



Agenda Item 6

June 12, 2020

The Honorable Jim Spring, Commissioner
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale St., Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Dear Commissioner Spring:

Transit operators continue to make progress since the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force (BRTF) last met on May 29. We appreciate the enthusiasm and support that BRTF members expressed at that meeting for the work we are doing. We look forward to discussing these efforts in more detail at the June 15 BRTF meeting with a focus on the development of the Transit Public Health and Safety plan, the submittal of our collective Recovery Plans, and concepts for the allocation of the second tranche of Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds.

While our coordinated efforts to address health and safety issues are rapidly taking shape and though we are taking steps consistent with the network connectivity and equity considerations expressed in Principle 5 of the regional CARES Act strategy, we are mindful that Principles 1-4 continue to be vitally important. Attention to Principle 5 elements must be balanced with the need to allocate funds quickly and flexibly, including a needs-based approach.

In addition to the work described in our Recovery Strategy Submittal, we continue our collective efforts in the following areas:

- **Financial Sustainability** - On June 1, our agencies submitted individual responses to MTC's request for updated financial projections. This information is based on our most up-to-date agency forecasts and is informing our initial draw down on CARES funds along with the development of FY21 budget actions.
- **Public Health and Safety** - We look forward to sharing the framework for a set of public health and safety guidelines that are being developed using evaluation of a host of local, national, and international resources and best practices. These guidelines will allow us to communicate clearly to the riding public and our communities that comprehensive steps are being taken throughout the region's transit network to ensure rider and

operator safety during the recovery. Your input on these guidelines will be incorporated as needed and the plan will be finalized prior to our June 29 BRTF meeting.

- Service and Operations Planning - To help manage the restoration of our transit network in a coordinated way, agencies are collaborating to create a consolidated baseline matrix of existing operating conditions and planned service changes. This matrix will be used to track adjustments to service and identify coordination opportunities through recovery. One possible outcome is the creation of customer facing communications, including maps that will help riders manage connections between systems and easily identify service frequencies on key routes. Transit agencies are continuing to explore the feasibility of other points of collaboration such as schedules, fares, and transfers.
- Communications - When the Public Health and Safety Guidelines are complete, they will include strategies for communicating them broadly through earned and paid media, social media and with consistent signage onboard transit vehicles and at stations. The guidelines will also be used to supplement a larger regional marketing and communications campaign that encourages riders to return to our transit network. That effort is currently being planned and will be informed by coordinated market research that provides insight about rider behavior and rider expectations about transit operations during recovery. It will also incorporate survey data from employers about near-term and long-term telecommute policies and overall planning for welcoming employees back to the workplace.

MTC staff recently asked agencies to think about ways that MTC can play a coordinating role in our recovery planning. We see great value in MTC engagement in the marketing and market research efforts that are currently planned. We welcome MTC's direct involvement in these efforts and ask that you designate staff and potentially consultant resources to help advance them in collaboration with the Communications Subgroup.

Some additional ways that MTC can support and build on the collaboration that is underway among the Bay Area transit agencies are:

1. Clipper START - Advancing the MTC means-based fare program has potential to make some of our systems more accessible to low income, transit dependent riders at a time when they need it more than ever. We are looking forward to its presentation at the Clipper Executive Board Meeting on June 22, 2020.
2. Clipper 2.0 and California Integrated Travel Project - An important consideration is how the rollout of the next generation of the region's fare card should be a part of the region's transit recovery strategy, especially as it pertains to no-touch fare payment. In partnership with the Fare Integration Task Force member agencies, we request that MTC help to identify opportunities to accelerate the launch of Clipper 2.0 and to advance the initiatives being considered by the California Integrated Travel Project in the Bay Area to facilitate easy and accessible payments across the State.



3. Transit Priority on Key Corridors - As the economy rebounds and employees return to work, providing priority to transit will be critical in managing the congestion that is integral to a successful Bay Area economic recovery. Transit prioritization improves service frequencies and on time performance, lowers costs to deliver transit services, and promotes seamless connections throughout the Bay Area. There are many corridors around the region that would benefit from this. For example, as the region continues to explore the feasibility of a dedicated transit lane on the Bay Bridge, many transportation agencies and local jurisdictions agree that significant improvements can be made to bridge approaches to improve transit performance. We request that MTC advance these concepts. Other ideas to explore could include using tools such as pricing in both east and west bound directions during peak commute times, allowing bus on shoulder, and changing the occupancy requirements or hours for carpool lanes to give transit a greater travel time advantage.

Again, thank you for your continued attention to these issues. Traffic congestion is returning throughout the region despite the slow reopening of the economy. One study suggests traffic congestion in the Bay Area will increase more than any other region in the country, even if just a small number of regular transit riders choose to drive instead of riding transit. We have an obligation to our riders, and communities throughout the region to do everything we can to prevent that from happening. We look forward to continued conversations about how we can best work together to rebuild a safe, integrated, accessible and well-utilized regional transit system to keep the Bay Area vibrant and moving together as one.

Sincerely,

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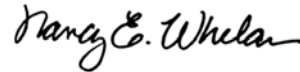
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Cc: Members, MTC Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force
Members, Bay Area State and Federal Legislative Delegations
Ray Tellis, Region IX Administrator, Federal Transit Administration