



August 10, 2020

Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Attention: Dave Vautin, Adam Noelting, Anup Tapase

Dear PlanBayArea staff,

Thank you very much for all of the work that has gone into the complex task of proposing future transportation investments in a complex region in a time of substantial uncertainty.

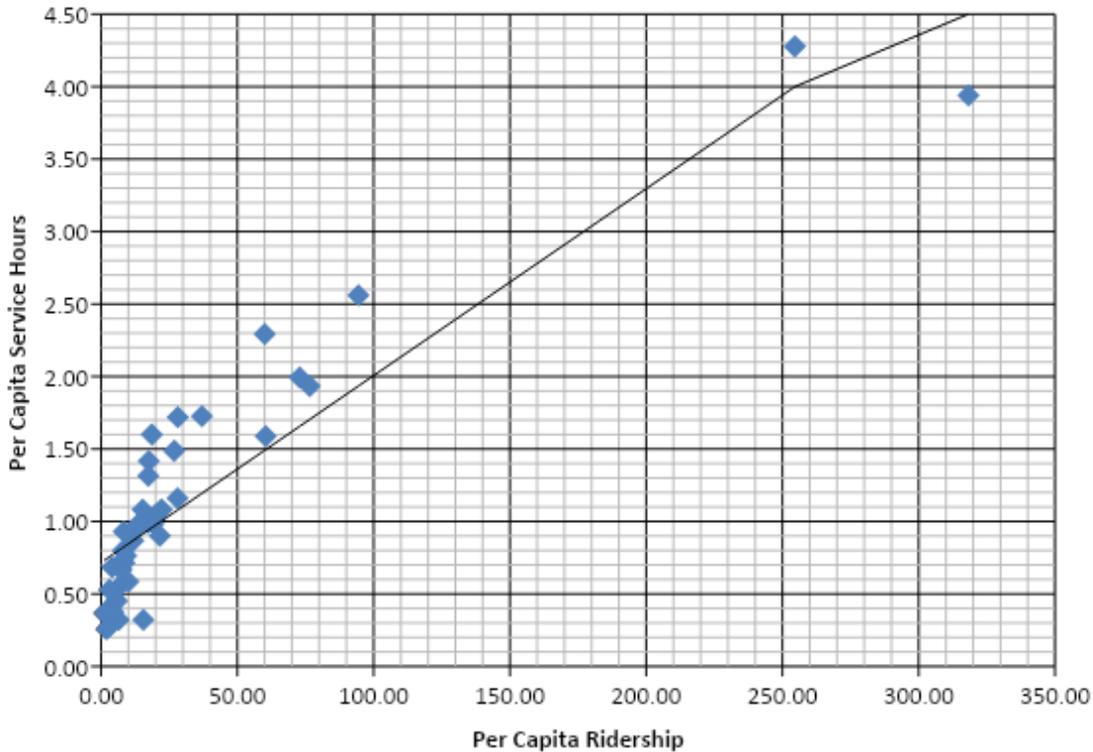
We have recently conducted research of high ridership transit systems that indicates that the Bay Area should substantially increase its investment in public transit operations in order to maximize the effectiveness of its public transit system. We recommend that Plan Bay Area include an increased investment in service hours amounting to at least 35% more than pre-Covid investment levels.

Seamless Bay Area is a member of the Voices for Public Transportation Coalition that is focused on securing robust funding for public transportation with goals of improving service for transit-dependent people, increasing ridership, and improving environmental sustainability, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and particulate pollution.

In support of these goals, we have conducted research on national and international effective practices on the amount of service needed for robust transit ridership (A presentation summarizing the results is linked.) Ron Kilcoyne, the lead researcher on the project has been the General Manager of multiple transit agencies; a professional specialty in his long career and consulting practice has been increasing ridership on suburban bus systems.

The recommendations in this document have not yet completed the review process being conducted by the Voices for Public Transportation internal review team and therefore does not yet represent a recommendation from Voices for Public Transportation.

Research consistently shows that there is a strong correlation between transit service hours and ridership, above and beyond other factors such as land use, pedestrian access, service pattern, etc.



This project reviewed a set of comparable information focusing on North American metropolitan regions using multiple lenses, including service hours, land use, and standards. Based on this analysis, we would recommend increasing service hours by at least 35% compared to pre-Covid levels (see attached slides for the details on the comparative analysis.)

The recommended revenue hour increase will cost \$20,594,928,960 over 30 years. Obviously funding is currently scarce as a result of the pandemic and recession. The PlanBayArea materials contemplate a large regional funding measure and/or other important new funding sources. This operation funding increase would be a valuable and important component to be funded with such sources.

This would represent an increase above the current recommendation in Plan Bay Area 2050, which assumes maintenance of existing level of transit service (pre-COVID) and funding the operations of committed expansion projects. The increases listed in the table above are based on existing level of service pre-COVID.

Service recommendations

We found that in the Bay Area, one area that we found where we are relatively deficient compared to other regions is in span of service. This finding dovetails with the PlanBayArea feedback received by

MTC importance for equity in improving span of service for low-income people whose jobs and other travel needs are beyond the traditional morning and evening white collar commute peak. Historically, Bay Area transit service strategies have emphasized a goal of public transit to reduce peak hour congestion for drivers. However, a majority of trips are taken outside of peak commute hours.

We also strongly support the other strategies recommended in Play Bay Area to improve transit access and ridership including fare integration and other equity policies, transit priority investments, and more. We agree that investments in active transportation are important and effective in reducing driving miles for many short trips. We agree that other factors will be important for transit use, including the quality of pedestrian access to transit, and changes to urban form over time. Based on the analysis in this report, we believe that increasing operating service hours will be an essential strategy, among other strategies.

Obviously, transit ridership is steeply down now due to the pandemic. However, PlanBayArea is a longterm plan and covers many years beyond the immediate impact of the pandemic. To achieve the longterm goals for equity and environmental sustainability, we would strongly urge inclusion of an increase in operating service hours in PlanBayArea pending funding.

Thank you for your consideration,

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