



September 25, 2018

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Chairman Mackenzie and Commissioners:

Everyone knows that all good things come to an end, but it's still difficult to imagine the Metropolitan Transportation Commission without Steve Heminger as its Executive Director. Over his 17 years as Executive Director, Steve guided the Commission through difficult challenges, into new opportunities, and towards its status as the Bay Area's essential regional public leadership body. His list of accomplishments is far too long to catalog, but I will always remember Steve as the person who drove the overdue MTC-ABAG staff merger, initiated the regional high-occupancy toll lane system, drove the implementation of the Clipper Card, required supportive land use planning as a condition of funding major transit capital projects, and always got Bay Area projects to the front of the line for state and federal discretionary funding. I also credit Steve with backing (and finding funding for) the generational projects that define and serve our region: the Caldecott Fourth Bore, the Transbay Transit Center, Caltrain electrification, and BART's extensions and rehabilitation. Of course he didn't do everything single-handedly, and I also credit him and the Commission with attracting and hiring some of the sharpest transportation planners and engineers in the nation. Steve's accomplishments and legacy will be long celebrated.

Along with the loss of Steve's experience and expertise comes another challenge: recruiting the next Executive Director. When you think about the magnitude of Steve's influence and accomplishments and the length of his service, and then think about the dramatic changes and challenges that lie ahead for the next Executive Director, it becomes clear that this is a critically important recruitment.

I am not exaggerating when I say that the challenges ahead are monumental and existential. While our booming economy is the envy of the nation, the Bay Area has, according to some sources, the second worst traffic and commutes in the nation. We have the most expensive housing in the nation. This is simply not okay. It's a crisis in livability, environment, and economic opportunity. We won't solve this regional transportation and housing crisis by simply doing more of the same, and we won't solve it by waiting for cities, counties, the state, or the federal government to do it for us. It's a regional problem, and because only MTC, our regional transportation and housing agency, can lead us towards the solutions, I expect that the Commission will place accountability and metrics for solutions on its next Executive Director. It's therefore essential that you hire someone who has the necessary ambition, capabilities, and experience — someone who will energize transportation and housing policies with a crisis mentality and will overturn and replace the ineffective and sclerotic strategies and habits that are no longer able to bring the relief that the Bay Area needs.

Our region can no longer tolerate studying transportation projects to death and allowing even simple projects to take ten-plus years to deliver. Now that building new highways is out of fashion, we need to bring world-class highway management technology and strategies to our existing highways and arterials, and we need to do it with



the sort of commitment that drove the Apollo program. We can no longer allow every local jurisdiction and individual to have absolute veto power over transportation (and housing) projects that have regional significance. Public transit can't continue to cost as much — and deliver as little — as it does, and we can't keep treating the sanctity of individual transit operators as more important than the needs of residents and employers. There's not enough money to continue giving everyone their "fair share" or to fund low performing projects; we need to increasingly use transportation money for competitive programs, challenge grants, and to encourage and reward innovation.

Companies like Waymo, Cruise, Zoox, Uber, and Lyft, plus private shuttles and transit operators, are showing what truly customer-focused transportation looks like, and how technology can transform how we get around. We need to recognize that the era of the government transportation monopoly is over, and build a new hybrid system that combines the strengths of public and private, with a focus on serving customers, not agencies.

Recruiting a candidate able to tackle these challenges and deliver on these opportunities is no small task. In addition to the necessary (and extensive) technical, management, and leadership skills, MTC's next Executive Director will need to boldly disrupt much of the way that the Bay Area does transportation.

I believe that MTC should include extensive consultation with key transportation stakeholders. And by "stakeholders," I do not mean just — or even primarily — the many agencies that have a hand in spending transportation funds and delivering transportation projects. Those with the most at stake in this recruitment are the users of the transportation system: the Bay Area residents, employers, and goods movers that are suffering the consequences of an underperforming system and that are desperate for agencies to act with urgency and creativity. The hundreds of employer-members of the Bay Area Council, and their hundreds of thousands of employees, are deeply interested stakeholders, and I am willing and eager (and insistent) to be consulted and engaged in the recruitment effort. Please let me know your thoughts about the most productive way to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jim Wunderman'.

Jim Wunderman
President and CEO