

2013-2017 Policy Advisory Council Biographies

Naomi Armenta – Representing the Disabled Community of Alameda County

“I would like to see regional transportation decisions look to the future while ensuring equity.”

Naomi Armenta has been an advocate for people with disabilities for over 20 years, relying totally on public transportation to navigate her electric wheelchair throughout the Bay Area since 1989. She is the paratransit coordinator for the Alameda County Transportation Commission, and is currently working on a Master’s degree in transportation management at the Mineta Transportation Institute.



Cathleen Baker – Representing the Low-Income Community of San Mateo County



“I’m looking forward to representing the interests of low-income communities, which have traditionally borne a disproportionate share of the negative impacts from various industrial, transportation, and land-use policies – impacts which result in lower life-expectancies and higher rates of asthma, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.”

Cathleen Baker’s qualifications to represent low-income communities stem from her current work as a community health planner, as well as previous research and policy analysis conducted for a community redevelopment agency to respond to a growing population of homeless families. She frequently collaborates with communities to address public health and environmental and social justice issues, and provides technical assistance on health impact assessments and local planning processes to benefit low-income and environmentally impacted communities in San Mateo County.

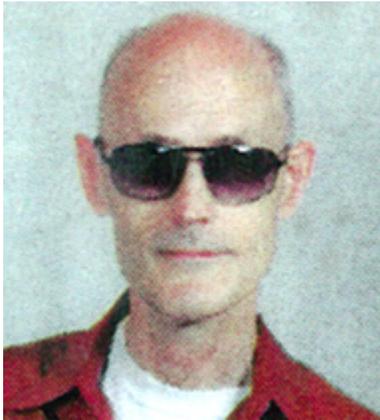
Caroline Bañuelos – Representing the Low-Income Community of Sonoma County



“As a former homeless-service provider, I’m deeply concerned about policies that affect low-income and homeless people. Having a transit system that is both accessible and affordable is essential to their livelihood. I’m very interested in planning a more efficient transit system that will meet the needs of all people in the North Bay. Thus, it is vital to me that homeless and low-income people as well as people of color have a voice in the planning process.”

Caroline Banuelos worked as a homeless service provider for ten years and is a former Planning Commissioner for the City of Santa Rosa. She is co-chair of Cinco de Mayo in Roseland, where she serves as a volunteer and advocate, and is chair of the Coalition for Latino Civic Engagement. Ms. Banuelos has been president of the Sonoma County Latino Democratic Club since 1994. She was also a member of the Board of Community Services, Community Advisory Board for the City of Santa Rosa, and has served on the board of directors of many nonprofits, including Social Advocates for Youth and Community Support Network. Currently, Ms. Banuelos works as the Volunteer Relations Manager for Ceres Community Project.

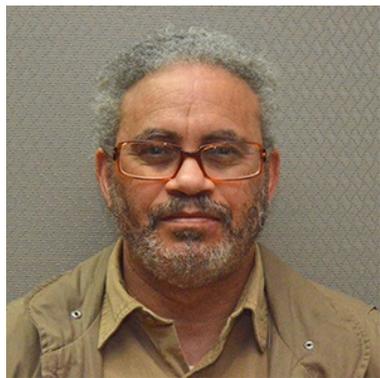
Jim E. Blacksten – Representing the Disabled Community of San Francisco



"I have used public transportation as a blind person for about 40 years. I've traveled locally on all of the public transportation systems within the Bay Area and on other transit systems as well. I am a proficient cane user and guide dog user. Acura, my guide dog, serves in an interactive partnership with me; we travel together throughout the Bay Area and beyond."

