The Board of Supervisors

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Contra Costa County

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November 3, 2015

Julie Pierce, Chair
Contra Costa Transportation Authority
2999 Oak Road, Suite 100
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Subject: Transportation Expenditure Plan & Potential Sales Tax Measure

Dear Chair Pierce:

On November 3, 2015, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the following comments be transmitted to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority. This letter details our position on policies and funding levels for the Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP), currently under development by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (Authority). At its September 15, 2015 meeting the Board received a report on TEP issues and formally recommended the positions detailed below.

This comment letter does not constitute an endorsement by the Board of the concept of a 2016 transportation sales tax. The Board will consider that broader issue at a future meeting in the context of the Board's assessment of the need for new funding for transportation and other services.

Local Streets and Roads: As you are aware, the demand for increased maintenance funding is a national, statewide, and local problem. In reviewing data regarding the County's maintenance needs, it is clear that a substantial increase in Local Streets Maintenance and Improvements funding is necessary.

An analysis performed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has shown that in unincorporated Contra Costa County over a 24 year period, we have a revenue shortfall of $442 million to address pavement and directly related non-pavement needs. Expanding on that analysis, assuming 30% revenues from a new TEP,

there would continue to be a $350 million shortfall over the same period. These figures don't include the maintenance demand for the 111 bridges in unincorporated County.

In addition to our current maintenance shortfall, we also have a need for more funding to implement and maintain complete street projects in our unincorporated communities to serve all of the users of our roads and enhance neighborhoods.

Considering the above, the Board supports the funding levels for local streets and roads (maintenance and improvements) in a new TEP that the Regional Transportation Planning Committees (RTPCs) have taken. Specifically, SWAT at 25%-30%, TRANSPAC at 30%, TRANSPLAN at 30% and WCCTAC at 28%. This support includes complete streets concepts as detailed below. The Board recognizes the importance of improving and maintaining our local streets and roads for all modes of transportation.

Recommendations from SWAT, TRANSPAC and WCCTAC include funding for complete streets and multi-modal projects within the local streets and roads category. TRANSPLAN recommends 30% for local streets maintenance and improvements and also recommends additional funding amounts for projects for bike and pedestrian improvements, safe transportation for schools as well as Transportation for Livable Communities.

During our discussion on maintenance needs, the topic of progress at the state regarding transportation finance reform was considered. While the Board has hope that the State will reform transportation financing practices, our data show that even if the maximum funding increases considered during the recent special session of the State legislature were enacted, we would continue to have a substantial maintenance backlog.

We understand there is an interest in establishing a reporting mechanism to provide additional accountability and tracking of maintenance funding. The Board is supportive of this and is willing to work with the Authority and other member agencies to develop a mechanism to ensure that maintenance expenditure practices are transparent.

Accessible Services/Mobility Management/Paratransit: As we indicated in our October 21, 2014 comment letter on the Countywide Transportation Plan, the issue of improvements to transit for the elderly and people with disabilities (accessible services) is a priority for the Board. This issue is longstanding; the Board made similar comments in 2002 during the effort to reauthorize Measure C. The Board is making these comments due to the forecasted growth of the target population[1] and increasing costs[2].

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[1] 65+ Bay Area population is forecasted to grow 137% by 2040. Data sources: 2010 Census, California Department of Finance, ABAG

[2] 60% **increase** in paratransit cost per trip from 2004 to 2013 (average of all Contra Costa County transit agencies) Data source: 2004-2013 National Transit Database

The Board believes this issue requires substantial, deliberate attention given that accessible transit responsibilities are diffused in Contra Costa County, making progress challenging. Accessible transit in the County consists of four different public Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit providers, program specific transit providers, city-based providers and the County itself has certain transportation obligations related to health care and the Older Americans Act. This structure grew organically over time and as such, no single organization falls naturally into a leadership role. With the recommendations below, we want to provide a countywide direction and improve services to our shared constituency while providing much needed cost controls.

