



Interdepartmental Memorandum

To: Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors

From: Edward D. Reiskin
Director of Transportation
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency

Date: March 21, 2014

Re: *Appeal of CEQA Determination - SFMTA Commuter Shuttle Pilot*

Hearing Date: April 1, 2014

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Introduction

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) submits this memorandum in support of SFMTA Resolution No. 14-023 and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determination made in connection therewith. The commuter shuttle sector in San Francisco has grown rapidly in recent years, providing a sustainable commute choice to thousands of employees, students, and other residents of the City. At the same time, the increase in the number and frequency of commuter shuttles has had unintended consequences on Muni operations and on other parts of the City's transportation system.

Preliminary data shows that commuter shuttles provide alternatives to drive-alone trips, and are associated with reduced auto ownership and the increased use of transit, walking, and bicycling for non-commute trips. Private shuttles currently provide more than 35,000 individual person-trips¹ on an average weekday, most of these during morning and evening peak hours. This is similar in volume to a system like Caltrain.

Field observations have demonstrated that, at highly used stops, commuter shuttles can conflict with Muni and other users. Delays to Muni, boardings away from the curb, traffic back-ups, and diversion of bicyclists out of bike lanes can occur when multiple vehicles (either more than one shuttle or a shuttle bus and a Muni bus) are competing for limited curb space. Field observations indicate that conflicts are minimal at stops where frequency is low and curb space is less constrained.

On January 21, 2014, the SFMTA Board of Directors approved a Commuter Shuttles Policy and Pilot Program ("the Pilot" or "Commuter Shuttles Pilot, attached as "Exhibit A"), including a resolution amending Division II of the Transportation Code to authorize the Pilot. The Pilot aims to address the following key transportation issues related to commuter shuttles:

- Delays in Muni service, which are most intense at stops where Muni service is very frequent
- Challenge of shuttle identification and ability to identify the right provider in response to problems
- Safety concerns, local congestion, and upstream Muni delays that result when vehicles are stopping in zones that are not conducive to sharing

¹ Based on SFMTA data compiled from 2012 data collected from shuttle sponsors.

- Clarity for enforcement personnel, providers, and the public about where shuttles are allowed to stop
- Responsibility to recover agency costs
- Lack of complete information about shuttle operations – a challenge for communications and planning

The Pilot will enable SFMTA to evaluate whether sharing Muni stops specifically selected to minimize impacts on Muni and other users, permit terms that establish standards for operations, and data-supported system management can minimize conflicts while supporting the beneficial commuter options that shuttles provide.

To measure the effectiveness of managing and regulating commuter shuttle loading activities within this Pilot, the SFMTA will conduct before- and during-pilot observations of Muni zones, audit shuttle GPS data, track collisions involving commuter shuttles, conduct a survey of shuttle and Muni operators, and assess actual costs associated with the program's activities.

Questions to be answered include: "To what extent does managing commuter shuttles by allowing sharing at specifically selected Muni zones reduce conflicts for Muni and other users?", "To what extent does a permit program that includes operational guidelines lead to desired operational behavior?", "What level of enforcement is needed to effectively regulate shuttles operating with permits?", and "What are the actual labor and capital needs to accommodate commuter shuttles within San Francisco?" Answering these questions will inform the SFMTA's approach for longer-term management and regulation of the commuter shuttles sector. For instance, if findings demonstrate a need for additional enforcement, and/or capital improvements, these elements and costs could be incorporated into a permanent program.

The Commuter Shuttles Pilot recognizes the SFMTA's responsibility in managing the transportation network in San Francisco and the SFMTA's authority to regulate curb space. The Pilot does not conflict with the authority of the California Public Utilities Commission to license shuttles for operation or regulating vehicle specifications. If the Pilot does not move forward, the current issues caused by unregulated stop locations will continue. SFMTA does not have the authority to prohibit operation of the buses. The SFMTA will be forced to continue to address these issues on an ad hoc basis until an alternative solution is identified and implemented.

Background

The Commuter Shuttles Pilot project is the result of several years of work at the SFCTA and the SFMTA. The San Francisco County Transportation Authority's (SFCTA's) 2011 Strategic Analysis Report (SAR) on commuter shuttles informed the SFMTA's process and approach. The 2011 SAR recommended that the SFMTA take an active role in managing the growing shuttle sector. The SFCTA was awarded a Bay Area Climate Initiative grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to support a variety of transportation demand management efforts, including development of a commuter shuttle policy.

The SFMTA began collecting information about the shuttle sector in late 2011 and throughout 2012. Updates were provided to the SFMTA Board's Policy and Governance Committee and the SFMTA's Citizens Advisory Council in 2011, 2012, and 2013 on scope, data collection findings, and policy approach. Additionally, updates were provided to the SFCTA Board's Policy and Programs Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee in 2012.

The preliminary data collected about the commuter shuttle sector's operations was limited to information provided voluntarily. However, the Pilot requires shuttle providers to submit data to SFMTA, which will allow the Agency to establish a more concrete understanding of how commuter shuttles interact with the rest of the transportation network.

Representatives from across SFMTA divisions and the Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) have reviewed and contributed to this policy.

Commuter shuttle sector overview

Numerous employers, educational institutions, medical facilities, office buildings, and transportation management associations offer shuttle service to their employees, students, and clients. Some buildings are required to provide shuttle service as part of their Conditions of Approval. In addition, an employer may comply with San Francisco's Commuter Benefits Ordinance by offering a free commute shuttle to employees. The majority of the commuter shuttles are closed systems that provide service to a specific population and are not open to the general public. Most shuttles are provided for free to employees (or students, tenants, etc.) The private shuttle sector encompasses:

- **Sponsors:** The buildings, employers, hospitals, schools, and other institutions that offer the service, either by contracting out to operators or by operating their own shuttles. Sponsors also include third party shuttle coordinator firms hired by companies to manage contracted shuttle systems.
- **Shuttle service providers:** The companies and individuals who operate the shuttle vehicles and provide the service on a day-to-day basis.
- **Riders:** The people who use shuttles for their commute trips.