Jim Blacksten is an active member of two chapters of the National Federation of the Blind of California – the Bay Area Chapter and the California Association of Guide Dog Users, and its national affiliate. He is also actively involved with Grace Cathedral (which is part of the Diocese of California) in San Francisco, participating as part of the Yoga, Labyrinth, Seniors and Jail community outreach programs. As a volunteer, Mr. Blacksten is involved with and connected to the San Francisco Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He is a long-standing entrepreneur currently working on various innovative business projects, and serves as president/chairman emeritus to Equal Access Plus, Inc., which he founded in 2003. Mr. Blacksten is also working as a professional in the field of real estate in the Bay Area. He is a proficient user of computers and adaptive technology and has spent 30 years in public communication, program coordination and implementation.

Richard L. Burnett – Representing the Minority Community of Solano County



"I am concerned about transportation decisions as well as policies that impact mobility management for Solano County and the Bay Area region."

Richard L. Burnett is a continuing member of MTC's Policy Advisory Council. He is currently a member of Solano County Transit (SolTrans) Public Advisory Committee, serving as Chairperson (2012-2014), and is also a member of Solano Transportation Authority (STA) Paratransit Coordinating Council, serving as Vice Chairman from 2008-2009 and Chairperson (2010-2012). Mr. Burnett was previously a member of the City of Vallejo

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, and served as a member of the City of Vallejo Housing and Redevelopment Commission. He also runs his own blogging service on Twitter and Tumblr (DisasterNewsNow), focusing on emergency preparedness and disaster management issues.

Joanne Busenbark – Representing the Senior Community of Napa County



“The senior community is growing everywhere - Napa County has the seventh-largest senior population in the state of California. I would like to work to get people out of their cars.”

Joanne Busenbark has advocated for transit and social senior services for over 30 years in Napa County. She is currently serving as a member of the Napa Valley Board of Trustees and is a long-time member and former chair of the Napa County Paratransit Coordinating Council. Ms. Busenbark is a former vice mayor for the City of Napa, where she served for nine years as a Councilmember and nine years on the Planning Commission, and has been a part of the Alliance on Aging and various other groups supporting seniors.

Carlos Castellanos – Representing the Low-Income Community of Alameda County

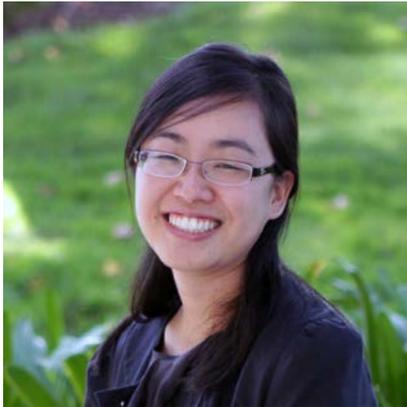


“My professional accomplishments include involvement in both the transportation and economic development aspects of the Fruitvale BART transit village and management and oversight of several housing, commercial and mixed-use developments.”

Carlos Castellanos has worked in the Bay Area for the last 15 years in the fields of planning and housing. The director of real estate development for East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, a community-based organization in Oakland, he has a Master’s degree in city planning and transportation engineering. He is experienced in working with local jurisdictions, labor unions and businesses to promote and achieve local and disadvantaged population hiring goals. He was a member of MTC’s Minority Citizens Advisory Committee, where he chaired the Regional

Transportation Plan 2035 Equity Analysis subcommittee and served on the subsequent Equity Analysis subcommittee that supported inclusion of a snapshot analysis of data gathered on regular intervals between regional transportation plans.

Bena Chang – Economy Representative



“MTC’s policies have a tremendous impact on the transportation infrastructure that employers depend on for moving goods and services and retaining and recruiting a world-class workforce to this region.”

Bena Chang joined the Silicon Valley Leadership Group in 2004, where she is Director of Housing and Transportation and works on a wide variety of housing and transportation policy issues. She has organized educational tours of developments and communities that showcase livable, transit-accessible neighborhoods. In 2008, Ms. Chang played a key role on the campaign to pass Santa Clara County Measure B, which

provides operating funds for the BART to Silicon Valley project. Recently, she worked to attract All Nippon Airways to start a San Jose to Tokyo flight in 2013.

