Subject: Overview of San Francisco Planning & Urban Research Association (SPUR) report, "Seamless Transit," and Discussion of Regional Activity on Key Recommendations.

Background: Several reports gaining national press coverage over the last year have shone a spotlight on the Bay Area's public transportation system. In October 2014, the Eno Center for Transportation published, "Getting to the Route of It: The Role of Governance in Regional Transit." The report surveyed six of the nation's major metro areas to explore how different regional governance structures "help foster—or hinder—the ability of different transit systems to deliver improved service, mobility, and innovation." This was followed by "Seamless Transit," a detailed critique of the Bay Area's public transit system by the San Francisco Planning & Urban Research Association (SPUR) in April 2015. Whereas the Eno Center Report focused on transit agency consolidation as a key step to a better transit system, the SPUR report emphasized customer-focused strategies that improve the transit experience in order to attract more riders.

A key theme of both reports is the importance of focusing on the *customer* when attempting to improve regional transit. Often, reforms that would improve the experience of the transit rider face obstacles resulting from a concern that the changes would negatively affect an individual operator's budget or service objectives.

Focusing this item on the SPUR report acknowledges the Bay Area's transit system for what it is — one of the most robust systems in the nation, but one that is institutionally complex and not easy to maneuver. In "Seamless Transit," those issues are analyzed and accompanied by corresponding high-level strategies to address them.

As you know, the Commission led a significant analytical and policy effort known on the Transit Sustainability Project (TSP) which concluded in 2012. The TSP led to the creation of new efficiency standards and parallel investment programs for the region's major transit operators.

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a forum to discuss the SPUR report in the context of work done to date (such as the TSP) and seek feedback from the commission on next steps. Rather than providing a detailed summary of the report's findings, we focus on the proposed solutions and provide an update on regional work conducted to date, currently underway and/or planned.

Key Findings:
"Seamless Transit" lists five barriers that stand in the way of a truly seamless regional transit system in the Bay Area:

1. Poor information about how to make a multi-operator trip
2. Difficult transfers between operators
3. Financial penalties for riders using more than one operator
4. Limitations on fare payment technology
5. Gaps in the region's transit network and duplicative services

The report recommends five strategies to tackle these barriers:

- Strategy 1: Help travelers understand the value of the transit system and how to use it
- Strategy 2: Standardize fares and develop passes that encourage the use of the region's entire transit system
- Strategy 3: Develop transit hubs that make transferring easy
- Strategy 4: Use an integrated approach to transit network design
- Strategy 5: Use institutional practices to promote integration

The report contains a "Plan of Action" that recommends 19 specific steps that should be taken to help implement each of these strategies, along with the entity/entities that should be involved in that work, as shown in Attachment 1. Note that MTC is listed in all but two of the steps, underscoring SPUR's recommendation that MTC play a central role in this effort.

Next Steps:
Staff seeks your feedback on focusing our efforts on Strategies 1 through 4 as outlined in Attachment 2:

1. Improving transit maps, including developing a better regional transit map;
2. Transit fare integrations; including technical improvements in Clipper® 2.0;
3. Improving hub design to facilitate transfer between transit and access to adjacent neighborhoods; and
4. Integrated approach to transit network design; working collaboratively with BART, AC Transit and WETA on near-term improvements in transit service in the transbay corridor.

For Strategy 5, MTC will continue to support local efforts, consistent with the Transit Sustainability Project recommendations.

As this action plan relies on the cooperation and active collaboration of the Bay Area's transit operators for success, a positive result could well show that "Seamless Transit" is possible regardless of the number of transit operators.

Staff could also convene a Commission workshop on this topic featuring interaction with transit agency board members and general managers in order to further explore these issues, actions to date, and future opportunities. We seek your direction on that idea as well.

Issues: None.

Recommendation: None. Information and discussion only.

