% of all trips on transit.** (4)
- **60-70% of all trips on transit.** (4)
- **Most trips by sustainable modes: >10% bike, >60% by transit.** (3)
- **Muni may be close to “there” in terms of the percent of all trips on transit.** (3) The goal should be improving the satisfaction of those that ride, since being a “captive” rider is not about being transit dependant in San Francisco. Simply holding percent of trips on transit constant should be considered a victory given the increasing affluence in the City.
- **Muni should be the mode of choice for all trips inside San Francisco.** (3) Muni should be able to reach the heights of its ridership in the 1970s.
- At least 50% of all trips on transit.
- Decrease absolute number of car trips below 2005 levels – this will be necessary if more public right of way is used for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.

### In what areas is MTA currently most successful?

- **Coverage, both geographically and span of service, is very good.** (10)
- **Providing basic mobility without major disruptions and “melt downs”.** (6) Muni moves a large number of people at relatively low cost to the rider with reasonable efficiency. Despite its shortcomings, many people depend on Muni.
- **MTA is currently not successful at meeting any of its goals.** (3) TEP may be, if done well, a positive step in right direction.
- **Muni's service that operates in physically separated right of way (e.g., Muni Metro).** (3) Muni Metro service often provides a high quality customer experience and has the potential to provide reasonably high quality service. The Metro system can be used without feeling angry or frustrated by Muni.
- **Reasonable fares.** (3)
- **Limited stop and express Muni service work reasonably well.** (2)
- **System is open to public input.** (2)
- **Comprehensive paratransit support system and accessibility.** (2)
- **Most drivers are very good at their jobs and work under difficult circumstances.** (2)
- F line service runs well and is well used.
- NextBus information is a step in the right direction.
- Proof of Payment is the first step in the right direction on fare collection.
- No more than one transfer required to get just about anywhere.
- Muni has many middle class and “choice” riders.
- Muni's equipment (vehicles) is relatively new and in good shape.
- Popular support for transit and transit improvements.
- Special events services – for example, Giants games.
- Muni runs more frequently than in many cities.
- Safety on board the bus.
- Service to downtown especially in peak times.

- Long-term planning – delivering major projects (e.g., F-Line).
- Vehicle maintenance is generally good – we keep the rolling stock rolling.

### What are the most important areas for improvement?

- **Reliability. (16)** This is the single biggest factor keeping riders away. People want to know when the bus is scheduled to be there and, when they get to the stop, when the next bus will actually arrive. Reliability problems are complicated and have many causes including missing runs (caused by the lack of operator and vehicle availability), especially on rail lines. Adding service on Third Street may further stretch an already vulnerable fleet. Management of the streets themselves, as well as management of Muni’s routes, needs to be improved to reduce service gaps, bunching, and to make travel and wait times less unpredictable. This problem ends up in a self-perpetuating cycle – missing runs put strains on the drivers who are out there, which increases stress and absenteeism, which makes service worse. Don’t be afraid to take lanes away from cars or parking if the goal is to allow Muni to move people reliably.
- **Transit speeds need to be more competitive with driving. (7)** MTA is not implementing enough strategies to improve the speed and reliability of Muni.
- **Thinking strategically and sustainably at the same time as providing the basic service every day – MTA and Muni does not take the time to think ahead. (6)** MTA staff is strictly reactionary. The MTA Board of Directors is too insular – the Board does not set the agenda, but instead only respond to what Staff needs. Everything should not boil down to money – need to determine and plan for the system and service we need.
- **If the system is not financially sustainable, nothing else matters – not just one year of budget balancing, but long term stability. (4)** Muni needs to make long term financial plans to achieve its goals, and not fit its long-term plans within assumed financial realities.
- **Operator courtesy and sensitivity. (4)** There needs to be more operator training of all types. Driver courtesy is an essential part of customer service.
- **Muni in particular is not staffed to be a leader – it’s all about dealing with today’s fires. (4)** MTA and Muni are not a “force in the region” – they are not leaders, especially considering the numbers they carry. Muni isn’t really a leader in the City either, although it has policy muscle through Prop E, Transit First, TIDF etc.
- **Current routings are inefficient – TEP process will be beneficial. (4)**
- **Legibility and communication so that the rider knows what to expect and how to use the system. (4)** Better customer information (active real-time information and passive). Muni is mysterious, especially for first time riders (e.g., visitors). This also translates to working with the public on studies and planning efforts – need to keep people notified about what’s happening on their system.
- **Deferred maintenance and lack of coordinated capital planning results in periodic meltdowns and lack of vehicle availability. (4)**
- **Need to act aggressively to increase transit mode share. (3)** MTA not acting with enough desperation and ferocity to achieve its goals. Muni should not be the province of the transit dependant, or designed strictly around the needs of a particular group of riders. Muni needs to attract a broader clientele or not be satisfied with attracting largely those that have no options. Need to provide more service to meet ridership demand and grow ridership.
- **Increased frequency of service on core routes. (2)**
- **Improving work rules with its unions so that Muni has more flexibility to provide good service. (2)** Current work rules are extremely bad for Muni service as experienced by Muni’s riders – work rules need to be thoroughly reexamined and renegotiated. In past, Muni driver union leadership has been completely disinterested in improving service, instead focusing on forwarding the interests of its members (at the expense of Muni and its riders).
- **Need to stop robbing one line to improve service on another. Planning decisions are too often politically based. Take care of the neighborhoods first. (2)**
- Better safety – Muni pays too much in claims and many accidents are easily avoidable.