Ms. Chang serves on the boards of Neighborhood Housing Services of Silicon Valley and the Housing Authority of Santa Clara County, on the Citizens Advisory Commission of the Valley Transportation Authority, and is a returning member of MTC’s Policy Advisory Council. She has always been interested in nonprofit work, and her previous experience includes tutoring recent immigrants in passing the U.S. citizenship test in Boston’s Chinatown, participating in a reading skills program for at-risk kindergarteners, and being a DJ for a college radio station. Her previous political experience includes interning at the district office of State Senator Richard K. Rainey.

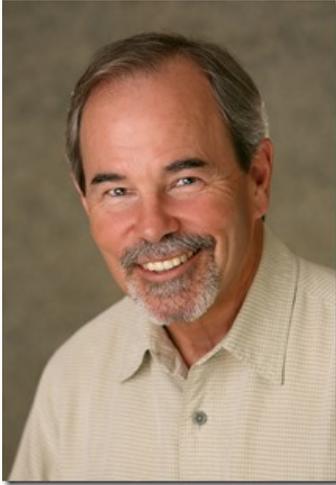
Elizabeth Clary - Representing the Disabled Community of Sonoma County



“A majority of people I support live below the poverty level, many in subsidized housing, and depend on our public transportation infrastructure to travel to work, receive medical care and complete basic errands. I take my responsibility to be an effective voice for the needs of Sonoma County residents with disabilities and other underserved and economically disadvantaged populations very seriously. I understand how government works and am committed to demystifying the processes.”

Elizabeth Clary directs program and business development for a nonprofit organization that facilitates competitive wage employment, senior services and education to over 700 people with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities and daily door-to-door transportation to over 200. She is one of 12 members on the Vendor Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors of North Bay Regional Center, which represents over 1,000 Sonoma County disability support providers. Ms. Clary is vice president of the Board of Directors of the North Bay Housing Coalition and served on the Sonoma County ADA Advisory Group from 2007-2010.

Chris Coursey – Environment Representative of Sonoma County



“I am a strong advocate for increasing and improving transportation options for Bay Area residents. Most of our greenhouse gas emissions come from the tailpipes of our cars. Providing convenient, efficient and practical alternatives results in a healthier community for all.”

Chris Coursey spent 30 years as a daily newspaper journalist, including a decade as the award-winning news columnist for the Santa Rosa Press Democrat. In 2007, he went to work as the community outreach manager for Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit. North Bay voters in 2008 approved a tax measure to fund the SMART train and pathway project, which is now under construction. Mr. Coursey left SMART in 2011 to start his own freelance writing and public relations business.

Wilbert Din – Representing the Minority Community of San Francisco



“I have worked tirelessly to address affordability and service enhancements affecting the most transit-dependent segments of our community. We must make public transportation affordable and viable for low-income families, individuals and seniors who depend on transit the most to get to and from jobs, school, medical appointments, etc., thereby enabling them to be more mobile – to be able to get around without owning a vehicle.”

Wilbert Din is a daily public transit rider (bus, cable car, subway and other surface transportation). He is currently co-chair of Chinatown TRIP (Transportation Research Improvement Project), where he has been active for the past 37 years, addressing transit and related concerns for all communities of color coming into and out of San Francisco’s Chinatown core area. He also served on the board of the San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency (SFMTA) for five years, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) for two terms, Third Street Light Rail Community Advisory Group (CAG), is currently a member of the SFMTA Central Subway Executive Committee and retired as a Staff Representative-Engineering after 38 years with United Airlines’ jet engine department. Mr. Din is also a former member of MTC’s Minority Citizens Advisory Committee.

Veda Florez – Representing the Minority Community of Marin County



“As a first-generation Latino in Marin County, I want to bring awareness to the fact that discrimination in the new millennium still exists. As a member of the Latino Caucus, I keep my finger on what’s happening in Sacramento as well as around the state.”