Attachments: **Attachment 1**: SPUR's Seamless Transit "Action Plan"
Attachment 2: Matrix detailing MTC planning and implementation experience with issues raised in "Seamless Transit."
Attachment 3: Presentation

Plan of action

		Metropolitan Transportation Commission	Transit Operators	Congestion Management Agencies	California State Transportation Authority	Cities	Civic Leaders and Organizations	Bay Area Toll Authority	Bay Area Bike Share	Large Institutions and Employers	Academic Institutions
Strategy 1: Help travelers understand the value of the region's transit system and how to use it	**Recommendation 1:** Develop marketing for the regional transit system	✓	✓								
	Recommendation 2: Provide clear, consistent and ample transit information across the region	✓	✓			✓					
	Recommendation 3: Develop great regional transit maps	✓	✓								
	Recommendation 4: Support third-party providers of transit information and tools	✓	✓								
Strategy 2: Standardize fares and develop passes that encourage use of the region's entire transit system	**Recommendation 5:** Develop regional, integrated fare products	✓	✓				✓			✓	
	Recommendation 6: Develop a regional fund to facilitate new regional fare products, and adopt a revenue-sharing agreement	✓			✓						
	Recommendation 7: Use a consistent fare-setting schedule that favors regional coordination		✓								
	Recommendation 8: Encourage variable pricing and develop a means-based fare payment program at the regional level	✓									
	Recommendation 9: Ensure that regional transit fare payment is convenient and reliable	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		
Strategy 3: Develop transit hubs that make transferring easy	**Recommendation 10:** Design great transit hubs, and plan for riders to make seamless transfers	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
	Recommendation 11: Integrate transit hubs into neighborhoods, and improve hub access	✓	✓	✓		✓					
Strategy 4: Use an integrated approach to transit network design	**Recommendation 12:** Identify a high-frequency, high-capacity core regional transit network, and set performance goals for it	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
	Recommendation 13: Respond to cross-county demand for bus transit	✓	✓	✓				✓			
	Recommendation 14: Integrate short-range planning for transit services, especially where operators share a market or service area		✓	✓							
	Recommendation 15: Use the regional transportation funding process to encourage the development of a cohesive regional network	✓		✓							
Strategy 5: Use institutional practices to promote integration	**Recommendation 16:** Incentivize system consolidations when they benefit customers	✓		✓	✓		✓				
	Recommendation 17: Evaluate long-term governance choices	✓			✓		✓				
	Recommendation 18: Facilitate dialogue among regional transit operators	✓	✓	✓			✓				
	Recommendation 19: Grow new capacity to address the regional transit experience	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓

Attachment 2
Matrix comparing SPUR Report Recommendations with MTC Projects Completed, Underway or Planned

SPUR Report (2015)		MTC Efforts		
		Planning Documents	**Activities to Date**	**Options for Future**
Strategy 1	Help travelers understand the value of the transit system and how to use it	*MTC Transit Connectivity Report* (2005) *MTC Transit Connectivity Plan* (2006)	Resolution 3866, Adopted 2008 • Hub Signage Program • 511 Traveler Information real time transit info and collaboration with private sector on sharing info with other providers, such as Google, etc.	• Support a Mapping Design Competition to develop consistent mapping at the regional, operator, and hub level.
Strategy 2	Standardize fares and develop passes that encourage the use of the region's entire transit system	*Integrated Fare Study* (2008) — TransLink® Management Group *Pricing Analysis: Fare Structure Barriers to Transit Ridership (2012)* — CH2MHill for MTC as part of the Transit Sustainability Project *Inner East Bay Fare Pilot Study* — MTC (currently underway) *Means Based Transit Fare Study* — MTC (currently underway)	• Clipper cards now in use on 13 Bay area transit operators. • Operators in Marin, Sonoma and Solano counties are included in Phase 3 Implementation underway. • In advance of Clipper 2.0 implementation, operators have agreed to standardize youth and senior eligibility and set a standard transfer discount.	• Hold workshop to explore whether or not to pursue a regional fare structure or product in advance of migrating to Clipper 2.0. • Key questions to be answered include the goals of a regional fare product(s), the time frame, the cost, and potential funding sources to offset lower fares.

