FREIDA VIERRA

November 10, 2025

Re: SUPPORT for item 3a
MTC Resolution No. 4650, Revised. Revisions to the Regional Early Action Planning Grant (REAP 2) program, including revisions to MTC's Community Action Resource & Empowerment (CARE) Program - Power-building and Engagement and MTC Resolution 4604

Dear Commissioners of MTC and Community Leaders,

My name is Freida Vierra, and I am a sophomore at Miramonte High School in Contra Costa County. I ride the County Connection 5 days a week. I am writing in full support of item 3a and MTC Resolution 4604 including **youth** into the CARE program. Earlier this year, I participated in MTC's Norman Mineta Bay Area Summer High School Academy, where I learned about the importance of youth involvement in transportation and public policy. I worked on a project to activate youth voices in policy and programs. Please see my **Diagram** below.

Through that experience, I was inspired by Commissioner Noack, Senator Weiner and learned how essential youth voices are in shaping transportation policy and how it's important to listen to everybody. I am grateful that the ideas shared during the Academy are being listened to and **turned into real action**.

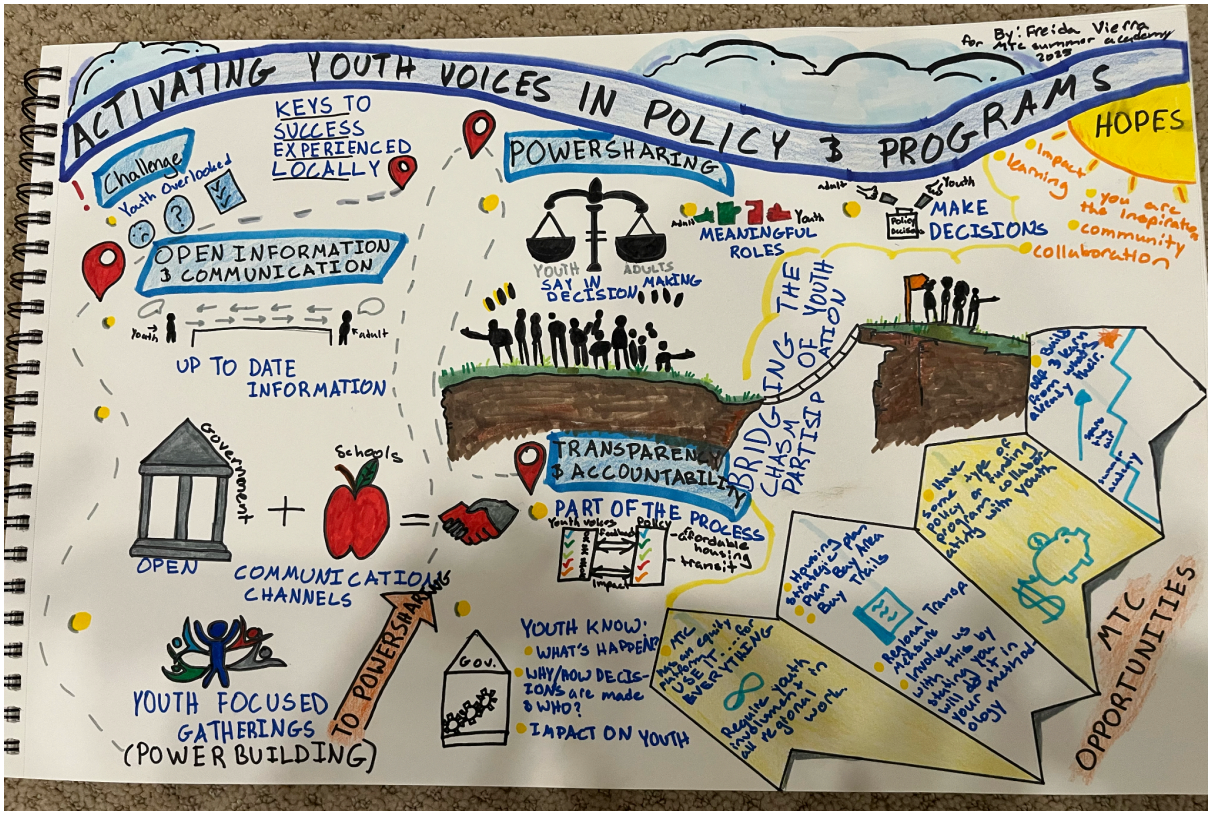
Resolution 4604 matters deeply to me and young people because many of us rely on public transit every single day. Whether we are traveling to school, jobs, internships, sports, or after-school activities, reliable and accessible transportation directly affects our opportunities. When transit works well, it helps us stay connected, involved, and safe. When it doesn't, it limits where we can go and what we are able to do. That is why including youth voices in this process is so important—we understand these challenges from daily, lived experience. Most students don't have cars, licenses, or the **money** to pay for gas or transit, so buses, trains, shuttles, bikes, scooters, skateboards, and rollerblades are often our ways to get around. In the Bay Area, thousands of teens use transit every day. In San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's Student Travel Tally survey, 55% of 9th graders reported taking public transit to school. Our experiences provide real evidence of what works and what needs improvement, helping build a transit system that actually serves the people who use it most.

My summer internship project also highlighted how important it is for youth to have meaningful roles in shaping transportation decisions. I focused on ideas such as power-sharing, where young people don't just share opinions—we get to participate in decisions. I also

emphasized the need for open communication, up-to-date information, and transparent processes. Youth-focused spaces and gatherings ensure that our experiences are heard instead of overlooked. My project reflected youth hopes for collaboration, clear opportunities, and policies that reflect real issues, like late buses, unclear schedules, unsafe stops or not having enough money for the bus. These are everyday problems that young riders face, and including us in policy development helps create solutions that are realistic and effective. Other youth in the internship across the region shared their experiences and ideas as well. Together, we brought different perspectives from our schools, neighborhoods, and daily transit routes, showing that youth voices are strongest when we speak collectively.

Thank you for giving youth a meaningful role in shaping decisions that impact our lives. I appreciate the effort to make youth perspectives a genuine part of the conversation, and I am proud to support Resolution 4604 as it moves forward.

This is an image of my MTC summer Norman Mineta Academy project:



Sincerely,
Freida Vierra

Sophomore, Miramonte High School