In our October 2014 comment letter we indicated that accessible service would need, in addition to additional funding, fundamental administrative changes if we are to respond adequately in a cost-effective manner to the projected demand for service. The recommendations below build on those earlier comments and are consistent with the *2013 Contra Costa Mobility Management Plan* (CCMMP), as well as the unfulfilled recommendations in the *2004 Contra Costa Paratransit Improvement Study*. The recommendations in this letter and found in the CCMMP are also consistent with MTC's *Coordinated Public Transit –Human Services Transportation Plan Update for the Bay Area*. The MTC Plan has the recommendation of *"strengthening mobility management"* which includes the designation of a Consolidated Transportation Services Agency[3] (CTSA). The designation of a CTSA is also a recommendation in the 2013 CCMMP.

The Board supports the following relative to accessible services in a new TEP:

1) The TEP should, in addition to providing additional operations funding, fund a countywide mobility management[4] program as recommended in the CCMMP[5]. The CCMMP includes preliminary cost figures for implementation which may need to be refined as we move ahead. As implementation progresses, the Board strongly

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[3] **CTSA**: Adapted from several public sources: Created under AB 210 (1979 – "Social Services Transportation Improvement Act"). The purpose of the Act was to improve the quality of transportation services to low mobility groups while achieving cost savings, lowered insurance premiums and more efficient use of vehicles and funding resources. The legislation took the middle course between absolutely mandating and simply facilitating the coordination of transportation services. Designation of CTSAs and implementation of other aspects of the Act were seen as a flexible mechanism to deal with the problem of inefficient or duplicative transportation services.

[4] **Mobility Management Defined**: Mobility management (MM) is a strategic approach to the coordination of transportation service, revenue streams, technology implementation, and customer service. MM directs passengers to the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation option using information, incentives, and other voluntary measures. Best implemented on a larger scale, a mobility-managed service area provides a full range of well synchronized mobility services in a cost effective manner.

[5] A small non-profit, "Mobility Matters" (formerly, "Senior Helpline Services") has begun providing some mobility management in Contra Costa County. However, that organization has limited funding thorough grants expiring in 2016. TRANSPAC provides Mobility Matters some Measure J funds (20a – Sr/Disabled Transportation) for a volunteer driver program. No Measure J funds are used for mobility management functions.

recommends consideration of a transition to the mobility management/brokerage[6] model used in Santa Clara County.

2) Currently, Measure J has eligibility requirements placed on local jurisdictions in order to receive *Local Streets & Maintenance* funding. As mentioned in the ***Local Streets and Roads*** section above, additional requirements are being considered for supplementary maintenance funding. Similar to those requirements, the Board is proposing that eligibility for transit funding under a new TEP be contingent upon participation in the implementation of the mobility management program and other identified improvements to accessible services.

3) Implementing the service model proposed in #1 above is a substantial investment. We believe that the County and Authority Board members would benefit from a tour of the Santa Clara County accessible services operation, OUTREACH. The OUTREACH operation is non-profit based and is a national model for cost-effective procurement, contracting and operations[7]. During a time where our own transit operations show a trend of **increasing costs**, the OUTREACH model has shown **reduced costs**[8]. The Board is requesting attendance from Authority members on this tour tentatively scheduled for December.

4) One barrier to progress on this issue is the understandable resistance to any changes in service to a sensitive population. As we move ahead with this effort, an explicit commitment should be made by all agencies involved to insulate current accessible transit customers from service degradations or interruptions.

The Authority should be aware that the Board is fully committed to pursuing improvements to accessible transit. The Santa Clara County mobility management/brokerage model includes County support by way of competitive pricing on vehicle maintenance, vehicle parking and bulk fuel purchases. The Board is currently exploring the possibility of duplicating that service in Contra Costa.

