

WEBVTT

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Laura Tolkoff: Hi, everybody, and welcome. We're just gonna give it another couple of seconds as people enter the room before we get started.

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00:00:44.900 --> 00:00:57.210

Laura Tolkoff: Hey, welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us this evening. My name is Laura Tolk off. I'm Spurs Transportation policy director. Thank you so much for joining us for this digital discourse tonight.

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Laura Tolkoff: Many of you here are spur members, and we really appreciate your support, and if you're not a member, I encourage you to join to support spurs, ongoing work, using education, policy and advocacy to make our cities and region more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable.

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Laura Tolkoff: And you can find out more about joining as a member online@for.org slash join.

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Laura Tolkoff: We're here today co-hosting this, this, this digital discourse with the Bay Area Council, which works to make the Bay area a better, the best place to live and work with business and civic minded leaders in the region

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Laura Tolkoff: we're joined here by Emily Loper, who is the Vice President of public policy at the Bay Area Council. We want today's conversation to be interactive and plan to be spending as much time as possible engaging with you all. So I encourage you to use the chat box to share your thoughts with each other and the speakers, and submit any questions that you may have, by using the Q. A. Panel which should appear at the button, appear as a button

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at the bottom of your screen, or the top of your screen. If you're joining us with your phone

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Laura Tolkoff: today's program is focused on how we are working to save our transit systems from the looming fiscal cliff, when the pandemic decimated transit ridership in 2,020 Federal covid relief funds help save transit agencies from bankruptcy and enable them to sustain

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Laura Tolkoff: levels of service that we can rely on while riders are steadily coming back to transit. Recovery has been slow, and ridership, along with income from fares, have not returned to pre pandemic levels for agencies like Bart, Muni and Cal Train and many others.

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Laura Tolkoff: Relief funds are were generous, but they're finite, and they're going to run out as soon as 2,024 for some of these agencies, and without new funding more

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Laura Tolkoff: excuse me, without new funding many bay area transit systems might be forced to make severe cuts. That would be dis disastrous for hundreds of thousands of bay area residents.

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Laura Tolkoff: And importantly, this is not just a bay area issue. It's also a California issue. There are many agencies throughout the State that are facing this shortfall which would affect millions of Californians.

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Laura Tolkoff: So for Bay Area Council, and our partners are part of a coalition called survive and thrive, that has come together to advocate for new funding from the State to help to help transit come back better than it was pre pandemic.

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Laura Tolkoff: So what we're looking at is from is is seeking funding from the State to fill our operating shortfalls and help regrow ridership and transfer transition to a more sustainable business model.

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Laura Tolkoff: And so we'll hear more today from our panelists about how we can collectively meet this moment. I'm gonna introduce our panelists now, including Senator Scott Weiner. Thank you so much for joining us tonight and for your championship of this issue in the Legislature. We're really excited to hear from you.

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Laura Tolkoff: Senator Weiner represents San Francisco and Northern San Mateo County in the California State Senate, elected in 2016. Senator Weiner focuses extensively on housing, transportation, civil rights, criminal justice, reform clean energy and alleviating poverty.

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00:04:24.340 --> 00:04:43.960

Laura Tolkoff: He chairs the senate housing Committee is co-chair of the California legislative Jewish caucus and chairs. The Senate Select Committee on bay area public transit. who are also joined here by Rebecca. Long She is the Director of Legislation and public affairs at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments.

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Laura Tolkoff: She has led several big transportation funding and policy efforts in Sacramento, including regional measures, 2 and 3, both approved by bay area voters.

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Laura Tolkoff: Michael is the executive director of the California Transit Association, a nonprofit trade organization representing California's transit

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Laura Tolkoff: industry, including more than 85 public transit and rail agencies in the State. In this role Michael steers the Association's industry, leading legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts and education program.

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Laura Tolkoff: So thank you, everybody for joining us today. Thank you, especially to the Senator for joining us tonight. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Emily, to provide some additional context and introduce and and then she'll turn it over to Senator Weiner.

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: Great thanks, Laura. We're happy to be working with you on this issue, as we do on so many of our transportation priorities. So just a little more context about why transit is still struggling to recover from the pandemic.

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: The Bairy Council has been tracking new commute patterns over the past couple of years, and the data shows that we have hit a new normal. Most employees are only commuting 2 to 3 days per week, and the percentage of fully remote work has skyrocketed almost 23% from less than 6% pre pandemic. So

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: this rise of hybrid and remote work, of course, has severe impacts for transit ridership region wide transit is only recovered just over half of its pre pandemic ridership, and Bart is stuck at about 40% of pre pandemic levels, which

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: ha is also almost exactly the current office occupancy of downtown San Francisco. So before the pandemic it's worth noting that 70% of all transit trips in the region started or ended in San Francisco. So certainly this. The future vitality of the city is very much tied to public transit success.

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: And in addition to this remote work impacting transit ridership. We're also hearing concerns from employers about safety, cleanliness, and reliability of the services, and that's proving to be another barrier to regrowing better ship so, as Laura mentioned. Because of all of this, our transit systems are at risk of running out of money in the next few years, and that could lead to devastating service cuts.

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: and in some case, in the in some cases the elimination of services, the cuts would be so severe that transit would no longer be a viable commute option, and would cut off many disproportionately low income residents from jobs, grocery stores, health care services, and really everywhere.

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: It would also push more residents into cars at a time when we're trying to shift people out of the cars to meet our greenhouse gas reduction goals. So that's why, as Laura mentions for the Area Council in a broad coalition representing business labor, environmental and equity groups

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: are working together with the panelists here today on a campaign to ensure that transit survives this crisis and thrives. Moving forward, Barry, Council and spur are working with transform seamless bay area public advocates urban habitat and Nrdc. Specifically.

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Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: and this year our survive and thrive. Coalition is working to secure a multi year State funding commitment to cover the operating shortfall over the next few

years, and also fund ridership regrow strategies to build transit into a better and more sustainable system for the future.

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So with that context i'll turn it over to our chief legislative champion, Senator Scott Weiner. Thank you so much for being here.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Thank you so much for for having me. Hi, everyone.

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Senator Scott Wiener: So I think Emily gave a really good overview of the problems that we have, and I I just want to

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Senator Scott Wiener: stress, and I I suspect i'm preach to the flyer. But oh, how devastating it will be if we allow transit to go over the fiscal cliff in the next 12 to 24 months, which is really the timeframe we're looking at, depending on the agency.

