



**SF Environment**

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EDWIN M. LEE  
Mayor

MELANIE NUTTER  
Director

**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT  
POLICY COMMITTEE**

**\*RESCHEDULED MEETING APPROVED MINUTES  
MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2012, 5:00 P.M.**

**CITY HALL, ROOM 421  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102**

**\*The April 9, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Policy Committee was rescheduled to Monday, April 30, 2012.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Commissioners Johanna Wald (Chair), Ruth Gravanis (Vice-Chair).

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call.** The Policy Committee meeting convened at 5:08 p.m. Present: Commissioners Wald and Gravanis.
- 2. Approval of Minutes of the April 4, 2012 Policy Committee Special Meeting.** (Explanatory Document: April 4, 2012 Policy Committee Draft and Approved Minutes) (Discussion and Action) Upon Motion by Commissioner Gravanis, second by Commissioner Wald, the April 4, 2012 Meeting Minutes were approved without objection (AYES: Commissioners Wald and Gravanis).
- 3. Public Comments:** Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda. There was no public comment at this time.
- 4. Presentation on California's High Speed Rail Project.** (Explanatory Document: Fast Start High Speed Rail for the Peninsula Presentation) Staff Sponsor: Melanie Nutter, Director; Speakers: Gillian Gillett, Director of Transportation Policy, Mayor's Office; Sharareh (Shari) Tavafrashti, Principal Engineer, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Informational Presentation and Discussion)

Ms. Shari Tavafrashti presented on the California High Speed Rail Authority's leadership role on the San Francisco Peninsula Corridor High Speed Rail Project and the "Fast Start" proposal for peninsula rail, reporting on topics of discussion that include:

- San Francisco Peninsula Corridor high-speed rail segment from the San Francisco Transbay Transit Center to the San Jose Diridon Station.
- San Francisco's commitment to high speed rail, Technical Working Group genesis, and participants.
- Transbay Transit Center Phase 1 project renderings.
- Evolution of California High Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA) Draft Business Plan and SFCTA's and Legislative Analyst's selected concerns with the Plan.
- San Francisco's "Fast Start" proposal and concepts, benefits, implementation strategies, and cost-effectiveness.
- Proposed phasing and comments on the revised Business Plan.
- Caltrain Capacity Study support of blended operations and benefits.
- Early investment strategies, project schedules, challenges, and funding plans.
- Next steps and SFCTA's role.

Commissioner Gravanis pointed out that the artist's rendering of the Transbay Transit Center shows a lot of reflective glass that does not appear to comply with San Francisco's new bird-friendly design for buildings. A discussion was held on resolutions in place to minimize local opposition to the plan and proposed timeline from beginning construction to completion of the peninsula project.

Commissioner Wald discussed her concern that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemptions would be granted for the project and strongly urged compliance with all CEQA laws.

Ms. Gillian Gillett, Director of Transportation Policy, Mayor's Office, Technical Working Group Co-Chair, discussed Caltrain's origin in San Francisco and regional consensus for the electrification plan that would reduce emissions by ninety-percent and increase ridership throughout the Caltrain corridor. She pointed out that the project is a way to plan for growth in an environmentally-friendly way that would help resolve issues surrounding Bay Area flight congestion. It was reported that the Mayor's Office is exploring alternatives to storing trains at the current CalTrain yard location that would be more environmentally-friendly and would not undermine the ability to reach the downtown extension. Solutions are being sought on how to implement high-speed rail sooner than the current Business Plan's projected date of 2028 through reviewing opportunities along the CalTrain corridor.

Public Comment: Mr. David Pilpel spoke in support of CalTrain electrification throughout the Peninsula and San Francisco's Downtown extension. He urged that CalTrain not relinquish use of its yard on 4<sup>th</sup> and Townsend until the downtown extension is fully funded and operational and a replacement yard is identified that can be electrified. He inquired as to why this item was heard at the Policy Committee and whether there would be a Commission resolution of support for the project.

Commissioner Wald reported that this project relates to the City's greenhouse gas emission goals. She suggested that the Commission could assist the SFCTA with outreach by holding a future public hearing to discuss how many tons of greenhouse gas emissions would be saved in San Francisco as a result of this project and how it relates to the City's overall climate goals.

**5. Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Project Update.** (Explanatory Document: Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Presentation) Staff Sponsor: Melanie Nutter, Director; Speaker: Michael Schwartz, Project Manager, Van Ness EIS/EIR, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Informational Presentation and Discussion).

Director Nutter reported that the Department's Clean Transportation staff has provided input into alternatives for the Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit project, and that there is now a preferred alternative that is being recommended.