- Better personal security on the bus and at stops – people do not always feel safe when using Muni.
- Cleanliness of vehicles and stations.
- Improve the organization's focus on riders/customers.
- Better access to transit stops – remove pedestrian barriers to transit stops.
- Need plan to increase Muni's affordability – at present it is too expensive for many low-income residents.
- Overall, using Muni often is not a positive experience.
- Proof of payment implementation must allow all door boarding to allow for operational, speed, and reliability benefits.
- Further decreases in bus emissions.
- As a way to make positive shift in mode share, reduce overall demands on Muni, and reduce number car trips, MTA should gather the small amount of funding necessary to implement the citywide bicycle network.
- Communication within the organization, top down and bottom up.
- Muni tends to substitute coverage for frequency and reliability. It's a poor trade-off.
- Marketing needs to be improved to get the whole City to embrace Muni and ask what they can do to help the system run better.
- **Coordination with other operators – looking for creative ways to make the most of all the transit resources in the City. (2)**
- **People that live in San Francisco and drive to work. (2)**
- Specific areas
  - Northern part of the city is underserved by rail which would increase ridership.
  - Some neighborhoods are underserved – Potrero Hill, Dogpatch, Outer Mission, Bayview, Visitation Valley, southeast part of the City.
  - Western neighborhoods.
  - All parts of the City that are currently more than a 30 minute transit trip from downtown.
  - Analysis of origin/destination data will reveal opportunities.
  - Places where the City is likely to change. The western part of the City is essentially going to stay the same. Focus on new markets and needs, especially since it takes so long to implement service improvements.
  - SOMA service and connections to all other parts of the city.
  - Limited service needed on Third Street and Visitation Valley, beyond the 9X.
  - Pacific Street is underserved by the 12-Folsom.
  - Less emphasis on downtown and more emphasis on the neighborhoods.
  - 19-Polk out to Hunters Point has been cut too much.
  - 2005 service cuts really hurt the system.

### Are there markets which the MTA does not serve well now that should be served?

- **Serving choice riders other than downtown oriented peak hour work trips. (8)** Cross-town (non-downtown) service quality needs to be bolstered. "Choice" riders will need service that is much more reliable.
- **Tourism: major entry barriers for those not familiar with system. (4)** Perception is that it is difficult to use Muni; very difficult to find basic information, buy a map, etc.
- **Faster service to all outer neighborhoods. (3)**
- **Need limited stop/express service seven days a week to reach these rider markets on weekends. (3)** Need limited services in parts of the city that don't have it now.
- Specific groups
  - **Seniors (2)**
  - College students and major employers: lack of Class Pass programs.
  - Late night riders.
  - Markets that are not ideally served by a 40-foot or bigger bus.
  - Muni should focus on getting current riders to use the system more rather than searching for more markets.

### What are the growth markets in terms of geography, trip purpose, population market segment, and time of day?

- **Need to make Muni something that can easily be used at least 18 hours a day.** (7) Muni needs to offer almost equal amounts of transit service throughout the day, unlike most peak oriented systems. Need 24 hour service to help service grow throughout the day. (4)
- **Need to find a way to get more weekend and occasional trips on Muni.** (3) People who have many travel choices (cars) can be convinced to take Muni if it were more reliable.
- **Need to focus on the places in the City that are changing and have potential for change.** (3) Look for new origin destination pairs like Richmond – Mission Bay, connecting the UC campuses. SOMA in general may need a new look.
- **Less emphasis on downtown oriented trips and more emphasis on the grid network.** (2)
- **Low income communities.** (2)
- **Seniors.** (2)
- Muni should increase its share of trips coming to San Francisco from outside San Francisco.
- Cyclists.
- Visitors.

### What are the things riders want most from MTA and how best to provide them?

- **Reliability.** (18) Reliability defined as “predictability” not adherence to schedule since most Muni riders don’t carry schedules.
- **Information/Legibility.** (13) NextBus information at all stops. Need maps at all stops so riders can see their alternatives if their bus doesn’t come (or if NextBus says the next one is arriving a long time away). Multi lingual information at all stops.
- **Safety.** (10) Including pulling to the curb, operating in a safe manner at all times, and security at stops and on buses.
- **Quality customer experience.** (8) Using Muni needs to be a positive experience most of the time. Friendly drivers would help a lot, as would vehicles that are more comfortable and clean. Keeping drivers on the

same route would help riders get to know their drivers over time.

- **Speed.** (7) It should never take more than a half hour to get downtown from the outer neighborhoods, and transit should always be time-competitive with driving. Boarding times need to be much faster; BART’s boarding times and those in Curitiba, even on buses, are good examples.
- **Less crowding.** (5) Need less crowding, especially during peak times. Need more humane loading standards.
- **High frequency service throughout the day on core routes.** (5)
- **Affordable fares.** (4) Including raising fares for more riders but providing for lifeline passes.
- MTA to be more responsive as an agency.
- Better routings that better match origins and destinations.

