

September 7, 2023

Re: Potential Regional Transportation Measure (September 8 2023 Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee - Item 3b)

Chair Canepa and Committee Members,

The need for additional transit funding in the Bay Area is urgent and SPUR appreciates the work that MTC staff have undertaken to initiate outreach, polling and analysis related to a potential 2026 regional transportation measure.

While we know there will be more discussion to come, we want to voice our initial support for many of the draft goals, guiding principles and expenditure priorities that staff have provided in item 3b. Together these represent a thoughtful foundation from which to launch the measure process. In particular we would emphasize the importance of the following:

- ***Establishing that funding for the operation and transformation of the region's transit system is a central priority and focus for the measure.*** *The Bay Area has a transit operating deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars over just the next five years. As of now, there is no plausible way to fill a gap of this magnitude and support ongoing operating needs into the future without significant new regional funding.*
- ***Ensuring that all expenditures advance equity and support the region's climate goals.*** The foundations of our region's collective well being and prosperity are imperiled by acute social and economic injustices and a worsening global climate crisis. A regional measure of the magnitude contemplated must address these realities. Past measures often included significant investments in expanding roadways and lane miles, which is counterproductive to meeting our climate goals and unacceptable in 2023.
- ***Crafting an adaptable and flexible expenditure structure that recognizes the future uncertainties our region faces.*** The last several years have been a sharp reminder that we live in a rapidly changing and unpredictable world. It is strategically prudent to build flexibility and adaptive capacity into the structure of a measure that would endure for decades and is still several years away from the ballot.
- ***Using new funding to strengthen and accelerate implementation of regional reforms, plans and policies.*** While not as directly addressed in the packet, we also strongly believe that a successful regional transportation measure must include provisions that build public trust by connecting new transit funding to the ongoing advancement and strengthening of reform and accountability provisions laid out in the Transit Transformation Action Plan, as well as regional policies and plans including MTC's Transit Oriented Communities Policy and Transit 2050+.

The potential regional transportation measure described in your packet is both deeply necessary and highly ambitious. Although the 2026 general election is more than three years away, the critical path of decisions and actions needed to achieve success is long. We urge MTC staff and policymakers, transit operators and other regional stakeholders and advocates to come together quickly around the near

term goal of advancing enabling legislation in 2024 that maximizes our region's chances for success. In practical terms, we believe that this will require:

- Expanding on outreach done to date by developing regular, ongoing structures for stakeholder engagement and collaboration at both staff and policy maker levels;
- Identifying resourcing for additional polling, communications, consultant advice, and in-depth staff work, particularly in light of the significant staff commitment required to also pass a housing measure in 2024;
- Focusing near-term efforts to develop enabling legislation on common goals and areas of consensus while preserving continued optionality and flexibility around key issues like revenue mechanism, details of an expenditure plan and measure geography.

We appreciate MTC's prioritization of this important effort and we look forward to working with you over the coming months and years to develop a measure that SPUR can support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alicia', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alicia John-Baptiste
President & CEO, SPUR