



Nov 2, 2023

MTC/ABAG Legislation Committee Agenda #3A

Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for considering the proposed framework for a regional transportation funding measure.

Sustaining and improving public transportation is essential for our region's mobility, including for people who fully depend on transit, for economic vitality, climate and housing goals. Polling shows that the public wants to see the public transportation sustained and transformed to be more convenient, affordable, accessible, efficient, safe and clean. Given the impacts of the pandemic on the financial health of the public transportation system, and the steady and gradual regrowth of ridership and revenue, public operating funding is essential to maintain and improve the system.

Our groups support a regional funding measure with **sufficient funding to not only sustain existing transit service levels, but to transform transit.** To this end, the authorizing legislation should enable raising between \$1 and \$2 billion annually, while allowing a final decision on measure capacity to be made incorporating information about voter sentiment, updated financial needs, and the state of California's long term approach to transit funding.

In addition, **our groups support the staff recommendation of authorizing multiple revenue options.**

The staff report asks whether specific policy reforms should accompany enabling legislation, citing past interest from the Commission in supporting a more integrated, reliable, efficient transit network.

Please support the inclusion of policy reforms that strengthen network management with enabling legislation. The Transit Transformation Action Plan lays out the vision and blueprint for the future public transit system that the Bay Area needs to create to attract large numbers of new riders -

"Design, adequately invest in and effectively manage a public transit network that is equitable, inclusive, frequent, affordable, accessible and reliable; [with] unified service, fares, schedules, customer information and identity."

Realizing this vision of transformation - which is overwhelmingly popular with voters - requires that funding from a regional measure be associated with clear standards and plans set at a regional scale by a Regional Network Manager.

This requires that MTC evolve and empower a Network Manager to take on the role of developing standards and plans, and that funding allocations to transit agencies be tied to compliance with regional programs - including, but not limited to, fare integration policies, service standards, transit priority standards, accessibility standards, and customer experience and wayfinding standards. Strengthening network management creates opportunities for efficiencies, advancing transit priority measures that allow a given amount of operating funding to deliver more service to riders, and streamlining customer experience work that is currently replicated in multiple agencies.

In addition to tying regional measure funding for transit to policy compliance, enabling legislation must also advance the governance and organizational changes needed to evolve the existing preliminary network management structure into a fully realized Regional Network Manager. This includes expanding staffing and resourcing of the RNM as well as evolving the policy layer of RNM governance to ensure that it is aligned with and representative of the interests of the region's transit customers.

These policy reforms are critical to making the case for more funding for transit. We must provide a clear plan for how new funding will be held to a higher standard.

Our groups look forward to working with MTC staff, legislators, and transit agencies on the policy reforms that need to be associated with enabling legislation that will deliver a more integrated system for the public.

Thank you for your consideration,

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