

July 10, 2018

The Honorable SamTrans Board of Directors

1250 San Carlos Ave.

San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

Via email

Re: Get Us Moving Final Investment Plan

Dear Chair Stone and Members of the Board,

We're writing in reference to the SamTrans Board agenda for Wednesday, July 11, specifically, Item 6: Get Us Moving (GUM) Final Investment Plan. The Transportation Equity Allied Movement (TEAMC) is grateful to SamTrans staff and Board for having authentically engaged us in the GUM process and for incorporating much of our input into the Final Investment Plan.<sup>1</sup> After obtaining input from most of our member organizations, TEAMC has decided to enthusiastically support the Final Investment Plan.

The elements of the Investment Plan we are most excited about are the core principles, the language on accountability, and the emphasis in spending on multimodal transportation improvements — particularly public transportation and bicycle and pedestrian improvements, which combined represent at least two-thirds of the measure's spending.

### **Visionary and Comprehensive Core Principles**

At the June 6th SamTrans Board meeting, TEAMC expressed strong support for the proposed core principles in the Draft Investment Plan, including “facilitate the reduction of vehicle miles travelled, travel times and greenhouse gas emissions”, “incentivize transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options over drive alone”, “enhance safety and public health”, “incorporate the inclusion and implementation of policies that encourage safe accommodation of all people using the roads, regardless of mode of travel”, and “maximize traffic reduction potential associated with the creation of new housing opportunities in high-quality transit corridors”.

We are even more pleased that over the last month, the core principles have been further strengthened to ensure greater community benefits by:

- Highlighting key groups that the public transportation system should serve (youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes),
- Referencing the creation of high-quality jobs,
- Expanding language on environmentally sustainable planning and solutions, including the incorporation of green stormwater improvements, and
- Adding the term “complete streets” to describe policies that encourage safe accommodation of all people using the roads.

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<sup>1</sup> The Transportation Equity Allied Movement Coalition (TEAMC) is a coalition of 28 diverse organizations that advances community-supported transportation solutions that promote greater access to opportunity, social equity, public health and safety, and environmental protection. TEAMC engages and empowers those historically underrepresented communities to advocate for a public transportation system that better serves all of our needs.

## **Strong Accountability Measures**

When it comes to accountability, the Final Plan is a significant improvement on the Draft Plan and even more so over the existing Measure A transportation sales tax. The Final Plan includes three important accountability measures to ensure the spirit of the measure is effectively implemented:

- Concrete language tying the measure's spending to the established core principles;
- A new provision requiring the Transportation Authority, which will be responsible for administering many of the investments in the measure, to develop a Strategic Plan that will be informed by community input; and
- Broad community representation on the independent oversight committee, including from youth, seniors, people with disabilities, business, labor, and the environmental community.

TEAMC is hopeful that these accountability measures will ensure funding is well spent after the measure's passage, and build public trust leading to November's election.

## **Emphasis in Spending on Sustainable and Equitable Transportation**

TEAMC is also pleased with the prioritization of funding for public transportation and active transportation modes, with 50% of the measure set aside for "County Public Transportation Systems", with an emphasis on "maintaining and enhancing bus, paratransit, and other mobility services to better serve vulnerable, underserved, youth, low-income, and transit-dependent populations throughout the County".

Not specifically stated in the measure's text is the importance of this funding in avoiding the threat of an estimated 30% cut in transit services due to the Agency's structural budget deficit, as well as fulfilling legal obligations to meet the transportation needs of our growing senior population.

Eligible programs and projects in the County Public Transportation Systems category that TEAMC is particularly excited about include:

- Increased core bus service frequency and implementation of an express bus network;
- Conversion of SamTrans fleet to zero-emission buses;
- Implementation of the SamTrans Older Adults and People with Disabilities Mobility Plan, the SamTrans Youth Mobility Plan, and the Coastside Transit Study;
- Caltrain improvements in order to grow ridership and improve safety and reliability;
- Improvements of first- and last-mile connections to core transit services; and
- Enhancements of the customer experience, such as wi-fi, on core transit services

The measure also includes 10% for "Regional Transit Connections" and 5% for "Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements". In addition, all roadway spending will be subject to a Complete Streets policy to encourage safe accommodation of all people using the roads, and bicycle and pedestrian components or facilities are explicitly stated as an eligible expense in the roadway categories. We are looking forward to SMCTA's Strategic Plan process to flesh out how the Complete Street principle will be implemented in all categories so that all transportation projects funded by the measure work for all people using it, regardless of method of travel.

The Plan also allocates 22.5% for “Countywide Highway Congestion Improvements” and 12.5% for “Local Safety, Pothole and Congestion Relief Improvements”, including 2.5% for grade separations. As is the case with the other program areas above, TEAMC is pleased that roadway funds will be guided by the core principles, with a focus not just on congestion reduction, but also on maintenance, safety, greenhouse gas emission reduction, and moving more people with fewer cars (increasing person throughput and reducing vehicle miles of travel).

Both the local and highway roadway project categories include Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and commute alternative programs as eligible expenses in order to incentivize transit, bicycle, pedestrian, carpooling and other shared-ride options. TEAMC hopes these types of programs will perform well in the Strategic Plan process after the measure passes.

And while we would have preferred stronger language and specific programs on incentivizing better land use, promoting affordable transit oriented development (TOD), and preventing residential displacement, we again look forward to the Strategic Plan process as an opportunity to advance these critical strategies in order to reduce congestion, promote equity and affordability, and increase transit ridership.

In closing, TEAMC is proud to support the Get Us Moving Final Investment Plan. We believe the Plan lays a solid foundation to advance mobility, social equity, quality of life, environmental protection and climate action, and public health and safety. We urge the Board to approve the Final Plan, and we look forward to working with you to pass the measure this November.

Sincerely,

Chris Lepe  
Senior Community Planner  
TransForm

Cynthia Lisette Cruz  
Program Director  
Youth United for Community Action

Montzerrat Garcia Bedolla  
Program Manager  
Youth Leadership Institute

Sarah Verity  
Board Relations Manager  
Gatepath

Shiloh Ballard  
President & Executive Director  
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition