

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: RACHEL EDE DEPUTY – DEPUTY DIRECTOR-TRANSIT
SUBJECT: METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGIONAL
MAPPING AND WAYFINDING PROJECT PROTOTYPE
IMPLEMENTATION

AGENDA ACTION: STUDY SESSION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department that the Council hold a Study Session on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Regional Mapping and Wayfinding prototype signage program. This item is provided for Council's information and no action will be taken except for possible direction to staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is leading a regional mapping and wayfinding project to harmonize transit wayfinding across the Bay Area and has selected the Downtown Transit Mall and the Downtown SMART station as one of three regional sites for implementation and evaluation of prototype signage. In this study session MTC and Transit Division staff will review the proposed prototype signage program for implementation in Santa Rosa.

BACKGROUND

In 2021 MTC's Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (Task Force) recommended a regionally harmonized mapping and wayfinding system as a key action item in the Task Force's Transit Transformation Action Plan. The goal of the Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project (RMWP) is to promote increased transit ridership by developing and deploying fully standardized wayfinding, mapping, and transit information throughout the Bay Area in all transit environments, while also providing guidance for pedestrian wayfinding and first/last mile opportunities. In 2023, the MTC project team completed a review of wayfinding existing conditions and conducted initial engagement with transit operator working groups, transit riders and non-riders, and members of Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) to develop initial design specifications for a family of wayfinding signs ("standards"). In January 2024, MTC publicly introduced some of these new signs,

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including the “regional network identity”—a consistent design language that seeks to simplify finding and using transit services throughout the region.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

Given the complexities of regional transit services, the RMWP is taking an iterative design approach, wherein wayfinding signage and materials will be tested and refined with feedback from transit riders and operators at progressively wider scales. The first stage will involve installing wayfinding prototypes at El Cerrito del Norte BART station, Powell Street in San Francisco, and the Santa Rosa Transit Mall and SMART station, which are served by a variety of transit agencies, offer transfers between bus and rail modes, and are within or near MTC Equity Priority Communities (EPCs).

MTC will solicit public, stakeholder, and transit agency feedback on the prototype signage to inform a revised set of standards for the next development stage, the pilot projects. Expected to be rolled out in 2025 and 2026, the pilot projects are intended to test the operational feasibility of widescale production, installation, and maintenance of the new wayfinding system. Similar to the prototypes, feedback gathered from the pilot stage will inform potential improvements for expansion throughout the region.

The draft prototype evaluation plan includes a wide range of proposed engagement methods with transit riders, stakeholder groups, and transit operators to collect feedback on three main indicators: signage design effectiveness, benefits to travelers, and operational feasibility. More active engagement methods such as recruitment or in-person surveys would be prioritized among current and potential transit riders and customers with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency, as well as disability advocacy groups and frontline operator staff. MTC will also use open surveys to engage the general public for feedback about the prototypes. Evaluation activities will occur throughout the prototype implementation, including before, during, and after wayfinding materials are installed. Lessons learned from the prototype evaluation will be used to improve future community engagement efforts during the pilot stages.

Transit Division staff believe this project is a unique opportunity for Santa Rosa to be at the forefront of transit service coordination in the region. Staff will keep the Council updated as the prototypes are evaluated and feedback is gathered. Sonoma County is also expected to be a pilot location for testing the operational feasibility of widescale production, installation, and maintenance of the new wayfinding system, at a broader scale than in the prototyping phase.

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FISCAL IMPACT

This Study Session does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund or Transit Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and no environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This item was presented to the Design Review Board on July 18, 2024. As a whole the Design Review Board was supportive of the project and looked forward to its implementation.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

PRESENTERS

Matthew Wilcox, Transit Planner
Gordon Hansen, Mapping and Wayfinding Project Manager, Metropolitan
Transportation Commission