### What are the barriers preventing MTA from achieving its vision, and how can these barriers be mitigated?

#### Organizational

- **They can’t achieve a vision if they don’t have one.** (11) There needs to be an integrated City vision for transportation that is articulated by MTA and other departments including SFCTA and DPW. City Hall should be part of directing vision. Clear vision and goals will be tools for addressing trade-offs among modes. Vision must be big and grand enough to inspire and actually shape the city; a small vision is not very useful or likely to be achieved. MTA needs to think big.
- **Staff culture** (11). Culture within Muni and MTA discourages active creation and execution of solutions to problems. Staff are reticent to come forward with solutions because they are worried about reprimands. There is little incentive to solve problems. There is no focus on the customer or on the quality of the product. Everyone is hunkered down in the “we can’t do that” mentality. There is no reward for figuring out HOW to make something happen. There need to be defined consequences for not getting the job done. Muni needs to empower people and get everyone moving in the same way.

- **Lack of staffing (7).** The MTA has deficient staffing levels in several critical areas – human resources, legislation, grant writing, analysts, and planners. Muni is left complaining about how the pie is divided, rather than affecting the pie. Deficient staffing means that employees are overwhelmed. Although Muni has attracted two recent great General Managers, the management ranks are still too thin, quality is spotty, and there isn't respect or focus on a professional middle level staff.
- **MTA administration and Board not aggressive enough about achieving its goals. (7)** The Administration and the Board seem unwilling to take on their own agenda and spend too much time on the day-to-day. They have the power to place ballot measures, work with politicians, and lobby to change state laws, but the organization does not appear to pursue these with any ferocity. MTA does not garner sufficient political support for the real changes that are necessary to significantly improve transit in San Francisco. Muni planning is too often on the defensive and instead should plot its course and take the steps necessary to achieve its goals. MTA is supposed to be independent, but too often the Board of Supervisors intervenes when someone complains (for example, stop consolidations get turned around by the Board). Too often details of community concerns (or just a few individuals) obscure larger goals and derail projects with a large net social benefit, with private interest prevailing over the public good. Not everyone is going to be happy with changes in San Francisco, and MTA needs to accept that. The MTA should work towards consensus, but be very willing to forge ahead to achieve a vision for the city as measured by concrete specific goals. Communities need to be involved from the beginning and should have a voice, but Muni has a responsibility to educate as well as listen. Everything can't come down to politics.
- **Transportation advocates are viewed as the enemy rather than a tool for political cover and community organizing. (4)** TEP process needs to hear voices of advocates (as well as riders). Riders themselves, rather than community groups, seem not to be represented in planning changes.
- **MTA does not do enough to discourage car use. (2)** Discouraging car use is an essential ingredient in shifting mode split. For example, to be time competitive with driving, transit can go faster, but car travel times can increase as well. If car use does not become less attractive while Muni becomes more, mode share will not shift very much.
- **An organization that keeps shuffling the boxes without asking whether this is really the best way to organize. (2)** It seems that the MTA spends too much time fixing blame rather than taking the time to figure out how to fix the problems. Upper management often has good ideas, but middle management does not know how to carry them out in a way that is positive and not just “discipline” based.
- **The system is too slow to adopt technological tools that could improve efficiency and effectiveness (2)** Proof of payment, Next Bus, automated vehicle location and other tools should all be in use already.
- Takes too long to hire and train operators.
- Staff have poor communication skills, defeating their own projects.
- Jobs that are too often filled by political appointments rather than the best skilled and trained person.
- MTA does not have enough independence, power, and authority to do what it needs to do to fulfill its responsibilities.
- MTA has all the independence and power it needs since the adoption of Proposition E, to manage its own budget and service and to take political cover from the Mayor and the Board. An independent MTA board needs to make the hard decisions and should be supported.
- Fear drives decision-making: fear of litigation, fear of angering minor vocal constituencies; fear of addressing labor issues.

#### Labor-Management Issues

- **Unions have direct links to elected officials and have no reason to work with management. (7)** Unions have little interest in improving service. For TEP to be successful, the operators need to be excited about it so its changes are not perceived as negative. It is often nearly impossible to do something as simple as reallocate service hours from one line to another because that would mean moving work from one division to another and the Union would object.

- **Union contracts that are out of touch with modern labor practices or even what the employees want.** (7) Union/management relations are not synergistic.
- **Everyone needs to pull together around achieving shared goals.** (4) This takes team building and communication throughout the organization. We have to get out of the blame game and shift the amount of energy spent on the worst 10% or 2% in any organization to instead focus on the top 10%.
- **Need to remove operator wages from the charter so that meaningful collective bargaining can take place.** (3) This is a core issue for Muni's costs – without real bargaining, the cost to provide service will always remain higher than it should be, Muni won't be able to create a good working environment, and it may be difficult to provide good service.
- **There isn't enough cooperation and trust between union and management.** Drivers have the feeling that "it all comes down on brown" – and that management does not support them when they try to do the right thing. There is no incentive to be the best.

### Service Delivery

- **Muni is way behind on every aspect of technology from fare collection to passenger counting to IT systems and vehicle design.** (4)
- **There is not enough focus on line/route management or service delivery.** (3) Muni needs not to just put more inspectors out on the streets, but needs more real two-way real time remote communication with a focus on service delivery. Give supervisors and drivers more authority and responsibility. Use modern real-time tools (such as NextBus's management capabilities) so that more supervision can be done from Central Control, rather than requiring large numbers of expensive people on the ground with minimal impact.
- **There is no systematic plan to improve service delivery.** (3) There is no management plan for service delivery that is felt throughout the agency -- no maintenance plan, no operations plan. First line supervisors are not well trained and do not have any real tools for managing service other than coming down on drivers.

