



Center for Independent Living, Inc.

January 11, 2023

MTC Executive Committee - Agenda 3A - Network Management

Dear Commissioners and staff

As people with disabilities and allies, the Bay Area Cross Disability and Allies Coalition (BAXDAC) would like to thank the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and agencies for working together on a Network Management Business Case study examining how to manage a more coordinated and accessible public transportation system that is accountable to riders.

In reviewing the proposal, we are happy to see that the refined Short/Near-Term RNM structure has incorporated feedback from Advisory Group members and the Policy Advisory Group TAP Subcommittee members:

- We support the concept of having a new "MTC RNM Committee" made up of both MTC commissioners and others with relevant roles - including transit agency board members not represented on MTC, and a state appointee. We feel that this proposal would be further strengthened if the non-MTC committee members had voting seats on the committee instead of having a non-voting status.
- We support having the "Voice of the Customer" Advisory Committee provide input directly to the MTC RNM Committee, rather than the RNM Council. We continue to believe that a representative of the Voice of the Customer Advisory Committee should have a seat directly on the MTC RNM Committee to ensure centering of customer perspectives.
- We support the proposal for dedicated staffing, particularly the potential for the seconding of transit agency and MTC staff within a unified structure. As part of the increase in staff capacity, we want to ensure that the staff responsibilities for accessibility should refer not only to needed changes to the Paratransit system, but also covering standards for accessibility for seniors and people with a broad spectrum of disabilities to the full public transportation system, with ADA

requirements considered the floor not the ceiling, and covering communications practices that include seniors and people with disabilities.

- Relatedly, we urge MTC to create an accessibility task force, composed of well-informed people with disabilities, who have researched accessibility best practices in the US and abroad, and who are aware of and have ideas about improving accessibility for public transit in the Bay Area. This task force would outline the fundamental principles and requirements of accessibility, and propose standards for development and promulgation in the Bay Area, to make accessibility and universal design a reality and the norm.
- A significant concern about this proposal is the lack of clarity about when and how the Long-Term RNM Structure will be developed. Staff and consultants have stated repeatedly in past meetings that the near-term structure is an interim solution. In addition, the MTC is taking the lead in laying the groundwork for a regional funding measure with a goal of funding that can create an integrated, accessible system. In order for new funding to create an integrated system, it would be valuable for accountability and authority to be aligned. Therefore, we urge the Commission to set a defined term for the preliminary RNM structure, and undertake a parallel process to identify and work toward the implementation of a long-term RNM Model, with work beginning in 2023.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and your ongoing work to deliver an equitable and accessible transportation system for the Bay Area.

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