Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments

Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee

November 14, 2025 **Agenda Item 3a**

Regional Transit Revenue Measure Polling Results

Subject:

Background on poll questionnaire and presentation of results related to a potential future regional transit revenue measure.

Overview:

In October 2025, EMC Research, Inc. (EMC) conducted a poll of 2,800 Bay Area voters in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties to test support and overall attitudes regarding a potential transit revenue measure. EMC interviewed 500 likely voters in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties. The poll also included 800 interviews in San Francisco with an even split sample (400 interviews per split) to test any impact that a potential San Francisco parcel tax for transportation might have on voter support for a potential regional transit sales tax measure.

All interviews were conducted in Chinese, English, and Spanish. The resulting regional margin of error on the survey data is plus or minus 2.3 percent, and the county-level margin of error is plus or minus 4.4 percent for those where 500 interviews were conducted and 4.9 percent for the 400 interviews in each San Francisco split. The poll was conducted from October 6 to 21, 2025, following the California Legislature's passage of Senate Bill (SB) 63, to gather voter feedback on the details of the potential measure. SB 63 authorizes the placement of a 14-year sales tax measure on the November 2026 ballot within the five-county Public Transit Revenue Measure District.

Key Finding:

The poll found that 56 percent of voters across the five counties (adjusted to reflect the proportion of the electorate in each county) supported the measure after hearing the ballot question without any additional information. This rose to 59 percent after receiving additional details about the intended outcomes of the measure and fell to 54 percent after hearing a negative argument against the measure.

Background:

Authorizing legislation for a regional transit measure was one of the Commission's top advocacy priorities in 2025. In MTC and ABAG's March 2025 legislative visit to Sacramento, staff highlighted that state action was needed to secure Bay Area transit's future, noting that the region's $1 trillion economy depends on a well-functioning transit system. [See Attachment B for the four-page hand-out that was developed for meetings with the Bay Area delegation and is available on the MTC website at this link (https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/State_Action_Need_Secure_Future_BA_Transit-Handout_03-2025.pdf)]. With respect to the region's high cost of living, staff noted, "Major cuts to transit will make life in the Bay Area even less affordable, hurting the Bay Area's most economically vulnerable residents and increasing traffic for everyone." Based on MTC analysis of potential service cuts to Bay Area transit agencies, we noted that, "Without new funding, AC Transit, BART, Caltrain and Muni will have to make draconian service cuts, eroding mobility for those who depend on transit as their primary form of transportation, causing traffic to spike, undermining core elements of the region's strategy for tackling housing affordability, and making it infeasible to meet state-mandated climate targets."

The Legislature ultimately enacted and the Governor signed SB 63 (Wiener/Arreguín), authorizing a regional transportation measure to be placed on the ballot in November 2026 in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara to: (1) avert major service cuts on AC Transit, BART, Caltrain and San Francisco Muni; (2) fund improvements to the transit rider experience; (3) improve transit efficiency and accountability; and (4) provide additional flexible funding for transit capital or operating expenses and/or local road/pothole repair on roads served by transit.[1] SB 63 authorizes a single revenue mechanism for

[1] The flexible funding component is only available in four of the five counties (all but San Francisco) as the entirety of the revenue generated from the portion of the sales tax raised within the City and County of San Francisco is allocated to support transit operating costs for transit service provided within San Francisco (specifically, BART, Muni, Caltrain, SF Bay Ferry and Golden Gate Transit).

the measure: a 0.5 percent sales tax in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Santa Clara and a 1 percent sales tax in San Francisco for 14 years.

In a press release (https://sd11.senate.ca.gov/news/longterm-bay-area-transit-funding-measure-senators-wiener-arreguin-heads-governor) dated September 13, 2025, Senator Wiener's office describes some of the outcomes SB 63 is intended to avoid:

> "Without a sustainable source of funding, budget challenges exacerbated by the pandemic will force transit agencies across the Bay Area to make major service cuts. BART could be forced to cut 65-85% of service, meaning trains only every 60 minutes, no weekend service, and station closures and line shutdowns. MUNI could face a 50% reduction in frequency on lines, no regular service after 9 p.m., and the elimination of Muni fare subsidies for low-income riders, seniors, and youth. AC Transit and Caltrain would be forced to make similar cuts.
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> Major cuts to public transportation service would cause ripple effects for everyone in the Bay Area. Without good quality public transit, fewer customers and employees could access businesses, fewer fans could attend concerts and sporting events, and thousands of low-income people lose their only transportation option. Commutes could increase by up to 10 hours per week for key routes connecting the East Bay to San Francisco, and traffic on the Bay Bridge could increase 72%. In San Francisco alone, the 13,000 (https://sd11.senate.ca.gov/news/longterm-bay-area-transit-funding-measure-senators-wiener-arreguin-heads-governor) students who ride MUNI could lose their route to school, and our air quality would tank with millions of additional gallons of gas burned. There are 800,000 jobs within a 15-minute walk to a BART station."

Passage of SB 63 was a necessary first step towards a financially sustainable business model for Bay Area transit, but the bill is just permissive; it authorizes a ballot measure to be put before Bay Area voters in November 2026.

EMC will be present at your meeting to discuss the results of the poll in detail.

Recommendation:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Memo to MTC dated 11/3/25 from EMC Research, Inc.
- Attachment B: Topline of October 2025 Poll conducted by EMC Research, Inc.
- Attachment C: "*State Action Needed to Secure Bay Area Transit's Future,"* a four-page document prepared by MTC and ABAG in March 2025.
- Attachment D: Presentation by EMC Research, Inc.

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