



Regional Transit Measure



San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Meeting | August 26, 2025
Jessica Epstein, SamTrans Director of Government and Community Affairs

Agenda

- San Mateo County Transit District (SMCTD) overview
- Regional Measure timeline
- Decision-making factors
- Evolution of the Regional Measure, amendments ongoing
- SMCTD Board Decision: opt in at ½ cent (8 to 1)
- SB 63: proposed expenditure plans
- Consequences if Regional Measure fails

The San Mateo County Transit District

- **Mobility Manager** dedicated to public transportation in San Mateo County
- **Special District** established under state law in 1975; independently governed
- **San Mateo County Transit District Board = SamTrans Board of Directors**
- **Owner/Operator:** SamTrans bus service, Redi-Wheels and RediCoast paratransit services, Ride Plus on-demand neighborhood rideshare, SamTrans shuttles
- **Member Agency:** Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) = Caltrain
- **Contracting Agency:** San Mateo County's signatory to agreements with BART
- **Managing Agency & Shared Services Provider:**
 - JPB/Caltrain
 - San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA)
 - Co-manage SMC US 101 Express Lanes Joint Powers Authority with C/CAG

SamTrans Overview

Service:

- 300+ bus fleet; 10M boardings annually
- Bus service at 97.7% of pre-pandemic ridership
- Other services: Redi-Wheels and RediCoast paratransit, Ride Plus n-demand rideshare, shuttles

Ridership: High need, transit-dependent customer base

- 94% of riders have "low income," 68% have "extremely low income"
- Nearly 79% do not drive or have access to a car
- SamTrans riders: lowest average household income among large Bay Area transit agencies

Fiscal Health:

- Operating costs growing faster than revenues
- Average operating budget deficit for FY27-35 estimated to be \$35M/year
- Capital needs: zero emission bus transition, sea level rise mitigation, bus stop improvements, Dumbarton right-of-way redevelopment, etc.

SMCTD (SamTrans) Board of Directors



Jeff Gee (Chair)
 Southern Judicial Cities
 2011-2018, 2021-present
 SamTrans Representative
 on Caltrain Board



Brooks Esser
 Public Member
 2023-present



Josh Powell
 Public Member
 2017-present



Marie Chuang (Vice Chair)
 Central Judicial Cities
 2023-present



Marina Fraser
 Public Member, Coastside
 2019-present



Peter Ratto
 Transportation Expert
 2015-present



David Canepa
 Board of Supervisors
 2023-present
 SamTrans Representative on
 Caltrain Board