- **Need to aggressively pursue more dedicated right of way for Muni.** (2)
- Trust – people won't ride if they have a terrible experience even one time. People don't trust Muni to produce a useable product.
- Schedules are inhumane and not realistic. Management doesn't want to hear about schedule problems because they often take money to fix.
- No one is analyzing vehicle break downs to better understand how to get a consistent and high quality fleet that will have full availability.

### Legal/ Governance

- **Governance issues.** (7) There is no political support or vision from the Mayor, Board of Supervisors or MTA Board. The SFCTA's role needs to be clarified and the TA and MTA need to be working together, not in competition. Need to figure out how to incorporate the SFCTA into MTA and make the SFCTA serve the goals of the MTA (2). Prop E should have done this. If the MTA is truly independent, it needs to have the power and authority to act that way. One crucial issue for the MTA is the city's current decision making process: The MTA does not have enough authority and cannot make changes quickly to improve transportation. Need to see how other cities have structured this process so that they can make good decisions quickly.
- **Need to reform level of service standards** (2) Current LOS/ CEQA measures prevent real improvements to transit, walking, and biking. Transit only lanes, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian improvements should be exempt from CEQA analysis. Internal inconsistencies in policies. Lack of performance measures for anything other than cars.

### Financial

- **Need to aggressively pursue new revenue sources.** (4) There is not enough money to provide enough service, and to provide service that is affordable. Needs more funding to improve service quality.
- There is no long term financial planning

### What can MTA and the City in general do to facilitate regional travel using transit?

- **Muni should focus on what it can really impact (9)** – local trips, and providing good service to key destinations or transfer points; Don't spend too much focus on low volume regional trips.
- **Fare and transfer coordination with other agencies for ALL riders, not just adult fast pass on BART. (6)** Unified fare media will help. This is an equity issue.
- **Physical redesign of intermodal centers. (3)** Need platform-platform connections, proper pulsed hubs at BART stations, appropriate locations for Caltrain stations, Golden Gate Transit center at Civic Center, timed transfers for lines that begin or end at a rail station, fare coordination.
- **Facilitate and encourage recreational trips being made on transit. (3)**
- **Encourage BART to operate longer hours. (2)**
- **Better integration with BART. (2)** Extend FastPass to Daly City BART station; Renegotiate off-peak rate for Muni riders on BART.
- **Take advantage of Sam Trans and Golden Gate services as if they were Muni. (2)** Don't let intergovernmental issues reduce the efficiency of resources. If other operators use our streets, they need to accept local riders.
- Muni is absent from the regional table – its needs to advocate for its needs in regional decision-making.
- Transbay Terminal must be extremely well-designed and must include Caltrain access.
- MTA needs to acquire more dedicated right of way, especially for regional carriers. For example, Golden Gate Transit should have dedicated right of way for its buses from Marin, over the bridge, on Lombard, down Van Ness, and into downtown. The Bay Bridge needs to have a bus lane (or very high occupancy lane) in each direction.
- Better integration with ferry services.
- Much better customer information about trips can be made, how to use Muni, and where it goes.
- Be more open to working with private businesses and others who might provide shuttle services that could help with regional trips.

### Are there examples of other transit agencies that “get it right” that could serve as models for MTA in any key areas? Are there peer systems to which to compare MTA?

- **New York City (10)** – useful service 24 hours a day (4); bus operations (2); fare structure and media (4) -- same price throughout region, and fares are very easy to buy/understand/use; lifecycle costing and capital planning.
- **Boston (4)**
- **Chicago (4)** – bus operations
- **Portland (4)** – holistic approach to streets, land-use connection, reliability, cleanliness, and lack of crowding; fare free downtown
- **Bogota (4)** – Implementation oriented (2); made the tough choices required to get the dedicated right of way to run very fast and reliable transit on the surface (2).
- **Seattle (3)**: fare free zone downtown (2). Using tunnels for more than one mode so that multiple routes benefit from large investment (i.e., both rail and buses operate in a tunnel downtown). The Central Subway should be designed this way.
- **Curitiba (2)** – made the tough choices required to get the dedicated right of way to run very fast and reliable transit on the surface.
- **London (2)** – bus intermodal center design
- **Paris (2)** – ubiquity of rapid transit network
- **Toronto (2)**
- Amsterdam: very easy to use system, emphasis on streetcars
- Vancouver BC: integrated transit and land use planning
- WMATA for rail operations
- Switzerland, especially Zurich (pulsed hubs, on-street transit management)
- Scandinavia and London: Signage
- Shanghai: passenger information is great (real time and passive), very easy to learn how to use the system, and then easy to get where you want to go
- Sydney: cleanliness, customer service orientation (e.g., drivers are very friendly and helpful)

- Barcelona, Bilbao, Stockholm, London: Intermodal station design
- Boulder, CO – effective branding; legibility of bus network (has been achieved even without rails in the ground); physical separation of bike network – focus on bike paths rather than bike lanes.
- Copenhagen – policy of reducing number of parking spaces in the city by 1% a year as a way to manage congestion and improve transit and bike friendliness.
- Denver

