

**SAMTRANS**  
**CORRESPONDENCE**  
**as of 12-9-2024**



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December 6, 2024

Tracy Scramaglia  
Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer  
City of Belmont Public Works  
1 Twin Pines Lane, Suite 385  
Belmont, CA 94002

**Re: FY 2025-2026 California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) Application – City of Belmont Transportation Master Plan**

Dear Ms. Scramaglia,

I am writing on behalf of the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) to express our support for the City of Belmont's Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant (STPG) Application to fund the development of the agency's Transportation Master Plan (TMP). This initiative aligns with Belmont and SamTrans' shared goals to create a connected, accessible, and environmentally friendly transportation network that meets the needs of the community.

The TMP outlines the city's transportation investments over the short, medium, and long term, advancing local, regional, and state priorities such as climate change mitigation, mode shift, VMT reductions, and equity. It also supports several widely endorsed local plans and policies. The planning process includes extensive outreach, both virtual and in-person, with strategies to engage underserved communities, ensuring diverse voices are represented in the TMP.

In partnership with the City of Belmont, SamTrans is initiating the Central El Camino Real (ECR) Transit and Multimodal Plan, which is a 7.5-mile corridor study along El Camino Real (CA State Route 82) through San Mateo, Belmont, and San Carlos. The Plan builds on the 2022 SamTrans El Camino Real Bus Speed and Reliability Study which identified potential changes to achieve faster and more reliable bus service on El Camino Real. The Plan will result in comprehensive conceptual level designs, developed in partnership with cities and local communities.


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Scramaglia  
December 6, 2024  
Page 2 of 2

SamTrans looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Belmont to complete the Plan and incorporate the recommendations to improve transit performance and design a safer and more people-friendly corridor.

SamTrans believes that the STPG Grant funding will allow the City of Belmont to facilitate a much-needed program in the area. We respectfully urge you to consider their application for funding. If you have any questions, please contact Government and Community Affairs Director Jessica Epstein at [epsteinj@samtrans.com](mailto:epsteinj@samtrans.com).

Sincerely,



April Chan  
General Manager/CEO

Cc: San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors



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GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

December 6, 2024

Commissioner Alfredo Pedroza  
Chair, Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
375 Beale Street, Suite 800  
San Francisco, CA, 94105

**Subject: SamTrans Budget Update**

Dear Chair Pedroza,

We appreciate the effort MTC has put into developing a potential funding ballot measure to sustain the Bay Area's transit systems. Although we have reservations detailed in our letter dated November 6, 2024, to Commissioner Spering, we are committed to continuing the conversation with the goal of creating a fair and practical solution for the transit systems in the Bay Area.

Throughout this process, MTC designated SamTrans as an agency with a balanced budget with no operational fiscal cliffs. When MTC first assessed the fiscal health of various transit agencies, SamTrans adhered to MTC's request and only provided operational revenues and costs from our financial statements. We did not provide other financial information that would have increased the burden to our operating budgets, including items such as debt service or capital program contributions that draw from operating funds.

We now understand some agencies included these items that we specifically excluded. This lack of a common denominator puts SamTrans at a significant disadvantage when calculating SamTrans' financial position within a regional measure. It also makes our prior written request for an independent Third-Party Reviewer of each agency's budget deficits and proposed fair-share calculations even more imperative.

Although at this time SamTrans is in a stronger operating financial position than many agencies due to our bus ridership recovery rates and healthy sales tax revenues, we are similarly struggling with the ability to fund capital infrastructure needs. Additionally, we find ourselves at an inflection point where expenses are outpacing growth in revenues. Several Fiscal Year 2025 operations contracts and

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Pedroza  
December 6, 2024  
Page 2 of 2

recently ratified collective bargaining agreements with union employees exceeded budgetary projections adopted in June 2023. Furthermore, the cost of necessary capital investments continues to rise. While our revised budget for FY 2025 is balanced, this was achieved by using reserves. Maintaining financial stability through responsible fiscal management is a top priority for SamTrans.

SamTrans recently launched the development process for the FY 2026 and FY 2027 two-year budgets. And we aim to present the updated 10-Year Financial Outlook to our Board this spring before the budget approval process. Based on preliminary figures, we believe the upcoming budgets will likely have structural deficits that rely on reserves to cover the gaps.

As we move forward with a regional measure proposal, we urge MTC to ensure agencies are calculating budget deficit projections consistently. A regional measure that fairly and sustainably addresses funding gaps experienced by Caltrain and SamTrans has a better chance to earn the support of San Mateo County voters.

Please contact Government and Community Affairs Director Jessica Epstein at [epsteinj@samtrans.com](mailto:epsteinj@samtrans.com) if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,



April Chan  
General Manager/CEO

Cc: San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors  
San Mateo County Transit District State Legislative Delegation  
David Canepa, Commissioner, Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
Gina Papan, Commissioner, Metropolitan Transportation Commission