



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 5
File #: 23-303

Board Meeting Date: 5/9/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor David J. Canepa, District 5
Subject: Resolution Supporting Equity Initiatives by Public Transportation Agencies Serving San Mateo County Residents

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution supporting equity initiatives by public transportation agencies serving San Mateo County residents.

BACKGROUND:

While the County does not directly provide public transportation services, it routinely engages with other public entities-like SamTrans, BART, and CalTrain-that provide such services to County residents.

These services are valuable to many County residents. They are of special importance to vulnerable communities within the County, including communities of color, low-income residents, people with disabilities, youth, seniors, and people experiencing homelessness. This is especially true when rising gas prices may cause increased reliance on alternative transportation options.

These entities have a number of affordability and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives currently underway, including the following:

- The **Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)** has implemented an “Equity Platform” to guide its work in reversing access disparities and dismantling systemic exclusion. Part of this work involves identifying certain census tracts as “Equity Priority Communities,” meaning they have a significant concentration of underserved populations, including low-income households and people of color. Equity Priority Communities are among the most prominent factors in deciding where to direct public transit investment. MTC also coordinates discounts for low-income riders across the Clipper Card system.
- The **Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District** has extensive equity and Diversity, Equity, and

Inclusion (DEI) initiatives focused on procurement and hiring. BART also offers discounts for youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income adults.

- The **San Mateo County Transportation District (SamTrans)** recently published its “Reimagine SamTrans” Final Report, which places equity at the center of SamTrans’ operations and planning. Using this new framework, SamTrans reaffirmed its commitment to equitably target services at three particularly vulnerable communities: (1) zero car households; (2) lower-income households; and (3) non-white households. SamTrans offers discounts for youth, seniors, people with disabilities, select veterans, and low-income adults.
- **CalTrain** has also developed a “Equity Policy Framework” to guide the system’s actions to address systemic inequity and racism. It also offers discounted fares for seniors, youths, people with disabilities, and Medicare enrollees.

DISCUSSION:

The County is dedicated to advancing equity and inclusion. Incorporating an equity lens into public service planning is particularly important when providing services that impact members of vulnerable communities. This is true for public transit, which is critical to communities of color, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, and low-income households within our County.

While the County does not provide public transit services to County residents, it is important to recognize the work that local public transit agencies undertake to incorporate equity into transportation planning, prioritize low-income and marginalized communities, and dismantle processes that reinforce systemic exclusion.

Passing this Resolution will help formalize the County’s commitment to equity in transportation planning and signal the County’s willingness to work with other entities toward that common goal.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.