

From: Cautn1 <cautn1@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 14, 2019 11:50 AM
To: CON, Controller (CON) <controller.con@sfgov.org>
Cc: Stevenson, Peg (CON) <peg.stevenson@sfgov.org>
Subject: The forthcoming MTA Task Force Report

Bay Area Transportation Working Group (BATWG)

December 14, 2019

Ben Rosenfield

Controller, City and County of San Francisco

Dear Mr. Rosenfield,

The comments below are mostly in response to the SFMTA Task Force's draft report and to what was said yesterday.

Outside Management Audit: The MTA would benefit from a comprehensive and completely independent outside management audit once every three years...provided the necessary follow-up adjustments were made.

A word of explanation is needed here. The SFMTA is a large and complex organization operating in a difficult, fishbowl-like environment. To ensure a fully functional Muni, it is essential that there be accountability and good internal communication at all levels. It is therefore essential that top management develop a way of assessing performance up and down the line and that it be given the authority to make appropriate adjustments when necessary. In this area the MTA, and Muni in particular, are in dire need of attention. Muni has many divisions and management levels. Some of the divisions are very independent and set in their ways, and some middle managers have agendas that are at variance with established SFMTA policies. This is not new. It's been that way for decades. It is exceedingly difficult for a handful of top SFMTA managers subject to constant public exposure and criticism to find out what's going on down the line, much less do anything about it. A periodic outside management audit could help in this regard.

Automatic Train Control System: When contemplating the upgrading and/or replacement of a highly complex technical system it is critically important that before awarding a hugely expensive long-term implementation contract, the Muni know exactly what it's getting and why. Independent expertise is therefore essential. In most cases the prudent thing for a public transit agency to do is to bring in a reliable ATC specialty firm with no skin in the game and no connections to the firms seeking the design and/or installation work.

Need for 3 to 5 Car Trains in Subway: The Task Force report appropriately alludes to some of the changes needed to achieve a better and more reliable the Muni Metro operation, including the aforementioned ATC improvements. However not enough attention has so far been given to the overriding benefits of running fewer but significantly longer peak-period subway trains.

Line Managers: In section 5b the hiring of 50 "transit supervisor positions" is mentioned. If by transit supervisors is meant what used to be called "Line Managers", the report-writers are right on target. In the past, conscientious line managers, placed at the right "pinch points" throughout the bus and rail network at the right times of day prevented many of the operating and other problems that afflict Muni's current service.

Incoming Automobiles: As was alluded to during the Task Force's December 13th meeting, more attention should be paid to the traffic emanating from outside San Francisco. According to MTC's 1990 - 2030 Travel Forecast, by 2025 a estimated total of 350,000 cars a day will be entering San Francisco from the east and south. Needless to add an excessive influx of cars from outside the city already congests San Francisco's streets and consequently already impedes Muni's surface operations. Securing the regional changes needed to reduce incoming traffic will require the determined, persistent and tightly coordinated efforts of the MTA, CTA Mayor's office and Board of Supervisors.

Infrastructure: The MTA's capital project delivery system is in need of major attention. Beefing up the design review function is of obvious importance. As is the upgrading of the administration of design, environmental clearance, procurement and construction contracts. Significantly speeding up the process from start to finish would lead to some remarkably positive results.

Getting to Peak Efficiency: With a small group of dedicated contract managers, backed by competent legal and engineering support, a public agency can control outside consultants and contractors very effectively. Yet the natural tendency whenever a new problem arises is to hire more people. In many instances it is better and cheaper to outsource the work than to hire permanent staff...who tend to remain on the payroll long after the need for their services has passed.

MTA Board: Having the entire Board appointed by the Mayor has not worked. Elected officials should find a way of installing *only* candidates who possess the qualifications, experience and passion needed to properly oversee a large and complex transportation organization.

Gerald Cauthen PE,

for BATWG