



METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

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## 2009 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

<b>S T A T E</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. State Budget Reform	A. Bring fiscal discipline and predictability to the state budget	California, Rhode Island and Arkansas are the only other states to require a two-thirds vote from its legislators on the budget. The FY 2008-09 State Budget stalemate's only real distinction was to be the latest in a long running series of impasses only to be followed by even worse news of having to immediately redo the budget in November. Moreover, the budget did little to address the structural deficit plaguing the state. While the state's perennial dysfunction is not a "transportation" problem per se, transportation (and public transit in particular) bears the brunt of the problem as lawmakers repeatedly turn to transportation funds to offset the shortfall in the state's General Fund. To solve this problem head-on, MTC lends its support to efforts to pass a constitutional amendment to allow majority rule democracy in the largest state in the land – while also understanding that spending reforms and other matters, such as requiring the establishment of a prudent reserve need to part of any long term budget solution.
	B. Merge the spillover with Proposition 42 and protect public transportation funds from General Fund diversion	Work with other transportation interests including the California Alliance for Jobs, Bay Area business and environmental interests, Bay Area transit operators, congestion management agencies, cities and counties to build support for a constitutional amendment (via the initiative process) that would fully dedicate gasoline sales taxes to transportation once and for all. This would be accomplished by eliminating the Spillover formula, which has been repeatedly raided in recent budgets and undermines the potential funding available from Proposition 42. All gasoline sales taxes would then flow into Proposition 42 which currently dedicates 40 percent of funds to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), 40 percent to local streets and roads, and 20 percent to public transit. A change in this formula might be necessary to secure consensus from all transportation stakeholders. MTC would also urge that the initiative provide constitutional protection to transit's base funding from the Public Transportation Account (PTA) trust fund.

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2. New Self-Help Funding	Authorize new revenue source to meet regional objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving local streets and roads	<p>Last year, MTC and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District actively supported AB 2558 (Feuer/Huffman) to allow MTC to place a regional gasoline fee on the ballot in the nine Bay Area counties for the purposes of local street and road repairs and climate protection. The bill was ultimately amended to allow similar measures to be introduced in regions throughout the state and to allow the revenues also to be used for public transit improvements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, state highway repairs and operational improvements. It passed the Assembly Floor and Senate policy committees, but was ultimately not taken up on the Senate floor due to insufficient support.</p> <p>With gasoline prices falling and the state’s fiscal condition in dire straits, we believe 2009 is an opportune time to reintroduce this legislation. Rather than asking the state to raise new funds to meet our needs, now is the time to secure the state funds already dedicated to transportation (as proposed in #1B above) and to ask the state to let us help ourselves. As a fee, eligible expenditures would have to provide a strong nexus between the fee paid and the expenditures for which the revenues are used. Notwithstanding this legal constraint, we will support a flexible approach that allows regions to establish an expenditure plan consistent with their own priorities, rather than one set in state law. Working closely with the Air Resources Board and Caltrans, we will work to ensure that the bill complements their own goals and has the support of the Administration.</p>
3. High Occupancy Toll Network	Authorize MTC to develop a high-occupancy toll lane network	In partnership with Caltrans, CHP, and the Bay Area Congestion Management Agencies, seek statutory authority to develop a high-occupancy toll (HOT) lane network for the nine-county region. Provide a framework for a regional HOT Network management structure and develop a corridor-based implementation process that establishes revenue guarantees (timing and amounts), specific corridor improvements, and tolling and operations policy.

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4. Proposition 1B: Transit Funding	Improve management of Proposition 1B transit funds	Support efforts on the part of the California Transit Association and Bay Area transit agencies to improve the management of Proposition 1B transit funds from the Public Transportation Modernization Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA). This would require establishing a formula that determines each agency's share for all future bond proceeds in order to allow a transit agency's total share of funds to be advanced on the basis of project readiness. This would ensure that the funds are used most efficiently while also maximizing the mobility, economic and environmental benefits of the voter-approved funds.
5. SB 375 Implementation	Ensure cleanup legislation advances regional goals	Governor Schwarzenegger's signing message to SB 375 indicated his support for cleanup legislation in 2009 that would address the following: (1) expanding the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemptions and streamlining provisions beyond housing and mixed-used development to other infrastructure, retail and commercial development that is consistent with the sustainable communities strategy; (2) clarifying that all Proposition 1B projects are exempt; (3) eliminating schedule conflicts between housing elements and regional transportation plans; and (4) reducing litigation risk and impact to the State Highway Account associated with mitigation requirements for impacts to the state highway system. MTC will monitor all proposed legislation related to SB 375 to ensure that it advances the region's transportation and land use goals.