There are two distinct markets within the shuttle sector: those that operate within San Francisco (intra-city) and those that operate between San Francisco and another county (regional). Intra-city shuttle trips comprise 80 percent of known San Francisco-serving shuttle activity while regional shuttle trips comprise about 20 percent of known San Francisco-serving shuttle activity.

Need for Regulation

As the commuter shuttle sector has grown, real and perceived conflicts have increased. Some shuttles stop at designated white shuttle bus zones or white passenger loading zones. However, many shuttles use Muni stops to load and unload passengers. Muni stops are designated with a red curb, which prohibits parking and stopping by non-Muni vehicles.

In some locations, commuter shuttle use of Muni zones has not resulted in conflicts, while in others there have been conflicts. Until now, the SFMTA has addressed conflicts with shuttles on an ad hoc basis by working with the relevant providers to resolve a reported problem. Parking Control Officers (PCOs) issue citations when they observe unsafe operations or stopping activities that impact Muni operations. However, this approach is not sustainable and does not provide clear standards for operators or enforcement.

Without a network of approved stops, private commuter shuttle operators have imperfect choices to make about where to load and unload riders: stopping in the travel lane (adjacent to parked cars) blocks through traffic and bicycles, presents safety hazards for riders boarding and alighting, and risks a parking citation; stopping at a Muni stop enables safer curbside access, but can delay Muni and risks a parking citation.

The SFMTA recognizes that commuter shuttles can provide important benefits to the overall transportation system, and that they complement the service that Muni provides by serving routes that not served by Muni or other providers. Furthermore, commuter shuttles provide sustainable transportation options during peak times, when Muni and many other public transit systems are at or over capacity. Data collected through a consultant survey of shuttle riders and shuttle service providers identified the following benefits from the commuter shuttles²:

- Reduction in private vehicle trips: Nearly half of all regional shuttle riders and 27 percent of all intra-city shuttle riders surveyed reported that they would drive alone for their commute if they did not have access to the shuttle service
- Reduction in car ownership rates: 59 percent of regional riders reported selling or forgoing purchase of a personal vehicle because of availability of the shuttle service, decreasing evening and weekend parking demand in San Francisco neighborhoods
- Increased use of transit, walking, biking, and other sustainable modes for non-commute trips
- Annual reductions of at least 43 million vehicle miles and 8,500 tons of greenhouse gas emissions³

Residents, elected officials, shuttle sector members, Muni operators, parking control officers, and Muni inspectors have requested that the SFMTA establish clear rules about where shuttles may and may not stop. The SFMTA has involved Muni operations, SFMTA safety and enforcement, shuttle sponsors, and the shuttle transportation service providers in developing an approach that minimizes impacts on Muni and other users while supporting the shuttle sector and the benefits it provides. However, before any long-term program is established, the SFMTA needs more complete information. SFMTA needs to regulate shuttle activity in order to gather consistent data about shuttle operations and their impacts over a period of time.

Benefits of a pilot

The Pilot program will allow the SFMTA to build on knowledge that exists and test out an approach and gather additional data about the performance of this approach that can inform longer-term solutions. In this case, the SFMTA has evidence that sharing certain kinds of Muni bus stops with commuter shuttle buses can work without impacting Muni service. The Pilot will allow the SFMTA to test this approach using a limited network of approved stops. It will further enable the SFMTA to understand how regulation and management affects Muni and other users.

The Pilot would differ from the current situation in the following ways:

- Shuttles stop using high demand Muni zones
- Enforcement through dedicated personnel
- Accurate and comprehensive data about shuttle operations and activities that can inform the formulation of a long-term approach
- Agreed-upon operations standards for shuttle operators
- Fee to recover agency costs associated with shuttle regulation

² Data collected by ICF International, July-August, 2012

³ Updated March, 2014 by ICF International

The SFMTA Board approved an 18-month pilot that would create a network of shared stops for use by Muni and those commuter shuttle buses that participate in the Pilot as described below.

The Pilot approach to designating and managing shuttle stops in San Francisco aims to maximize the benefits shuttles deliver while minimizing conflicts with other users of the City's transportation network.

Key elements of shuttle pilot

- The SFMTA will develop a network of approximately 200 shared Muni and shuttle stops
 - Shuttle transportation service providers propose which Muni stops should be considered to become shared stops
 - SFMTA solicits input from residents, Muni operations on street conditions to consider when evaluating proposed stops
 - SFMTA traffic engineering and service planning staff will evaluate proposed stops in light of shuttle sector preferences, street conditions, Muni operations, and stop configuration
 - A SFMTA public hearing and associated notification will be required to approve network of shared stops
- Shuttle service providers would apply for a permit to use network, and pay a fee for permit
- Permittees will be responsible for ensuring that their operators comply with agreed-upon operating guidelines, including displaying a placard that identifies them as a permitted user
- Parking Control Officers, Muni Inspectors would enforce stopping at shared stops in order to limit the use of such stops only to Muni and permittees
- Permittees will share data on operations with the SFMTA, following specifications established by the SFMTA

Eligibility

The Pilot applies to privately operated transportation services that move commuters to, from, and within San Francisco. Services that are arranged by an employer, building, or institution to provide transportation home-to-work, work-to-home, last-mile-to-work, or work site-to-work site are eligible to participate in this program. These services warrant a pilot program to test sharing of stops because:

- Service is routine (following set schedules) and involves relatively uniform number of vehicles
- Service reduces greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled
- Operations are conducive to sharing with Muni at certain stops
- Operators are commercially licensed and subject to regulation, including safety and insurance requirements, by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
- Operations complement, but do not duplicate, existing public transportation services

Network development: application and approval process

To implement the Pilot, the SFMTA solicited applications from shuttle service providers for the purpose of determining which stops should be included in the shared Muni-shuttle stop network. Submissions included specific Muni bus zones that shuttle providers would like to use as part of the pilot network and information about the type of vehicles that would use the stops, and the hours and frequency of the proposed stop use.

The SFMTA also solicited information from community members about specific street and traffic conditions that may be relevant to the inclusion or exclusion of specific stops within the network of shared stops. The SFMTA gathered over 4,000 suggestions from residents about locations that should and should not be included in the pilot network via an interactive website that was available in English, Chinese, and Spanish, and through two community open houses.

Over the next several months, the SFMTA transit service planning and transportation engineering staff will review proposed stops, identifying potential impacts provided by community input as well as information about Muni operations and stop configurations to recommend a network of shared stops. Where existing Muni stops are not long enough to accommodate shuttle use and an extension of the zone is warranted, the SFMTA may suggest lengthening the zone or creating an adjacent shuttle zone by restricting use of adjacent parking spaces during peak hours. Staff may also suggest the creation of separate white zones to accommodate shuttles at locations where sharing is not feasible.

A proposed network of shared stops, along with any stop extensions or other curb changes, will be subject to public notification and a SFMTA public hearing.

Any Muni stop not formally approved by the SFMTA as a shared stop will remain, by default, not an allowable or legal stop for private shuttles. Violators will be subject to citations.

Permit terms

The permits authorizing permittees' commuter shuttles to make shared use of selected Muni stops will contain requirements related to: indemnification of SFMTA and the City of San Francisco; display of placards; specific operating guidelines designed to reduce impacts on Muni and other users; provision of data feeds to SFMTA; paying permit fees and any outstanding traffic citations; and compliance with CPUC requirements.

An administrative penalty fee may be issued and/or a permit may be revoked for failure to comply with permit terms.

Permit and use fee

The SFMTA will recover the full \$1.6 million cost of this Pilot program through a permit and use fee. State law prohibits establishing costs to generate revenue beyond cost recovery.

The permit and use fee includes both upfront and on-going costs associated with the Pilot. Upfront costs include Development of stop proposal systems, evaluation of proposed stops, signage and placard design and production, sign installation, data management system development, and permit processing. On-going costs include enforcement, data system management, day-to-day oversight and administration, billing and payment processing, and evaluation.

The permit and use fee will be assessed on a per-stop event basis. A "stop event" is defined as an individual instance of an individual bus stopping at the shared zone. An average of 4,121 stop events per day was assumed in deriving the cost per stop-event. This number reflects the SFMTA's knowledge of existing commuter shuttle stop events in Muni zones based on preliminary data collected from shuttle sponsors and service providers in 2012. The exact per-stop fee may be revised based on total stop-events identified by the permit applicants.

The fee is \$1 per stop event. For example, a shuttle service provider that uses 10 shared zones 20 times a day would submit a permit application requesting permission to make 200 stop events a day

and, if approved, the SFMTA would charge this shuttle service provider \$200 per day, or \$52,000 per year.

Permit application

After the network of shared stops is approved, shuttle service providers will be allowed to apply for permits. An initial permit will be issued for the first six months of the program, followed by a renewal (or adjusted) twelve-month permit for the remainder of the program.

Regulation and enforcement

Shuttles with permits will be required to display SFMTA-developed placards on the front and rear of their vehicles. The placards will identify the users as having permits and will include a unique identifier associated with the shuttle provider to facilitate SFMTA contact with the correct shuttle service provider regarding any complaint or inquiry. Signage will be posted at each approved stop in the pilot network. Parking Control Officers and Muni Inspectors will enforce compliance with the program, issuing citations for non-permitted shuttles using shared stops, shuttles using Muni stops not part of the pilot network, and shuttles loading in a bicycle or mixed flow lane.

In addition to parking citations, the program will include penalties for violations of the permit terms.

Data and evaluation

Permittees will provide GPS data captured while operating in San Francisco. GPS data will provide the granularity and consistency of information needed to focus enforcement efforts, respond to complaints, audit for compliance, identify hot spots of delay, and develop an understanding of shuttle operations.

To measure the effectiveness of managing and regulating commuter shuttle loading activities, the SFMTA will conduct before and during pilot observations of select Muni zones, audit GPS data of shuttle operations, conduct a survey of shuttle and Muni operators, and develop a cost report to answer the questions below:

Does managing commuter shuttles by allowing sharing at certain Muni stops reduce conflicts for Muni and other users?

- **Conduct before- and during-pilot observations** at select Muni stops within the network, and of Muni stops that are excluded from the network but that had been used by commuter shuttle buses prior to the pilot, to assess the change in conflicts between shuttles and other users. Conflicts to be evaluated include: double parking to load/unload (Muni or shuttle), delayed access to curb (Muni) because of shuttle use, shuttle loading blocks crosswalk, shuttle loading blocks bike lane, and curb denials for people in wheelchairs/with strollers.
- **Track collision data** to assess collisions involving shuttle buses.

What enforcement is needed to effectively regulate shuttles, given a permit program framework?

- **Audit GPS data feeds from on-board shuttle devices** to evaluate compliance with the terms of the permit. Assess to what extent permittees are stopping only at the stops that are within the network. Assess to what extent permittees are stopping at Muni zones outside of the network. Assess to what extent permittees are making the number of stop events that

they have received permit approval to make. Assess to what extent permittees are only stopping to load and unload by auditing dwell time.

- **Track citations of shuttle buses** to assess use of Muni zones and pilot network zones by shuttles that do not have permits.
- **Collect feedback** from SFMTA enforcement about how the Pilot approach to enforcement is working, and what level of enforcement is needed to regulate commuter shuttle loading.

What are the actual labor and capital needs to accommodate commuter shuttles within San Francisco?

- **Track actual administrative costs** associated with the permit program.
- **Identify what capital improvements** are needed to accommodate shuttle buses. These may include such projects as signal timing or stop improvements.
- **Identify costs for effective enforcement strategy**, as outlined above.

Post-pilot

If the pilot evaluation demonstrates that sharing designated Muni zones with commuter shuttles successfully reduces conflicts and supports commuter shuttle operations, the SFMTA may consider:

- a) Making the Pilot network permanent; or,
- b) Proposing a revised permanent network.

If the Pilot does not demonstrate that sharing designated Muni zones with commuter shuttles successfully reduces conflicts, the SFMTA may consider whether any refinements in the approach would address remaining problems. If the conclusion is that commuter shuttles and Muni are not compatible at any shared stops, the SFMTA may then consider requiring that commuter shuttles pursue creation of white zones for shuttle stops or other alternatives not yet identified.

Conclusion

The Pilot program has been carefully designed to test a solution to the issues raised by the expanded use of commuter shuttles in San Francisco, and provide SFMTA with data to accurately assess the Pilot. SFMTA recommends that the Board of Supervisors deny this appeal. As noted above, a decision to uphold the appeal will only serve to continue the current circumstances, forcing SFMTA to address commuter shuttle issues on an ad hoc basis until another approach is developed and implemented.

Attachment:

Exhibit A: Commuter Shuttles Policy and Pilot Program



SFMTA
Municipal Transportation Agency

Commuter Shuttle Policy and Pilot Program

January 2014

Introduction

The commuter shuttle sector in San Francisco has grown rapidly, offering a sustainable commute choice to thousands of employees and students, and at the same time leading to unintended impacts on Muni operations and on other parts of the transportation system.

Commuter shuttles provide alternatives to drive-alone trips, and are associated with reduced auto ownership and use of transit, walking, and bicycling for non-commute trips. Private shuttles currently provide more than 35,000 individual person-trips¹ on an average weekday, most of these during morning and evening peak hours. This is equivalent to approximately 5 percent of total Muni boardings on an average weekday.

Numerous employers, educational institutions, medical facilities, office buildings, and transportation management associations offer shuttle service to their employees, students, and clients. Some buildings are required to provide shuttle service as part of their conditions of approval. And, an employer may comply with San Francisco's Commuter Benefits Ordinance by offering a free commute shuttle to employees. The majority of the commuter shuttles are closed systems that provide service to a specific population and are not open to the general public. Most shuttles are provided for free to employees (or students, tenants, etc.) The private shuttle sector encompasses:

- **Sponsors:** The buildings, employers, hospitals, schools, and other institutions that offer the service, either by contracting out to operators or by operating their own shuttles. Sponsors also include third party shuttle coordinator firms hired by companies to manage contracted shuttle systems.
- **Shuttle service providers:** The companies and individuals who operate the shuttle vehicles and provide the service on a day-to-day basis.
- **Riders:** The people who use shuttles for their commute trips.

There are two distinct markets within the shuttle sector: those that operate within San Francisco (intra-city) and those that operate between San Francisco and another county (regional).

Shuttle impacts and benefits

As the commuter shuttle sector has grown, real and perceived conflicts have increased. Some shuttles stop at designated white shuttle bus zones or white passenger loading zones. However, many shuttles use Muni stops to load and unload passengers. Muni stops are designated with a red curb, which prohibits parking and stopping by non-Muni vehicles. In some locations, commuter shuttle use of Muni zones has not resulted in conflicts, while in others there have been conflicts. Until now, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) has addressed conflicts with shuttles on an ad hoc basis. However, this approach is not sustainable and does not provide clear standards for operators or enforcement.

¹ Based on SFMTA data compiled from 2012 data collected from shuttle sponsors.

Without a network of approved stops, private commuter shuttle operators have imperfect choices to make about where to load and unload riders: stopping in the travel lane (adjacent to parked cars) blocks through traffic and bicycles, presents safety hazards for riders boarding and alighting, and risks a parking citation; stopping at a Muni stop enables safer curbside access, but can delay Muni and risks a parking citation.

The SFMTA conducted field data collection that confirmed that shuttle operations create conflicts for Muni and other users of the transportation system most often when using Muni stops that:

- Are on the near side of an intersection, where parked vehicles immediately precede the stop. In this case, the rear end of the vehicle often protrudes into the travel or bike lane.
- Have frequent Muni service
- Are shorter than 80 feet
- Have frequent shuttle service

The impacts include:

- Delays to Muni
- Muni buses that must stop in the traffic lane rather than at the curb
- Localized traffic congestion
- Diversion of bicyclists out of bike lanes and into traffic lanes

The SFMTA conducted analysis of shuttle contributions as well and identified the following benefits from the commuter shuttles:

- Reduction in private vehicle trips: Nearly half of all regional shuttle riders and 27 percent of all intra-city shuttle riders surveyed reported that they would drive alone for their commute if they did not have access to the shuttle service
- Reduction in car ownership rates: 59 percent of regional riders reported selling or forgoing purchase of a personal vehicle because of availability of the shuttle service, decreasing evening and weekend parking demand in San Francisco neighborhoods
- Increased use of transit, walking, biking, and other sustainable modes for non-commute trips
- Annual reductions of at least 45 million vehicle miles and 11,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions

Residents, elected officials, shuttle sector members, Muni operators, parking control officers, and Muni inspectors have requested that the SFMTA establish clear rules about where shuttles may and may not stop. The SFMTA has worked with shuttle sponsors and the shuttle transportation service providers to develop an approach that minimizes impacts on Muni and other users while supporting the shuttle sector and the benefits it provides.