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Senator Scott Wiener: This is not a situation where we go over the cliff, and then, a couple of years later, we find some money, and we just turn the switch back on. Once. Once this happens, it's going to be exceptionally hard to to walk it back.

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Senator Scott Wiener: because what we're going to see a system start to make massive service cuts

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Senator Scott Wiener: and stop investing in kind of capital and maintenance that they need to do. And people are gonna then just stop taking transit, and so it'll become. You know the what we've

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Senator Scott Wiener: talked about for a long time, which is the death spiral you cut. But service

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Senator Scott Wiener: people see it's less service. So they so you move even more ridership. You lose more revenue, and so they therefore have to cut even more service. So, and once part starts going to weekdays only, and maybe only once an hour really starts cutting a bunch of lines, and so on and so forth. It's going to be very, very hard ever

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Senator Scott Wiener: to fix that. And so we have one shot to get it right to shore up these systems, and to make sure that we do not go over this cliff.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and I am very, very concerned that there's not enough of a sense of urgency in the broader political world to make that happen, because if these systems start falling apart.

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Senator Scott Wiener: the economic damage that is going to do to the Bay area. it's hard to overstate.

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Senator Scott Wiener: In addition to this, completely undermining our climate, the sustainability go, we need more public transportation.

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Senator Scott Wiener: more frequently more reliable, going to more places and more parts of the State. Not less so. It's the exact opposite of what we need. So that's why the Governor's post budget was very. There are a lot of great things in there. I'm not criticizing the governor. He had a close up more than a 20 billiondollars

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Senator Scott Wiener: deficit, so i'm not being critical of him. But I I am expressing that I think the problem with with this piece of the Governor's budget proposal is that it goes in the wrong direction. It does not do anything to address the fiscal cliff, and, in fact, cuts 2 billiondollars

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Senator Scott Wiener: out of transit capital. So we, the good thing is, I was able to quickly round up a bunch of legislators from both bay area and Southern California, who are very concerned about this issue, and want to see the State step in similar to how New York is. State is stepping in to help the New York subway.

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Senator Scott Wiener: We we would love to see, you know a general fund appropriation, just as a you know, and and we're Mtc. And Cta. We're kind enough to do surveys and analysis. That shows that over the next 5 years. I think it's about a 3 billiondollar whole operating gap in the bay area somewhere between, I think, 5 and 8 billionstatewide.

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Senator Scott Wiener: And so we're looking at for the bay area. If it's 3 billion over 5 years. That's about 600 million

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Senator Scott Wiener: dollars a year Statewide, it's probably about a 1 billiondollars a year in the next 5 years the to large amount. But that is that that is

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Senator Scott Wiener: doable. We can do it. And so we have we put in several different budget letters with a lot of legislators signing on advocating for various different funding sources.

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Senator Scott Wiener: different pots of money, and also I know that this is more of a bay area request. It's more controversial in Southern California, but giving cogs like Mtc. Or sky or sand, that the the flexibility regionally

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Senator Scott Wiener: to decide to flex highway funds and use some highway funds for transit operations we got. We received California received more highway funds than we anticipated from the Federal infrastructure law, bipartisan, infrastructure law.

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Senator Scott Wiener: And so it does make sense, in my view, to give regions the ability to flex some of that money for transit operations, and that will be controversial. But I think we should have that ability.

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Senator Scott Wiener: So we're working as hard as we can at the State level on trying to backstop some of these risks. But the region needs to do self-

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Senator Scott Wiener: and that means going to the ballot regionally to provide some funding for both transit capital and operations.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and Mtc. Has heard me say this until blue in the face. Right now the plan is to go do a regional housing bond next year 2024, and then do a transit funding measure regionally in 2,026.

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Senator Scott Wiener: I I I think 2026 is way too late to do it for transit. We have a 12 to 24 month window before we start doing long term damage to these systems.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and in my view, we should be going out with a strong transit funding measure in 2024. That's when we need the money. I'm a 1,000% supportive of the regional housing bond, and if we can find the way to do both next year, I would fully support that. But and i'm a housing guy that's like my thing, but we cannot let these systems fall apart. Our region cannot afford it. So I think that we need to do regional help, self help, and we

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Senator Scott Wiener: we need to do a regional transit funding measure, in my view, in 2,024. One other last thing I want to know is, I think there is a narrative that the our public transit systems are making reforms. I think that's untrue.

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Senator Scott Wiener: We know that transit coming out of the pandemic. It look

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Senator Scott Wiener: the mute patents are different. Things are different. We know that there are some community lines that immunity is doing better than Bar. I think it's like 50 plus percent return of ridership. But there are some lines that are 80, 80 90%,

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Senator Scott Wiener: a pre-pandemic ridership. And a there are some lines that on the weekends are more than 100% of pre-pandemic ridership.

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Senator Scott Wiener: So we're seeing ridership sort of move around to an extent at least on some systems. And so we we absolutely need to look at. You know what what the future looks like and what these systems should look like, but I will caution that we Don't. I think it's too soon for us to know right now

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Senator Scott Wiener: what transit needs are going to be in 5 years I. Everything is in flux. Work from home is in flux. I don't think work is going to look the same in 5 years as it looks now. I think a lot of we. I think no one has any idea what

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Senator Scott Wiener: well

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Senator Scott Wiener: office and work from home balance is going to look like in 3 years, 5 years, and it's going to take some time for the dust to settle in terms of what transportation patterns look like in a few years or so.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and wouldn't it be tragic if we let this, these systems fall apart before we could even figure out how they need to change.

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Senator Scott Wiener: And so the we don't know all the reforms that are needed. It's too soon to know. But we know some things. We know that fair integration is important, and some other items, and so I formed that the request of our barrier, caucus and Senate Select Committee on Bay Area public Transportation.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and our caucus is very involved in it, and I think sometime in mid. May we're gonna be having our first hearing of this new select Committee, and I believe we'll likely be focusing on discussing some of the reforms and proposed reforms that our Bay area transit agencies are working on. So i'll stop there. And again, I want to thank everyone for your focus on this incredibly important issue.

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Laura Tolkoff: Thank you, Senator, and thank you for championing this. I want to mention that you know we we know that you're leaving a little bit early today. So we're leaving a few minutes now for anyone who would like to ask a question of the Senator.