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6. Transit Operations - Lifeline	A. Broaden State Transit Assistance (STA) eligibility for discount fares	In 2007, MTC sponsored AB 1637 (DeSaulnier) to broaden STA eligibility for Lifeline purposes. The rationale for the bill was to allow the top ideas emerging from our Community Based Transportation Plans – such as discount fares and shuttles targeted to improve access for low-income neighborhoods – to be funded by State Transit Assistance (STA) funding, a likely fund source for the Lifeline Program. The bill foundered due to some local transit operators objecting to it on the grounds that it would reduce their STA funds. With \$400 million contemplated for the Lifeline Program as part of Transportation 2035, MTC proposes to revisit this idea, working in partnership with transit operators, and to limit it to the population share of STA funds.
7. TransLink®	Extend the time limit for use of Regional Measure 2 TransLink® funds	Regional Measure 2, the voter-approved \$1 toll increase approved by voters in 2004, provided \$20 million in operating funding for TransLink® over a three-year period. Due to delays in launching TransLink®, however, only \$3.5 million of the funds have been spent to date. While TransLink® has made huge strides in the last year, with Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, Golden Gate Transit, Caltrain and San Francisco Muni now participating, annual operating costs are not high enough to exhaust the remaining \$16.5 million in a two year-period. Allowing the funds to be spent over a five-year period would allow TransLink® to spend down the remaining RM2 funds in the most efficient manner.
8. Toll Bridge Operational Improvements	Improve enforcement and traffic operations of FasTrak® lanes	In order to minimize losses from toll violators, MTC will support legislation that would improve enforcement and traffic operations of FasTrak® lanes. Examples of legislative recommendations included in the BATA Toll Violation Enforcement Implementation Plan include: require the issuance of new car license plates with specific vehicle identifier plates at car dealerships and expanding other enforcement mechanisms with respect to vehicles that have unpaid violations

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1. New Beginning for the Federal Surface Transportation Act	Advance MTC's policy priorities in the national dialogue about SAFETEA's successor	MTC will work in partnership with the California Department of Transportation, the California Association of Councils of Government and other metropolitan planning organizations statewide, as well as Bay Area transportation agencies to pursue a bold new direction at the federal level. We will advocate for a much simplified federal program with clearer national goals, an emphasis on relieving congestion and providing enhanced travel options in metropolitan areas, a new program to focus on expediting goods movement and much higher levels of funding for all modes.
2. Economic Stimulus Package	Promote the inclusion of transportation funding in any proposal for a national economic stimulus package	MTC will advocate that transportation infrastructure be included in any proposal for a national economic stimulus package. Both highway and public transportation projects yield considerable benefit to the economy in terms of economic stimulus and jobs. Additionally, we will advocate that funds be used to deliver projects at the state and regional level, such as the FHWA Surface Transportation Program (STP), and to deliver projects on a faster schedule than would otherwise occur.
3. Climate Change/ Energy Policy	Advocate for federal action on climate change to assist the Bay Area in meeting its goals	Monitor federal legislative proposals on climate change and energy policy to ensure that any legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions be structured in such a way as to assist the region in achieving our greenhouse gas reduction goals as well as our mobility goals. In order to help the region and the state reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation, advocate that Congress pursue a multi-pronged approach to solving the problem, including the possibility of a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system in which sustainable transportation projects that reduce greenhouse gases would be an eligible beneficiary of the revenue.

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4. FY 2009-10 Appropriations	Maximize the flow of New and Small Starts funds to the region	<p>MTC will continue its advocacy efforts to implement the Regional Transit Expansion Program, Resolution 3434, by advocating for federal New Starts funds for San Francisco Muni's Third Street Light Rail/Central Subway project. MTC will also support the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's efforts to work with the Federal Transit Administration on the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project as it seeks to reenter the New Starts process in FY 2011.</p> <p>With regard to Small Starts funding, MTC will work with our transit partners to ensure that Congress fully funds the Small Starts Program at the authorized level of \$200 million and support AC Transit's efforts to secure Small Starts funding for their San Leandro/International Boulevard/Telegraph Avenue Bus Rapid Transit project.</p>

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