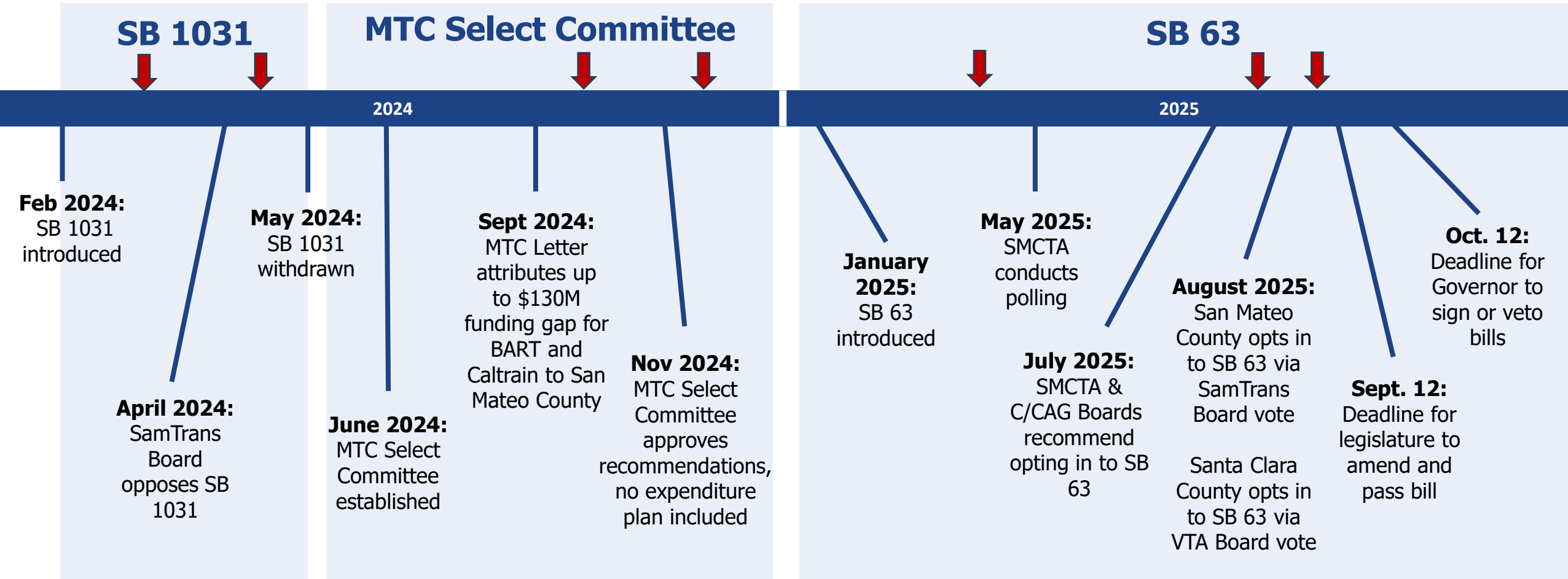


Rico E. Medina
 Northern Judicial Cities
 2021-present
 SamTrans Representative on
 Caltrain and SMCTA Boards



Jackie Speier
 Board of Supervisors
 2025-present

Regional Measure Timeline



↓ Red arrow indicates official correspondence regarding Regional Measure from SMCTD

SB 63 SMCTD Board Priorities

- Full funding of Caltrain's deficit
- Protect SMCTA Measure A
- Support for BART and SF Muni service (SMC ridership/pandemic fare loss) with:
 - Accountability and oversight
 - Protection against disproportionate service cuts
 - Quality-of-life standards for safety and cleanliness at stations/stops
- Fair treatment of SMC in exchange for financial contributions
- Minimize MTC Transit Transformation and administration costs
- Maximize return-to-source funds for public transit in San Mateo County
- Protect SamTrans service from budget deficit

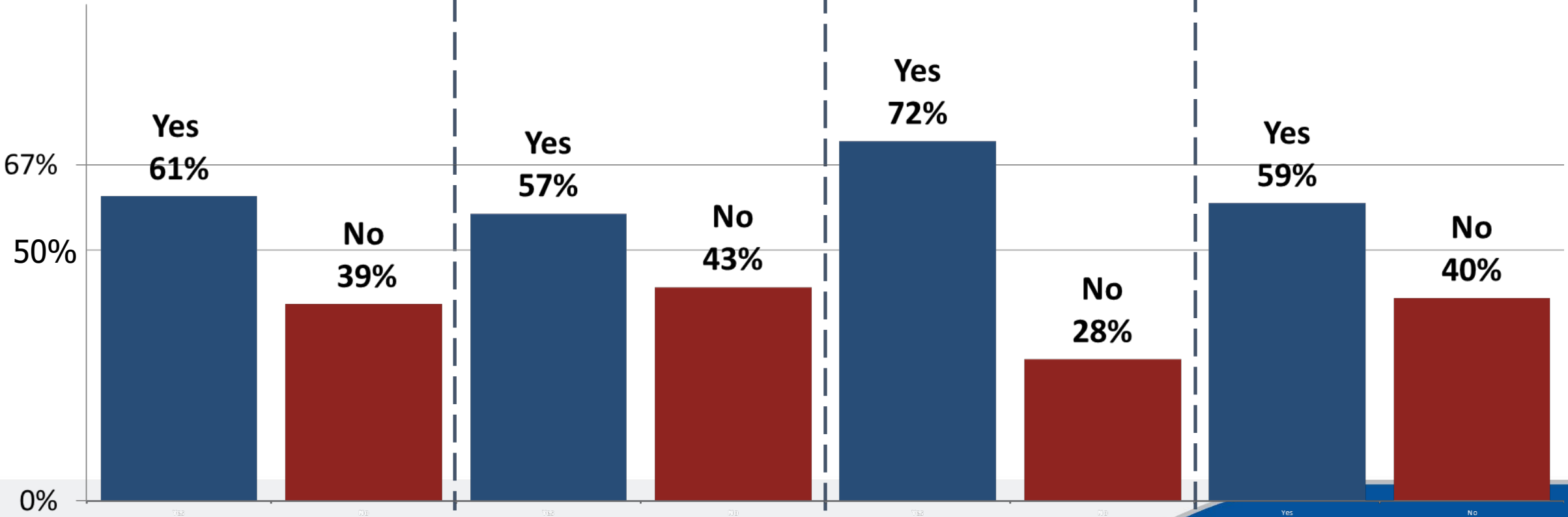
While all measures reach majority support in the County, support for a Measure A extension without increase is the only instance where support reaches two-thirds