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Laura Tolkoff: If you have a question, do for a feel free to put it in the Q. A. And I'll do my best to elevate it. If you are raising your hand, please, instead. Use the Q. A function, you know, maybe just to start us off

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Laura Tolkoff: just to start us off. Senator, if you if you might, I think you started to kind of touch on this issue that you know the crisis is so big that it's only prudent to be thinking about many different potential sources of funds. Is there anything more that you could say about how we should be thinking about potential sources locally.

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Senator Scott Wiener: regionally? What are some out of the box ideas that that you think should really be on the table for us, locally and regionally, as well as in the State?

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Senator Scott Wiener: And we, wanna I, I to to me, there are 2 things that I think I I think, are probably the more potentially the most straightforward, and maybe Michael or Rebecca disagree with me. One is, you know the governor did cut 2 billiondollars from transit capital.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and we we want to reverse that. And I think clawing back a cut is easier than asking for brand new money. And so we we're not. Not that. I think we're gonna probably get

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Senator Scott Wiener: the 2 billionback. But maybe we'll get a 1 billion of that back. Maybe I don't know.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and what. And when we claw back some of that money do we make it flexible so it can fund operations in addition to to capital, I think the highway funding flexibility, is it to me, is a a smart target.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and then regionally, I don't know what the tax

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Senator Scott Wiener: would be. I mean, it's been so much worked on on potential options for regional taxes to support, transit the the whole mega measure, or what is it called that faster. It was renamed. And so I You know I I can't remind. I know there were business tax or sales tax, or some mix.

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Senator Scott Wiener: And so I I think that's important to consider.

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Laura Tolkoff: You know you've been one of the most vocal champions for housing really progressive housing legislation in the State, and I think you know, in our view, transit oriented communities, don't work without the transit. Can you talk more about

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Laura Tolkoff: how the collapse of transit might impact the State's housing goals.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Well, I mean it it.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Yeah. I mean, I think there's a lot of consensus, not consensus. There's ever consensus around housing, but something approaching and census. You know that the best place to to build housing is around transit also around job centers.

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Senator Scott Wiener: and if you start having bad transit, it's just undermines that entire approach.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Right? If if if you don't have reliable transit.

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Senator Scott Wiener: so that that would be bad for State housing policy, there are also certain provisions of State law that

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Senator Scott Wiener: that grant more ability to create housing or not have parking, or whatever near public transportation hubs. And if those hubs start, you know deteriorating.

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00:20:30.490 --> 00:20:37.180

Senator Scott Wiener: You know we're building on this housing with no parking or a limited partnering on the Assumption people are going to take transit.

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00:20:37.280 --> 00:20:47.860

Senator Scott Wiener: and then the transit isn't there, or it's really bad, or it's not there on the weekends, or there's on one train an hour. And so it really

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00:20:47.970 --> 00:20:49.640

Senator Scott Wiener: undermines those

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Senator Scott Wiener: provisions and those goals, and of course, you know, just totally undermines our our carbon emission reduction goals.

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Laura Tolkoff: Thank you.

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I think you know we we are getting a lot of great questions in the Q. A. And I think you know one of the things that you mentioned is that you have a select committee that you're you're asking to establish. And I think someone is alluding to some of the coverage in the press about

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Laura Tolkoff: some of the ideas that are out there for for operational and structural changes to our notoriously fragmented system in the Bay area.

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Laura Tolkoff: In your view, what are the types of changes that you that you think we need to be thinking about that, you know, will lead towards greater financial stability for public transit as a whole.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Those could be changes, you know, in to to transit agencies, or the way that the State is set up to support public transit.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Yeah, I mean. I You know I I do. I do think that

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Senator Scott Wiener: I I I do think that some of our workforce systems get a little bit of short shrift under

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Senator Scott Wiener: certain funding formulas, and you know, and the reality is that you know

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Senator Scott Wiener: I mean before the pandemic mun. It was carrying half of the as a ridership in the entire region. and if you put part in there, you know you're talking about the lion's share. So when I was an Mtc. I was always very supportive of making sure that we fund the smaller

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Senator Scott Wiener: agency. So i'm not suggesting that we, you know, not do that those agencies are very important, but we need to never forget that these workforce

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Senator Scott Wiener: agencies that are serving such a high percentage of regional transit ridership are really important, you know. And I I think also, you know, gas tax, which is right now.

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Senator Scott Wiener: 20% for transit. I think that's too low. I think more more of our gas tax.

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Senator Scott Wiener: I should go to to transit.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Those are just a few things.

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Senator Scott Wiener: Thank you. I know you have to leave a little bit early, so I do really appreciate your time spent with us this evening, and for speaking so vocally in support of public transit writers in the region in the State. I think we're we're very lucky to have you in Sacramento.

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Laura Tolkoff: So with that we're going to move over to here a little bit more from Rebecca long at Mtc.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): Great. Thank you so much, Laura. And yeah, just thank you to spur as well as Emily Loper for the leadership on this subject. I'm: just gonna pull up my slides now.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): And so Mtc. Is the 9 County Regional Transportation planning Agency for the Bay area. For those of you who might not know. But i'm guessing this audience, most of you know who Mtc. Is?

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As was stated in the Introduction, I'm. The Director of Legislation and Public Affairs, and in that role do a lot of the advocacy work in Sacramento and Washington. So i'm going to try to

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Rebecca Long (MTC): really explain with a bit of detail. You know the source of the fiscal cliff crisis, some of the complexity and the differences are around different operators.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): and our proposed approach to addressing it.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): Yeah. So i'm going to give an overview of the ridership and financial challenges. Talk about what the outlook looks like on the financial standpoint for different agencies.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): highlight some of the regional initiatives that are under way to enhance the transit experience and expand ridership, and then again get into a little bit of the budget. Ask.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): So I think, as many of you know, but I think it really bears. Since repeating how important the Federal Covid relief funding has been to transit really nationwide. But here in the bay area we received 4.4 billiondollars

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through the various Covid relief packages to basically keep transit running. There was a, you know, a recognition very quickly, you know, among the industry, and then translated quickly into advocacy in Washington that

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Rebecca Long (MTC): this was a game changer for some operators. You know they lost 95 of their ridership overnight, and there was really no sense of how long this was gonna last. And so there were multiple iterations of the Federal relief that were provided.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): So Where are we now in terms of overall ridership. As I think, Laura mentioned, we're at about

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Rebecca Long (MTC): 53% overall. But it really does vary significantly by operator.

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Rebecca Long (MTC): And I do want to make one interesting point, or I think it's interesting is that the drop is not 100%. Just the shift to remote work. We have seen a reluctance of those who are still commuting to work to take transit, and I think that really represents an opportunity.

122

00:26:23.610 --> 00:26:28.080

Rebecca Long (MTC): Looking at this is from census data in 2,021,

123

00:26:28.110 --> 00:26:42.170

Rebecca Long (MTC): the share of those who are commuting. Again, this is not include People who are working from home went from 14% in 2,019 to 5, as far as the share of of of of transit.

124

00:26:42.410 --> 00:26:46.010

Rebecca Long (MTC): And so, again, that gap really represents a a big opportunity.

125

00:26:47.580 --> 00:27:07.230

Rebecca Long (MTC): This slide shows the breakdown of most of our operators. We have 27 operators, I think there might be a couple not included here. But what you see is the Blue Bar is representing those operators who have recovered between 60 to 79 of their ridership the oranges

126

00:27:07.280 --> 00:27:19.190

Rebecca Long (MTC): between 32 to 49% the the green. There's really one operator that right now is in that green zone, and that's marine transit that over 80 of their Pre Covid ridership.

127

00:27:19.290 --> 00:27:37.900

Rebecca Long (MTC): and then the yellow is between 50 to 59. So you can see this this chart is actually, you know, we're updating it as often as we can. This is from the it's a 3 month average from December to through February of this year. Compared to

128

00:27:38.230 --> 00:27:39.850

Rebecca Long (MTC): 2019,

129

00:27:39.870 --> 00:27:57.310

Rebecca Long (MTC): and it's getting better. So that's good. We're certainly seeing an upward trajectory. But I think what does also really jump out are where Bart is at at 40. Cal. Train, you know. Both very commute focused systems below 40%

130

00:27:57.310 --> 00:28:12.940

Rebecca Long (MTC): Golden Gate Bridge. There. Gold Gate Bridge transit. Their system has been very commute, focused as well, and so they're below 40 as well as a couple of the North Bay Bus operators.

131

00:28:14.770 --> 00:28:30.610

Rebecca Long (MTC): So i'm just gonna take a couple of minutes to talk about the different business models in the regions transit systems, because it really does affect how we, you know, think about the future, and and explains the nature of the shortfalls

132

00:28:30.610 --> 00:28:45.610



Rebecca Long (MTC): that you see in the bay area, particularly compared to some other parts of the State or the country. So some of our operators have really been very user fee focused and have a very high what's called a fair box

133

00:28:45.610 --> 00:28:58.770

Rebecca Long (MTC): recovery ratio. That is what percent of their operating budget is covered by fares, and, as you might imagine, having a high fare Box ratio was viewed as the gold standard. Because you're being more

134

00:28:58.770 --> 00:29:13.510

Rebecca Long (MTC): self sustaining. You, Don't, require as much subsidy, but it's obviously turned on its head with the drop in ridership. So for Bart and Cal train in particular, they both had a fair box ratio of around 70%.

135

00:29:13.510 --> 00:29:23.020

Rebecca Long (MTC): But then, with that significant portion of their their operating budget being reliant on fares, and them being commute oriented systems, they

136

00:29:23.150 --> 00:29:29.360

but then a double whammy for those agencies and then Golden Gate transit.

137

00:29:29.470 --> 00:29:43.950

Rebecca Long (MTC): They also are very user fee focused, relying on tolls, bridge tolls, and while the Bay Bridge has recovered quite a bit of its traffic to almost where it was pre pandemic. Golden Gate

138

00:29:44.060 --> 00:29:59.280

Rebecca Long (MTC): Bridge has definitely stayed pretty depressed, commuting from the North Bay into San Francisco. You know it's definitely down. And so that transit system is seeing a big impact in terms of the amount of toll revenue that can go towards

139

00:29:59.550 --> 00:30:03.310

Rebecca Long (MTC): towards transit, because it prioritizes the bridge first.

140

00:30:03.510 --> 00:30:18.880

Rebecca Long (MTC): and then you have a lot of the bus Operators are really reliant on sales, Tax and sales. Tax has actually, you know, remained quite robust during the pandemic, and this is also true for operators in Southern California.

141

00:30:18.880 --> 00:30:25.920

The more that you were reliant on sales tax, if you lose significant amount of ridership. It doesn't impact you quite as much.

142

00:30:26.120 --> 00:30:44.010

Rebecca Long (MTC): And then we have some operators. Very importantly, the second largest operator, in terms of funding shortfall and the largest transit operator in terms of the ridership San Francisco community. They have a significant amount of their revenue comes from the city's general fund.

143

00:30:44.010 --> 00:30:59.020

Rebecca Long (MTC): and comes from parking revenue traffic, fines and things that are very much depressed as a result of the overall cities decline in economic activity and and just activity overall.

144

00:30:59.030 --> 00:31:06.450

Rebecca Long (MTC): So that's kind of a unique situation. That, you know also is very much driven by the the remote work

145

00:31:08.710 --> 00:31:17.970

Rebecca Long (MTC): and just reinforcing the point that Emily made earlier that you know San Francisco's recovery is really below that of other

146

00:31:18.020 --> 00:31:26.270

Rebecca Long (MTC): North American cities in terms of just return to to the office, and that's clearly having a significant impact on transit.

147

00:31:27.410 --> 00:31:41.980

Rebecca Long (MTC): So here are the the slides that show the the dollar figures that we're looking at that Senator Weiner referenced earlier. On the way you can see is that it's a very rapid growth over the next few years.

148

00:31:41.980 --> 00:31:58.240

Rebecca Long (MTC): And so the the budget that's being negotiated in Sacramento right now is for fiscal year, 2324, and that actually doesn't have a huge shortfall it's under 100 million for the bay area and the scheme of things that's not so much. It gets around 78 million.

149

00:31:58.240 --> 00:32:17.620

Rebecca Long (MTC): but then it goes. You know rapidly close to 400, and then we're over 700, and the reason for those increases is not that there's some sudden growth in cost. It's that in over the next 2 years operators still have some Federal Covid relief funding in their budgets. And so it's cushioning this mismatch between

150

00:32:17.620 --> 00:32:19.580

Rebecca Long (MTC): expenditures and revenues.