Veda Florez is a marketing consultant and has produced television and film touching on topics such as the politics surrounding the environment, minority causes and low-income issues. She serves on the Board of Directors of Marin Grassroots, which works to advance social equity and strengthen the voice of under-represented communities, and is an active member of the Marin County Election Advisory Committee. As a volunteer for the Red Cross, Ms. Florez deployed to areas devastated by Hurricane Rita to assist individuals

in need of emergency services. She is a regular user of BART and Golden Gate Transit and enjoys hiking on the many Bay Area trails.

Sandi E. Galvez – Environment Representative



“Where we live, what we breathe, the goods and services we have access to, the jobs we can secure, and the amount of time we spend commuting for our daily existence all impact our quality of life. I deeply care about improving the life chances for all people in the Bay Area.”

Sandi E. Galvez is the executive director of the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII), a collaborative undertaking of the 11 public health departments in the region to eliminate health inequities through a broad spectrum of public health and healthy policy activities. In addition to her experience in public health, she also previously served as a Planning

Commissioner for the City of Oakland, helping guide land use and development, and making policy and zoning recommendations to the City Council.

Bob Glover – Economy Representative

“I’ve worked my entire career as a tireless advocate for the Bay Area business community. As a lifelong resident, I have a deep love and appreciation for the region and a strong desire to improve its sustainability. During my career, I’ve had the opportunity to work with business interests throughout the region and have developed an ability to work with people of all different industries and viewpoints.”



Bob Glover is the executive officer of the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area and, over the ten years he's been employed there, has been a part of various efforts to improve transportation and accessibility for residents. With the continued growth currently forecast for the Bay Area, Mr. Glover would like to ensure that planning for housing and transportation includes all segments of society. As a past member of local city commissions, he's been part of the development process as both a public-sector and private-sector representative, experiencing firsthand the importance of the public process and the need for collaboration in local and regional planning. He is currently serving as an elected board member of the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District and a board member of Homeaid Northern California. He was previously a member of the City of Pleasant Hill Redevelopment Advisory Committee and served as board chair of the City of Martinez Planning Commission.

Jack Gray – Economy Representative



“As a resident of Napa for over 50 years, I have witnessed the tremendous growth that has occurred in both the Bay Area and the County of Napa. I am currently active locally as the president of the Napa County Taxpayers Association. I have been involved with Napa County Transportation Department’s planning efforts concerning roads and the development of Napa County’s Climate Action Plan. I am interested in the development of plans and actions that are justifiable in terms of both benefits and long-term economic costs.”

Jack Gray’s career over 40 years has included engineering and engineering management work in multiple disciplines. In the commercial nuclear power field, he was responsible for reactor controls engineering during construction of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District’s Rancho Seco nuclear plant. As a Department of Defense civil service employee, he has had extensive experience associated with naval nuclear propulsion and environmental work at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, including duties as the shipyard’s head nuclear engineer, the director of radiological control, and the head of the shipyard’s Safety, Health and Environmental office.

Richard Hedges – Representing the Senior Community of San Mateo County



“I want to continue my efforts with MTC to create an efficient, sustainable and stable transportation network. I would like to be part of the stated goal of combining transit districts to create efficiency and improve service. I believe by creating a sustainable system which properly serves and houses our special needs citizens we create a system that serves everyone.”

Richard Hedges has been involved with senior and disabled issues nearly his entire life, since assisting his grandmother, who was sight-impaired. He himself became disabled after an on-the-job accident that ended his career in the building trades. He completed his education,

including a master's degree, and accepted a position with the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. A long-time supporter of Transit-Oriented Development, Mr. Hedges chaired San Mateo Together, a group that included the Building Trades Council, Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Club and the San Mateo Central Labor Council. Through the group's efforts, senior and disabled housing is to be constructed near the Caltrain Station in San Mateo. He is a former field representative in the office of U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos, performing outreach to community groups and labor in San Mateo and San Francisco counties, and is a former member of MTC's Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee and the MTC Advisory Council.

Randi Kinman – Representing the Low-Income Community of Santa Clara County

“We have prioritized grass-roots organizational projects that, through self-help, will allow residents better access to resources while working with various agencies to prioritize funding of capital projects that reduce crime and blight while developing services for the community.”

