

From: [Dave Campbell](#)
To: [MTC Info](#)
Subject: Bike East Bay comments to MTC agenda item 10c May 27 Comm Mtg
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 3:32:57 PM
Attachments: [Bike East Bay Letter in Support of Transit Safety.pdf](#)

External Email

MTC Commissioners:

As part of your discussion of Agenda Item 10c on CARES ACT Recovery at your MTC Commission on May 27, please support as a top priority making transit safe, for both drivers and riders, with masks and cleaning and rear door boarding, and hazard pay for transit workers. Attached is Bike East Bay's letter of support for this.

Bike East Bay needs transit to succeed in order for people to have options to walk and bike more, and for this reason we support the petition of Amalgamated Transit Union 192 for more resources and support for safer transit immediately.

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/bay-area-atu-demands-that-the-metropolitan-transportation-commission-provide-safe-service-now>

Bike East Bay will join your meeting to speak in support and we have asked our membership to add their voices to this petition and this urgent need. Please help us ensure that transit succeeds.

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Dave Campbell
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[Learn how COVID-19 is impacting Bike East Bay events and activities.](#)



May 24, 2020

Therese McMillan, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066 CC: MTC Commissioners

Re: Protecting transit workers and riders during COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Ms. McMillan:

People are not riding transit for fearing of getting sick. Your action is needed to reverse how COVID-19 pandemic has put health and lives of transit workers, other essential workers, and transit-dependent riders at serious risk. Transit riders are not all wearing masks and unnecessary fights are erupting over this. Bus drivers don't feel safe and if front door boarding returns, the problem is exacerbated. High transit ridership is essential for high bike ridership. Your leadership is needed.

This immediate safety threat also affects the longer-term recovery of transit ridership. Until state-of-the-art protections are in place across all our transit agencies, the future of public transportation in the Bay Area will be dire.

Our foremost priority must, therefore, be the protection of transit workers and riders. We are frustrated by inconsistencies, and therefore concern and confusion, among transit operators and others about what types of PPE are appropriate and necessary in the transit environment. Just saying "PPE should be provided", without specification, has proven inadequate. Furthermore, as riders transfer between services, they are met with inconsistent and conflicting standards between agencies, adding to the confusion about compliance and what is safe.

For these reasons, **we request that MTC immediately lead collaboration with transit agencies, transit unions, and public health departments to develop and disseminate consistent, state-of-the-art standards for worker and rider safety for all parts of the Bay Area transit system, and dedicate necessary funding to ensure that standard is met across the board.** In promulgating such a standard, MTC should consult appropriate public

health officials and transit experts outside the Bay Area, as well as of course Bay Area transit agency staff and unions.

That standard should address, among other things, all of the following:

- What types of PPE (personal protective equipment) should be provided for transit workers, and how many?
- Should masks be provided for every rider that needs one, and what types? Should riders without masks be prohibited from entry insofar as possible? Should this be enforced and how?
- Should hand sanitizer be provided on all transit vehicles and transit hubs?
- Should hazard pay be provided for transit workers and pandemic leave for workers exposed to the virus?
- Should rear-door boarding be implemented consistently on all buses?
- How should agencies disinfect transit vehicles and how often?
- Should there be on-site testing of transit workers?
- What additional protections are appropriate to meet the specific needs of paratransit riders, such as:
 - Assistant dressed in a protective suit, face shield, gloves, mask, goggles
 - One passenger per vehicle, per trip

Because this should be fact-based and reflects an urgent need, we believe that this collaboration should be initiated immediately and that reports of implementation of health standards and communications should be regularly provided to the Task Force and the Commission.

Along with the implementation of standard practices, **MTC and transit agencies should collaborate to create a universal and comprehensive communications initiative** to inform riders about the safety, health risks, and practices regarding the use of public transit, in order to build public confidence needed to draw riders back to the system as the economy reopens.

Finally, with respect to the Blue Ribbon Task Force itself, our constituent organizations have several additional recommendations.

1. We are concerned that the Task Force doesn't sufficiently represent the voices of transit riders, especially people with disabilities and low-income people. The composition of the Task Force would be improved by including at least one representative of an organization that focuses on the day to day concerns and needs of transit riders, as transit riders are ultimately the chief intended beneficiaries of the Task Force's efforts. There are several such organizations in the region, including San Francisco Transit Riders, the Silicon Valley Transit Users, and the Friends of Caltrain. We also believe a single representative for disabled riders may not adequately represent the diversity of this constituency.

2. We strongly support the development of a coordinated regional core transit network plan to inform service planning decisions and inform CARES act funding allocations. We suggest the following priorities to guide the Blue Ribbon Task Force's work to develop a core transit network plan:
 1. Ensure core levels of service for transit-dependent populations who depend on transit for local trips
 2. Ensure core levels of service on key corridors and destinations across the region, while maintaining service and affordability for key connections
 3. Ensure that the Bay Area has the capability to recover a complete transit network, including both local services and regional connectivity, serving all residents
 4. Retain jobs and staffing in order to restore service effectively
 5. Bring riders back by building confidence in public transit

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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