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May 16, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing this letter to express the Contra Costa Economic Partnership's strong support for 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. These delays are expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Expanding and widening I-680 is a prohibitively expensive option, while building additional rail service in the corridor would cost billions of dollars.

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.

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.

The Contra Costa Economic Partnership 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.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alex R. Mehran", written over a diagonal line.

Alex Mehran
Chair of the Board