

Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee

November 6, 2020

Agenda Item 3a - Handout

November 2020 Election Update

Subject: Update on key statewide and local measures as well as state legislative races in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Overview: Staff will provide an election update at your meeting on key statewide and local ballot measures relevant to MTC/ABAG, as well as the results of congressional and state legislative races for the San Francisco Bay Area delegation.

Discussion **Statewide Ballot Measures**

Statewide, voters were in a somewhat cautious mood this election, rejecting a number of measures that were popular in the Bay Area, but not enough to carry the rest of the state. Below we provide some details on how the Bay Area's vote compared to the rest of the state's.

Proposition 15 (Property tax to fund schools, government services): As of Thursday, November 5, Proposition 15 was behind, having received 48.3 percent support statewide. It was supported by voters across the nine-county Bay Area as well as counties further north (Mendocino and Humboldt) and further south (Santa Cruz and Monterey). The only other counties where it secured a majority were Alpine, Los Angeles and Imperial counties.

Proposition 16 (Repealed ban on affirmative action): While the Commission and ABAG took a support position on this measure, which would have repealed the ban on affirmative action enacted by voters in 1996, it received 44 percent support statewide. It was supported by more than a majority of voters in the counties of Alameda, Marin, San Mateo and Santa Clara. Statewide, Los Angeles was the only other county where more than a majority of voters supported the measure.

Proposition 19 (Property Tax Assessment Portability & Inheritance Rules): A narrow majority (51.5 percent) of California voters supported this complicated measure that allows homeowners over 55, disabled or who have lost a home in a natural disaster to transfer their assessed value up to three times anywhere in the state. The measure also eliminated certain loopholes applicable to inherited property. Proceeds from the measure are to be used to offset increased costs borne by counties associated with increased staffing required to conduct assessments and for fire protection efforts by the state. Some additional property tax revenue may also be available to schools, according to the Legislative Analyst's summary.

Proposition 21 (Rent Control): Voters once again roundly rejected a measure that would have expanded the ability of local government to establish rent control on newer property, including single-family homes, this time by 59.7 percent, slightly higher than in 2018 when it was rejected by 59.4 percent of voters. Just one county—San Francisco—supported the measure by 51.3 percent. The next highest support for the measure in the Bay Area came from Alameda County, where 49.5 percent of voters were in favor. Support was also relatively high in Los Angeles County at 49.2 percent.

Proposition 22 (Gig Workers/Transportation Network Companies): California Voters showed strong sympathy towards the arguments for preserving the independent-contractor status of gig workers with 58.4 percent supporting the ballot measure sponsored by Uber, Lyft and DoorDash for which they and other supporters spent over \$200 million. Once again, Bay Area voters in a number of counties bucked the trend, with the measure rejected by voters in Alameda, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Sonoma counties.

Bay Area Ballot Measures

Transportation

Bay Area voters once again demonstrated their willingness to tax themselves to pay for transportation improvements in this election.

Measure DD (Sonoma County): Voters approved a 20-year extension of Sonoma County's ¼-cent sales tax by 72 percent. The measure would otherwise have expired in 2025.

Measure RR (Caltrain): Strong support was shown by voters in each of three Caltrain counties for Measure RR, the Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax. Collectively, the measure was supported by 70 percent with the specific results by county as follows: San Mateo (71.7 percent), San Francisco (74 percent) and Santa Clara (67.3 percent). The measure will stave off major service and staffing cuts and provide a long-sought after dedicated source of operating funds for the region's oldest commuter rail system.

Housing/Homelessness Funding

Measure A (San Francisco): San Francisco voters approved by 71 percent a \$487.5 general obligation bond with eligible expenditures including investments in supportive housing facilities and shelters including facilities that provide mental health services, improvements to condition of and safety of local streets, and improvements to accessibility, safety and quality of parks, open space and recreation facilities,

Measure W (Alameda County): Voters in Alameda County overwhelmingly approved a new ½-cent sales tax for ten years for general county needs, including housing and services for those experiencing homelessness, mental health services, job training, social safety net and other general fund services. The measure is estimated to generate \$150 million annually.

Measure MM (City of Berkeley): Voters in Berkeley approved by 54 percent this measure designed to 1) prohibit eviction of qualifying tenants for nonpayment of rent during state or local emergencies; 2) authorize the Rent Stabilization Board to set registration fees for certain partially exempt units; and 3) limit the Accessory Dwelling Unit exemption to owner-occupied properties with a single-family home and one accessory unit.

Measure K (San Francisco): Voters in San Francisco approved this measure which authorizes the city to own, develop, construct, acquire or rehabilitate up to 10,000 units of low-income rental housing.

Measure O (Sonoma County): Voters in Sonoma County approved by 69 percent a new ¼-cent sales tax for 10 years measure to provide approximately \$25 million annually for local mental health and addiction services and facilities for children, adults, veterans, seniors and those experiencing homelessness.

Zoning/Land Use

Bay Area voters demonstrated opposition to additional housing units in their communities but support for additional flexibility for small businesses in a number of measures.

Measure T (Antioch): Voters strongly supported this measure (79 percent) which amends the Antioch General Plan to limit development in a part of the city known as the Sand Creek Focus Area. The measure aimed to protect Sand Creek and its tributaries, preserve agricultural land, protect open spaces, protect wildlife and preserve scenic views. Presently, the General Plan allows up to 4,000 dwelling units in the Sand Creek Focus Area. Measure T will now reduce the allowed number of units to 2,100.

