From: Garcia, Robin
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:42 PM
To: MTC Info
Subject: July 8th MTC Programming and Allocations Committee Meeting Item 4b

External Email

Dear Chair Josefowitz and Programming and Allocations Committee Members,

I urge the MTC Programming and Allocations Committee to recommend the “Conservative” assumptions not the “Somewhat Optimistic” assumptions be used to calculate the second payment of CARES Act funding.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted the most vulnerable populations in immeasurable ways. One of the most important aspects of daily life is that of local reliable public transit, specifically for low-income, transit-dependent community members such as essential workers, working poor, and seniors. Basic needs such as getting to work, going to the grocery store, and access to childcare and healthcare services are dependent on these local transit programs.

The Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) provides bus and light rail service across Santa Clara County, and yet has received less funding than all other transit agencies during the CARES Act funding distribution. The bus and light rail service provided by VTA serves to safely transport community members locally to access essential services across the county. Therefore, this mode of transportation is crucial and necessary for transit-dependent community members.

We are in strong disagreement with staff’s recommendation to proceed with the proposed distribution of funds. As our leaders request the public to act conservatively during the COVID-19 pandemic by wearing a mask, social distancing, washing hands, etc., we ask that MTC take a conservative approach to the distribution revenue assumptions of the 2nd round of CARES Act funding. There is a discrepancy in the current allocation assumptions, using an optimistic forecast during a time when the pandemic has called for a more cautious approach.

With the current more optimistic assumptions, VTA will receive $7 million dollars less than using the more conservative sales tax assumption. That $7 million can translate into 30 to 40 positions lost.
During this time when equity is an especially critical topic, the demand to provide necessary services to those who need them most is nonnegotiable. Under this moral standing, we respectfully ask that you reconsider the decision to support staff’s recommendation.

Sincerely,

Robin Garcia
SEIU Local 521