



**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

June 27, 2021

Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale Street, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

**Re: Blue Ribbon Task Force Meeting – June 28, 2021- Items 4 and 5**

Dear Chair Spring and Members of the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force:

**Item 4. Regional Network Management Options & Evaluation**

SPUR commends the Task Force, operators and MTC staff for their work to-date and encourages you to continue to study options for establishing a network manager.

In SPUR’s view, the network manager should have accountability for setting long-term, strategic policy for regional transit and bringing regional consistency to support a great customer experience. This approach is found in other places around the world, successfully growing ridership even in areas with relatively low densities and high rates of car ownership.

The network manager structure can and should be designed to support operators in delivering on local service priorities and policies to support local equity and affordability goals. One way to accomplish this is for the network manager to set policy goals for the regional transit network and routes that connect to regional hubs, but also minimums to ensure a baseline level of consistency across the region. In this setup, local governments retain the authority to provide additional service or deeper discounts using local funds as they see fit.<sup>1</sup> This is one way to safeguard (and improve) transit service levels in dense, urban places.

**Item 5. Transformation Action Plan**

SPUR encourages the Task Force to complete a Connected Network Plan in 2023 prior to transportation funding ballot measure in 2024. A critical step in network management is to create a long-term, durable vision for transit service throughout the region, through a “focused multi-agency effort on regional and subregional service planning to deliver an effective transit system that can attract more riders and be more reliable, connected and customer-oriented”.<sup>2</sup> The connected network plan can generate public confidence in the outcomes of future funding measures, which is a key aspect of organizational effectiveness (discussed in Item 4). SPUR believes that the Connected Network Plan should be the plan for a core regional transit network

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spur.org/news/2019-04-24/my-rider-your-rider-what-bay-area-can-learn-germanys-collaborative-transit-planning>

<sup>2</sup> Blue Ribbon Task Force meeting materials, May 2021.

that is designed to act as the Bay Area's stable, high-capacity, high-frequency transportation backbone. As reviewed in past meetings, voters want this too. Voters cited a lack of frequency as a major barrier to public transit use, and over 70% of focus group participants in a 2020 study said that there should be a regional plan to guide transportation investments.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to bus rapid transit, a transit priority policy and corridor assessment should include:

- (1) The places that would benefit from coordinated efforts to tackle persistent speed and reliability impediments with signal priority, better curb management and parking regulations, queue hopper lanes, and more. Bus rapid transit may be limited to a few locations and difficult to achieve without significant approval streamlining, but there are many more local routes that would benefit from better reliability and speed.
- (2) Revising policies and design processes so that that the delivery of bus and HOV projects are coordinated with ongoing investments in highways so that the region cost-effectively is investing in bus and HOV priority at the same time that it is upgrading highways.
- (3) A pilot express bus operating model. The Plan Bay Area 2050 draft recommends three initial express bus pilots. For one or more of these proposed regional express bus routes designated, establish operating targets and supporting policies to test and demonstrate a new, coordinated regional express bus operating model. This may strategies to maximize equitable service design, efficient hub station design and operations, station access options and investment needs, station area design, and network integration.

Sincerely,



Laura Tolhoff  
Transportation Policy Director

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<sup>3</sup> <https://mtc.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=853593&GUID=20745081-6820-4AA7-84FA-BD08FE45F310&Options=info%7C&Search=>