Guiding principles

The following high-level policy principles inform this proposal:

1. Provide a safe environment for commuter shuttle riders as well as other street users
2. Support the commuter shuttle operations
3. Integrate commuter shuttles into the existing multi-modal transportation system
4. Ensure that commuter shuttles do not adversely affect operations of public transportation in San Francisco
5. Consistently and fairly apply and enforce any regulations/policies governing shuttle operations
6. Work collaboratively with shuttle sector to develop policies and resolve concerns and conflicts
7. Establish a program structure that meets current needs, and that has the potential to evolve as the sector grows and needs change
8. Develop processes with attention to effective enforcement and ease of administration and on-going oversight

Related SFMTA Strategic Plan goals

The proposed policy supports the following SFMTA Strategic Plan goals:

- 1.3: Improve the safety of the transportation system
- 2.3: Increase use of all non-private auto modes
- 3.2 Improve the transportation system's positive impact to the economy
- 4.4 Improve relationships with our partners and stakeholders

The pilot approach to designating and managing shuttle stops in San Francisco aims to maximize the benefits shuttles deliver while minimizing their impacts.

Proposal

The SFMTA proposes an 18-month pilot, the Shuttle Partners Program that would create a network of shared stops for use by Muni and those commuter shuttle buses that participate in the Shuttle Partners Program, as described below.

Eligibility

The proposed pilot applies to privately operated transportation services that move commuters to, from, and within San Francisco. Services that are arranged by an employer, building, or institution to provide transportation home to work, work to home, last-mile to work, or work site to work site are eligible to participate in this program. These services warrant a pilot program to test sharing because:

- Service is routine (following set schedules) and involves relatively uniform number of vehicles
- Service reduces greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled
- Operations are conducive to sharing with Muni at certain stops
- Operators are commercially licensed and subject to regulation, including safety and insurance requirements, by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and comply with commercial CPUC requirements
- Operations complement, but do not duplicate, existing public transportation services

The following users are not eligible to participate in the pilot:

- Tour or recreational buses, long-distance interurban buses: long dwell time and irregular stopping activity are not conducive to sharing with Muni
- Party buses: long dwell time and irregular stopping activity are not conducive to sharing with Muni; system benefits not demonstrated
- On-call point-to-point services (airport shuttles, limousines, other on-demand transportation): irregular service, dwell time too long
- School buses: San Francisco has the authority to exempt school buses from stop restrictions and has not done so
- Private individual fare transportation (jitneys, transportation network companies (TNCs)): irregular use is not conducive to sharing; transportation system benefits have not been demonstrated
- Vanpool vehicles: Are exempt from critical CPUC safety, training, inspection regulations; drivers do not have commercial licenses.
- Services that replicate Muni routes: the purpose of this pilot is to support transportation services that expand transportation options through providing point to point services that are not provided by public transportation

Key elements

- The SFMTA will develop a network of approximately 200 shared Muni and shuttle stops
 - Shuttle transportation service providers propose which Muni stops should be considered to become shared stops
 - SFMTA will solicit input from residents, Muni operations on street conditions to consider when evaluating proposed stops
 - SFMTA traffic engineering and service planning staff will evaluate proposed stops in light of shuttle sector preferences, street conditions, Muni operations, and stop configuration
 - A SFMTA public hearing, and associated notification, will be required to approve network of shared stops

- Shuttle service providers would apply for a permit to use network, and pay a fee for permit
- Permittees will be responsible for ensuring that their operators comply with agreed-upon operating guidelines, including displaying a placard that identifies them as a permitted user
- Parking Control Officers, Muni Inspectors would enforce stopping at shared stops in order to limit the use of such stops only to Muni and permittees
- Permittees will share data on operations with the SFMTA, following specifications established by the SFMTA

Alternatives considered

The SFMTA considered the following alternatives to the proposed pilot approach:

1. Prohibiting shuttles from all Muni zones and requiring them to use existing white zones, or to seek new white zones. This alternative was not pursued because it would require the establishment of a large network of new white zones, many of which would require parking removal. Given that data gathered from field observations indicated that sharing at certain kinds of stops would work, the SFMTA proposes to pursue the proposed option instead of pursuing parking removal for every shuttle stop.
2. Allow shuttles to use all Muni zones, with exceptions of those identified by the SFMTA as problematic. A guiding principle of this pilot is that it should test an approach that could expand over time as the shuttle sector evolves—piloting a network that has the capacity to grow better supports this key principle than authorizing a network that will shrink over time as Muni and shuttle demands increase. Additionally, the burden would be on the SFMTA to evaluate all of Muni's approximately 3000 stops and determine which may create problems. This approach would essentially legalize the current situation where shuttles use any Muni stop until conflicts result in filed complaints and an SFMTA investigation that leads to directions to operators to avoid problematic stops. The problems with the current approach were motivations for improved policy.

Pilot benefits

The pilot delivers benefits to both the City and to the shuttle sector.