Split A: Regional Variable Rate Sales Tax: SMC at 1/4¢

Split B: Regional Variable Rate Sales Tax: SMC at 1/2¢

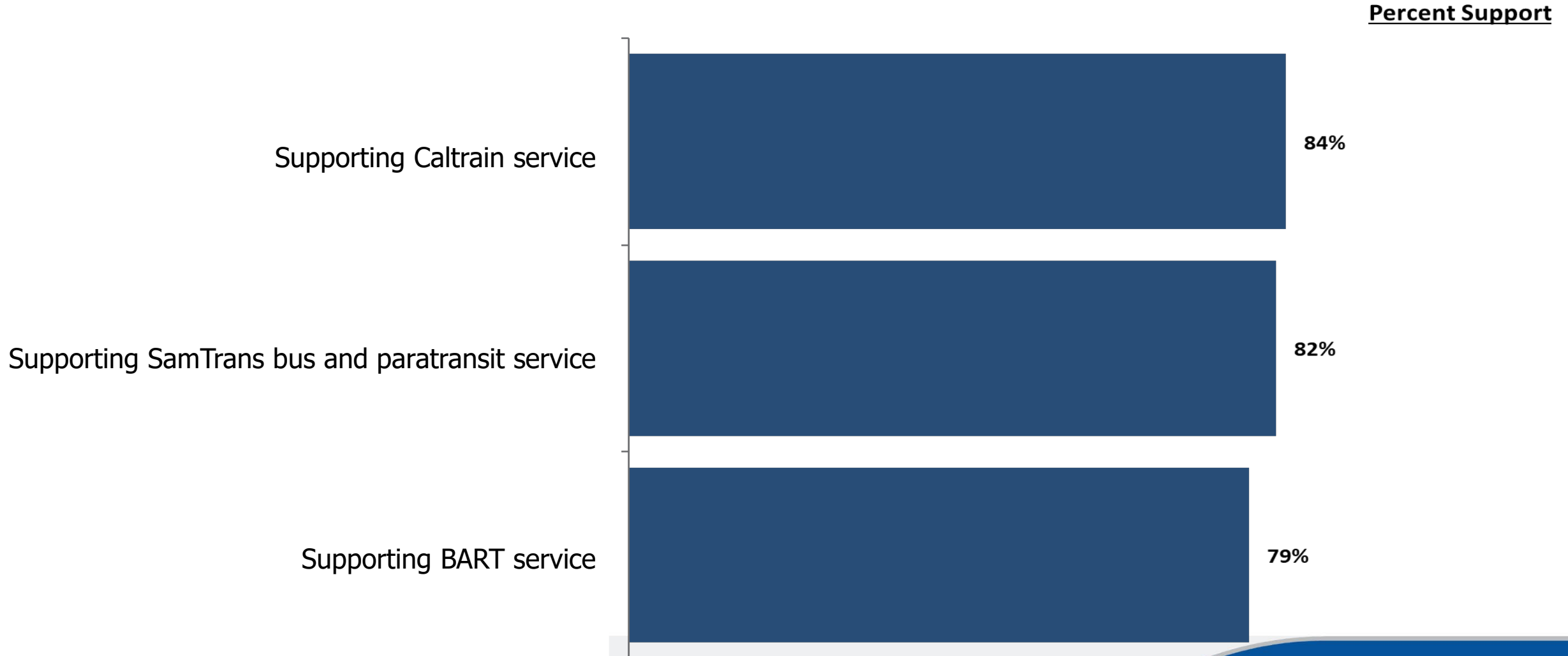
Split C: Local Sales Tax: Extend Measure A with no increase

Split D: Local Sales Tax: Extend Measure A with 1/8¢ increase



Most support tax dollars being spent on three major transit operators in the county

How do you feel about your tax dollars being spent on each of the following transportation priorities in San Mateo County?