| SPUR Report (2015)		MTC Efforts		
		Planning Documents	**Implementation**	**Recommendation**
Strategy 3	Develop transit hubs that make transferring easy	*MTC Transit Connectivity Plan* (2006)	Wayfinding and hub signage improvements made at all regional transit hubs.	Consider collaborative hub design requirements to provide transit users with direct and safe path of travel between transit services within the hub and to adjacent neighborhoods. Complete previously identified projects, both existing and planned, that support transit user access and transfers.
Strategy 4	Use an integrated approach to transit network design	Core Capacity Transit Study (underway) Inner East Bay Comprehensive Operational Analysis (2013) Private Sector Shuttle census (underway) Marin-Sonoma bus service study (underway)	• Short-range transit plans in both Solano and Sonoma Counties have focused on coordinated service between multiple transit operators. • MTC completed phase 1 of Tri-City/Tri-Valley study. • Paratransit service in Solano County is being coordinated	Develop a transbay transit crowding relief strategy with AC Transit, BART and WETA in the immediate future.

Attachment 2
Matrix comparing SPUR Report Recommendations with MTC Projects Completed, Underway or Planned

SPUR Report (2015)		MTC Efforts		
		Planning Documents	**Implementation**	**Recommendation**
Strategy 5	Use institutional practices to promote integration	Transit Sustainability Project (2012) • Recommended pursuit of functional and institutional consolidation, particularly in Marin and Solano Counties.	• MTC Adoption of TSP Recommendations, Resolution 4060, Updated 2013 • Merger of ferry services under WETA. • Vallejo/Benicia consolidation completed (Soltrans). • Joint procurements especially for vehicles are common among operators. • MTC is coordinating and updating the regional capital transit assets inventory for all operators.	Continue to support institutional consolidation where it makes sense consistent with MTC Resolution No. 4060 (TSP).
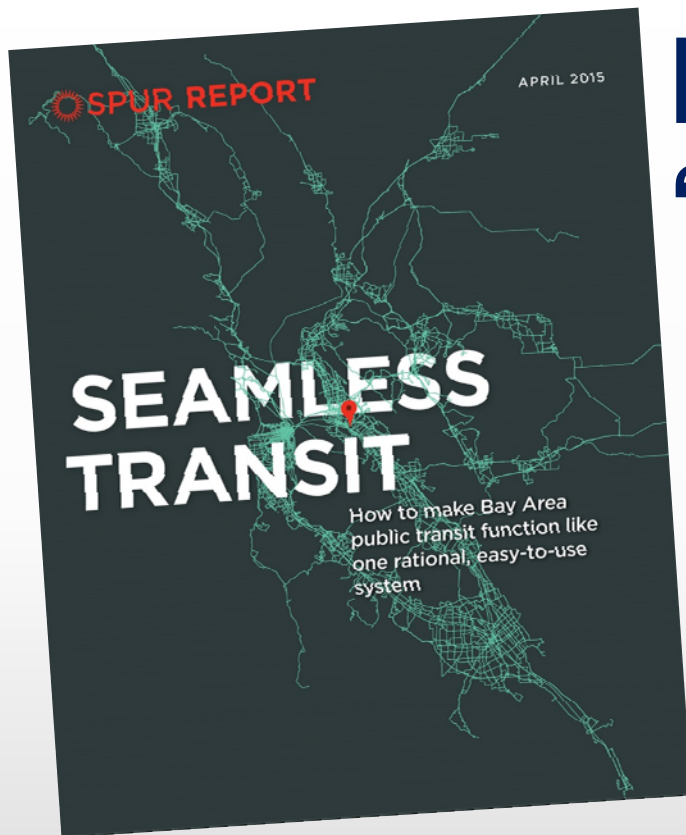
What's Wrong with Bay Area Transit?

The SPUR report is aimed at identifying barriers to increased transit ridership.