### What are the things transit operators and other employees want most from MTA and how best to provide them?

- **Less stressful working environment, especially for frontline employees who bear the brunt of rider frustration. (9)** This begins with equipment that is adequate, safe and ergonomically correct to reduce injury and stress on the job. It includes load factors that are less crowded to allow drivers to have a more humane environment to work in. Less crowding would improve operator safety as well. Need to offer more service that is more reliable. Some routes may require monitors or a second set of eyes on the bus for security. Operator assaults are a real problem that needs to be addressed. Stress also comes from inadequate running time and schedules that can't possibly be made. Making sure that all runs are filled would greatly reduce stress by managing crowding and helping passengers to be calmer and more courteous when on the bus.
- **Drivers and mechanics want to be heard and respected. (9)** Drivers want to be consulted. "Treat drivers with the same respect we give firemen!" Drivers want "communication, identification and assistance in implementation" which translates to open communication with management, respect, and a great working environment. Some union members aren't sure their unions speak for them because unions tend to represent the long time members and not the future needs. Need to recognize that Muni employees are Muni and City employees first and union members second. If their employers hear them instead of going through a grievance process, everyone is better off.

- **Support for a culture of working as a team to deliver quality service; support entrepreneurship to deliver quality, not "as long as you have a good excuse, you're OK." (6)** Restore pride in doing a good job. Muni employees do have pride and are hurt by constant negative stories and impressions. Muni employees need to know that they are supported and backed up by management, not that everyone is looking for an easy scapegoat when something happens. Need better support for the best drivers – make mentors of the best drivers. Better support all the way around.
- **Adequate compensation and benefits. (3)**
- New work rules that improve ability of employees to rely on other employees and improve accountability of management and line level employees. (2)
- **Better training and tools to do their job, including the changing focus on security. (2)**
- **Better street operations, street design, and customer interface to make it easy to provide good service. (2)** Higher usage of prepaid fares. Drivers want to drive buses and routes that are easy to keep on-time – buses that are easy to keep reliable, have few unexpected delays.
- **Certainty or at least stability– make change in the organization more predictable. (2)** Make it possible for a driver to feel ownership over his vehicle, his trip and his riders.
- Need to make the Joint Labor Management Board (JLMB) more effective and inclusive.
- Job security.
- Less emphasis on discipline and more emphasis on rewarding the best.

### Do MTA's existing service design policies (line spacing, line headways, stop spacing, load factors, etc.) provide the necessary guidance to redevelop the system?

- **Stop spacing needs to consider topography and perhaps demographics, but within that context, stops should generally be more widely spaced. (14)** Current or eventual spacing standards (in feet) need to be viewed as an average, not as a ceiling for the distance between stops. Muni doesn't adhere to its own standard which would make a huge step

forward. Problem seems to be worst on trolley lines and LRT lines where passing isn't possible, so line management is more complicated. Be careful when thinking about stop consolidation not to neglect the seniors and disabled riders who make up such a high percentage of current ridership. Muni needs to apply stop spacing standards consistently throughout the city so that it is fair; little concession should be made for topography, no concessions made based on demographics. Current policies are ignored – even secret.

- **Need to look at places that are over served.** (7) and consider more short turns and other techniques that provide capacity to places that are always over crowded. Look at new ways to deliver service – alternatives to the fixed route bus for certain low volume times of day and parts of the City. Empty buses should not be tolerated. Muni needs to reengineer itself with realistic and complete data and if we're going to invest resources in unproductive service, it should be a policy choice that's clear about the number of people served and the cost of serving them – both in dollars and in alternative uses of those resources.
- **Speed and comparative travel time with car are most important missing policies.** (3) Muni should consider places where more limited and express services could be added, converting some of the local service. This would be relatively low cost and doesn't require any major new operating initiative.
- **Implementing any policies will require data collection and monitoring.** (2) Make real informed decisions and monitor what you do; not politically driven decisions that are often half measures.
- Muni needs to set policies that will work in both good and bad financial times, similar to AC Transit's policies that equate density and service frequency. Policies make it clear that when 10-minute service is called for, and when 15 minute service won't be tolerated.
- Frequency – On Muni's core routes, service should operate every 5 to 7 minutes for 18 hours a day. If current frequency policies are kept, their hours (span) need to be expanded.
- Needs for residents and visitors are about the same
- Specifics:
  - Transit lines should never be just one block apart (e.g., Clement Street, Valencia).

- Outer Balboa is over served, short turns could help.
- Too many buses go all the way down Market Street, consider short turns.
- Consider multiple inner terminals for some routes, similar to 38's multiple outer terminals.
- Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights may be over-served.
- Express routes may operate on days or times when they are not needed (i.e., Martin Luther King's Birthday), but too short a span on regular work days.
- Community service routes should be treated specially, with frequent stops, even flag stops, smaller vehicles and a local neighborhood orientation. These routes should not be "robbed" when service is missing elsewhere.

### Given the trade-offs inherent in service planning what should be MTA's top priorities? Further, should all areas of the city have access to some transit? If so, are lifeline frequencies enough?

- **Stop spacing should be examined – there may be too many stops contributing to reliability problems and slow travel times.** (9)
- **Top priority is to provide reliability on the most frequent lines.** (6)
- **Muni needs to provide different types of services for different types of customers.** (6) More limited and express services, and potentially BRT, perhaps premium priced, without leaving transit dependant behind. Small buses and community shuttles should be part of the mix too. Muni needs to be faster and be time-competitive with driving– changes should err in this direction, rather than less. Muni needs to aggressively make bold changes to become faster and more reliable.
- **There are places that are overserved, especially on long lines.** (6) Consider more short turns which could improve reliability, etc. Abandon routes that don't meet productivity standards/thresholds. Not every line is a 40 foot bus route and alternative delivery strategies should be considered. Small buses on community service lines would be an easy victory.