Randi Kinman, a former planning commissioner for the City of San Jose, has been working as a volunteer in the City of San Jose's Strong Neighborhoods Initiative program for ten years. She represents and works with communities of color and low income, developing residents' leadership skills while providing training and education. Ms. Kinman is a former member of MTC's Minority Citizens Advisory Committee, where she chaired the Equity Analysis subcommittee that supported inclusion of a snapshot analysis of data gathered on regular intervals between regional transportation plans.



Jerry Levine – Economy Representative



“I have a wealth of public transit and affordable housing experience from the nearly 30 years I worked with the City/County of San Francisco. Now that I'm retired, I have the time, knowledge and motivation to continue to serve the Bay Area community.”

Jerry Levine worked 30 years for the City/County of San Francisco and, prior to that, was an international economist in Washington, DC. He was appointed by Mayor Agnos to the Mayor's Citizens' Committee on Community Development, where he served for over 15 years, including two as president of the full committee and several years as the chair of the Affordable Housing Subcommittee. Mr. Levine was also appointed by Mayor Brown to the SF Planning Commission, where he served for two years. As the former legislative analyst and primary Federal Grants Administrator for SFMTA, he has maintained close working relationships with the staff of the Federal Transit Administration.

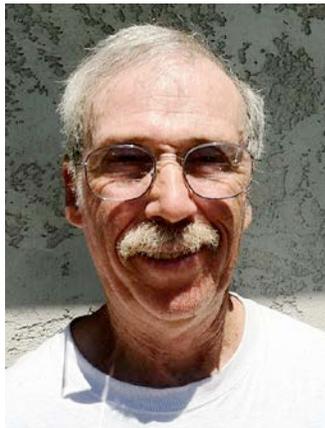
Mark Nicholson – Representing the Minority Community of Contra Costa County



“My interest in representing a community of color is that I’ve shared some of the same experiences and challenges encountered by individuals in these communities. I believe that consideration, significant outreach and inclusion of these communities are vital for creative and successful outcomes in all modes of public transportation projects and policies. I look forward to being a voice for people of color and economically disadvantaged communities throughout the Bay Area.”

Mark Nicholson, a civil engineer, has built and managed an array of construction projects in both the public low-bid and private environments. He was raised in a low-income family/community where his primary mode of transportation was public transit. Mr. Nicholson has lived in the Bay Area for 20 years and is working to help improve its infrastructure and environment. He is a member of the Construction Management Association of America and United States Green Building Council.

Michael Pechner – Representing the Senior Community of Solano County



“I’m involved in senior citizen issues in Solano County and have been very involved in Bay Area transportation issues since the early 1970s. I’m keenly aware of the necessity to get commuters out of their cars and into public transit to help curb greenhouse gasses. I’m also an avid cyclist and a supporter of the SMART bike-pedestrian path.”

Michael Pechner is the owner/operator of Golden West Meteorology and was formerly the on-air staff meteorologist for KCBS Radio. He is a consulting meteorologist/forecaster for Union Pacific Railroad, Stanford University and San Francisco Giants Baseball, among others, and he has been a “Ball Dude” for the Giants since 2000. A former member of MTC’s Advisory Council, Mr. Pechner was an ad hoc member of the 101 Corridor Action Committee that helped preserve the Northwestern Pacific Railroad for transit in the North Bay. He was actively involved with the Napa-Solano Rail Study, is a qualified brakeman for the Niles Canyon Railway, and has been a volunteer fireman with the Cordelia Fire Protection District for more than 20 years.