151

00:32:20.460 --> 00:32:35.740

Rebecca Long (MTC): I think what also jumps out here clearly is the extent of the Orange bar that represents Bart and the extent of the Blue Bar, which represents Muni, and collectively they represent about 2 thirds of the regions shorter fall

152

00:32:37.710 --> 00:32:38.550

Rebecca Long (MTC): whoops.

153

00:32:38.580 --> 00:32:56.070

Rebecca Long (MTC): So just I i'm gonna speed up here because I did try to set a timer for myself, and I think i'm i'm getting at. And i'm potentially gonna run over. But really, our message to Sacramento in our advocacy is just how critical transit is to our equity and climate goals.

154

00:32:56.070 --> 00:33:18.140

Rebecca Long (MTC): Looking at the State's own reports related to climate. They may clear that California can't achieve its climate goals through electrification alone that we need to be reducing the amount of driving, because that turning over of the fleet to a 0 carbon fleet is not going to happen overnight. And, as Senator Weiner said, we need to have a better

155

00:33:18.150 --> 00:33:22.660

Rebecca Long (MTC): transit system than we do today to attract more people to choose transit.

156

00:33:24.240 --> 00:33:38.960

Rebecca Long (MTC): And then, with respect to equity, what we've really seen in the data is that transit is even more so. Now, the you know, Mo. Choice that those who are the most vulnerable in our society rely upon

157

00:33:38.960 --> 00:33:52.650

Rebecca Long (MTC): the proportion of transit riders who are low income or people of color. It's just it. It's at probably the highest it's ever been, and so cuts to those systems are really having a a very disproportionate impact.

158

00:33:54.390 --> 00:34:07.540

Rebecca Long (MTC): So the region really is trying to reimagine transit and think about, You know, using this crisis as an opportunity to create a more integrated system. I mentioned at the outset, and you can see it

159

00:34:07.540 --> 00:34:16.290

Rebecca Long (MTC): in the slides that we have many operators, as you all know. How can we make the system, you know, feel like one harmonious seamless system?

160

00:34:16.550 --> 00:34:21.900

Rebecca Long (MTC): We had a blue ribbon task force right as Covid hit where we highlighted and and

161

00:34:21.949 --> 00:34:41.360

Rebecca Long (MTC): reach consensus with operators and other stakeholders. Around. These priorities, which are integrating our fares, having more harmonious branding and signage Speeding up transit obviously speed is a factor that that bears in mind when folks are deciding whether they want to drive or take transit.

162

00:34:41.360 --> 00:34:49.080

making sure that the system is really accessible for all users, particularly older adults, people with disabilities.

163

00:34:49.120 --> 00:34:51.840

Rebecca Long (MTC): And then, of course, finding or funding.

164

00:34:53.080 --> 00:35:12.400

Rebecca Long (MTC): and so just to close with the the way in which we're thinking about this budget. Ask? It really is a multi year package. Senator Weiner noted that there is a proposal to put a regional measure on the ballot right now the path that Mtc. Is on is to

165

00:35:12.400 --> 00:35:24.090

Rebecca Long (MTC): pursue that through a bill that would be enabled next year so the bill would go through in 2024, and then we would be able to put something on the ballot in 2,026.

166

00:35:24.170 --> 00:35:32.620

But we don't want to put all our eggs in that basket. We're doing polling now, and so we we know that we need to have some funding

167

00:35:32.740 --> 00:35:43.890

Rebecca Long (MTC): secured through this Year's budget to provide for time to develop a more sustainable funding plan for the region, and it needs to be a multi year commitment.

168

00:35:43.890 --> 00:36:00.820

Rebecca Long (MTC): And then we also do think that there have to be multiple revenue sources that the Legislature assigns to this need, because the need is too great for any single funding source to provide for it. We're also trying to minimize impact on the general fund.

169

00:36:00.820 --> 00:36:15.630

Rebecca Long (MTC): I think I saw in the chat somebody asked about. You know the fact that there is a budget deficit. We're very cognizant of that, and transportation generally doesn't receive general fund monies. Those are going towards education towards health care towards

170

00:36:15.880 --> 00:36:33.130

Rebecca Long (MTC): criminal justice, and it's a very contentious fight every year. It's not a place that transportation generally does well in. And so we're looking to. What are the other existing transportation funding sources that we could direct towards this, for you know a limited amount of time while we

171

00:36:33.220 --> 00:36:53.090

Rebecca Long (MTC): transition to a more sustainable funding model, there are going to be some difficult questions and and negotiations that happen. The legislature does want to see that transit agencies are making hard choices and and want to know how they can be assured that they're doing their best to bring back riders to use funds efficiently.

172

00:36:53.190 --> 00:37:09.380

Rebecca Long (MTC): and certainly as Senator Weiner mentioned as well, there are proposals to shift, or at least provide flexibility to use funds that had otherwise been directed towards capital for operating purposes. To address the the shortfall.

173

00:37:09.540 --> 00:37:24.310

Rebecca Long (MTC): We are really making a strong case for new funding. You know some of the capital funding that we've already identified priorities for has the potential to leverage billions and billions of dollars in Federal monies, and so shifting

174

00:37:24.310 --> 00:37:35.220

Rebecca Long (MTC): those State funds to operating and missing the opportunity to attract again. Billions of dollars in Federal money seems like a. You know, a

175

00:37:35.240 --> 00:37:50.210

Rebecca Long (MTC): penny wise, count, foolish choice that we think you know we need to be very careful with. So we're making the case. We think we agree with Senator Weiner. It's doable. The money is there, and it's really a question of the Legislature prioritizing transit. And with that I will close. Thank you.

176

00:37:51.050 --> 00:37:55.800

Laura Tolkoff: Thanks, Rebecca, for the sake of time. I'm going to move us straight into Michael.

177

00:38:06.440 --> 00:38:24.140

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Thank you, Laur, for that introduction. Folks. I'm Michael Pimantel, executive director of the California Transit Association, and for those of you who don't know our organization well. The Association is a nonprofit trade organization that represents here in Sacramento more than 220 member organizations

178

00:38:24.140 --> 00:38:30.820

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: from across California's transit industry that includes 85 transit and rail agencies here in the State.

179

00:38:30.960 --> 00:38:50.570

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: So, as I begin my remarks. I do, of course, wanna acknowledge and thank Spur and the Bay Area Council for hosting this important forum, and though he has left, I do want to thank Senator Weiner for his leadership in elevating throughout his career in the Legislature the importance of State support for public transportation.