- **Focus service on high density areas and core routes that have higher populations of transit dependency.** (4) Less geographic coverage is acceptable. Muni should maintain complete coverage in the City, bus focus service on high density areas.
- **When meeting transit goals is in tension with automobile congestion goals, transit should always trump autos.** (3) Need real implementation of Transit First.
- **Lifeline service should be provided at least every 30 minutes to all corners of city, with higher frequencies based upon density and transit dependent populations.** (3) 30 minutes is minimum service frequency that is useful. Service at this frequency needs to be reliable. Every 60 minutes is too infrequent.
- Should emphasize the comfort and convenience of passengers and people who live in the neighborhoods Muni serves.
- There are no neighborhoods that have too much service; buses and Metro lines are always crowded.

**Are there infrastructure and fleet issues (for example, vehicle types and passenger facility needs) that should be considered in the MTA TEP process?**

**Vehicles**

- **Current vehicles create boarding and alighting delays – need wider doors, level boarding, all-door boarding.** (5) Low floor vehicles will lower claims because they are easier for the elderly to use.
- **Entire light rail fleet should be low-floor.** (3)
- **Current vehicles ignore critical quality of life issues, especially noise and passenger comfort.** (3) All vehicles should include handholds that go to the front of the bus. Some accessibility features have been lacking on newer vehicles. Handholds should be low enough for shorter people. Hooks that allow people to hang their grocery bags and hold on are ideal. Comfortable seats would be great – why should we assume that San Franciscans won't treat a nice bus with respect. Driver ergonomics should be a priority. All buses should be clean – people respect something that looks respectable.
- **Fleet that reduces emissions.** (2)

- **Need to replace trolleys.** (2) Electric trolley buses should be replaced with hybrid diesels – these offer more flexibility (for passing buses) and speed. Also allow more flexibility to offer limited stop and express services. The current trolley fleet, including the new ETIs, is not reliable and should be replaced.
- **The fleet is in better condition than it has been in a long time.** (2)
- 30' buses have never been replaced and are being phased out. Need to consider the needs and utility of a small bus fleet.

**Surface Stops**

- **NextBus needs to be fully implemented.** (10) Real time arrival information should be provided throughout system, especially at major transfer locations. Metro stations and major bus stops need much more real-time information; NextBus is good, but not everything it could be.
- **More and better bus shelters.** (6) Bus stops over-emphasize anti-homeless, anti-vandal indestructibility over passenger comfort. Need more comfortable seating, better route and schedule information. Tilt seats are hard for seniors. Improved lighting will increase security at shelters, as will more emergency phones. Bus stop shelters are in disrepair. Graffiti is up and needs to be addressed.
- **Develop stop standards and include this in the overall goals of the system. Include “station like” stops for key bus stops.** (3)
- **Need stop bulb outs on all stops, especially streets with high traffic volumes.** (3) Buses should never have to pull in and out of traffic. Center platforms work well too instead of bulbs.

**Metro Stations**

- **Metro stations should be converted to allow low-floor LRTs.** (3)
- Need more seating in Metro stations
- Need clear signage to elevators in Metro stations.

**Streets**

- **Need dedicated right of way and/or signal prioritization on all major lines.** (3) Need huge increase in amount of dedicated right of way. These need to be colorized to improve performance and legibility

of routes and to demonstrate importance of transit. Consider transit lanes in the middle of the street, especially Geary and Van Ness. This would improve reliability and safety. On Mission Street, consider a Market Street type arrangement with side platforms, even if you can't have dedicated lanes.

- **We need a thorough understanding of what transit preferential techniques work best in which situations and the flexibility to apply what's needed until reliability reaches standard on every line, starting with the most heavily used. (2)**
- Focus on pedestrian safety on all high volume transit streets
- Need countdown signals at every intersection in the City.
- Priority signals hold the green too long and create a wake of congestion behind, especially on very frequent routes.

#### Network/ Service Design

- **Need a comprehensive plan for BRT and LRT implementation throughout the City. (4)** Whole network needs to be implemented as quickly as possible. BRT is the key to improving transit travel times and transit image.

#### Other

- **Invest in the best preventative maintenance and state of the art facilities to support the operation. (5)** These are nearly always overlooked. Muni needs to develop a long range facilities plan and manage its assets.
- **Focus on facilities, which are often overlooked, but contribute to employee morale, and the ability of people to do their jobs. (2)**
- Will likely need another bus yard to accommodate BRT vehicles and the additional service necessary to achieve mode share goals.
- Capital investments should be made only with the goal of reducing operating costs.
- System needs more legibility. Major transit lines should run both directions on same streets; use contra-flow transit lanes where streets are one-way. Need much better signage and way finding.
- Region's operators need to share information to design

and procure the best equipment out there.

- More places to buy lifeline passes
- Muni needs to focus on service efficiency and effectiveness and not on "building things."

