



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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October 18, 2024

Dear Select Committee Members,

Earlier this year, we knew we had a big and challenging job ahead of us when Senator Wiener and Senator Wahab called on MTC to spearhead an intensive stakeholder process to develop a framework for a transportation measure with broad enough regional support to pass the Legislature in 2025 and pave the way for a successful ballot measure in 2026. It's been my honor to Chair this process, and I want to again thank the Select Committee members for the time you have invested, contributing your expertise and insights to many long and difficult conversations we've had since our first meeting in June. I also thank the members of the Executive Group for their service.

From June through October 2024, Select Committee members helped to shape scenarios that achieve the following objectives:

- Sustain transit
- Implement transit transformation
- Can win support from legislators and voters

In tackling this challenge, we have heard input and considered comments from all Bay Area counties, across sectors, and have made immense progress in refining and sharpening our initial ideas and scenarios. We have identified key sticking points, such as how to define a fair contribution by a given county to BART, and elements needed to bring about consensus. We have facilitated and fostered conversations that are gradually building trust and creative solutions among agencies and opening a path forward. Thanks to your involvement and support, your willingness to grapple with hard topics and consider all possible solutions, we now have a better chance of success.

At the last meeting, there was interest in exploring two new approaches to addressing the need for new funding for transit operations: a coordinated set of county-led measures and a coordinated set of transit operator-led measures. Staff consulted with county transportation agency leaders and heard little enthusiasm about the prospects for county-led measures to equitably address the acute funding needs facing certain transit agencies. With respect to transit operator-coordinated measures, some transit agencies are developing back-up plans in the event that a regional measure is not the most viable, preferred approach. Notably, both BART and Caltrain indicated in their remarks in September that their preference is for a regional measure. We will hear about those transit operator-led measures as well as a potential five-county, multi-operator transit-agency measure that SFMTA has developed, in coordination with other transit operators, in Agenda Item 4a.

Given the urgency of addressing the BART shortfall, I felt it was important to meet with local elected leaders from Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco and San Mateo counties, which I view as pivotal to an equitable funding solution. After meeting with leadership and executive staff from the county transportation agencies for these four counties, I challenged each of them to identify how they would propose – if not through a regional measure – to contribute to the annual funding needed (a range depending on the shortfall that was targeted). As of the date of this letter, we had received a response from just one agency – Alameda County Transportation Commission (Attachment A). Santa Clara has committed to covering its share of operating costs for BART and Caltrain and investments in transit transformation.

Although I no longer expect the Select Committee to coalesce around one preferred option, I think input and rankings provided by the Select Committee at the October meeting will provide the Commission critical information to guide their consideration of enabling legislation beginning at the Joint MTC/ABAG Legislation Committee in November. The Commission plans to complete public opinion polling in early 2025 and – armed with the Select Committee’s recommendations and those polling results – will have the crucial components needed to guide the Commission’s position and pursuit of enabling legislation.

The consensus we were tasked to find may yet feel elusive but the work we have done together on this Committee has better positioned us on a path to a brighter Bay Area future, one with better collaboration, deeper understanding of different perspectives and a newfound ability to find common ground.

Finally, attached is information in response to comments and questions made at the last Select Committee meeting regarding the following topics:

- State funding for transit operations (as share of operating budget) at other large “peer” transit systems in the U.S.
- Sales tax contribution (and rates) to transit among Bay Area counties

Sincerely,



Jim Spering

Chair, Transportation Revenue Measure Select Committee

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Alameda County Transportation Commission letter
- Attachment B: State Funding for Transit
- Attachment C: Bay Area Sales Taxes for Transportation
- Attachment D: Meeting Goals