



May 19, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Support for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Grant Application for the USDOT's National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) Competitive Grant Program; 680 Forward Program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Bay Area Council, representing over 300 major employers across the San Francisco Bay Area, I'm writing to express our strong support of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) application to the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) competitive grant program for its initiative entitled 680 Forward.

The 680 Forward program promotes a holistic approach to improving mobility and creating more sustainable, shared modes of transportation. 680 Forward will fund a suite of multimodal projects along Interstate 680 – a backbone corridor in the San Francisco Bay Area that bisects all of Contra Costa County – to modernize the corridor for the future. The corridor experiences significant delays and inconsistent flow of traffic in both directions, and these delays are expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Expanding and widening I-680 is an expensive option, and building additional rail service in the corridor would cost billions of dollars. Neither option is financially feasible nor would adequately address these congestion problems.

To address these challenges, the ten projects within this program are designed to work in harmony to improve safety, smooth traffic, and increase access for all users of the transportation system. Specific projects include new, zero-emission express bus service supported by shared mobility hubs and improved highway shoulders for part-time transit lanes; bicycle and pedestrian overcrossings to create a more cohesive bicycle network near large employment centers; coordinated adaptive ramp metering to reduce congestion; technology to encourage behavior change towards shared transit modes; completion of an express lane network; and new mobility options for the elderly and disabled. Key elements of 680 Forward complement each other by strengthening regional multimodal connections and reducing barriers to alternative mode use.

680 Forward is the only project in the Bay Area competing for Mega Grant (large) funding that has been endorsed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the metropolitan planning organization for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. With over \$549 million in state, other federal,

and regional funding already committed, CCTA is seeking approximately \$395 million in National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) Grant funding.

The 680 Forward program aligns with USDOT's efforts to advance infrastructure projects of regional significance with economic, mobility, and safety benefits, and is poised to reduce travel time and environmental emissions, while enhancing the region's economic vitality. Importantly, 680 Forward will prepare the I-680 corridor for the future with innovative solutions that will foster multimodal transportation options, reduce vehicle-miles traveled, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and increase equity and access for historically disadvantaged and underserved communities.

Bay Area Council strongly supports CCTA's 680 Forward program for Mega Grant funding. Thank you for your consideration of this request, which will transform this critical corridor and advance the region's commitment to transit innovation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Loper", written in a cursive style.

Emily Loper
Policy Director