



Date: May 27, 2020
Attention: Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Re: Agenda Item 10C, MTC Resolution No. 4420, Revised. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (H.R. 748) - Recovery Strategy

Honorable Commissioners,

The lack of specific public health guidance on how to make public transit safe for riders is a major vulnerability to the recovery of our transit system.

MTC must do everything it can to make transit safe for riders and workers to minimize the risk of transmission throughout a transit rider's journey. Bringing back riders to transit will depend on our ability to make transit safe, and to communicate that safety to riders, earning back their trust and helping them make informed decisions.

We applaud that there has been recent collaboration between MTC and transit agencies to share information and practices on safety measures to prevent COVID-19.

However, there needs to be more than information sharing and coordination calls. Bay Area transit requires proactive leadership to develop a science-based, defensible and proactive transit rider safety plan for *the region*.

We recognize MTC is neither a transit operator nor a public health agency and has little prior experience in this area. The Bay Area's 27 transit agencies are also not experts in public health - and yet, each are struggling to do their own coordination with local public health departments, or outreach and information-sharing with peer agencies in other parts of the world. Several Bay Area transit agencies span multiple counties with different standards, with riders regularly moving between counties and transit agencies' service areas. Also, most public health departments don't have much specific expertise on public transit, and have little guidance directly applicable to running public transit safely.

With its CARES act funding, MTC is uniquely positioned to lead a coordinated Bay Area transit safety strategy at this moment in time, bringing together the foremost experts already working within Bay Area transit agencies and health departments. We recommend that with its CARES act funding:

- 1. MTC should immediately establish an Office of Rider Safety for Bay Area Transit that should exist for at least two years.**
- 2. MTC should immediately bring on a qualified professional to be the Bay Area's "Chief Public Transit Safety Officer" to proactively work across agency and regional boundaries, with transit workers and public health authorities, to manage the**

development and coordination of safety standards and practice on Bay Area transit. This person could be a new hire -- or seconded temporarily from another MTC role, an existing transit agency, public health department, or consulting firm.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ian Griffiths".

Ian Griffiths
Policy Director, Seamless Bay Area

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Adina Levin".

Adina Levin,
Advocacy Director, Seamless Bay Area