



May 2, 2024

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

RE: Support for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Grant Application for the USDOT's Competitive Multimodal Project Discretionary Program for Innovate 680 program

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Bay Area Council, representing over 325 of the Bay Area's largest employers, I am writing to express support for Contra Costa Transportation Authority's (CCTA) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) program for the Innovate 680 program. This program includes a package of improvements that enhance mobility and create more sustainable, shared modes of transportation along the Interstate 680 (I-680) - a backbone corridor in the Bay Area that is critical to connecting the broader region.

I-680 is an important corridor in the Bay Area, connecting Silicon Valley and the surrounding South Bay with the Tri-Valley area and eastern Contra Costa County. It is part of the federal National Primary Freight Network, and connects with the I-580 corridor, the most heavily used truck route in the Bay Area. However, I-680 corridor experiences significant delays – it is one of the top ten congested corridors in the Bay Area - and inconsistent flow of traffic in both directions. 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, Innovate 680 was developed to fund a suite of multimodal projects along I-680 to relieve congestion and modernize the corridor for the future. In particular, three projects within Innovate 680 have the greatest potential to provide immediate public benefit. These projects are designed to work in harmony together to improve safety, smooth traffic, and increase access for all users of the transportation system. Specific projects include three shared mobility hubs that support first and last mile connections to zero emission hydrogen transit, coordinated adaptive ramp metering to reduce congestion on I-680, and completion of an express lane network. These key elements of Innovate 680 complement each other by strengthening regional multimodal connections and reducing barriers to alternative mode use.

The Innovate 680 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, Innovate 680 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.

For these reasons, the Bay Area Council supports CCTA's Innovate 680 program application for MPDG funding. We thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact Emily Loper, Vice President of Public Policy, at eloper@bayareacouncil.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Wunderman".

Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council