



Date: March 12, 2020
Attention: Joint MTC Legislation Committee and ABAG Legislation Committee
Re: Agenda Item 3a., March 12 Meeting - Advocacy Principles to Guide Legislation
Aimed at Improving the Bay Area's Transit System

Dear Committee Members,

We are pleased that MTC and ABAG are considering support for legislation that can bring about a more seamless and integrated transit system. We largely support the advocacy principles developed by staff and wish to suggest a few key changes to ensure the principles are consistent with the spirit of the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force and a potential upcoming business case that would study network management options.

The MTC advocacy principles are broadly consistent with the Seamless Transit Principles which are supported by thousands of transit riders from across the Bay Area, have also been formally endorsed at nine public agencies (including BART, WETA, Alameda County, SFCTA and the Cities of Millbrae, Berkeley, San Mateo, and Albany) and 32 organizations and businesses. The principles are:



**Run all Bay Area transit as one
easy-to-use system**



**Connect effortlessly with other
sustainable transportation**



Put riders first



**Plan communities and transportation
together**



**Make public transit equitable
and accessible to all**



**Prioritize reforms to create a
seamless network**



**Align transit prices and passes
to be simple, fair, and affordable**

Taking guidance from the principle of "Put Riders First", we request that MTC's advocacy principles support legislation that advance network management concepts that provide the best outcome for riders without a preference of what agency should assume network management responsibilities. Specifically, we request two points within Principle 4 be removed:

- *Remove the phrase in 4A* "Oppose the establishment of a new transit network management agency, at this time"
- *Remove the phrase in 4D:* "Preserve and strengthen MTC's existing authority and responsibility for transit coordination."

Both of these phrases seem to articulate a preference that MTC take on network management responsibilities, either in the short or long term. This is at odds with the spirit of collaboration and trust-building that has been expressed as important at the Blue Ribbon Task Force among transit agencies and advocates.

[Research presented to the Blue Ribbon Task Force](#) has indicated there are several effective models for network management in other high-ridership regions with excellent integrated transit. They include network coordination being led by an entity similar to MTC - but also coordination being led effectively by entities that are structured very differently from MTC, including models led by a dominant or unified transit agency. The Task Force has endorsed the goal to develop a business case; we believe it's in the public's best interest to study all network management options over the course of the next several months, including options that may explore an entity other than MTC overseeing network management. The business case analysis may inform upcoming 2021 legislation, or legislation in future years.

While we understand that these MTC principles are directed toward 2021 legislation, they could be easily interpreted as expressing MTC's preference of longer-term network management options. Given that these advocacy principles will be brought before the Blue Ribbon Task Force for review on March 22, we advise that MTC refrain from advocacy that expresses any preference for a specific long-term network management option. The business case process that is getting underway is the appropriate place to undertake that analysis. MTC should commit to doing what's in the best interest of riders, even if that may involve placing some authorities that currently reside with MTC elsewhere into a different organization, if study and deliberation finds that better poised to succeed with transit integration.

With the removal of the two aforementioned parts of the principles, we believe these principles offer a very good direction for the future of Bay Area transit.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Griffiths", written in a cursive style.

Ian Griffiths
Policy Director, Seamless Bay Area