Mr. Michael Schwartz, Project Manager, Van Ness EIS/EIR, San Francisco County Transportation Authority presented on the Van Ness BRT project and reported that there is a staff recommendation for a locally preferred alternative (LPA) that is in the approval process with the SFCTA and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA). He introduced Mr. Paul Bignardi, representative from the SFMTA. Topics of discussion included:

- Van Ness Avenue BRT Project Background, purpose and need
- Full-Featured Bus Rapid Transit System
- Alternatives Assessed in combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR)
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternatives.
- Findings—Benefits and Impact
- Community and Stakeholder Meetings, Outreach
- Alternatives Analysis in the EIS/EIR
- Stakeholders prioritize Transit Performance that pointed to the Center BRT as the option that best meets project purpose and need.
- Challenges with Center BRT alternatives.
- Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and Benefits of the Center Running BRT with Right Side Loading/Center Median and Limited Left Turns.
- Next Steps.

Mr. Schwartz reported that the Van Ness BRT project would contribute to a decrease in vehicle miles traveled and result in a system-wide increase in transit ridership. Director Nutter reported that the city's most recent carbon emission footprint shows that forty-percent of emissions results from cars and trucks. The Department of the Environment has a strong interest in seeing the success of transportation projects as they will be critical in helping reach the city's greenhouse gas-reduction goals.

Commissioner Gravanis discussed the importance of working with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to coordinate stormwater management projects in order to capture as much runoff as possible. Ms. Tavafrashti reported that an analysis would be prepared of SFPUC's water and sewers line during the project's engineering phase. She reported on working group meetings that have been held with the SFPUC Citizens Advisory Committee and future public meetings that are planned to discuss ways to capture stormwater for other uses. Commissioner Gravanis suggested that bus shelters be designed in such a way to be more functional and block out rain and wind. Mr. Schwartz explained that once the LPA is approved, specifics will be sorted out in the design phase of the project. He discussed the possibility of wind power generation and solar roofs.

Commissioner Wald suggested that SFUC consider replacing the combined sewer system in the project plan area. Commissioner Wald and Mr. Schwartz discussed the integration of this project with California Pacific Medical Center's (CPMC) development plans in the project area. Commissioner Wald commended this project's compliance with the City's CEQA and public outreach goals.

Public Comment:

Ms. Gillian Gillett discussed the current design of city streets and stormwater collection. She suggested that the medians be created in such a way to capture more stormwater and be more accessible for maintenance. Mr. Schwartz reported that meetings would be held with the Department of Public Works, the agency that currently maintains center medians, to discuss maintenance plans and selection of trees for this area. A discussion was held on the possibility of a jurisdictional transfer of median from DPW to the SFMTA. Director Nutter suggested that Mr. Schwartz consult the Department's Urban Forestry Council Coordinator to discuss this project and the city's urban forest.

Mr. David Pilpel spoke in support of the proposed LPA. He asked that he be made aware of meetings held at the SFUC Wastewater Committee and spoke of his membership on this committee and the 2003 Proposition K Expenditure Committee. He discussed his past concern with the San Francisco County Transportation Authority becoming a project sponsor and developer of projects but spoke in favor of the work on the Van Ness BRT. Mr. Pilpel suggested that a review be made of the downtown Novato bus station transfer point that is maintained by Golden Gate Transit Authority.

Mr. Paul Bignardi, SFMTA, reported that an agreement would be worked out between DPW and MTA to determine the best plan for maintenance.

Mr. Steven Krefting stated that he strongly supports the Van Ness BRT project and the solution of combining the median with right side boarding, as proposed by the staff recommended LPA.

- 6. America's Cup Sustainability Credit.** Staff Sponsor: Melanie Nutter, Director; Speaker: Jill Savery, Head of Sustainability, America's Cup Event Authority (Informational Presentation and Discussion)

Director Nutter reported that the America's Cup Host and Venue Agreement (December 2010) states an intention for the America's Cup event to be carbon neutral. She introduced Ms. Jill Savery, Head of Sustainability, America's Cup Event Authority, to present on partnerships and arrangements to make that a reality.

Ms. Jill Savery reported on the America's Cup Sustainability Plan and America's Cup Event Authority's approach to carbon management. She discussed the basic premise that all regulations would be followed in carrying out the event, and there would be plans to create specific strategies to reduce the carbon footprint even further by avoiding emissions, such as through energy-efficient technology and the utilization of renewable energy where feasible.

Ms. Savery discussed the America's Cup Event Authority's partnership with Althelia Ecosphere, an organization that develops carbon credit projects with high and rigorous standards. The

Event Authority is working with Althelia Ecosphere to develop projects that also protect the marine environment. Conservation International, a partner of Althelia Ecosphere, is reviewing these projects to ensure they achieve desired outcomes. She discussed two components of the America's Cup Sustainability Credit currently being considered:

1. A validated and verified carbon offset credit provided by Althelia Ecosphere (equivalent to one tonne of carbon) sourced from iconic projects in developing countries with a strong coastal forest and marine component that reduces emissions, conserves biodiversity, and benefits local livelihoods; and
2. Local initiatives supporting sustainability and carbon reduction projects in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Ms. Savery reported that the Event Authority is contemplating the creation of a local advisory group in the next six weeks to advise the Event Authority on local project criteria and priorities. Commissioner Wald suggested that the group evaluate projects to determine if they can be operational.