It makes five key findings:

1. Poor information regarding multi-operator trips

2. Difficult transfers between operators

3. Financial penalties for using more than one operator

4. Fare payment technology limitations

5. Gaps in network *and* duplicative services

SPUR Report's Proposed Strategies

1. **Help travelers understand how to use system** (i.e. better branding, maps and wayfinding)

2. **Standardize fares and develop regional passes**

3. **Develop transit hubs that make transferring easy**

4. **Use an integrated approach to transit network design**

5. **Use institutional practices to promote integration**
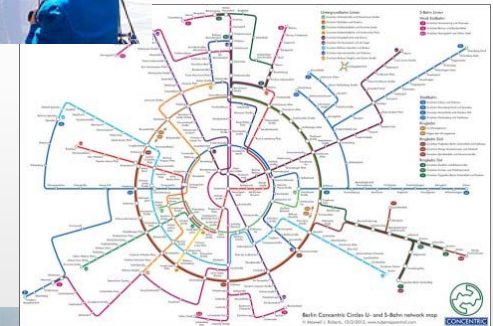
Where's the Map?

The Bay Area's Transit System is Confusing!

- **We lack a comprehensive regional transit map to help riders figure out how to get from A to B on different systems.**

- **Related Work (completed & underway):**

  - MTC Transit Connectivity Report & Plan (2005, 2006)

  - MTC Transit Coordination Implementation Plan (updated March 2015)

  - Regional Hub Signage Program, 511 Transit Info (ongoing)

- **Options:**

  - Partner with the Silicon Valley Community Fund, which wants to provide a cash prize for the best regional transit map.

  - Go digital – plan and fund customizable digital displays.

  - Support standardizing the design of map styles across operators (in stations and for web & mobile devices).
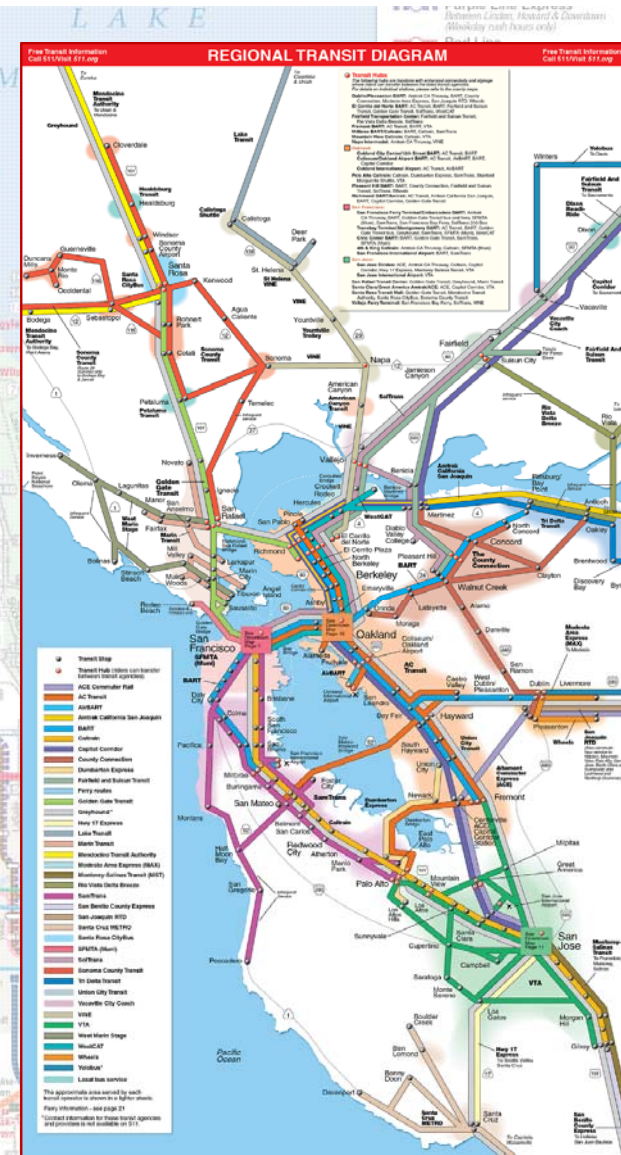
Develop Fare Products that Encourage Ridership

- **Clipper has made riding the 13 participating operators easy for those using e-cash.**

- **But there is no regional transit pass that encourages and financially rewards the frequent multiple-operator rider.**

- **Related Work (completed & underway):**
  - Integrated Fare Study (2008)
  - Pricing Analysis: Fare Structure Barriers to Transit Ridership (2012)
  - For Clipper 2.0, agreement by Clipper operators to standardize youth and senior eligibility for discounts

- **Options:**
  - Review regional fare policy options as part of transition to Clipper 2.0
  - Implement recommendations of Regional Means-Based Transit Fare Pricing Study and Inner East Bay Fare Pilot Study (both underway).

