



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

# Memorandum

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Virginia Murillo, Transportation Planner  
**Subject:** 2016 Rail~Volution Conference

From October 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, I attended the 2016 Rail~Volution: Building Livable Communities with Transit Conference in San Francisco. The Rail~Volution Conference addressed nearly every aspect of building a livable community, including bus rapid transit, transit-oriented development, and active transportation workshops. Approximately 1,200 transportation planning professionals from public agencies, consulting firms, and non-profits from all around the country attended the conference. San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee and Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer provided opening remarks about the future of transportation. Plenary speaker topics included roundtable discussions on:

- **Introduction to the Bay Area:** The Bay Area's inequality, housing and transportation issues with participation from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, and the Low Income Investment Fund.
- **The State of the Rail~Volution:** The future of transit-oriented development throughout the country, with participation from the Low Income Investment Fund, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) and Morgan Stanley.

I attended several sessions that enhanced my knowledge on a variety of transportation planning issues that are of particular relevance to the Transportation Agency. These sessions included:

- **Plans, Projects and Programs: Putting Disadvantaged Pedestrians First**  
 Santa Ana, CA Councilwoman Michele Martinez moderated a panel on pedestrian planning, with presenters from California Walks, Eisen|Letunic, and the Seattle Department of Transportation. Participants discussed techniques for empowering residents to get involved in active transportation planning by partnering with community organizations and involving the community in walking audits. This is relevant to the Transportation Agency as the goal for the Active Transportation Plan is to make local bike and pedestrian projects more competitive for State grant funding.

- **Building Bus Rapid Transit Partnerships: Four Stories**  
Presenters from transit agencies in Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, Portland and Seattle discussed design challenges for bus rapid transit projects, and noted the need to build consensus among stakeholders. Presenters noted that it was important to engage local city engineering staff in the design development process, and emphasized the importance of being realistic in designing around street constraints.
- **Performance Based Planning and Programming:**  
Presenters from Smart Growth America, Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation and MTC acknowledged that using a data-driven ranking process to determine regional funding allocations for transportation projects is challenging. MTC noted that their cost-benefit ranking includes a “compelling case” narrative portion in case jurisdictions believe that the ranking methodology does not fully capture the benefits of their projects and allows jurisdictions the opportunity to provide justifications as to why their projects should be prioritized.
- **Bike Share Models that Work and Why:**  
Laura Cornejo of LA Metro, presented on Los Angeles County’s new bike share program, which undergoes the same planning methodology as bus transit service and is treated as another mode of transportation. LA’s bike share program is synced with LA’s transit system, allowing users to use bus transit fare cards to access the county’s bike share program. LA Metro’s staff provides technical assistance to local jurisdictions that install and maintain bike share stations. This is relevant to TAMC because both Monterey and Salinas are considering initiating bike share programs, and being able to coordinate these efforts would provide the most benefit to the region.
- **Transit Oriented Development Research: Hot off the Presses – and the Streets**  
Academic researchers from the University of Southern California and the University of Utah presented on transit-oriented development parking requirements and vehicle mile travel reductions. Overall, they found that transit-oriented developments do not require as much parking as standard engineering parking manuals would suggest. Researchers also found a reduction in driving in transit-oriented developments. This is important information to consider for future Monterey County transit-oriented developments.
- **Go West! Getting Commuter Rail off Track:**  
Presenters from Friends of Caltrain and the Connecticut Dept. of Transportation discussed commuter rail’s capital improvement, maintenance and ridership challenges. Presenters noted that commuter rail provides more capacity than highways and require less right-of-way.

The content of the Rail~Volution Conference was very relevant to transportation planning, as we are planning a variety of multimodal facilities and coordinating with local and county officials to plan for multimodal and active transportation infrastructure. The conference was well attended by consulting, public agency and non-profit professionals from around the State and the country. I was also able to meet professionals from the State that can serve as useful contacts for the future.

The full Conference program is online: <http://railvolution.org/>