Commissioner Gravanis discussed the importance of considering projects that would compensate for the impacts that global warming has had on local wildlife and sea-level rise on the edge of the bay. She spoke in support of a sustainability credit that would encompass additional projects and include a legacy project. Ms. Savery presented an example of a potential local project -- develop biodiesel fueling dock infrastructure for marine vessels that could be supported through the sale of America's Cup Sustainability Credits, which would fit in with existing SF Carbon Fund projects.

Director Nutter inquired about the timeline that baseline and residual carbon footprint figures would be available. Ms. Savery stated that she hopes that an initial baseline event carbon footprint will be available in approximately four weeks, at which time there would be more of a focus as to how to reduce the footprint.

Commissioner Wald discussed the controversy surrounding the effectiveness of carbon reduction projects and encouraged Ms. Savery to consult with the Department and other agencies to verify the rigorous standards of partnerships. She suggested that funds and credits be allocated more to local versus international projects since most of the activity will be in San Francisco, and it would be easier to mitigate, monitor, implement and track local projects. Commissioners Wald and Gravanis stated that international projects could be effective if a connection were to be made between local and international projects. Director Nutter spoke in support of starting an advisory group to make recommendations on local investment strategies.

Commissioner Gravanis suggested that the proposed local advisory group coordinate efforts with another group working on the America's Cup Healthy Ocean Project. She suggested that this group outreach to the environmental community and be involved with wetland restoration projects that would correlate with the sustainability credit. A discussion was held on the timeline for monitoring carbon emissions produced by the event. Ms. Savery explained that San Francisco activities are monitored from the start of when the baseline footprint is established and is then defined by established accounting principles of who owns the emissions. Commissioner Wald suggested offering incentives or a carbon reduction award to

spectators and teams for their carbon savings efforts and then analyzing these incentives to understand what worked well. This information could be provided to other entities to incentivize certain kinds of behaviors and could be an influential legacy project.

Public Comment:

Mr. David Pilpel discussed a Green Film Festival film about a surfer who uses the ocean for recreational purposes and is also involved in activities to save the oceans. He suggested that the outreach and education component include testimonials from these types of individuals.

Mr. Steven Kreffting, Coordinator, Environmental Council working on America's Cup, conveyed his appreciation for the presentation and thought being given to this effort. He praised the America's Cup Event Authority for providing race marshal training on marine mammal protection. Mr. Kreffting stated that there are several members of the Environmental Council who would be interested in participating and offering ideas to a local advisory group.

- 7. Policy Committee Recommendations on Commission Goals and Action Items to Achieve Goals for Calendar Year 2012 for recommendation to the Commission on the Environment.** (Continued from the April 4, 2012 Meeting) Sponsor: Commissioner Johanna Wald (Discussion and Possible Action). Continued to the May 14, 2012 Policy Committee meeting.

Public Comment: Mr. David Pilpel encouraged the Commission to be judicious in their use of time and where to direct their influence in supporting Department staff, encouraging other agencies, and better actions of others.

- 8. Quarterly Review of Commission on the Environment and its Committees Accomplishments for 2012.** (Explanatory Document: List of Commission and Committee 2012 Agenda Topics) (Discussion). Continued to the May 14, 2012 Policy Committee meeting.
- 9. Director's Report and Updates.** Speaker: Melanie Nutter, Director (Explanatory Document: Director's Report) (Informational Report and Discussion). A written Director's Report was provided.

- 10. Announcements.** (Discussion) There were no announcements made at this time.

- 11. New Business/Future Agenda Items.** (Discussion) Agenda Items 7-8 were continued to the May 14, 2012 meeting. Topics discussed as possible agenda topics for the May 14 meeting include an update on the PACE GreenFinanceSF program or a report on Renewable Energy Task Force recommendations. Commissioner Gravanis asked that future reports by staff include recommendations on how the Commission can provide the most benefit. She suggested that a future discussion be held on what the Department is doing to influence the City to not purchase items packaged in Styrofoam.

Public Comment: Mr. David Pilpel suggested that the Future Agenda Checklist be updated to remove historical items. Ms. Fish reported that the checklist is not intended to be a public document. Mr. Pilpel suggested contacting the San Francisco Planning Department to present on the Transportation Sustainability program, which is a fee-based citywide mitigation program for transportation. He stated that he believes the program would undercut CEQA review for transportation projects in San Francisco.

**12. Public Comments:** Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda. There was no public comment at this time.

**13. Adjournment.** The Policy Committee meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Monica Fish, Commission Secretary  
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\*\* Copies of explanatory documents are available at (1) the Commission's office, 11 Grove Street, San Francisco, California between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., (2) on the Policy Committee's website <http://www.sfenvironment.org/commission/agendas> with each set of minutes, or (3) upon request to the Commission Secretary at telephone number 415-355-3709, or via e-mail at [Monica.Fish@sfgov.org](mailto:Monica.Fish@sfgov.org).

Approved: May 14, 2012