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March 20, 2022

Therese McMillan

Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

Bay Area Metro Center

375 Beale Street, Suite 800

San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear Ms. McMillan:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA) I would like to applaud you, your staff, and the Commission on your strategic approach to developing a federal grant strategy to empower the Bay Area to meaningfully advance *Plan Bay Area 2050's* ambitious goals to combat the climate crisis; deliver a well-connected, safe, and multimodal transportation network; and improve access to opportunity for all Bay Area residents. This smart approach will best position the Bay Area as a region to compete well and be awarded through federal discretionary funds authorized under the five-year *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)*.

For seven decades, the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA) has been a leading voice for the economic engine that is San Mateo County. SAMCEDA believes in the power of a strong economy driven by an appreciation of what that engine provides to our ecosystem on the Peninsula. By working with employers of all sizes and industries – who employ a vast majority of workers based in San Mateo County, engaging with our public sector and our elected leadership, recognizing that we have 21 individual jurisdictions (20 cities and one county) and collaborating and communicating with the Chambers of Commerce, non-profit organizations, and our educational institutions, SAMCEDA tackles the most difficult challenges through goal-oriented solutions.

SAMCEDA requests that MTC staff and Commissioners consider prioritizing the following projects for the Caltrain and US 101 Trade Corridor that benefit not only San Mateo County, but also San Francisco County, Santa Clara County, and the entire region:

- *Caltrain Electrification and Downtown Extension Projects*
- *US101 Express Lanes North of I-380 (MEGA category)*
- *US101/SR92 Express Lanes Direct Connector (MEGA category)*
- *US101/SR84 (Woodside Road) Interchange (INFRA Funding)*
- *Grade Separations, esp. Burlingame and SSF/San Bruno grade separations,*
- *SamTrans Bus Fleet Electrification*



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Let me also share our specific rational for the following specific projects in greater detail:

The *Managed Lanes North* of I-380 project under the *MEGA* category will close a critical gap and allow us to have a managed lane the length of Highway 101 in San Mateo County to facilitate our express buses, shuttles, and HOVs. **Major benefits include:**

- The project is included in the MTC's Express Lanes and *Express Bus Network 2021 Strategic Plan* and corresponding *MTC Plan Bay Area 2050 Strategy* to build an integrated regional express lanes and express bus network.
- Creates continuous express lane network along Highway 101, closes critical regional gap and creates a seamless express lane network from the San Francisco/San Mateo County line to Oakland/San Leandro.
- Upon completion, San Mateo County will have gone from 44 lane miles of HOV Lanes on 101 (Santa Clara County line to Whipple) to over 60 miles of managed lanes the length of the Highway 101 Corridor.
- Builds on the existing *San Mateo County Express Lane Equity Program*. The San Mateo County Express Lane Joint Powers Authority (JPA) approved its equity program before we even had an express lane. The equity *Program* currently consists of \$100 Clipper Card and or \$100 Fastrak for eligible participants. This *Managed Lane* extension can help us to expand our equity program to extend its impact.
- Will facilitate mode shift by encouraging transit, shuttles, and HOVs. SamTrans is currently operating express buses in the corridor from Foster City to downtown San Francisco, which is already popular before the pandemic. There are now plans for further expansion with additional routes. And the completion of this gap dramatically increases the value proposition of express buses.
- Major employers are implementing return-to-work plans, which in the past heavily used Highway 101 from San Francisco to Silicon Valley.

SAMCEDA played key role in all stages of the current express lane project from Whipple to I-380, including facilitating \$3M in private sector funding for the design and environmental work and then \$50M of private sector construction funding for the express lanes. This might be the only major private company contribution for express lanes in the Bay Area.



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INFRA (Nationally Significant Freight)

Highway 101/84 (Woodside Road) Interchange in Redwood City is a critical connection to the Port of Redwood City. The Port is the only deep-water port in the South Bay and serves businesses from San Francisco to Silicon Valley. The project will improve trade and freight activity by removing a traffic bottleneck that routinely delays goods movement. The project also includes significant bicycle and pedestrian access improvements connecting adjacent communities of concern with open space along the Bay. The project is fully designed, has \$117 million in committed funds and is seeking the remainder of construction funding of \$184 million. **Additionally, the following facts are important to note about the Bay Area's lesser known, but tremendously important Port:**

- The Federal Government is demonstrating increasing and significant confidence in the Port of Redwood City through recent investments in dredging due to the Port's increased annual tonnage/revenue and its *FEMA FSA* designation;
- Construction materials needed for most major residential and commercial projects along the *US 101 Trade Corridor* are passed through at this Port. These material are needed to build multi-family residential units essential for cities to meet Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) allocation goals and to meet the growing need for life science labs and offices to name a few;
- In the past three years the Port has received \$5M in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants for security and emergency preparedness;
- Future WETA ferry is expected at the Port of Redwood City location that will serve both transportation needs and FEMA designation of first responders and resources;
- 101/84 is a bottleneck which limits growth and further deteriorates the federal funding that facilitates growth;
- Congestion of trucks has impacts to neighboring disadvantaged communities with GHG, diesel and other particulate emissions;
- Annual average is 2M metric tons via vessel and 2M metric tons via freight rail. Interchange will improve both truck and rail cargo;
- Reduce truck/rail/vehicular conflicts; and
- Improve safety along the entire corridor.

CRISI and Railroad Crossing Elimination Program

1. The *Burlingame Grade Separation* project is the highest ranked CPUC safety project and is finalizing its design and seeking construction funding. This critical safety project will also support Caltrain and High-Speed Rail service. This project will be able to significantly leverage federal grant funds with the county's *Measure A* funds.
2. The South San Francisco/San Bruno Grade Separation is another pipeline grade separation project that will improve mobility, safety, and reduce environmental impacts like noise. This project is also listed as a high priority in the CPUC Section 190 list: no. 10 out of 38 crossings. This project will also be able to leverage federal grant funds with the County's local *Measure A* sales tax funds.



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Additional MEGA (National Infrastructure Project Assistance)

The 92/101 *Managed Lanes Director Connector Project* will provide a direct connection from Highway 92 to the Highway 101 express lanes. This connection will improve traffic flow and safety at this congested interchange and encourage mode shift by enabling transit, shuttles, and HOVs to quickly connect with the Highway 101 express lanes. This project is included in *Regional Measure 3 (RM3)* and is currently in the environmental and design phase. Construction is scheduled to start in 2026.

We appreciate your efforts and support the MTC Commissioners approving a regionally balanced list that both reflects the needs of the region as well as our San Mateo County constituents. SAMCEDA looks forward to supporting the MTC's *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Regional Grant Strategy* and advocating as a unified Bay Area for all these critical regional projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosanne Foust".

Rosanne Foust
President & CEO
SAMCEDA

cc: State Senator Josh Becker, California State Senate
Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Mullin, California State Assembly
Assemblymember Marc Berman, California State Assembly
Hon. MTC Commissioner Gina Papan, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Hon. MTC Commissioner David Canepa, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Carter Mau, San Mateo County Transit District
April Chan, San Mateo County Transit District
Sean Charpentier, C/CAG
Mike Callagy, County of San Mateo
SAMCEDA Board of Directors