Measures R and Y (San Mateo): Voters in the City of San Mateo faced dueling general plan amendment measures related to building height and density requirements on the ballot and appear to have rejected both. Measure Y, placed on the ballot by voter initiative, and Measure R, placed on the ballot by unanimous vote of the city council. Measure Y is close (rejected by 50.6 percent of voters) while Measure R was rejected by about 53.4 percent of voters.

- San Mateo voters in 1991 approved Measure H, subsequently revised by Measure P in 2004, capping building height at 55 feet city-wide, setting density limits, with some exceptions in the downtown. According to the ballot measure itself, Measure Y aimed to “preserve the livability and suburban character of the City of San Mateo by essentially maintaining through the year 2030 the height limits and densities first established in 1991.”
- Measure R, instead, would have allowed the city to engage in a planning process that would have allowed higher height limits in neighborhoods near transit, while maintaining restrictions in the traditional single-family home areas. It also would have amended the existing inclusionary housing program to allow off-site construction of units or other alternative means of compliance while retaining the minimum 10 percent affordability requirement for market rate housing.

Measure Z (City of Alameda): Voters in Alameda opposed by 59 percent Measure Z, which would allowed higher density zoning in the city, amending a provision in the City Charter which generally limits housing density to one unit per 2,000 square feet of land.

Measure H (San Francisco): San Francisco voters supported Measure H, submitted by Mayor London Breed, by 62 percent. The measure is in direct response to the economic impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, particularly restaurants. It streamlines the approval and permitting process for small businesses to operate outside, in parklets and allows restaurants and cafes to include work spaces.

Miscellaneous Local Government

Measure B (San Francisco): Voters supported this measure which was also framed in the context of COVID-19. It establishes a Department of Sanitation and Streets with oversight from a Sanitation and Streets Commission, and establishes a Public Works Commission to oversee the Department of Public Work.

Measure GG (City of Berkeley): Voters approved by 60 percent a general tax on transportation network company (e.g. Uber and Lyft) vehicle trips originating in Berkeley of 50-cents per single passenger and 25-cents per pooled ride with an estimated annual revenue of \$910,000 per year.

Measure S (Santa Clara Valley Water District): Voters approved a parcel tax generating approximately \$45.5 million annually for the Santa Clara Valley Water District for projects to protect water quality, provide flood protection and reduce pollution of waterways.

Measure T (Santa Clara County): Voters overwhelmingly approved (82 percent) a new, permanent \$24 annual parcel tax, estimated to raise \$8 million per year, for a variety of land management/open space needs, including: protecting and preserving natural open spaces and managing land to reduce wildfires and floods; protecting land around creeks to prevent pollution and improve water quality; creating urban parks; preserving wildlife habitats; and preserving family farms.

Measure X (Alameda County): Voters approved this \$90 million bond measure for fire prevention efforts in the county. The measure's revenue is eligible to be used to repair/replace outdated stations and support wildfire protection and disaster response.

Measure X (Contra Costa County): Voters approved by 59 percent a general ½-cent sales tax including road repair, providing an estimated \$81 million annually.

State Legislative and Congressional Delegation

All Bay Area incumbents seeking reelection to the State Assembly and Senate won their races this year. However, due to term limits and one member not seeking reelection, the Bay Area will have four new members of our delegation, including our own MTC Commissioner and ABAG Director Dave Cortese, who handily won his race to represent District 15 and fill the seat currently held by Senator Jim Beall. Josh Becker, filling Senate District 13, currently held by Jerry Hill. John Laird, a former Assemblymember and most recently the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency under Governor Jerry Brown has returned to Sacramento to represent Senate District 17 currently held by Bill Monning. The district includes a small portion of Santa Clara County as well as counties of Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo and a portion of Monterey. The Bay Area also has a new Assemblymember, Alex Lee, representing District 25 in San Jose in the seat currently held by Assemblymember Kansen Chu.

The Bay Area's Congressional delegation remains unchanged, with the vast majority of incumbents winning re-election by 70 percent or more. Democrats will continue to hold onto control of the U.S. House of Representatives, though the Democratic Party saw a loss of eight seats at the time this memo was finalized, while picking up two. At this time, the Republican Party appears likely to retain control of the Senate. If this holds, there will likely be no changes in committee leadership in either chamber.

Transportation Ballot Measures Outside California

Nationally, there were some big wins as well as some disappointments for public transit across the country this election, with voters demonstrating an appreciation for its critical role in providing urban mobility even amidst the pandemic.

- Voters in Austin, Texas supported Proposition A, a major funding measure backed by property taxes estimating an estimated \$7 billion that provides funding for a new commuter rail line as well as bus rapid transit. This win comes on the heels of two prior failed efforts in 2000 and 2014. They also supported Proposition B, considered a complementary measure providing funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements among other expenditures.
- Voters in Denver, Colorado supported by a 64 percent margin (sufficient for passage) a so called “climate sales tax” of 1/4 -cent sales tax generating \$40 million annually with proceeds eligible for a wide range of purposes including workforce training, solar power, adaptation/resiliency programs and sustainable transportation options.
- Voters in Seattle overwhelmingly supported (82 percent) extending and slightly increasing a sales tax (from 0.10 percent to 0.15 percent) originally passed in 2014 that funds a large portion of the region’s bus network. In exchange for the increase in the sales tax the measure lets sunset a \$60 car fee. The measure is estimated to generate about \$42 million per year.

On the disappointing side, voters in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region rejected a \$5 billion package funded by a payroll tax that would have funded a broad range of roadway and transit projects, including a new light rail line from downtown to the city’s southwestern suburbs and bus rapid transit investments on four major corridors. The measure was opposed by some major companies in the area due to the payroll tax.


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