



July 21, 2023

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: July 26, 2023, MTC Commission Item 9b. 23-0923 MTC Resolution Nos. 4584, Revised, and 4596-4602. Allocation of \$379 million in Regional Measure 3 (RM3) capital funds to ACTC, SMCTA, STA, and VTA

Dear Chairperson Pedroza and fellow commissioners,

As fellow members of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission who represent Santa Clara County, we would like to thank the Programming and Allocations Committee for recommending approval of the \$379 million in Regional Measure 3 (RM3) capital funds to projects, including \$130 million to the Eastridge to BART Regional Connector. We respectfully urge the full Commission to approve these at the July 26 meeting.

The Eastridge project, while the first transit extension to be funded by RM3, has been a community priority in East San José and Santa Clara County for more than two decades. This project extends VTA's light rail system by 2.4 miles into an existing Equity Priority Community and a significant center for existing and planned housing. Light rail service in Santa Clara County began in the late 1980s and voters approved funding for this extension in the 2000 Measure A sales tax program. Since then, the VTA Board of Directors has repeatedly voted to affirm this project as one of the top two projects in that program, along with the BART Silicon Valley Extension. The allocation of RM3 funding will allow VTA to award a construction contract and finally start construction of this extension next year - more than three decades after the system began operating in wealthier parts of our county. Failing to fund or delaying the construction of this project would raise serious equity concerns for our community.

We would also like to raise concerns about the input from various stakeholders at the July Programming and Allocations Committee meeting, including a letter from several organizations asking that MTC secure a commitment by the City of San José to comply with the region's Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy as a condition of allocating funding to this project.

The City of San José and VTA strongly support the goal of developing transit-oriented communities. VTA's Board of Directors adopted a VTA TOC Policy on June 2, 2022, and the City has made significant strides in line with MTC's TOC Policy – including essentially

removing minimum parking requirements across San José last year and numerous policies and programs to increase housing production, preservation, and protection in the Housing Element recently approved by City Council.

That said, placing conditions on the Eastridge project funding in this manner is premature, as administrative guidance is not yet final. We cannot commit to conditions we don't yet understand, nor do local jurisdictions have the ability to make that kind of commitment without fully engaging local communities and decisions by local elected bodies. Moreover, that would make VTA subject to mandates that it has no control over. By extending the light rail system into East San José we are connecting the system to a significant transit-dependent community and making great strides in achieving the TOC goals. We must also recognize that the policy does not mandate compliance until 2026.

Thank you for supporting the allocation of RM 3 funding to all of the projects recommended in the staff report and for considering these additional concerns. All of us share a regional commitment to creating a robust, reliable transportation network that increases equity, reduces carbon emissions, and improves the quality of life for residents throughout the Bay Area.

In community,



Cindy Chavez

Commissioner

Metropolitan Transportation
Commission



Matt Mahan

Commissioner

Metropolitan Transportation
Commission



Margaret Abe-Koga

Commissioner

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