What public transit systems do San Mateo County riders use?

After SamTrans, BART has the highest annual boardings in San Mateo County, followed by Caltrain and Muni

- SamTrans – 10M+
- BART – 3M+
- Caltrain – 2.3M
- Muni – 2.2M

SMCTA Polling Data Highlights

- 57% of San Mateo County voters support 1/2 cent regional transportation sales tax measure
- Voters value local and regional public transportation service, connections, coordination including Caltrain, BART, SamTrans, SF Muni, and VTA
- Voters want to improve both local and regional transit connectivity, with a slight preference for regional (86% regional vs. 78% local)
- Voters think it is crucial to have high quality roads (64%) and high-quality public transit service (56%) even if it means raising taxes
- There is little difference in support between a 1/8, 1/4, or 1/2 cent tax increase

Evolution of the Regional Transit Measure

Issue	Prior bill or demands	SB 63 Bill <u>Authors' proposed amendments</u> as of 8/6/25*
SMC participation	Required	Voluntary
SMC Return-to-source \$	\$0 in years 1-9	\$50M+ annually
Caltrain deficit	Not fully funded	Fully funded by all three member agencies
SMC BART contribution	\$70-\$100M	\$32.5M annually
MTC admin and regional "Transit Transformation"	11%	5.25%
Duration	30 years	14 years
Service Standards: BART and SF Muni	None	Equitable and consistent standards across all taxed counties for service frequency, cleanliness, surcharges, security—regardless of contribution size
Accountability: <i>SMCTD advocating stronger</i>	Full MTC Commission	Only taxed counties participate on accountability oversight committee; Equal guaranteed SMC representation; Committee empowered to withhold funding
Financial Oversight: <i>SMCTD advocating stronger</i>	Minimal	3rd party audit and enforcement, compliance required for funding; industry experts to develop plan and enforce long-term financial stability requirements
Transparency	None	BART and Muni committed to regular reporting to SMCTD

*These are minimum commitments; amendments under further negotiation in legislature

Leveraging SB 63 Opt In for Unprecedented Accountability

2007 Agreement between SMCTD and BART (Current)

- No enforcement mechanism other than litigation
- No requirement for BART to provide updates to SamTrans, or communicate service changes
- No specific service level agreements

SamTrans Board Action Aug. 6, 2025

Opt In to SB 63 (8 ayes, 1 no)

Adopt a motion exercising San Mateo County's option to join the SB 63 Regional Transportation Tax Measure with a 1/2 cent tax rate. Also, instruct the Bay Area delegation:

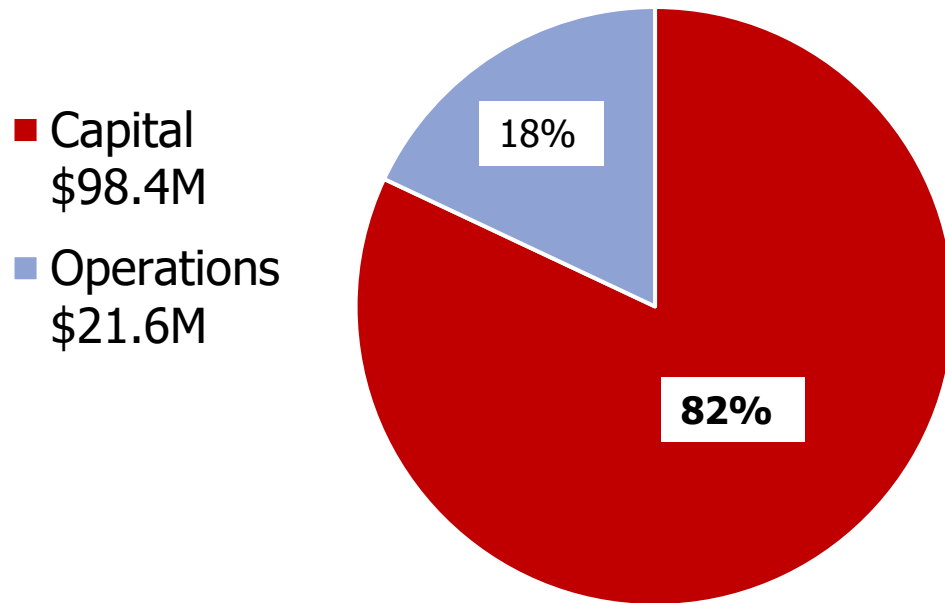
- (a) to advance **SMCTD's proposed alternative to the SB 63 expenditure plan** (with a lower attribution of San Mateo County revenues to SF Muni and a higher "return-to-source" allocation to facilitate San Mateo County's increased contribution to Caltrain), and
- (b) there will be **oversight and accountability measures** to ensure San Mateo County has fair and meaningful representation in oversight and that the County benefits fairly from its attributions to SF Muni and BART, while
- (c) **preserving San Mateo County's ability to participate in the measure.**

Reasons for Opt In Decision

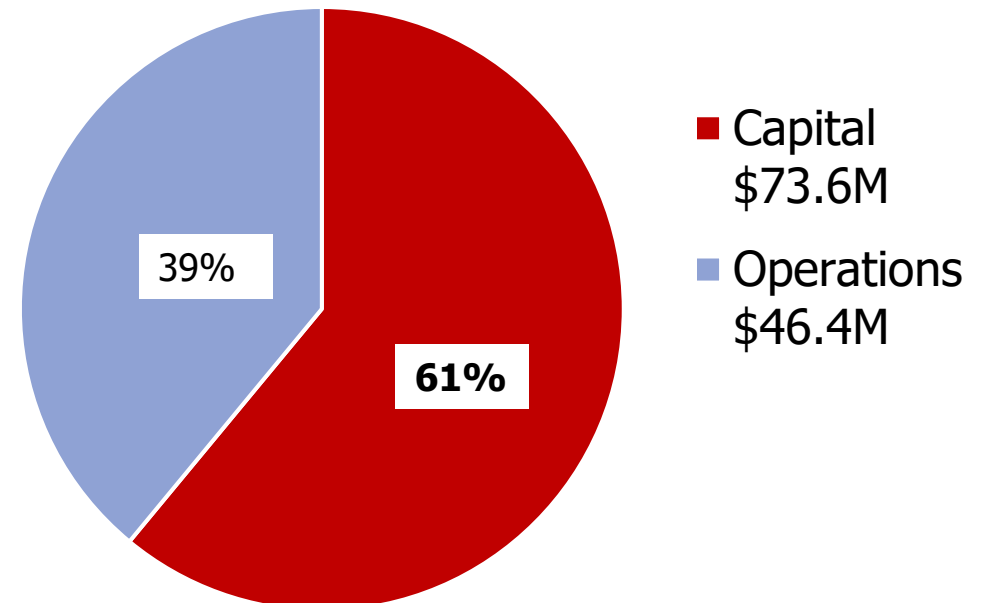
- Majority of voters and key stakeholders support opting in at ½ cent
- Fastest emergency funds for Caltrain operations; protects against service cuts
- Fulfills SMCTD's obligation to Caltrain deficit for duration of measure
- Protects SamTrans service and capital investments from structural deficit
- Supports BART and SF Muni service for millions of riders in San Mateo County
- Guarantees equal treatment of SMC with all other BART and SF Muni service areas; includes transparency, accountability, and oversight with financial consequences
- Protects existing Measure A investments from being cannibalized and diverted to Caltrain operations (e.g. funds for city and county streets and potholes, competitive infrastructure grants)

The Measure A Predicament: How to fund Caltrain's deficit **without** a Regional Measure?

Current Measure A (2004)



Est. New Measure A (2028)



Examples of local capital projects include:

- Formula funding to cities and unincorporated county for pothole repair and repaving
- Highway interchange safety projects like US 101/84
- Grade separations and rail safety improvements
- Protected bikeways and pedestrian facilities

Proposed SB 63 Expenditure Plan Attributions by Agency

Agency	% of SMC 1/2 Cent sales tax	Riders Served in SMC Est. Annual Boardings	FY 31 Dollars**
Caltrain	24.07%	2.3M	\$32.5M*
BART	26.64%	3M+	\$35.97M
SF Muni	5.10%	2.2M	\$6.86M
SMCTD	38.95%	10M	\$52.58M
TOTAL	94.76%	17.5M	\$127.91M
MTC	5.00%		\$6.75M
Administration	0.25%		\$0.34M
Grand TOTAL	100%		\$135M

*Fully funds San Mateo County's Caltrain deficit obligation, per Caltrain JPB Board recommendation.

**HDL Revenue Generation Projection FY31

SB 63 Authors' Proposed Expenditure Plan

All County Attributions by Agency

County	Tax Rate	Revenue Generated \$ M	Admin .25%	MTC Transit Transformation	BART	AC Transit	SF Muni	Caltrain	East Bay Small Bus	SF Bay Ferry	Golden Gate (GGBH TD)	Return to Source County Flex Revenue	% County Share Left
AC	0.5%	\$216	\$0.54	\$10.80	\$139.76	\$45.90			\$5.25	\$3.50		\$10.26	4.75%
CC	0.5%	\$138	\$0.35	\$6.90	\$80.85	\$5.10	\$1.50		\$15.75	\$1.05		\$26.51	19.21%
CCSF	1%	\$252	\$0.32	\$6.30	\$73.43		\$158.51	\$10.00		\$2.45	\$1.00	\$0.00	0.00%
SMC	0.5%	\$135	\$0.34	\$6.75	\$35.97		\$9.99	\$32.50				\$49.45	36.63%
SCC	0.5%	\$313	\$0.78	\$15.65				\$32.50				\$264.07	84.37%
Totals		\$1,054	\$2.32	\$46.40	\$330.00	\$51.00	\$170.00	\$75.00	\$21.00	\$7.00	\$ 1.00	\$350.28	

SB 63 Authors' Proposed Expenditure Plan (simplified)

County	Tax Rate	Revenue Generated \$ M	.25% Admin	5% MTC Transit Transformation	BART	SF Muni	Caltrain	County Return to Source, Flexible Transit Revenue	% County Return to Source
Alameda	0.5%	\$216	\$0.54	\$10.80	\$139.76			\$10.26	4.75%
Contra Costa	0.5%	\$138	\$0.35	\$6.90	\$80.85	\$1.50		\$26.51	19.21%
San Francisco	1%	\$252	\$0.32	\$6.30	\$73.43	\$158.51	\$10.00	\$0.00	0.00%
San Mateo	0.5%	\$135	\$0.34	\$6.75	\$35.97	\$9.99	\$32.50	\$49.45	36.63%
Santa Clara	0.5%	\$313	\$0.78	\$15.65	*		\$32.50	\$264.07	84.37%
Annual Totals (M)		\$1,054	\$2.32	\$46.40	\$330.00	\$170.00	\$75.00	\$350.28	

***Context: VTA committed >\$5 Billion to BART from its local Measure A & Measure B sales taxes to fund BART to Silicon Valley Extension capital costs via separate contract, plus ongoing operational costs for the extension**

Local Consequences if Regional Measure Fails

- Caltrain deficit not addressed, risks severe service cuts. No access to State emergency loan.
- Loss of \$45M+ annually to San Mateo County in new, locally controlled, return-to-source public transit funds
- Risks SamTrans service cuts and mission-critical capital investments
- Measure A: increased burden to fund transit operations with renewal; less funding for cities and unincorporated county
- Less funding for BART and SF Muni service, stations, and connections in San Mateo County; negative impact on riders, the economy, and local traffic congestion
- No leverage over BART and SF Muni service decisions in San Mateo County, including guaranteed, system-wide service and quality of life standards
- Less influence for San Mateo County over regional public transit network



Thank you



Contact: Jessica Epstein | epsteinj@samtrans.com