



July 11, 2023

Re: Programming and Allocations Committee Agenda Item 3b – RM3 Allocations

Dear Commissioners:

The Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) policy that MTC passed in September 2022 represents a vital step toward implementing Plan Bay Area 2050, with its bold climate, equity, and mobility objectives. Our coalition supported the TOC Policy, with the many compromises that were made to achieve broad Commissioner support. We expect the Commission to adhere to the policy.

One of the key incentives for TOC Policy compliance is the requirement that, in order for MTC to allocate regional funding to transit extension projects, each relevant jurisdiction must commit that, by the option of OBAG 4, it will comply with the policy. **The proposed action to allocate \$120 million in RM3 funds to the “Eastridge to BART Regional Connector” has a prerequisite that the City of San Jose make such a commitment to comply with the TOC Policy compliance.** We are not aware that any such commitment has been made by the City of San Jose. We request that this matter be clarified, or that MTC secure a commitment from the San Jose City Council that the city will comply with the MTC TOC Policy.

To our knowledge, this is the first proposed fixed-guideway transit extension allocation since the TOC Policy was passed, making this a critical test of whether the Commission intends to follow the spirit and letter of the policy.

We acknowledge that this project has been desired by many community members in East San Jose for a long time. This letter does not suggest any change to funding that has been dedicated to this project – only that MTC follows the procedures and standards it has set for itself.

Specific funding requirements notwithstanding, the most important reason to follow the TOC policy is for the benefits that it will bring to the communities along this new transit service. Benefits include more transit-accessible housing and jobs; less traffic congestion (because there will be less auto-oriented development); stronger policies to preserve existing affordable and protect tenants; and safer, more affordable ways to access these new transit stations. We should be focused not on the Eastridge project itself, but on the access improvements that it can deliver for residents, and its potential to stimulate

more transit-oriented housing, jobs, and amenities on the East Side. By following the TOC Policy as required, San Jose will maximize these benefits.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Justine Marcus, Senior State & Local Policy Director, Enterprise Community Partners

Corey Smith, Executive Director, Housing Action Coalition

John Minot, Co-Executive, East Bay for Everyone

Justin Hu-Nguyen, Co-Executive Director of Mobility Justice, Bike East Bay

Sara Greenwald, 350 Bay Area Transportation Committee