Design Better Regional Transit Hubs

Many "transit hubs" don't work well. Transfers are cumbersome, requiring long walks, up and down stairs, etc.

- **Options:**
  - **Require hub design requirements focused on providing users a direct path of travel between transit services and adjacent neighborhoods.**
  - **Prioritize funding for projects that maximize convenience of transfers, including direct pedestrian connections between systems.**
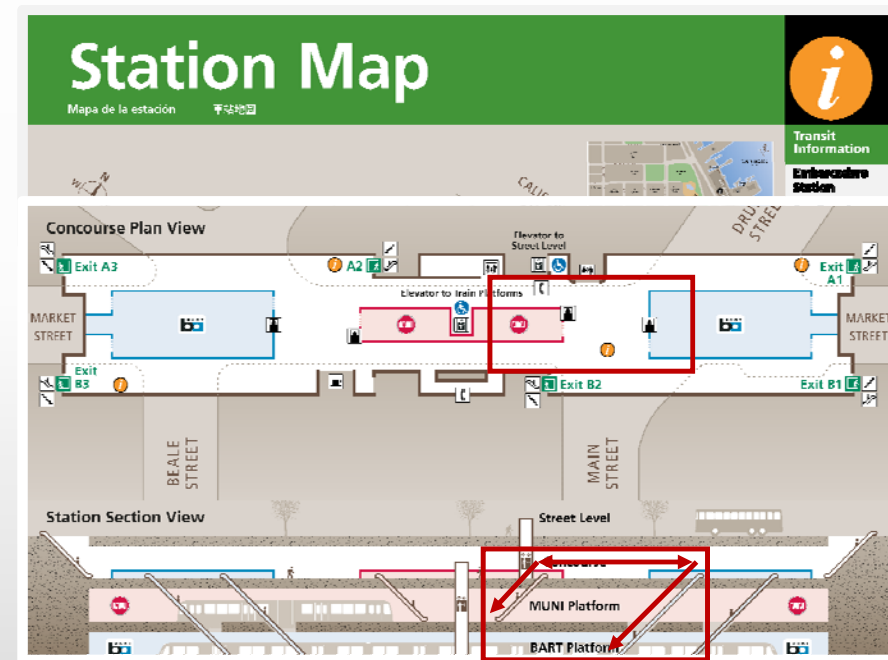
Integrated Transit Service Planning

- **Operator-specific service planning doesn't always serve the public with the fastest and most convenient routes.**

- **Overlapping service areas that don't interact can lead to inefficient use of resources.**

- **Related Work (completed & underway):**
  - Inner East Bay Comprehensive Operational Analysis
  - The Core Capacity Transit Study
  - Marin-Sonoma bus service study

- **Options:**
  - Use integrated service approach to provide near-term relief to transbay crowding
  - Use financial incentives to encourage riders to travel outside peak periods and use alternate systems.

Institutional Integration

Consider integrating transit operations in order to deploy better, more integrated, regional transit service

- **Related Work** (completed & underway)**:**
  - Transit Sustainability Project (2012) recommended pursuit of functional and institutional consolidation, especially in Marin and Solano Counties
  - Merger of Alameda/Oakland and Vallejo ferry services under WETA
  - Merger of Vallejo and Benicia bus service under Soltrans

- **Options:**
  - Support institutional consolidation where it makes sense, consistent with Transit Sustainability Implementation Plan (MTC Resolution 4060)
  - Over long-term, initiate dialogue with region's commuter rail operators on an integrated governance model

What's Next?

Staff seeks Commission feedback

- Is addressing concerns raised by "Seamless Transit" an MTC priority?

- Which strategies should we focus on?

- A workshop could provide more opportunity to explore issues in depth.