Benefits to City include:

- Increased safety for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders, and private vehicle drivers as shuttles operate according to agreed-upon guidelines
- Reduced impacts on Muni operations
- Reduced localized congestion

- Ability to quickly resolve conflicts, using identification and shared data
- Data to support more effective management of the roadway network for all users
- Information on shuttle activity, allowing effective communication and planning
- Shift commuters onto and keep commuters using sustainable non-single occupancy modes

Benefits to the shuttle sector include:

- Ability to propose and coordinate with SFMTA on approved locations for passenger loading/unloading
- Clarity on which stops are legal to use and which are illegal, a clear framework of enforcement and repercussions for violators
- Signage at approved zones will communicate allowed use to members of the public and enforcement
- Upgrade of some stops to accommodate shuttle vehicles as added users
- Ability to address issues and concerns quickly through partnership with the City
- Coordination with SFMTA on further improvement of transportation services and conditions
- Information about upcoming construction projects, street closures, and planning projects of interest that may affect shuttle services

Network development: application and approval process

The SFMTA will solicit applications from shuttle service providers for the purpose of determining which stops should be included in the shared Muni-shuttle stop network. The SFMTA will host an on-line submission system that allows shuttle service providers to identify specific Muni bus zones that they would like to use as part of the network. Shuttle service providers will also provide information about the type of vehicles that would use the stops, and the hours and frequency of the proposed stop use.

The SFMTA will solicit information from community members about specific street and traffic conditions that may be relevant to the inclusion or exclusion of specific stops within the network of shared stops. The SFMTA will host two open-house style community workshops and an interactive webpage with instructions in English, Spanish, and Chinese to invite members of the community to provide location-specific information for consideration. Similar information will be solicited from Muni operators and supervisors.

SFMTA transit service planning and engineering staff will review proposed stops, identifying potential impacts provided by community input as well as information about Muni operations and stop configurations to recommend a network of shared stops. Where existing Muni stops are not long enough to accommodate shuttle use and an extension of the zone is warranted, the SFMTA may suggest lengthening the zone or creating an adjacent shuttle zone by restricting use of adjacent parking spaces during peak hours, subject to a public hearing. Staff may also suggest the creation of separate white zones to accommodate shuttles at locations where sharing is not feasible, which would also be subject to public

hearing.

SFMTA staff and the Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) have reviewed and contributed to this policy proposal. A proposed network of shared stops, along with any stop extensions other curbs changes, will be subject to public notification and a SFMTA public hearing.

The SFMTA may review and move the list of proposed shared stops forward as a package through the approval process. The SFMTA would approve the shared zones based on technical merit and the goal of supporting shuttles as an auto vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategy. The SFMTA reserves the right to reject a proposed space or remove it from the approvals process at any time and for any reason.

Requests for a limited number of additional shared stops may be submitted and considered on a rolling basis throughout the term of the pilot program. However, the intention is that most of the shared stops will be identified and approved at the outset of the pilot program.

Any Muni stop not formally approved by the SFMTA as a shared stop will remain, by default, not an allowable or legal stop for private shuttles. Violators will be subject to citations.

Permit and use fee

The SFMTA would charge each participating shuttle provider a permit and use fee of \$1 per stop event per day. A "stop event" is defined as an individual instance of stopping at the shared zone. For example, a shuttle service provider that uses 5 shared zones 10 times a day would submit a permit application requesting permission to make 50 stop events a day and, if approved, the SFMTA would charge this shuttle service provider \$50 per day.

The permit and use fee has been developed using a cost-recovery basis and includes both upfront and on-going costs associated with the pilot:

Upfront costs:

- Development of stop proposal system (map-based web interface)
- Evaluation of proposed stops
- Signage and placard design
- Signage and placard production
- Sign installation
- Data management system development
- Permit processing

On-going costs:

- Enforcement
- Data system and management
- Day to day oversight and administration
- Billing, collection, payment processing
- Evaluation

An average of 4,121 stop events per day was assumed in deriving the cost per stop-event. This number reflects the SFMTA's knowledge of existing commuter shuttle stop events in Muni zones based on data collected from shuttle sponsors and service providers in 2012. The exact per-stop fee may be revised based on total stop-events identified by the permit applicants.

Permit application

After the network of shared stops is approved, shuttle service providers may apply for permits. An initial permit will be issued for the first six months of the program, followed by a renewal (or adjusted) twelve-month permit for the remainder of the program.

The permit application form will request the following:

- Company name, point of contact, contact information
- Billing address
- Number of stop events anticipated for term of the permit
- Total number of shuttle vehicles that may be used for shuttle service, and make and license number
- Total number of placards requested
- Documentation of the applicant's registration status with the CPUC and any other verification of eligibility
- Agreement to comply with all terms of permit

Fee collection

The SFMTA will invoice approved permittees at the time of permit approval. The fee will be collected twice during the program: upfront for the first six months and then upfront for the following 12 months.

Shuttle providers that increase service during the course of the program shall notify the SFMTA project manager and pay for additional stop usage.

The SFMTA will conduct reconciliation every six months to compare the number of stop events paid for with the number of stop events made, and will invoice firms for additional stop events made. The SFMTA will not issue refunds for anticipated stop events that are not made as the cost recovery calculation is based on a certain level of overall stop events. If a service provider's actual stop events exceed the number of stop events paid for the SFMTA will invoice for the difference. If actual stop events exceed the number of stop events paid for by more than 10 percent, the SFMTA will assess a penalty fee of 10 percent of the unpaid cost in addition to invoicing for the excess stop events.

Any invoices sent by the SFMTA are due and payable within 30 days of invoice date. Late payment will be subject to interest.

Payment of all outstanding fees, penalties and outstanding citations must be made prior to the issuance of any continuing permit.

The SFMTA may also impose an administrative fee for lack of compliance or performance of permit

conditions.

The SFMTA will not reimburse any permit and use fees, regardless if a permittee stops using the shared network by choice or because of permit revocation associated with non-compliance.