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00:38:50.570 --> 00:38:58.540

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and particularly for leading this year's fight to secure trans operations funding to address our near term shortfalls.

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00:38:58.830 --> 00:39:18.740

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Now the previous speaker is laid out well, the myriad challenges facing our industry, and why it is critical that we act as a State to stave off drastic cuts, to transit service that would undermine our State in regional mobility, environmental and equity objectives. I want to co-sign on their message.

182

00:39:18.740 --> 00:39:37.450

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: but I also want to acknowledge that much of today's conversation has centered on the challenges faced by bay area transit agencies, and I want to elevate that the challenges are faced similarly, acutely by agency, statewide, and across the nation.

183

00:39:37.450 --> 00:39:50.890

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: And as a Testament to that. I want to highlight that in our recently adopted strategic plan the Association's leadership identified as our top advocacy advocacy priority for 2,023

184

00:39:51.010 --> 00:40:02.480

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: action to secure new transit operations, funding to address pandemic, induce funding shortfalls and to support transit agencies in advancing ridership recovery strategies.

185

00:40:02.580 --> 00:40:15.560

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Now, as we developed this plan, and as we built out our Budget advocacy campaign this year, we've been clear that new operations funding should be oriented toward addressing our near term needs statewide

186

00:40:15.590 --> 00:40:21.130

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: as we build toward long-term solutions that include a greater role for the State

187

00:40:21.210 --> 00:40:23.460

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: in supporting transit operations

188

00:40:23.670 --> 00:40:39.760

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Now, this push recognizes that today public transit agencies are being hit by a variety of external factors, some of which were noted by the previous speakers that have undermined their ridership and increase their cost of service, and i'll speak more to this in a moment.

189

00:40:39.990 --> 00:40:59.670

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: But for now I want to highlight that our campaign is proceeding in a phase manner, and is currently focused on building awareness of California transit agencies, operations, funding needs, and the various impediments to regrown ridership. As we work to finalize a budget request for delivery to the Newsome Administration and the Legislature. Later this month.

190

00:41:00.090 --> 00:41:16.350

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: critically through our campaign and parallel initiatives led by organizations across the State, we have collectively created in the face of a daunting state budget deficit a policy window to secure state funding, to preserve and further support public transit.

191

00:41:16.800 --> 00:41:34.580

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: As we proceed in our joint advocacy we must present in this policy window a budget request that is, evidence based, and it is attuned to the level and timing of transit funding needs statewide, and i'll speak to some of these considerations now, and provide some broader contacts

192

00:41:34.580 --> 00:41:36.870

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: to the statewide challenges that we face.

193

00:41:37.750 --> 00:41:51.480

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: So when early January of 2,023. My association solicited responses from our member agencies to a survey that was focused on these funding short falls, and the results are frankly troubling

194

00:41:51.700 --> 00:42:03.010

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: as presented on your screen. Nearly 46% of our survey respondents will fully expand their federal Kevin 19, and relief by the end of the next fiscal year, 2,324,

195

00:42:03.210 --> 00:42:16.520

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and another 10% will fully expand their relief by the following fiscal year, 2,425 as we look ahead, and an additional 8 will fully expand their Federal relief in the 3 fiscal years that follow.

196

00:42:16.720 --> 00:42:33.230



Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Now this depletion of relief funds by most agencies in state fiscal year. 2324 leads to a fivefold increase in our projection for the Statewide, funding short falls between the end of State fiscal year, 2324, and the start of state fiscal year, 2,425.

197

00:42:33.350 --> 00:42:38.970

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Now, in the press. You've often heard that the operations funding shortfalls are most acute in the bay area.

198

00:42:39.040 --> 00:42:49.310

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and from our data we find that there is some validity to that assertion, particularly in fiscal year, 2,425, but it certainly doesn't capture the full picture.

199

00:42:49.580 --> 00:43:01.470

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: And so for some contacts consider the timing and the geography of the full draw down a Federal funding from the agencies on your screen. That again represent agencies, statewide

200

00:43:01.940 --> 00:43:08.110

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: as transit agencies, exhaust or federal relief. That's when they begin to see the operating deficits occur.

201

00:43:08.350 --> 00:43:18.470

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and we have cataloged roughly 6 billiondollars in operations funding needs over the next 5 fiscal years, and we estimate that the true need may be as high as 8 billiondollars.

202

00:43:18.610 --> 00:43:25.620

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Of course I want to elevate that the depletion of Federal relief funds is not the sole driver of our Industry's operating deficits.

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00:43:25.630 --> 00:43:43.070

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: reported shortfalls are driven by a variety of factors, some of them external, including the lost in transit ridership. That is itself a function of change commute patterns, Writer: safety concerns and our States housing affordability crisis which has reduced fair revenue.

204

00:43:44.140 --> 00:43:58.930

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: It is also a factor, or rather an outgrowth of increased operations, costs driven by a tight labor market, and supply shocks to our nation's fuel support supply that have made it more expensive to operate our services.

205

00:43:59.100 --> 00:44:11.000

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and then finally, it is a function of increased capital costs, resulting from supply chain issues, inflation, and the adoption of more expensive but cleaner transit vehicle technologies.

206

00:44:11.040 --> 00:44:19.730

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: And so All these shortfalls here in California are, of course, staggering. I want to emphasize that we are not alone in facing these significant financial challenges.

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00:44:19.730 --> 00:44:37.600

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: New York. Mta. Chicago transit Authority Septa. In Philadelphia, onelada in DC. Historically, some of the nation's most productive transit systems are also similarly facing near term operations funding shortfalls and so, no matter if you are in New York, San Francisco, or La.

208

00:44:37.600 --> 00:44:55.640

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: the path forward for transit agencies in writing through this current troubles will require external intervention to pull agencies from their fiscal cliff, and I know that we're going to have a robust discussion. And so I want to just thank you for the time the ability to present to you today, and i'll hand it back to Laura. Thank you.

209

00:44:59.660 --> 00:45:10.590

Laura Tolkoff: Thank you, Michael, and building on that. I'm going to say a few words as well about about kind of the State perspective on this, but from a different vantage point.

210

00:45:10.610 --> 00:45:17.400

I think you know, public transit. Actually, i'm gonna share my slides before I start talking.

211

00:45:18.700 --> 00:45:19.990

Laura Tolkoff: Just a moment.

