

Date: February 27, 2019
W.I.: 1111
Referred by: Commission

ABSTRACT

Resolution No. 4359

Resolution of Appreciation for Steve Heminger upon his retirement after 25 years of leadership at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Bay Area Toll Authority and Association of Bay Area Governments.

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RE: Resolution of Appreciation for Steve Heminger

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution No. 4359

WHEREAS, Steve Heminger is retiring from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) after 25 years in various leadership roles, including 17 years as the organization's dynamic and visionary executive director; and

WHEREAS, as executive director, Steve also helmed several MTC affiliates, including the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), the Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE), the Bay Area Infrastructure Financing Authority (BAIFA), and the Bay Area Headquarters Agency (BAHA), and more recently provided leadership to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); and

WHEREAS, Steve also served as chair of the Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee, which oversaw construction of the new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge — the largest transportation project in California history; and

WHEREAS, Steve joined MTC in 1993 as manager of Legislation and Public Affairs, a role that involved shaping MTC's legislative priorities and pursuing that agenda in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., while also steering the agency's communications and media relations functions; and

WHEREAS, in 1999 Steve was promoted to deputy executive director, and a short two years later in 2001, he stepped into the role of executive director of MTC and its affiliates, with responsibility for overseeing a staff that today numbers in the range of 300, while also continuing to raise the agency's profile regionally, statewide and nationally; and

WHEREAS, Steve has been a major player in the crafting of several multiyear federal transportation authorization bills, in the process catching the attention of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who in 2005 appointed him to serve on the high-profile National Surface Transportation

Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which helped chart the future course for federal transportation investments in the post-Interstate Highway era; and

WHEREAS, Steve has made it his mission to ensure reliable, adequate funding for the Bay Area's transportation network, promoting congestion-pricing as a way of managing demand and maximizing revenues, while doggedly pursuing bold financing measures and, in the case of Regional Measure 2 and Regional Measure 3, successfully garnering the endorsement of the Bay Area electorate; and

WHEREAS, arriving at MTC some four years after the Loma Prieta earthquake had fractured the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, Steve pursued the replacement of the old East Span with vigor and vision, steering the design process that resulted in the striking and daring signature element — the single-tower self-anchored suspension span — then working with the California Legislature to finance the mega seismic safety project while slaying bureaucratic and political demons that threatened to derail it, and overseeing a complex procurement and construction process that spanned the oceans and more than a decade — often rocking a hardhat as he personally inspected progress on the project; and

WHEREAS, Steve helped steer MTC resources to a number of marquee transit projects, including the BART extension to Warm Springs and San Jose, the eBART extension to Eastern Contra Costa County, BART's extension to SFO and the Oakland Airport Connector, Muni's Central Subway, the new SMART rail system in Marin and Sonoma counties, and the Salesforce Transit Center — which together added more than 85 miles of rail to the region's network; and

WHEREAS, other high-profile infrastructure projects benefitting from MTC's support during Steve's tenure include the Fourth Bore of the Caldecott Tunnel, the remaking of the massive Doyle Drive approach to the Golden Gate Bridge into the scenic Presidio Parkway and the Golden Gate Bridge suicide barrier, to name a few; and

WHEREAS, Steve was instrumental in the advent of High-Occupancy Toll Lanes in the Bay Area — now referred to as Express Lanes — as a tool for reducing congestion, rewarding carpoolers and vanpoolers, and raising revenues to expand the region's network of diamond lanes, and filled an institutional gap by putting MTC in the business of developing 270 miles of

what will ultimately be a 600-mile network of Express Lanes in the Bay Area, with the agency overseeing the actual construction of some 90 miles (one-third of MTC's mileage) to date; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to promote a seamless experience for travelers, Steve championed the Clipper® universal transit fare card — which is now used 20 million times a month across 22 public transit operators — and presided over the expansion of electronic toll collection to all seven of the region's state-owned toll bridges as well as Express Lanes, to the point where FasTrak® now collects more than \$50 million in tolls and logs 10 million transactions a month; and

WHEREAS, Steve had the vision to acquire a white elephant of a WW II military warehouse and transform it into the Bay Area Metro Center, a state-of-the art office condominium that would bring together under one roof several regional agencies in order to foster communication and collaboration among their staffs and policy makers — and that has now risen in value significantly due to Steve's foresight as to the potential of the Rincon Hill neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, under Steve's watch, MTC became a force for transit-oriented development, or TOD, and its close cousin, priority development areas, or PDAs, which are at the heart of Plan Bay Area; and the agency put policy into action by helping to create the Bay Area Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing (TOAH) revolving loan fund and providing \$10 million in seed money, and by infusing the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Program with more than \$700 million to incentivize housing production in the vicinity of PDAs; and

WHEREAS, Steve elevated the conversation about the region's housing crisis by spearheading the formation of a blue-ribbon panel known as CASA: The Committee to House the Bay Area — charging it with developing creative strategies for boosting housing production, preserving existing affordable housing and protecting vulnerable populations from displacement — and braving the political heat that the committee's CASA Compact generated in some quarters; and

WHEREAS, in a move designed in part to further strengthen the transportation-housing nexus, Steve engineered the consolidation of MTC's staff with ABAG's, in the process

streamlining agency operations and cutting costs while preserving all ABAG jobs and the esprit de corps; and

WHEREAS, in his role as executive director of BATA, Steve presided over one of the largest and most reputable bond-issuing agencies in the country, with close to \$15 billion in bond sales and consistently high ratings — financing that has been crucial to the retrofitting, rehabilitation and expansion of the Bay Area’s seven state-owned toll bridges; and

WHEREAS, Steve’s love of literature and mastery of the English language permeated every document he touched, and inspired staff to aspire to compelling, nontechnical language in everything from memoranda and reports to presentations and web content — even as he developed an aversion to printed material as the digital age took hold; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the staff and commissioners of MTC congratulate Steve on his well-deserved retirement and wish him much enjoyment as he makes beautiful music with his musically talented and growing family; commend him for transforming MTC into a powerhouse actor on the local, state and federal stages, and for materially improving in myriad ways the mobility, safety and well-being of the people of the Bay Area; and commit wholeheartedly to carrying on Steve’s mission to minimize paper and “Be Regionable” in all things related to transportation and livability in the Bay Area.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Jake Mackenzie, Chair

The above resolution was approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission at a regular meeting of the Commission held in San Francisco, California, on February 27, 2019.