Permit terms

A permit authorizing shuttle partners' (Permittee's) commuter shuttles to make shared use of selected Muni stops ("Designated Stops") would contain the following key conditions and requirements:

1. Permittee must indemnify SFMTA/City of SF for injuries or damage resulting from Permittee's use of Designated Stops, including associated bus shelters and other related sidewalk features
2. Permittee vehicles must display placard issued by SFMTA at specified location on front and rear of vehicle(s) at all times when operating commuter service in San Francisco
3. Permittee must comply with operating guidelines:
 - a) *Muni priority*: Muni buses have priority at and approaching or departing Designated Stops
 - b) *Yield to Muni*: Where Muni or other public transit buses are approaching a Designated Stop and when safe to do so, allow such buses to pass so they may stop at Designated Stops first
 - c) *Stay within the network*: Permittees shall stop only at Designated Stops or other non-Muni zones
 - d) *Active loading; No staging or idling*: Designated Stops may be used only for active loading and unloading; shuttles must load and unload riders as quickly and safely as possible. Staging must take place outside of any Designated Stops, consistent with parking regulations
 - e) *Move forward*: Shuttle drivers shall pull forward in a Designated Stop to leave room for Muni or other shuttles
 - f) *Pull in*: Shuttle drivers shall pull all the way to, and parallel with, the curb for passenger boarding and alighting; loading and unloading shall not take place in a vehicle or bicycle lane, or in a manner that impedes travel in these lanes
 - g) *Comply with all applicable traffic laws*: Shuttles shall be operating in accordance with all applicable state and local traffic laws
 - h) *Circulation*: Permittees shall stay on arterial streets and avoid steep and/or narrow streets to the extent possible. Permittees shall comply with all relevant street and lane restrictions

- i) *Training*: Permittees shall ensure that training for shuttle drivers addresses these operating guidelines
 - j) *Follow instruction from officials and traffic control devices*: Shuttle drivers shall follow instructions from police officers, authorized SFMTA staff, including Parking Control Officers, and traffic control devices in the event of emergencies, construction work, special events, or other unusual traffic conditions
4. Provide data feeds per SFMTA specifications
 5. Pay permit fee
 6. Promptly pay any outstanding traffic citation
 7. Demonstrate compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements imposed by the CPUC, including registration/permitting, insurance, and vehicle inspection requirements, as well as standards for drivers

An administrative penalty fee may be issued and/or a permit may be revoked for failure to comply with permit terms.

Identification of shared stops

The SFMTA will approve a set of approximately 200 Muni stops available for use by participating shuttle programs members during the period of the pilot. These stops will bear signage indicating that they are part of the approved shared network. The signage will use a logo and design consistent with the on-vehicle shuttle placards.

For those locations where stop extensions are deemed appropriate and receive approval, the SFMTA will paint the curb and fabricate and install signage indicating the location as a shuttle stop.

Regulation and enforcement

The SFMTA will develop and issue placards that identify permitted shuttle vehicles. Enforcement personnel will rely on display of the placard on the front and rear of the vehicle to verify legitimate users of the shared stops. Additionally, the placards will each bear a unique identification number that is associated with the shuttle service provider so that the SFMTA may easily contact the correct shuttle service provider regarding any complaint and concern. Each shuttle must have a placard affixed in agreed-upon visible locations in the front window and rear during permit-related operation in San Francisco.

Placards shall be assigned to the shuttle service provider, rather than to individual vehicles, to allow for flexibility of fleet management.

Parking Control Officers and Muni Inspectors will enforce compliance with the program, issuing citations for actions such as:

- Non-permitted shuttles using shared stops

- Any shuttle (permitted or non) using Muni stops not designated as part of the shared network
- Any shuttle (permitted or non) loading or unloading in a bicycle or mixed flow lane

In addition to parking citations, other penalties associated with the program include:

- Late payment will be subject to interest
- Stop events exceeding those paid for and permitted: If actual stop events exceed the number of stop events paid for by more than 10 percent, the SFMTA will assess a penalty fee of 10 percent of the unpaid cost in addition to invoicing for the excess stop events
- Non-compliance with permit terms: The SFMTA may impose an administrative fee and/or revoke a permit for lack of compliance or performance of permit conditions

Data

Three sets of data are needed for the shuttles pilot program: data to inform the network of shared stops, data to support the program during implementation, and data to evaluate the program.

Network set-up data

The SFMTA will invite shuttle service providers to identify which stops should be considered for inclusion in the network of shared Muni-Shuttle stops. The SFMTA will establish a web-based map interface for proposal submissions. SFMTA traffic engineering and transit operations staff will evaluate these proposed stops for inclusion in the network.

In the submission process, the SFMTA will request the following information:

- Bus stop location (the map will allow a user to identify a Muni stop by location, which will be connected to the bus stop ID and associated information about Muni activity and stop configuration from the SFMTA's bus stop ID database)
- Frequency and hours of use of any stop
- Vehicle make and length for vehicles anticipated to use the stop

This information will be requested by from each shuttle service provider so that SFMTA evaluation may account for intensity of use at each proposed stop.

Program support data

The SFMTA proposes to collect data during the course of the pilot program that will directly support the implementation of the pilot and that will enable the SFTMA to better manage the transportation network –providing a benefit for the shuttle sector and other transportation system users. The SFMTA intends to collect data fields such as:

- Fleet identification number
- Vehicle types in fleet

- Route by latitude/longitude
- Stop ID
- Stop usage
- Number of vehicles, by stop ID
- Frequency of use, by stop ID
- Speed of travel

Permittees will provide GPS data captured while operating in San Francisco. GPS data will provide the granularity and consistency of information needed to achieve the following:

- Focus enforcement efforts: queries to assess where stops are being made outside of the network will support enforcement approach
- Respond to complaints: identifying specific companies associated with complaints
- Audit: collect fees for stops events made that exceed those paid for
- Prioritize stops for passenger amenities: stop use would inform which stops should receive passenger amenities such as shelters
- Respond to hot spots: Identification of areas where there is a high concentration of shuttles may result in parking and traffic changes to address the high demand for loading/unloading space
- Prevent delay on key corridors: Identification of delay hot spots could lead to suggested shuttle route segment changes
- Establish average speeds of roadways: and understand how speeds and system operation are affected by temporary and permanent projects
- Engage in dynamic communications and routing: address public concerns, special events, emergencies, construction, and other routing needs with appropriate operators

Uniform inputs will enable the SFMTA to analyze data efficiently and to integrate data from shuttles with data from other modes. Data feeds from individual providers and vehicles will allow targeted communications to address conflicts and resolve problems, and is fundamental to effective auditing.

