



April 26, 2022

Network Management Business Case Advisory Group
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear Chair Mulligan, Vice-Chair John-Baptiste, and the Network Management Business Case Advisory Group,

We are writing to discuss the interests and priorities of the thousands of people with disabilities and elders who live, work, and travel in the Bay Area. The needs of this community have long been underrepresented in transportation planning in this region, and we are seeking to work with you to ensure that accessible transportation is central to the analysis being conducted as part of the Network Management Business Case Study at MTC. We know that equity has been stated as central to the approach of MTC's planning work, and it is essential that people with disabilities be included in that framework.

We are glad to see that the region's Network Management Business Case Study will be evaluating institutional options with goals of delivering more integrated approaches to fares, accessibility, customer information, network planning, and funding, in order to deliver a public transportation system that is more rider-friendly and provides more equitable access. We are pleased to see paratransit is included in the scope of Network Management priorities.

As the project team continues its analysis, it will be essential that the metrics and evaluation criteria include specific measures of accessibility. A network management plan is not successful if it is not able to lead to key improvements for people with disabilities and the aging population. In particular, the analysis must show how the preferred network management alternatives perform against outcomes that are priorities for the disability and aging community.

These priorities include:

- A centralized, singular point of entry for eligibility for and access to discounts, passes, paratransit, and other services;

- Centralized mobility planning that includes a variety of modes and services that people with disabilities and elders use to meet their mobility needs;
- Centralized dispatch, customer service, and trip planning to ensure all residents, including people with disabilities, can access and navigate the system;
- Regionally coordinated paratransit service, with one-seat rides and same-day service with expanded reach to all those who need it;
- Robust, frequent, reliable fixed-route transit service that serves the needs of transit-dependent riders all day and night, not just the 9-5 commuter population, in urban, suburban, and rural areas;
- Uniform accessibility standards across the region that support providing accessible and consistent service to all customers, including wayfinding and audio/visual/tactile cues for multiple disabilities;
- All modes of transit, including paratransit, are affordable to people with disabilities and elders with low incomes;
- Safe, accessible pathways to transit stations and stops, including uniform standards for accessible pedestrian signals;
- A central policy-making body for critical elements of coordination of the regional public transportation system, with accessible decision-makers who are responsive and accountable to community members.

We request that at future meetings of the Network Management Business Case Advisory Group, information is shared that shows how the analysis is taking these outcomes into account.

We are also concerned about the lack of representation from people with lived experience with disability and paratransit in the Network Management Business Case process. In order to ensure that the Business Case recommendations take into account the needs and priorities of people with disabilities and elders, we strongly recommend the inclusion of two representatives from the disability and aging communities on the Network Management Business Case Advisory Group. In addition, any outreach associated with the development of the Business Case and any associated ongoing work should include people with lived experience with disabilities and aging. The final policy-making body developed as an outcome of the Network Management work should also include a person with a disability who can speak directly to that experience in governance and planning decisions.

We are watching this process closely and look forward to working with MTC, the Advisory Group, and all project team members to ensure accessible transportation is central to the region's governance reform efforts.

Sincerely,

Daveed Mandell
Member, Transportation Committee
American Council of the Blind

Sheri Burns
Executive Director
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center

Warren Cushman
Member
California Council of the Blind

Frank Welte
MTC Policy Advisory Council

Sandra Lang
Senior Transit Advocate

Debbie Toth
President & CEO
Choice in Aging

Adina Levin
Executive Director
Friends of Caltrain

Hayley Currier
Policy Advocacy Manager
TransForm

Mary Lim-Lampe J.D.
Executive Director
Genesis