



**METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

Date: May 28, 2025
To: Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
From: Carina Lieu, Policy Advisory Council Chair
Regarding: May 2025 Council Report to Commission

Summary:

This memo provides a summary of the activity of the Policy Advisory Council (Council) over the previous month. The Policy Advisory Council met on April 22, 2025 and covered three items, including two legislative bills and an update on the successor advisory body to the Council being launched in 2026.

New Appointment: Jaime Vilorio (San Francisco) appointed to the Equity and Access Subcommittee.

Status Update on Senate Bill 63 (Regional Transportation Measure)

The Council received an update on SB 63, state legislation that would enable a regional transportation funding measure to appear on the November 2026 ballot. The bill currently includes Alameda, San Francisco, and Contra Costa counties, with San Mateo and Santa Clara listed as “preferred opt-ins.” These counties must formally choose to participate and set their own local tax rate. Staff clarified that these decisions will be made by each county’s Board of Supervisors, in coordination with their transportation agencies and transit operators.

Staff explained that the bill’s narrower scope—focused on BART counties—was a strategic response to political and polling constraints. A previous attempt at a nine-county measure lacked sufficient support, and overlapping local ballot measures (e.g., SMART in the North Bay) made regional alignment more complex. Several Councilmembers, including Levin, Kallins, and Orantes, expressed concern that this narrower scope risks excluding communities that still rely on regional integration and investment. There was strong interest in ensuring that non-participating counties remain engaged in broader transit coordination efforts.

Council discussion also focused on fairness in funding contributions, particularly for multi-county transit systems. Staff noted that MTC has commissioned an independent third-party review by MGO, expected in May, to validate transit operator deficits and help guide equitable

cost-sharing discussions among counties, a critical step to ensuring accountability and public confidence.

Finally, while Councilmembers emphasized the importance of tailored messaging, clarity on systemwide benefits, and a strong equity narrative to build public support, staff reiterated that MTC cannot lead a campaign to pass the measure but will continue to share factual information and promote the value of regional transit investments. Any voter-facing campaign will be led by an independent coalition, responsible for crafting localized strategies in coordination with participating counties.*

Status Update on Senate Bill 239 (Teleconferencing)

The Council discussed Senate Bill 239, which would expand remote participation options for Brown Act advisory bodies without final decision-making authority, while still requiring one physical location for public attendance. Councilmembers expressed strong support, emphasizing that remote access improves accessibility, equity, and participation—especially for those facing travel, caregiving, or financial barriers. Vice Chair Orantes and Member Baldini testified in Sacramento in support of the bill and shared positive reflections. Members were encouraged to submit letters or emails ahead of the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on May 6.

Transition to New Advisory Body

The Council received an update on the new MTC-ABAG Community Advisory Council, scheduled to launch in 2026. The new body aims to streamline governance while maintaining a strong community voice, though eligibility will be limited to non-elected residents, with some exceptions such as college board members. The structure introduces designated stakeholder roles representing youth, transit advocates, labor, business, the environment, civic organizations, and affordable housing.

Councilmembers expressed mixed reactions. While supportive of the equity goals, members including Eldred, Gupta, and Rhoads raised concerns about the expanded scope and whether deeper policy engagement would require more preparation or time commitment. Hankerson advocated for veterans to be recognized as an underrepresented group, and several Councilmembers encouraged robust outreach to youth, people with disabilities, and equity-priority communities—emphasizing the need for support structures such as mentoring and nonprofit partnerships to ensure meaningful participation. Suggestions to support functionality included training and forming subcommittees or ad hoc groups to manage workload. Current PAC members were encouraged to apply.

**Need for Public Clarity on County Participation in SB 63: Several Councilmembers expressed confusion about how counties decide whether to participate in the regional transportation funding measure enabled by SB 63—particularly regarding local tax rates, “opt-in” procedures, and MTC’s role. This reflects a broader need for accessible, public-facing explanations to ensure communities understand how decisions are made and how to engage.*

To support public understanding and trust, I recommend that MTC’s Communications and Legislative Affairs teams develop clear, accessible materials explaining:

- *How counties opt in to the measure*
- *Who sets the tax rate and how “fair share” contributions are determined*
- *What the MGO independent review will inform*
- *MTC’s legal role versus the role of an independent campaign*

Providing this information early—before the campaign phase—will help equip the public, stakeholders, and advisory bodies to engage meaningfully in the process.