Improved Land Use Coordination: In our October 2014 letter and at our September 15th discussion, the Board discussed the need for economic development and balancing jobs

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[6] A mobility management operation can, over time, transition to a "brokerage" model. A brokerage model splits functions related to ADA paratransit/accessible service with a transit agency. Those functions span a continuum starting with administrative responsibilities (contracting with service providers, monitoring performance, customer service) all the way up to a full service brokerage (central call center/dispatch, management of a coordinated system, etc). Adapted from FTA Report #0081, "Accessible Services for All": http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_Report_No._0081.pdf#page=39

[7] Federal Transit Administration, *"Accessible Transit Services for All"* December 2014 www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_Report_No._0081.pdf#page=246

[8] 19% **decrease** in cost per trip from 2004 to 2013 Data source: 2004-2013 National Transit Database

and housing to make more efficient use of our transportation infrastructure. The following statistics underscore the structural problems that challenge our transportation network as well the potential benefits of addressing these problems:

1) The five cities in the Bay Area with the longest commute times are all in Contra Costa County[9];

2) Contra Costa is second only to Solano for having the lowest number of jobs relative to housing[10] and is forecast to be the only County in the Bay Area with fewer jobs than housing units in 2040[11]; and

3) Travel patterns are imbalanced resulting in substantially underutilized infrastructure. For example, State Route 4 in East Contra Costa County carries approximately 2.3 times as many vehicles in the commute direction as in the non-commute direction[12].

Long and congested commute patterns cause residents to spend more of their time commuting than in other, more valuable activities and contribute substantially to unhealthful and climate-altering emissions. A primary cause of this unbalanced, inefficient and resource-intensive transportation pattern is that it can be difficult to find jobs and housing in close proximity, or to find jobs and housing connected by transit. The potential sales tax measure now under consideration may present an opportunity to better address a root cause of the transportation challenges we face.

The Board would like to discuss with the Authority and other stakeholders the possibility of developing policies in the TEP for promoting development that reduces congestion and makes better use of transit and other existing infrastructure. We propose that conversation include two types of approaches: a) funding allocations; and b) new policy incentives. To stimulate discussion, we have included some initial ideas below on each of these two approaches. We would welcome a discussion on these and other ideas that others may have.

Initial Ideas on the Funding Allocation Approach: The TEP could allocate a portion of the future funds to a congestion reduction program related to stimulating certain types of new development. Funds for such a program could be used to stimulate certain infill and other development that demonstrates positive impacts on the transportation system, such as reduced demand on the most congested freeways and roads, better

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[9] MTC's "Vital Signs": Oakley, Brentwood, Antioch, Hercules, Pittsburg
[10] ABAG: San Francisco Bay Area: State of the Region: Economy/Population/Housing – 2015 (Figure 4.27 (Jobs to Housing Ratio, Bay Area Counties))
[11] ABAG: Draft Plan Bay Area: Forecast of Jobs, Population, & Housing, March 2013 (Table 14 (SF Bay Area County Housing and Job Growth, 2010-2040))
[12] MTC's Vital Signs

utilization of transit, greater off-peak utilization, reduced average commute times, and reduction of out-of-county commute trips. This could take the form of development in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) near transit or other types of development that achieve the demand reduction goal. For Contra Costa County, jobs/housing balance is a key concern. A focus on developing employment centers that would offer well-paying jobs proximate to housing (i.e. priority industrial areas or priority employment areas) could have merit. Stimulating development that establishes well-paying jobs in East County, for example, could reduce strain on Highway 4, offer a far easier commute for East County residents and make better use of prior transportation investments by stimulating the counter commute.

Subject to feasibility studies, demonstration of congestion reduction, and Authority approval, local jurisdictions could request funding for projects that would stimulate development that would reduce congestion. Such investments could include transportation infrastructure (e.g. improvements to transit and roadways in areas targeted for job growth). However, to realize the congestion reduction benefit of the desired development, a broader range of investments could be considered, such as advanced telecommunication/broadband infrastructure, water, sewer, power, impact fee offsets, land assembly, or other investments. The analysis should consider not only the direct growth in jobs (and housing) likely to result from the investment, but also the net growth in jobs (certain jobs such as advanced manufacturing can have relatively high job multipliers).

Initial Ideas on the Policy Incentives Approach: The TEP might include additional policy incentives to promote infill and other development that reduces congestion. For example, the TEP could include incentives for local agencies to adopt and implement certain land-use policies such as PDAs, priority industrial areas or priority employment areas, greater density along transit or employment targets. Alternatively, incentives could be linked to certain TEP funding categories. For instance, economic development/jobs-housing balance/congestion reduction goals could be criteria for allocating funding to any competitively awarded pots of funds.

