



January 11, 2024

Re: Leg. Cmte item 3b: Objection to a revenue measure that supports highway widening

Dear Commissioners:

As organizations committed to environmental sustainability and equitable transportation investments, we appreciate MTC's work toward a potential transportation revenue measure. The need for significant new funding for our region's transit operators is critical to prevent severe service cuts and enhance overall service quality. We are in the midst of a global climate crisis and a thriving transit system is imperative to meet the Bay Area's sustainability objectives and to reduce our region's greenhouse gas emissions.

We must ensure that the measure leaves a positive impact on the climate and our communities. We recognize the importance of generating revenue for public transit operations as a primary goal for this measure and we also understand the potential need to include some non-transit

investments in the expenditure plan. **Nonetheless, we strongly object to the development of a transportation revenue measure that supports highway widening.** Our concern is based on evidence that highway widening:

- 1) Promotes higher levels of automobile use and, consequently, contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, noise pollution, and traffic hazards, which often disproportionately affect communities of color, people with limited incomes, seniors, and children.
- 2) Draws riders away from public transit, resulting in reduced political support and fare revenue for transit agencies.
- 3) Redirects funds toward road infrastructure that would otherwise be available for vital needs such as transit operations, expanding transit services, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements, safer streets, and incentives for sustainable transportation choices.
- 4) Fails to solve the congestion problems that motivate such investments.

The measure being contemplated by the Bay Area region represents a generational investment in our transportation system that will support projects and programs decades into the future. In 2024, in the midst of a climate emergency, it is simply unconscionable to authorize new funding for projects that work directly against our climate goals. A successful measure will need to avoid highway widening. Please develop a measure that we can all support. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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CC: Bay Area delegation to the state legislature, environment committee chairs and committee staff, and leadership of the legislature