212

00:45:26.240 --> 00:45:27.860

Laura Tolkoﬀ: Sorry 1 s.

213

00:45:34.870 --> 00:45:49.220

Laura Tolkoﬀ: So I think you've heard from my colleagues today. Here, You know how important transit it is to our State policy goals it really underpins. Excuse me, our climate, our health, our equity.

214

00:45:49.220 --> 00:46:04.280

and housing goals. But the reality is that you know it's its business model is in crisis, so as the state is increasingly defining higher and higher expectations, for what transit will do in our state.

215

00:46:04.280 --> 00:46:20.940

Laura Tolkoﬀ: It's financial future is really diverging and headed in the opposite direction. And so what Spur was trying to understand is to understand what role the State has historically played in funding transit operations?

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00:46:20.940 --> 00:46:34.140

Because I think we're in a moment where some might say that our request of the State is really unprecedented, and in some ways it is. But we would argue that it's unprecedented, but it's warranted.

217

00:46:34.350 --> 00:46:51.420

Laura Tolkoﬀ: And you know, as you've heard from Michael a recent study from the UC. It's found that more than 70% of California transit operators are expecting serious financial shortfalls in the near future, and it's going to affect

218

00:46:51.420 --> 00:47:11.030

Laura Tolkoﬀ: a lot of agencies of many different sizes, and it's especially going to affect the largest ones. So, to be clear, All transit in California serves an important function, and operators of all sizes are really facing. Financial pressure is related to revenue losses and escalating costs. As Michael spoke about

219

00:47:11.030 --> 00:47:20.980

Laura Tolkoﬀ: the States. Many small operators provide important mobility options within communities that they serve, and are certainly essential in

220

00:47:21.000 --> 00:47:40.400

Laura Tolkoﬀ: in helping all Californians access essential count transportation. But there are some agencies that also provide a really outsized influence over California's ability to meet its ambitious climate, goals and housing goals and health and equity goals.

221

00:47:40.900 --> 00:47:48.470

Laura Tolkoﬀ: So I want to just point out this chart here, which is a spur analysis of the national transit database.

222

00:47:48.470 --> 00:48:08.040

Laura Tolkoﬀ: and what we found is that in California there are over 200 operators, transit operators, and of those 210, about 5, really 10 of them carry the majority of the States riders, and most of those are really projecting major shortfalls.

223

00:48:08.040 --> 00:48:19.640

Laura Tolkoﬀ: the 5 largest of the 5 largest systems, La Metro Muni Bar easy transit. They're all facing significant financial challenges as well as La Metro

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00:48:19.640 --> 00:48:29.120

Laura Tolkoﬀ: and sorry La Metro and San Diego. And so they're all be all going to be facing significant shortfalls in the next few years.

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00:48:29.120 --> 00:48:45.010

Laura Tolkoﬀ: and with the exception of Bart, these agencies were not hugely reliant on fares, but because of their sheer size, are all experiencing absolute losses of fair income that simply cannot be easily back filled with other local sources.

226

00:48:45.600 --> 00:48:56.110

Laura Tolkoﬀ: And what's really compelling is that I think one of the things that we found is that that these transit agencies

227

00:48:56.150 --> 00:49:00.320

Laura Tolkoﬀ: throughout the United States, what we're seeing is that

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00:49:00.440 --> 00:49:15.270

Laura Tolkoﬀ: the California's California share of funding for transit operations is much lower than in other States. The general trend is that the State

229

00:49:15.270 --> 00:49:33.190

Laura Tolkoff: funding makes up a fairly small proportion of these operators budgets, and relative to its ambitious goals and peers. It's really a a we're really seeing that California tends to under invest relative to its peers.

230

00:49:33.190 --> 00:49:50.490

Laura Tolkoff: So when we looked at the data for other large transit systems throughout the Us. That State funding often plays a more significant role in supporting transit operations in those other big systems, particularly those serving large metropolitan areas on the East coast.

231

00:49:50.990 --> 00:49:55.140

Laura Tolkoff: And so, even though California can either very clear

232

00:49:55.140 --> 00:50:19.380

Laura Tolkoff: that count that transit is central to its future. But for transit to really realize that pivotal role. The State needs to really step in to recover and help transit transition to a more sustainable business model. And that's something that's gonna take time. It's gonna take a lot of effort from multiple level layers of government. There's a lot of exogenous factors that affect transit success.

233

00:50:19.380 --> 00:50:30.920

Laura Tolkoff: And it's gonna be things that we need to do to help identify new sources of funding, to help grow near transit and to really support a more efficient system.

234

00:50:30.920 --> 00:50:43.880

Laura Tolkoff: And again, those are going to take time to achieve at scale. And so, you know. In the meantime, there's really no path towards financial stability or improvement or growth in our systems.

235

00:50:43.880 --> 00:50:57.330

Laura Tolkoff: If we allow California's system transit systems to really slip into that death spiral of deeper service cuts and disrepair. And so you know, that's something that we're seeking with our partners here from the State.

236

00:50:57.330 --> 00:51:22.120

Laura Tolkoff: And if you yourself would like to get involved, i'm gonna point you to a couple of opportunities to do so. The first is coming up on the eighteenth. Several of our partners listed here at the bottom, are working with Supervisor Preston to have a rally bringing attention to the need for transit funding outside of San Francisco City Hall, April eighteenth, at 12 Pm.

237

00:51:22.120 --> 00:51:34.270

Laura Tolkoff: The information is on the screen here, and we can send it out with the slides for those who can't join. But we hope to see you there on the eighteenth.

238

00:51:34.420 --> 00:52:04.410

We are also starting to be in budget negotiations. Season as the spring and summer move forward. And so what that means is that there are going to be lots of opportunities to contact your legislator and advocate for more public, for more funding for public transit service and to support ridership regrowth. As we transition to this new normal. There is a website called Save California transit.org

239

00:52:04.410 --> 00:52:32.650

Laura Tolkoff: that was put together by one of our coalition partners with opportunities to have your city send a letter to sign a petition yourself to sign up to volunteer or phone bank or write letters, and to call your legislators, so I encourage you to check out that website, sign up for action. Alerts there! That will be the best resource for you to find out how to engage as we move through this budget season.

240

00:52:32.840 --> 00:52:35.910

Laura Tolkoff: and with that, and

241

00:52:36.100 --> 00:52:44.510

Laura Tolkoff: close this conversation, and turn it over to some more Q. And a. To take that for our last few minutes.