Finally, the Board hopes there can be a discussion regarding if and how the potential measure can address the fundamental shifts in the statewide transportation planning and funding landscape resulting from recent landmark greenhouse gas reduction legislation (for instance the State's replacement of the Level of Service (LOS) metric with a Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) metric). At this time, it may be appropriate to consider revisions to the Authority's *Growth Management Program* and *Technical Procedures* that would incrementally and strategically adapt to the new VMT standard while maintaining the local benefits of the current LOS standard.

The Board would welcome discussion on these and other ideas related to these challenging land use and transportation issues.

Bicycle Transportation Issues: Contra Costa County currently has the lowest rate of trips-by-bike rate in the Bay Area according to the MTC[13]. Please consider a strategic approach to developing and prioritizing bicycle project and program activities to reverse this rate to improve the County's ranking.

One component of that strategic approach could be to further expand and improve the County's network of separated, Class I trails. These facilities often have a substantial number of users, traveling at varying speeds, on a single path. For example, a "bicycle expressway" could be a separate project in the Iron Horse corridor that would accommodate faster cyclists. This would increase usage, safety, and comfort for both cyclists and pedestrians and merits consideration during development of the TEP.
Major Projects: The following is an update to the Board's priority project list transmitted in our October 2014 comment letter. The Board also intends on pursuing these priorities at the appropriate Regional Transportation Planning Committees.

The TriLink/State Route 239: This project continues to be a priority. In the interest of advancing a project within a shorter time frame, the Board is requesting that the Vasco-Byron Highway connector phase be prioritized in the TriLink program of projects.

The Kirker Pass Road Truck Climbing Lanes: This project addresses congestion and safety along in this critical TRANSPAC and TRANSPLAN connector road.

The northbound project, estimated to cost $18 million, is scheduled for construction in 2018 and will provide a northbound truck climbing lane and paved shoulders for future Class II bike lanes between Clearbrook Drive in the City of Concord and the easternmost Hess Road intersection in the unincorporated area. The project is needed to improve safety for motorists and bicyclists along this stretch of road that experiences high truck traffic and is a major commute corridor between Central and East County. With sustained grades steeper than eight percent, trucks are unable to match the speed of other vehicles on the roadway, causing significant congestion and creating a safety hazard. The southbound project will add a truck climbing lane in the opposite direction and is estimated to cost over $20 million. There is no date yet for construction, but project development activities are expected to be started within the next few years.

Capitol Corridor Voucher Program: This is a new proposed program that the Board is requesting WCCTAC and CCTA explore. WCCTAC is currently involved in a high capacity transit study that would explicitly or effectively extend BART service in West

[13] MTC: Regional Bicycle Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area – 2009 Update.

Contra Costa County. Given that a service expansion of this type is typically a long-term process; a more immediate solution should be considered.

The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) currently operates the Capitol Corridor service through Contra Costa County. In order to provide some service increase to West Contra Cost residents in the short term, a TEP-funded, Capitol Corridor voucher program for Contra Costa residents should be considered. The CCJPA is currently involved in a Capitol Corridor Vision Planning process, which calls for coordination with WCCTAC and CCTA relative to the high capacity transit study. Either the CCJPA planning process or the WCCTAC High Capacity Transit Study may be an appropriate mechanism by which to explore this concept.

Marsh Creek Trail: The Board also suggests consideration of an emerging transportation project: a multi-use path in the Marsh Creek corridor that would connect east and west County on or near Marsh Creek Road. This project is in the concept stage and discussion among local jurisdictions has begun. The project would be a significant community asset and may mature enough in the next year to warrant eligibility for funding.

The following projects continue to be a priority: North Richmond Truck Route, I-680 HOV Gap Closure, Iron Horse/Lafayette-Moraga Trail Connector, Vasco Road Safety Improvements, and Northern Waterfront Goods Movement Infrastructure.

The Board of Supervisors greatly appreciates staff and consultant assistance during our deliberations on TEP development. We look forward to your response and additional engagement on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

John Gioia, Chair
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor, District I

C:
David Twa, County Administrator
Sharon Anderson, County Counsel
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