Timothy J. Reeder – Representing the Disabled Community of Contra Costa County

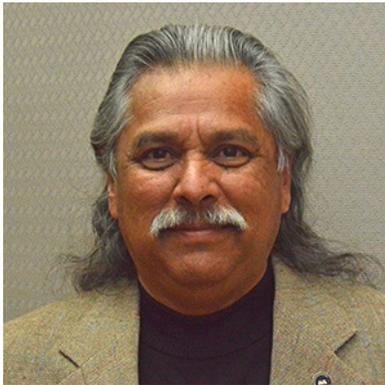


“I’ve lived in the Bay Area all my life. I was disabled after 25 years of working iron and now drive and operate a taxi and town car throughout the Bay Area. I have firsthand knowledge of the needs and strengths of current transportation issues.”

Timothy Reeder is founder and past president of the Danville Taxi Association, where he has owned a taxi and town-car business for ten

years. He’s constantly on the road throughout the nine Bay Area counties, in spite of injuries sustained in 2003 while employed as an ironworker during seismic upgrades to the western portion of the Bay Bridge.

Gerald Rico – Representing the Minority Community of Napa County



“I look forward to helping to bridge the gap for all those in need of a better mass transit system and a better link to jobs and homes in the San Francisco Bay Area.”

Gerald Rico, a retired California Highway Patrol peace officer, has worked closely with the minority communities of the Bay Area during his career, and also served for 25 years in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He is a board member and former president of the Napa County Peace Officers Association and is currently serving as Region 50 president of the International Peace Officers Association. Mr. Rico is also a member of the Napa County Land Trust and is a former member of MTC’s Minority Citizens Advisory Committee.

Linda Jeffery Sailors – Environment Representative

“I served on Dublin’s first city council and participated in development of its first general plan. In creating the first city structure, I learned how important it is to consider environmental issues in planning both building and transportation.”

Linda Jeffery Sailors was a founder of the Livermore Amador Valley Transportation Authority and served as its board president. She was on Dublin’s first city council for ten years, serving as Mayor for two years. She is still active in transportation and environmental issues in the community through membership in the TriValley Conservancy and BART to Livermore committees.



Benjamin Schweng – Environment Representative



“I’ve fixed so many bikes over the years that have been hit by cars or been damaged from road hazards. I’ve had too many friends (who rely on bikes as their primary transportation) have their bikes stolen without recourse. I’d like to help make the system safer and better for them.”

Benjamin Schweng is the proprietor of Cyclepath, a bicycle shop in downtown Hayward that serves a diverse community of riders. He has experience helping people to overcome the many challenges that exist to cycling in the Bay Area. He’s a local cycling advocate and has

volunteered with Safe Routes to Schools, Bike to Work Day and law enforcement-sponsored safety outreach. He is the current chair of the Hayward Downtown Business Improvement Area Advisory Board and a member of the Alameda CTC Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Council. He also has experience in highway construction as a field engineer.

Alan Talansky – Economy Representative

“I bring a unique economic viewpoint as honed by years of considering development, economic and environmental opportunities and addressing implementation and big-picture long-term issues.”

Alan Talansky is a senior vice president at EBL&S Development, where he leads the mixed-use, transit-oriented development practice, mixed-use development and business development. He was responsible for the development and planning activities of Station Park Green, a transit-oriented development in San Mateo. Mr. Talansky serves as chair of the Technical Analysis Program of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and has served on the TAP panels of Santa Rosa and San Carlos as well as serving as chair for San Jose’s Diridon Station transit-oriented development plan. He is currently chair of the Bond Oversight Committee for the San Mateo County Community College District and Public Policy chair of the San Mateo Chamber of Commerce.



Mordechai Winter – Representing the Senior Community of Marin County



“I consider myself an environmentalist, a philanthropist, and a passionate advocate of mass transit in the Bay Area. I also have a passionate interest in bicycle commuting and the Sonoma/Marin Rail Service “SMART” Train.”

Mordechai “Marty” Winter is presently on the boards of the Progress Foundation, the Belvedere Tiburon Library Foundation, the Sonoma County Museum, and the Marin Shakespeare Company. He served on the Belvedere Planning Commission for eight years. Now retired, he has extensive experience in real estate construction, management, leasing and sales, and is currently managing his own portfolio of properties.