



May 27, 2020

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale St., Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear Chair Haggerty and MTC Commissioners,

We are writing in response to the May 27, 2020 letter to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission from Seamless Bay Area regarding recommendations related to public health guidance and safety for transit riders. We recognize the critical importance of ensuring the highest level of public safety for our riders using the protocols recommended by public health experts. We appreciate the recognition of our on-going collaboration with MTC and transit agencies throughout the Bay Area to share information and best practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transit agencies are currently coordinating to develop Transit Public Health and Safety guidelines and best practices that will address the issues identified in the Seamless Bay Area letter. This work is being informed by guidance from local, national and global public health experts and peer transit systems in regions outside the Bay Area.

As we continue to advance this work, it should be expected that recommendations will evolve throughout the recovery phase, and by working together, our systems will be prepared to respond to changing conditions in a coordinated way. Establishing a new “Office of Rider Safety for Bay Area Transit” would complicate and duplicate these efforts, diverting scarce resources from restoring transit agency services during recovery. This move would add an unnecessary layer and additional cost to the work that is already underway and focused on the following key outcomes:

- Providing workers with personal protective equipment;
- Developing safety standards and protocols to protect public health,

- Developing coordinated marketing and communications campaigns and
- Looking to best practices around the world on how riders can return to and feel safe while riding transit.

We all recognize that these outcomes will be essential to the fundamental recovery of public transit in our region as well as the safety of riders and our essential frontline employees.

We look forward to continuing to work with you as we advance our efforts.

Sincerely,



Nuria Fernandez,
General Manager
Santa Clara Valley
Transportation Authority



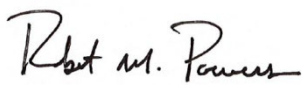
Jim Hartnett, General
Manager/Executive Director
San Mateo County Transit
District/Caltrain




Michael Hursh,
General Manager
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit
District



Denis Mulligan,
General Manager
Golden Gate Bridge,
Highway and Transportation
District



Robert Powers,
General Manager
San Francisco Bay Area
Rapid Transit District
(BART)



Rick Ramacier,
General Manager
County Connection



Nina Rannells,
Executive Director
Water Emergency
Transportation Authority



Jeffrey Tumlin,
General Manager
San Francisco Municipal
Transportation Agency



May 27, 2020

The Honorable Jim Spering, Commissioner
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale St., Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear Commissioner Spering:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (BRTF). MTC's allocation of the first tranche of Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds was a critical step that will help ensure transit agencies can maintain core services for essential travel and avoid layoffs and furloughs as we begin the process of planning the recovery and restoration of the region's transit network. We feel strongly that the BRTF will reinforce the regional coordination efforts described below and will put the Bay Area's transit network on a path to financial sustainability and recovery. Together, we can meet this unprecedented challenge.

As the Commission has noted in its discussion of the principles that will guide future CARES Act allocations, the BRTF is an opportunity to discuss the best strategies for ensuring the financial stability of our transit systems and restoring service and ridership in a way that focuses on safety, equity, and network connectivity.

We agree that coordination of our networks and recovery strategies are essential during this continued period of uncertainty. Building on past collaborative efforts, over the last two months, as the impacts of the pandemic on transit systems were first being realized, our agencies began coordinating on several fronts to foster consistent operational, safety, and customer communication approaches.

Since then, we have established a more formal framework that includes the establishment of a set of working groups that will collaborate to ensure that recovery strategies are coordinated throughout the region. Focus areas include:

- Financial Sustainability - Ensure that the pandemic's agency-by-agency financial needs are assessed in a consistent way and the impacts associated with an inability to cover those needs are well understood.
- Public Health and Safety - Develop Transit Public Health and Safety guidelines and best practices to ensure the safety and health of front-line workers and customers during various phases of recovery. This work is being informed by guidance from local, national

and global public health experts and peer transit systems outside of the Bay Area. It should also be expected that recommendations will evolve on different timelines throughout the recovery phase, and our systems will be prepared to respond to changing conditions in a coordinated way.

- Service and Operations Planning - Plan for the coordinated restoration of transit services in a way that ensures access for transit dependent riders and minimizes gaps in service between systems and among communities.
- Communications - Develop and implement regionally coordinated marketing and communications strategies that foster uniform expectations about how the region's transit network will evolve during recovery, what the customer experience will be like, what the region is doing to preserve transit as a viable mobility option now and into the future, and will ultimately regain transit ridership.

These working groups will continue to guide transit agency actions during the time when the BRTF is meeting. We recognize that many of the issues that the BRTF will discuss are covered by the work that these groups are doing, and we expect to report progress to the BRTF and seek feedback on a regular basis.

While the BRTF is charged with discussing how CARES Act funds will be linked to the issues included in Principle 5, we all must keep in mind that adherence to Principles 1-4 are of the utmost importance. Swift allocation of the remaining CARES Act funds will be essential to covering the revenue losses that systems are experiencing and preserving the financial sustainability of transit systems into FY 2021 and beyond. As the BRTF discusses the transit agency recovery strategies and their relationship to CARES Act funding, we should recognize that agencies are operating at historically low revenues and will be for an undetermined amount of time. In light of this, it will be important that recovery strategies:

1. Avoid making it more costly to operate essential transit services through actions that require the operation of services that are over and above what CARES Act allocations will support, or actions that further reduce revenues. As the Seamless Bay Area provisions have been discussed over the last year, we have consistently supported their concepts with the understanding that new investment would be needed to effectively implement many of them. We are working together now to replace lost revenues, and the actions we take during recovery should reflect that.
2. Recognize that agencies receiving CARES Act funds are expected to maintain existing staff. While MTC's initial allocation has demonstrated that there is flexibility in allocating CARES Act funds within the region to achieve certain goals, that flexibility is limited by the expectation from Congress that staff layoffs and furloughs will be avoided.

Again, thank you for the work you are doing to help shepherd us through this crisis. We look forward to working with you, your colleagues, and stakeholders throughout the region to do what



is necessary to position transit to survive this challenge and to emerge from it stronger than ever before. Over the last few months, the Bay Area has demonstrated a clear ability to come together and be resilient in the face of such an immense challenge. We are confident that by working together this effort will be the latest example of that resilience.

Sincerely,

Nuria Fernandez,
General Manager
Santa Clara Valley
Transportation Authority

Jim Hartnett, General
Manager/Executive Director
San Mateo County Transit
District/Caltrain

Michael Hursh,
General Manager
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit
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Rick Ramacier,
General Manager
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Nina Rannels,
Executive Director
Water Emergency
Transportation Authority

Jeffrey Tumlin,
General Manager
San Francisco Municipal
Transportation Agency

Cc: Members, MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force
Members, Bay Area Congressional Delegation
Ray Tellis, Region IX Administrator, Federal Transit Administration