Permittees will equip each shuttle bus with an on-board device that can provide real time location data to the SFMTA, and shall maintain a continuous feed of the specified data while the shuttle is used in San Francisco for commuter shuttle service. If the permittee cannot provide the required data in accordance with SFMTA specifications, the permittee will install an on-board diagnostic device prescribed by the SFMTA in each permitted shuttle vehicle.

Evaluation

The SFMTA will evaluate the pilot program to assess how well it addresses conflicts between Muni and private commuter shuttles, and how well it encourages and facilitates shuttle operation, as well as environmental benefits.

The SFMTA will collect information from shuttle providers such as vehicle and fuel type, ridership, and shuttle miles traveled from shuttle providers for the environmental benefits assessment.

The SFMTA will conduct before and after field data observations on sample stops to compare shuttle operations and impacts on other users. The SFMTA will track the following data through auditing GPS feeds, enforcement reports, 311 complaints and requests, field observations, citations, and other communications to the SFMTA:

- Complaints about shuttle activities, including from Muni operators
- Incidents of shuttle-Muni, shuttle-shuttle, and shuttle-other user conflicts
- Violations of operating guidelines by shuttle operators
- Citations issued

The SFMTA will also evaluate the program's structure, administration, enforcement, and actual costs.

Communications

The SFMTA has been working with members of the shuttle sector to develop the pilot program. Additionally, staff has had communications with interested residents and district Supervisors. SFMTA staff presented the policy framework to the Policy and Governance Committee of the SFMTA Board, the SFMTA Citizens Advisory Council, and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority Citizens Advisory Committee.

The SFMTA will use a variety of media to notify stakeholders of the pilot and associated policies.

Pre-pilot input and notification

The SFMTA maintains a database of known members of the commuter shuttle sector. Staff will use contacts from this database, as well as communications via business groups and business-facing news outlets to ensure that information about the new program is distributed to companies that provide shuttle services.

The SFMTA will hold two community open houses to gather information about neighborhood preferences and specific street conditions that SFMTA staff will include in evaluating the proposed stops and developing the pilot network. Additionally, the SFMTA will host a multi-lingual web-based input system for those who cannot or do not wish to attend an in-person event. The SFMTA will distribute information to community organizations about the community open houses and the web-based input opportunity. SFMTA staff will work with Board of Supervisors offices to notify community organizations in each district and to include information in district newsletters. SFMTA will also announce these input opportunities via Facebook and through a press release.

Muni operators and supervisors will also provide input on street and stop conditions for consideration. Outreach to Muni operators and supervisors will include presentations at

division safety meetings.

In advance of the pilot's commencement, the SFMTA will develop bulletins for Muni operators, Muni inspectors, and parking control operators that outline which stops will be shared, the expected operating guidelines, and instructions for reporting and citing non-compliance. SFMTA will also communicate the new pilot to the San Francisco Police Department.

The SFMTA will provide a set of training slides that outline program expectations that shuttle service providers will deliver in operator trainings.

Communications during pilot

The SFMTA website will include information about the pilot shuttle service providers and for community members. It will also provide instructions for members of the public to submit complaints, comments, and questions.

Placards on shuttle vehicles will include a logo and year that identifies the shuttle as a current participant in the MPP as well as a number that will assist the SFMTA in identifying the shuttle service provider.

Signs identifying stops that are part of the network will be affixed to bus stop signage. The design of these signs will coordinate with the on-vehicle placards to facilitate identification of approved use.

Environmental clearance

The SFMTA determined that the proposed modifications to the Transportation Code and the Commuter Shuttles Pilot Program are categorically exempt from environmental review under Class 6 (information collection activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource). The City Planning Department issued a concurrence with this determination.

Changes to Transportation Code

The proposal would require changes to Division II of the Transportation Code, amending it to add Section 914, which articulates the shuttle permit pilot program.

Post-pilot

If the pilot evaluation demonstrates that sharing designated Muni zones with commuter shuttles successfully reduces conflicts and supports commuter shuttle operations, the SFMTA may consider:

- a) Making the pilot network permanent; or,
- b) Revising or expanding the network and making it permanent.

If the pilot does not demonstrate that sharing designated Muni zones with commuter shuttles successfully reduces conflicts and supports commuter shuttle operations, the

SFMTA may consider whether any refinements in the approach would address remaining problems, and may consider a second pilot term to test these. If the conclusion is that commuter shuttles and Muni are not compatible at any shared stops, the SFMTA may then consider requiring that commuter shuttles pursue creation of white zones for shuttle stops.

Implementation timeline

- *January-February 2014:* Solicit stop location proposals. Design and fabricate placards and stop signage Solicit input from
- *May 2014:* Recommend shared stops for pilot, public hearing to approve network. (install signage, inform enforcement, and provide placards). Establish implementation and staffing plan. Collect baseline data.
- *June 2014:* Process permit applications
- *July 2014:* Pilot commences.
- *July 2014-December 2015:* Pilot term