#### **If a sustainable financial operation is a key goal, what are the most promising avenues for increasing revenue and/or reducing costs?**

##### To increase revenue

- **Increase fare revenue by increasing average fare. (15)** Raise fares including passes and keep doing that consistently as inflation increases. Deal with the deep discounts on Muni and bring average fare revenues up. Muni should aim to have higher farebox recovery ratio targets. Provide discounted fares (e.g., senior discount) only during off-peak times. System wide proof of payment with a plan to eliminate or control fare evasion (4). Charge higher fares for special services (e.g., express and limited stop service). (4) Riders will pay more for premium services, including express services over longer time periods, BRT, potentially Fast Pass on BART.
- **Parking charges are the key to Muni ridership and congestion reduction. (11)** MTA still plays both sides of the parking policy game. More specifically, charge market rates for all parking in City, ensuring adequate availability at all times. Charge new parking impact fees to address Muni's congestion costs at their source. Reducing parking requirements saves the developers a lot of money. Find a way to recoup some of that for Muni with an in lieu fee or other parking space tax. Should increase neighborhood parking permit costs and charge for more curbside parking. Increase all parking costs, and eliminate any monthly discounts in City garages. There should be no free parking for anyone downtown. Use modern parking technology to adjust pricing, extend meter hours and make changes as needed to maximize revenue.
- **Muni should not pursue additional new revenue sources until it can prove it can deliver better service and reduce its costs. (9)** Muni must focus on delivery and optimize what it has before it goes back for more money.

- **Find ways to make downtown businesses pay for the services their employees receive. (5)**
- **Consider a downtown congestion pricing program. (4)** The City may not be ready for this for 5 years, but it will happen eventually.
- **Reestablish the vehicle license fee local add-on. (4)**
- **Restructure routes to eliminate redundancy and provide better service on fewer lines. (4)** Less geographic coverage is OK.
- **Higher state, regional, and local gas taxes that fund transit operations and capital improvements. (3)** Gas tax increase at the next dip in prices.
- **Consider 1/4 cent sales tax. (3)** To get a 2/3 vote, create a tax that does more than one thing – for example funding healthcare AND MUNI or Muni AND homeless services. Do a better sales job.
- **Consider ways to get every City resident to pay a fee in exchange for a deeply discounted or free Muni pass. (2)**
- **Increase sales of monthly passes. (2)**
- **Vehicle impact fee. (2)**
- **Fight for allocation formulas based on daytime population and/or ridership, not overnight population. (2)** MTA needs to find partners for this and take a leadership role. Get a bigger slice of the money already available to the region.
- Maximize use of Proposition 42 funding, and make as much available to operating as possible rather than capital.
- Going to the voters is always difficult so make it count. Don't keep going back to the well for \$5 or \$7M. Make it count.
- Bridge toll increase – make the second dollar permanent and consider adding another one and dividing it by ridership to transit operators.
- Make new housing developers pay into TIDE.
- No fare increase until plan in place for service improvements
- Citywide parcel tax.
- See February 2006 SPUR policy paper for ideas for new revenues.

- Create combined transit passes that offer entry at museums
- Increase flexibility to get operating funds from sales tax, especially if capital projects aren't fully funded.
- Increase enforcement of parking and traffic issues.
- Maximize the opportunities for air rights development over facilities including parking garages.
- Make sure people understand Muni is an essential City service like police and fire and don't stop until it's funded adequately.

#### To reduce costs

- **Address disability and worker's comp. Get people to come to work! (6)** This isn't just about enforcing rules, it's about making a less stressful work environment, improving vehicle ergonomics and doing what has to be done to intervene early rather than reacting when someone is disabled. Consider incentives to encourage people to be their best rather than finding ways to punish those that are not doing what you want.
- **Renegotiate labor contracts to improve work rules/practices. (6)** to increase productivity and decrease unit costs.
- **Make the system more productive and efficient. (5)** Use technology to improve efficiency: NextBus data should be used for line supervision and service planning. Emphasize efficiency in vehicle design. Fare collection is also a technology issue. We may be losing a fair amount of revenue in fare evasion. Our tear off transfer is a useless fare mechanism. Look at fare practices elsewhere.
- **Focus on preventative maintenance. (5)** Especially true for the Breda light rail vehicles which are deteriorating rapidly. Diesel's are getting to be a problem too. Need to extend the working life of vehicles. Better maintenance will allow Muni to reduce spare ratios, which will lower organizational costs.
- **Change street design and management to help Muni be more efficient. (3)** Focus on Transit Preferential Streets improvements to reduce delay, including signal prioritization, stop sign removal, dedicated transit lanes, queue jumps. Realize the promise of Prop E by combining some street functions across modes, such as traffic control and street supervision to be more efficient and reinforce common goals.

- **Optimize stop spacing for ridership, eliminating many bus stops. (3)**
- **Have DPW prioritize road maintenance on transit routes. (2)** Poor road conditions increase cost of Muni maintenance and repairs. Coordinate projects on the street to minimize impacts on neighborhoods.
- **Bay Area wide purchasing to control costs. (2)** Consider a coordinated purchasing pool with other Bay Area operators for as many things as possible including fuel, parts and other consumables. Consider a Bay Area spec for standard buses with MTC entering into long-term procurement contracts.
- **Decrease use of diesel fuel (via more fuel efficient vehicles or more electric vehicles). (2)**
- Look at middle management – every \$100,000 a year job should be justified.
- Muni has already cut too much – we’re past the fat and into the bone.
- Do a comprehensive evaluation to find ways to convert paratransit riders to fixed route including free Muni for wheelchair users; travel training for those that need it.
- Streamline purchasing and hiring and all of the areas where the structure adds political burden.
- Let drivers “trade back” some of their sick leave for pay when they retire. It’s an incentive not to use the time, which some consider to be “theirs”.

