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July 23, 2008

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, California 94607

Re: Regional Transportation Plan 2035

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of San Francisco Planning & Urban Research, a public policy think tank dedicated to good government and good planning, I am writing to comment on the proposed Transportation 2035 investment plan of \$232 billion over the next 25 years.

We support the emphasis on maintenance and efficiency in the discretionary program, and urge the adoption of choice #2 for the discretionary \$32 billion. However, we feel this emphasis is not sufficiently apparent in the financially constrained investment program you are asked to approve today, and cannot endorse approval of that package without qualification.

One of the strongest elements of this Regional Transportation Plan, and an area where the Metropolitan Transportation Commission is leading the nation, is the inclusion of performance measures to guide decisions about potential transportation infrastructure investments. We commend the Commission and MTC staff for using these standards, especially the ones that measure reductions in vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. It is imperative that we are strategic with our investments because we are faced with a new, unrelenting reality like none we have faced: the days of cheap fuel are over, and the consequences of a continually heating planet are already upon us and will worsen badly if we don't take immediate remedial action.

It is this new reality that prompts us to urge you to examine more closely the financially constrained investment program that includes a number of projects we feel do not meet the new goals adopted by the MTC for this RTP. Projects which do not meet these goals, including expansion projects in the so-called "committed" pot of funds, should not be included in the RTP.

Specifically, there are \$29 billion in expansion projects in the "committed" pot of funds that have not been subject to the MTC's new performance criteria. The

public and Commissioners deserve the chance to compare those investments with the investments in the \$32 billion discretionary pot of funding, and the investments in the "vision" portion of the plan which may be more strategic, such as the extension of Caltrain to downtown San Francisco.

We urge you to condition your approval of the RTP's investment package on the evaluation of the road and transit expansion projects in that package.

We look forward to working with the MTC staff on the development of a regional transportation system that supports a healthy region, growing in population and jobs while reducing its impact on the environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Snyder", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Snyder
Transportation Policy Director