242

00:52:44.680 --> 00:52:49.100

Laura Tolkoff: and i'll turn it over to Emily to steer us for that

243

00:52:49.950 --> 00:53:01.440

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: great Thank you, Laura. So Rebecca and Michael, we have several questions in the chat. We'll try to get through as many as we can. So a little bit.

244

00:53:01.820 --> 00:53:02.630

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: Okay.

245

00:53:03.960 --> 00:53:04.860

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: Can you hear me?

246

00:53:05.590 --> 00:53:07.970

Laura Tolhoff: We are. We can now there was a delay.

247

00:53:09.100 --> 00:53:11.280

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: Okay, so

248

00:53:11.610 --> 00:53:13.600

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: we have a few questions here.

249

00:53:13.660 --> 00:53:37.270

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: The first is we we we talked about the opportunity to regrow transit ridership, and Rebecca, as you mentioned, a number of there's still a percentage of commuters that have not returned to transit post pandemic. And so many of the concerns we're hearing are related to safety and cleanliness of the system. Can you speak to how

250

00:53:37.270 --> 00:53:42.610

you know how you envision overcome any overcoming those challenges to draw riders back?

251

00:53:44.300 --> 00:53:45.570

Rebecca Long (MTC): Thanks, Emily.

252

00:53:45.600 --> 00:53:58.930

Rebecca Long (MTC): It's a great question, and and you know we are certainly seeing that in kind of customer surveys that Bart's been doing and and just polling that your organization's been doing that. That is the top concern right now

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00:53:58.930 --> 00:54:09.740

Rebecca Long (MTC): is around safety. Cleanliness, I think that Bart has, you know, is is one of the agencies that is confronting those challenges most directly, and that they are

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00:54:09.970 --> 00:54:21.800

Rebecca Long (MTC): committing to make more investments in. You know police as well as ambassador programs, since you know having more police presence. Isn't necessarily

255

00:54:21.810 --> 00:54:32.800

Rebecca Long (MTC): going to make everybody feel safer. So I think they're trying to kind of do both, and I believe they've recently made some decisions to have their police force be more present on trains themselves.

256

00:54:32.800 --> 00:54:54.340

Rebecca Long (MTC): So that's a change. And then I I understand that they've also moved forward or about to approve a contract related to their fare. Gates, which are very easy to hop over, and, I think are kind of associated with, You know, some more problematic behavior on the system. So those are some of the strategies that that Bart is using.

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00:54:54.340 --> 00:54:55.870

I think there's also

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00:54:55.950 --> 00:55:06.470

Rebecca Long (MTC): an opportunity, you know, to do a little bit more kind of public information Community service announcements on the system itself. They do have some

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00:55:06.470 --> 00:55:23.230

Rebecca Long (MTC): programs like the Bart Watch app that I don't know that you know most people writing Bart even know about, but it's a way to report any incident in real time. I've personally used it. It does make me feel better that I know that you know I'm getting a response. So those are just some examples.

260

00:55:25.410 --> 00:55:44.270

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and if I can add to that from a statewide perspective. We are very interested in legislation moving through the State capital. Currently they would address some of these underlying conditions that is made transit less than an attractive option for a lot of commuters.

261

00:55:44.380 --> 00:56:02.680

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: One bill that we are soon to support is Sp. 434 by Senator Dave men that relates to harassment that is experienced by women by folks from the Lgbtqia communities, as they are engaging with public transit.

262

00:56:02.680 --> 00:56:17.120

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: and requiring that agencies conduct surveys to better understand those experiences, and to lay the foundation for what would be strategies that they implement to begin to address those experiences



263

00:56:17.390 --> 00:56:37.360

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: we're also examining, and are hoping to be able to support a. B. 1,377 by assembly woman, Laura Friedman, the chair of the Transportation Committee related to homelessness and so Historically, we, as an association, have been calling on the State of California to provide direct funding to transit agencies

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00:56:37.360 --> 00:56:47.060

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: to allow them to address homelessness as it's experienced on their systems. The State has unfortunately not come through with resources directly to the agencies.

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00:56:47.080 --> 00:56:58.700

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: But with this bill Miss Friedman is attempting to require that, as cities and counties put in grant applications for the States resources that would flow through the hat program

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00:56:58.700 --> 00:57:12.070

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: that they coordinate with transit agencies and speak to how those applications will address homelessness on transit systems. Now, here I want to be clear. Instances of homelessness do not necessarily equate in all instances

267

00:57:12.090 --> 00:57:27.650

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: to matters of public safety. Unfortunately, at times it does have this interface with perceptions of safety. and so it is a matter that we need to address as agencies in order to present a more welcoming face to the traveling public.

268

00:57:27.650 --> 00:57:51.240

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: Those are some of the items that we are committed to pursuing. And then, just finally, we'll note Transit Prioritization is one of the areas where we have to continue to make progress. We've got to demonstrate a travel time, savings and efficiency benefit to writing public transit to bring people on board. I saw a quote, or rather a question in the chat about bright line, bright line, successful because it's dedicated right of way

269

00:57:51.240 --> 00:58:03.320

Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association: because it can prove travel time savings over a car. If we can start to demonstrate that in your inner city, in your urban transit systems, we can start to see that mode shift happen on our systems as well.

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00:58:05.360 --> 00:58:08.680

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: Great? Thank you both. That was very comprehensive.

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00:58:08.700 --> 00:58:19.360

Emily Loper, Bay Area Council: Answer that I think addressed a lot of the issues that were a lot of the questions in the chat. I know we are at time now. So, Laura, i'll turn it back to you to close.

272

00:58:20.700 --> 00:58:50.680

Laura Tolkoff: Thank you, everybody. I know there were more questions, and we can answer today. But I I really appreciate you all. Turning out and engaging with this Forum tonight. Unfortunately, we are at the end of our time today, and so I do want to just thank our guests thank our Co-pilot, our co-pilot, our co-presenters, with this Bay Area Council. Thank you to Rebecca and Michael, and to the Senator for all you do to to support and advocate for public transit in California.

273

00:58:50.680 --> 00:58:58.830

Laura Tolkoff: I think we'll be working together on this, and hopefully be able to share good news with everybody here in a few months.

274

00:58:59.460 --> 00:59:00.880

Laura Tolkoff: Have a good night, everybody.