### What should MTA’s first priorities be?

- **Delivering a reliable service with predictable wait times is the most important priority. (10)**
- **Define vision first, AND THEN figure out how to achieve it. Don’t be constrained by perceived limitations. (7)** An organization as big as the MTA (and Muni) needs a strategic direction; everything else (goals, policies, behaviors) will flow from this. This requires the longest process (like the TEP) but is the only way to make sound fundamental changes for the better. Vision needs to be clear and aggressive to dramatically shift mode share towards transit. MTA needs to communicate clearly to citizens and policy makers the tradeoffs involved to achieve the goals. Goals need to be multi-modal and inter departmental. Goals need to be supported and driven through

by the Mayor’s office. Start with one division at a time and get everyone pulling the same way.

- **Focus on the customer and the customer’s experience. (6)** Develop a culture of service delivery and empowering people to deliver good service.
- **MTA needs to take a leadership role in its duty to find new sources of funding. (3)** MTA should not wait for the politics to be right – it needs additional funding ASAP.
- **Get the long term financial house in order. (3)**
- **Improve speed on existing routes so Muni is time-competitive with the car. (3)**
- **Add resources where Muni has always been lacking to take a leadership role in the region. (3)** Create an Executive Deputy for HR and have it work non-stop on labor issues, staff development, benefits and workers comp and industrial injury issues. Show you’re serious about enforcing the contract and getting people to work in a well compensated humane environment.
- **MTA needs to embrace “Complete Streets” movement and plan for all modes of transportation in an integrated way. (2)**
- Improve maintenance
- Accurate information so that Muni can tell the truth, and so that problems can be analyzed fairly.
- Provide different types of service for different markets – limited, express and BRT service for the choice market without hurting people who need a more tailored service. Eliminate “one size fits all” thinking
- Focus on transit justice – make it equal for all.
- Do something visible to help Muni’s image and show it can accomplish something important. First steps should include neighborhood shuttles, more limited stop service and expanding successful expresses.

### Other Comments

#### TEP Focus

- MTA should do simple fixes for Muni performance (e.g., stop consolidation and stop sign removal) as quickly as possible
- MTA needs to think more like a business – with transit as its first priority.

- Need to have a rapid transit network – a network is the only way to achieve transit mode share goals
- MTA does not realize the desperation of the transportation situation in San Francisco and is not acting quickly enough, with enough desperation, to make needed improvements.
- Balance future thinking and planning with the need to delivery quality service daily.
- There needs to be a balance between modes that is about moving people and fairly dividing space. Make clear that we are not talking about prohibiting cars and possibly killing vitality. We need to move people without risking our vitality.
- Use the independence of the MTA Board to do the right thing.
- TEP is most exciting for its focus on system efficiency. “Stick to the knitting”
- MTA still divided into single-mode silos. Need to integrate planning across modes and integrate transportation and land use planning with Planning Department
- TEP will not get very far without the political will to make tough choices and significant changes in the city.
- TEP must be bold and make bold changes: these start with a big vision and clear goals.

### TEP Process

- **This study needs to be asking the question – If we were starting over, would we do it this way? (3)**
- TEP process (specifically the policy advisory group) needs more rider representation to balance out managerial and union representation, as well as more pedestrian advocates, bicycle advocates, and planning advocates – this should be a multimodal study that establishes mode share goals not just for transit. Because it will chart a vision for the city, planning groups (and the planning department) should have more involvement.
- Concern that the Citizens Advisory Group will not be respected, will not have the importance or weight it deserves.
- TEP process must be driven by the answer to the question: “What kind of city do we want to be and live in?” This is a unique opportunity that won’t come around again.

- One essential ingredient to achieving the city’s goals is actively discouraging car use.

### Specific Ideas for Muni/ MTA

- **Need much better enforcement of transit-only lanes. (3)**
- **Improve the current Muni system map. (2)** Current map is inadequate and needs to be dramatically improved. Muni maps should highlight higher frequency routes to make trade-offs transparent to riders.
- Need to get control of temporary disability permits at meters, which hamper street enforcement.
- Must reduce variation in boarding times – key issue for reliability
- Use light-duty personnel as “loaders” at busy stops to get people legally in the back door as a first step toward a full proof of payment system.
- Nat Ford needs to get out and meet with riders and every group he can. Don’t take the staff as gospel.
- MTA needs a unified message and image.
- Bicycles should not be allowed on Muni Metro. It is crowded 24/7 and will be a hazard with the amount of wheelchair use on the Metro lines.
- Try to make fixed route riders out of potential para-transit users with free Muni passes for wheelchair riders.
- Nat Ford needs to meet with the accessibility committee – he has not responded to invitations to do so.
- DPT puts too much emphasis on getting people to the bridge. Put traffic control officers in the neighborhoods where they will help San Franciscans.
- Need to examine pedestrian/cable car safety issues and pedestrian conflicts with LRTs.
- Supervision and first level of management should be clearly distinguished from the rank and file. There needs to be clear definition and training for these jobs.
- Clement service could be limited to a local shuttle, or the branch of the 38 that goes to the VA hospital.
- Honest information to passengers.
- Honesty – Let’s be honest about what a transit system

can and can't do. If your car trip has variability, then the bus transit trip will too. We need to set reasonable targets, meet them and be honest about them.

- Bus service changes for Third Street implementation need to be rethought.
- 66 Quintara is often empty.