

Friends of the Downtown Rail Extension

March 11, 2025

Chair Sue Noack
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
375 Beale Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Item 3b. Major Project Advancement Policy: Stage Gate Evaluation and Recommendations for Transbay Joint Powers Authority - the Portal Project

Dear Chair Noack and Commissioners,

Thank you to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for considering the elevation of The Portal to Level 1 of the Major Project Advancement Policy (MAP), the Bay Area's roadmap to fund important transit projects.

Moving The Portal to Level 1 will allow it to compete for critical remaining funding – such as the State's Cap and Trade program - as the Transbay Joint Powers Authority works to close its funding gap of \$2.5 billion, to sign a Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration, leveraging the \$3.38 billion committed to this project.

This project will transform regional connectivity across the entire Bay Area; harnessing the full potential of Caltrain's new electrified fleet to create fast, frequent one-seat service between San Francisco's financial district and the Silicon Valley. Such untapped potential will create countless new job opportunities and tax revenue by merging these two employment centers into one integrated economic powerhouse, further solidifying our region's dominance as the tech capital of the world.

As ardent supporters of extending Caltrain service (and future California High-Speed rail service) to the Salesforce Transit Center, we strongly recommend MTC approve the staff recommendation to elevate The Portal to Level 1 of the MAP.

Sincerely,

Michael Gimbel

Co-Founder, Friends of the Downtown Rail Extension