Creating a More Seamless Transit Network through Governance Reforms

September 9, 2019
Rail~Volution

Ian Griffiths
ian@seamlessbayarea.org

Seamless Bay Area
Mission

Transform the Bay Area’s fragmented and inconvenient public transit into a world-class, unified, equitable, and widely-used system by building a diverse movement for change and promoting policy reforms.

To get there, we are:

- Articulating a clear vision
- Raising public awareness & grassroots support, building coalitions
- Changing professional culture
- Advancing legislative reforms
- Tactical advocacy
The Bay Area’s Challenge: transportation and housing are *regional* issues and have a huge financial, human, and environmental costs.

People have longer commutes than ever

Despite job growth, people are fleeing the Bay Area due to lack of access to housing.

**FLEEING THE BAY AREA**
As soaring housing prices make it increasingly difficult to survive here, more people are considering leaving the Bay Area. Percentage of residents who say they are likely to leave the Bay Area in the next few years:

- 34% in 2016
- 40% in 2017
- 46% in 2018

Source: Bay Area Council

BAY AREA NEWS GROUP
Transit should be the backbone of the Bay Area, but is not keeping up

Between 2001 and 2016 in the Bay Area:

- Population Growth: +11.9%
- Average Commute Time for Transit Users: +11.9%
- Annual Trips Taken on Public Transit per capita: -10.4%
- Average Bus Speed: -9.3%
Many people want to use transit -- but don’t because it’s too difficult

“It takes too long to get around on transit.”

“It doesn’t take me where I need to go”

“It’s not frequent enough”

“It’s too confusing”

“It’s not reliable”

“It’s a hassle”
Our Fragmented Regional Network is not working

Transit Agencies (25+)

MPO

County-Level “Congestion Management Associations”

COG

Association of Bay Area Governments
In a Seamless customer-focused regional network:

- A connected rapid transit network is strategically planned at regional level to work as a system
- Transit agencies work together to operate different parts of the integrated network
- Service quality, fares, schedules, and wayfinding is standardized to be a reliable and as simple as possible for users
- Transit investments are prioritized to advance network goals
- Transit and high-capacity vehicles move quickly on all major regional corridors
Other Similar Regions Are Doing Much Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greater Frankfurt (Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund)</th>
<th>San Francisco Bay Area (9-county)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (m)</td>
<td>4.9 million</td>
<td>7.75 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (sq miles)</td>
<td>5,405 sq. miles</td>
<td>6,966 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Governments</td>
<td>408 municipalities</td>
<td>101 cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit Operating Companies</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Transit Ridership 1996</td>
<td>482 million</td>
<td>435 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Transit Ridership 2018 (SF - 2017)</td>
<td>769 million (60% growth from 1996)</td>
<td>505 million (16% growth from 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Transit Mode Share</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately equal scales
How do we take the first steps?  
Principles for reform

- Set up reform process that allows for evolution over time
- Ensure stability of transit agency operating revenues; don’t create “winners and losers”
- Recognize & build off of existing transit operator strengths & expertise
- Reduce bureaucracy and duplication
- Stay focused on customer outcomes
New Funding: An opportunity

Polling Suggests:
- Strong support for investment in transit
- Support for systematic improvements to make transit seamless, reliable, fast, and affordable;
- Limited trust in the capacity of existing public agencies to deliver
Three critical policies the State Legislature must pursue

1. Define our mobility vision & targets
   Adopt Bay Area sustainable transportation targets and a strategic policy direction of a seamless regional system

2. Direct resources to advance goals
   Connect new transit funding to advance targets, and goals and standards associated with an integrated, world-class transit system

3. Develop institutions that can deliver
   Establish clear regional leadership and accountability for mobility goals, standards and targets by initiating institutional reform.

- Increase Trips by sustainable Modes to 50%
- Increase Trips by Transit to 20%
- Reduce Vehicle Miles per Capita by 1/3
Building Support for Reforms

- Input from transit agencies, cities, advocacy groups, transit experts
- Building support through local transit agencies, cities, regional processes
- Coordinated approach between new funding “Mega-Measure” enabling legislation and companion “Seamless Transit” reform legislation
More information
www.seamlessbayarea.org

Seamless Transit Principles
www.seamlessbayarea.org/seamless-transit-principles

Seamless Vision Map
www.seamlessbayarea.org/vision-map

Contact
Ian Griffiths, Co-Founder & Policy Director
ian@seamlessbayarea.org