

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Task Team (TT)

Minutes of Meeting
April 1, 2005, 9th meeting

Participants: Peter Steinert, Chair (HQ Mass Transportation), Ina Gerhard, Recorder (HQ Mass Transportation), Tunde Balvanyos (AC Transit), Tim Buchanan & Jerry Champa (HQ Traffic Ops), Bruce Chapman (HQ Research and Innovation), Tilly Chang (SFCTA), Antonette Clark (HQ Design), Jim Cunradi (AC Transit), Don Dean (HQ Research and Innovation), Jean Finney (Caltrans District 4), Corinne Goodrich (SamTrans), Bob James (Caltrans, District 11), Jim Jarzab (Commuter Associates), Julie Kirschbaum (SFCTA), Ahmad Rastegarpour (HQ Traffic Ops), Peter Strauss (San Francisco MUNI), Martha Styer (HQ Traffic Ops), Sonja Sun (HQ Research and Innovation), Jon Twichell (AC Transit), Mike Valcho (Caltrans, District 7), Sam Zimmerman (DMJM Harris)

Introductions/Approval of April 4 Minutes

Following the introductions and a brief review of the main highlights of the last meeting minutes, the TT approved the minutes without comments/changes. Peter Steinert thanked the subcommittee organizers for their work in getting the meetings organized.

Sam Zimmerman Presentation

Sam Zimmerman focused his presentation on the range of activities other state DOTs are involved in with regard to BRT (and rubber-tired services in general). His presentation is attached to these minutes. As an important funding source for the future Sam referenced Section 1205 of House Bill 3550 of the Transportation Equity Act (TEA LU) that provides for funding of \$500 million per year (\$3 billion over 6 years) for ITS improvements (targeted allocation), once reauthorization is signed.

In addition to the resource documents the TT is already familiar with, Sam mentioned the following two useful references for everyone who is working on BRT:

1. TCRP A-23A, BRT Practitioner's Guide (to be completed in October 2005):

A logical extension to the BRT Implementation Guidelines (TCRP Report 90, Volumes I and II). The document will focus on a number of important planning activities such as ridership forecasting and traffic operations analysis as well as the determination of the relative cost-effectiveness of the various BRT treatments.

2. BRT Planning Guidelines:

Prepared by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, the document is oriented to BRT systems in developing countries. It is much more policy and process oriented than TCRP Guidelines which focus on specific elements of BRT.

Available here: <http://www.itdp.org/STe/STe4/readSTe4/BRT.PDF>

Sam emphasized the state's potential role in championing legislation proposed by transit operators who don't have the resources and access to state legislators to do so; and the active role states can play in promoting transit options in general and, where appropriate, BRT in particular by participating in the planning process at the regional/local level. New

York State DOT, for example, is at the forefront in pushing local agencies to pursue an aggressive transit agenda. State DOTs have different approaches to funding non-state highway BRT/transit projects, for example, direct project funding through local assistance or, like New York DOT, where the state funded TSP for the city of New York. He distinguished **busways** (independent of freeway ROW, similar to rail, for example in rail corridor) from **HOV and HOT lanes** (designed for and oriented towards SOV-use, not ideal for BRT because of lack of access to transit facilities and stations) and **transitways** (part of freeways, but designed with transit in mind).

Sam believes that the TT is moving in the right direction: To do a policy paper first, then address questions of what the Department is prepared to fund, provide technical assistance for, and what it will allow (based upon defined standards and warrants). In particular, he applauded the effort to get input from the operators who have to live with the guidelines once completed.

Draft Guidelines Outline

The draft outline submitted for discussion is based on the MTI course outline and Caltrans HOV Guidelines. Comments and suggestions were as follows:

- ⇒ There is a disconnect between outline and subcommittee focus areas. Where should subcommittees feed into the outline?
- ⇒ Funding has to be addressed, eventually to be added between Statutes and Policies in Chapter 1.
- ⇒ Subcommittees have to research their respective policies and statutes.
- ⇒ Will there be resource allocations to the districts if more involvement at the local level is desired? What about the Department hiring a consultant? The whole group is struggling to get something going and would like to have a BRT expert such as Sam take the lead.
- ⇒ The group has what it takes to move the effort forward. Lack of specific direction can also be an opportunity for flexibility.
- ⇒ Disconnect between the lack of resources Caltrans is willing to commit to the TT efforts on the one hand, and the expressed commitment to BRT on the other hand.
- ⇒ Caltrans should institute a BRT coordinator.
- ⇒ FTA could organize national forum of state DOTs on BRT.
- ⇒ Guidelines ought to provide process within the Department, clearly determining who does what, where to start and where to go next.
- ⇒ Suggestion for transit operators to develop and submit a white paper to Caltrans management to give formal support to Caltrans TT staff members.
- ⇒ If we stop working on the Guidelines and start working on a White Paper, wouldn't we be going one step back? We don't want to lose momentum as repeated requests are coming to Traffic Ops.
- ⇒ In discussions of the Infrastructure Subcommittee, support/ policy/ coordination issues were felt to be most important. A policy paper is needed as opposed to going back to management with a White Paper.

Overall, there was a feeling that the outline does not give enough structure and that a policy paper would help in setting the framework, starting with developing the policies,

translating them into guidelines, and then assign resources. It was suggested to get the policy paper approved first before doing other parts of the guidelines. The policy paper could also be the introduction for the guidelines. It was also suggested to have transit operators join Caltrans staff when submitting the policy paper to management; and to try to get Randy Iwasaki to attend meeting since he has been very supportive of BRT.

The D4 group volunteered to take the lead in working on the policy paper and submit a draft at the next meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

Technology Subcommittee: Don Dean reported on their first meeting. 12 people were in attendance. Group discussed focus area and added 7th issue: Data Integration and Exchange. Martha Styer clarified that Caltrans has adopted the Federal Highway Administration's "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2003, as amended by the California Supplement. This reference supersedes the traffic signals portion of Chapter 9 of the 1996 Caltrans Traffic Manual (as amended). (Caltrans is moving to new so called 2070 signal controllers and will no longer support 1970 technology).

The California Supplement website is:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/mutcdsupp/>

Infrastructure Subcommittee: Jerry Champa reported on their first meeting. 6 people were in attendance. It was a largely organizational meeting. Chris Schmidt had developed a list of 46 relevant infrastructure items to be addressed under 7 major categories. A 6-hour in-person meeting is scheduled in San Diego.

Service Planning/Identity Subcommittee: Jim Cunradi reported on their first meeting. This whole area is largely the purview of the transit operators. The group discussed:

1. Pavement coloring to create BRT brand – this is something the operators want but presents a challenge to Caltrans.
2. Freeway signage to refer to facilities.
3. The impact of frequent headways on traffic signals and overall traffic flow.

The group needs clarification as to how the Subcommittee should feed into the outline.

Next Steps

- D4 group will work on policy paper.
- Sam Zimmerman's presentation will be sent out to TT members.
- Subcommittees will continue their work

Next Agenda Items

- Policy paper draft document
- Subcommittees update/ changes to outline
- Timeline revisited

Next meeting

The next videoconference is scheduled for:

Friday, May 6, 2005, 9 – 11 am

Please also note that we have also scheduled videoconferences for:

Friday, June 3, 2005, 9 – 11 am

Friday, July 1, 2005, 9 – 11 am

Friday, August 5, 2005, 9 – 11 am

Minutes by: Ina Gerhard