

Resolution in Support of Seamless Transit Principles

WHEREAS, despite the critical importance of high quality public transportation in supporting a healthy, environmentally sustainable, equitable, and accessible San Francisco Bay Area, public transportation is only used in 12% of all commute trips in the region, compared to 75% of commute trips made by car; further, the quality of and usage of public transit in the Bay Area has declined in recent years, with transit trips per capita declining by 10% and bus speeds declining by 9% between 2001 and 2016. The COVID-19 pandemic has decimated ridership further, such that without major changes in how transit is operated and funded, transit is at risk of sustained declining use; and

WHEREAS, a contributing factor to public transit's low levels of use the Bay Area and Santa Clara County is inconvenient and costly for many types of trips, requiring riders to: use multiple transit systems operated independently with little coordination; pay multiple separate fares; experience unpredictable transfers; and navigate different wayfinding systems and brand identities of at least 27 different agencies; many of these challenges fall disproportionately upon low-income and transit-dependent people; and

WHEREAS Regions with high-ridership, resilient, public transportation systems are, by contrast, characterized by highly integrated networks of quality local and regional transit services that make traveling without a private automobile convenient and easy for all types of trips, featuring aligned routes and schedules, seamless integration of trains and buses, coordinated transfers, high quality transit hubs, common branding and customer information, and other common regional customer experience standards;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Clara County Democratic Party endorses the Seamless Transit Principles as articulated by Seamless Bay Area at <https://www.seamlessbayarea.org/seamless-transit-principles> and listed in Attachment A and agrees to be publicly listed as a supporting organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Santa Clara County Democratic Party urge the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Board to endorse the Seamless Transit Principles through a Board Resolution, affirming commitment to working collaboratively with State agencies, VTA, municipalities and other public agencies develop a highly integrated regional transportation system that provides convenient, seamless, and affordable transit for customers.

Submitted by Emily Ann Ramos

Attachment A: Seamless Transit Principles

#1: Run all Bay Area transit as one easy-to-use system

Public transit must work as one seamless, connected, and convenient network across the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Getting around on transit should be as fast and easy as driving a car. Coordinated bus, rail, and ferry routes and schedules should encourage effortless transfers. Consistent and clear customer information, branding, and maps should make using transit simple and dignified.

#2: Put riders first

Riders should feel comfortable when using transit and be treated like valued customers. Public transit agencies must do more to listen to riders and continuously improve service. They must prioritize riders' needs above all else, and overcome all operational, political, and bureaucratic barriers to provide an excellent and seamless customer experience.

#3: Make public transit equitable and accessible to all

People of all income levels, ages, abilities, genders, and backgrounds should have access to world-class public transit. People who are the most reliant on transit are best served by a universal, inclusive, regionally integrated, connected system that is used by all. People with limited means to pay for transit should be provided with discounts.

#4: Align transit prices to be simple, fair, and affordable

Transit should provide good value for money. Fares across the region's 27 public transit agencies must be aligned into a consistent, fair, and affordable system that encourages using transit for all types of trips and doesn't punish riders for transferring. Passes offered should work across all transit agencies, and be made available to individuals, employers, and schools to promote transit use.

#5: Connect effortlessly with other sustainable transportation

A person's journey does not end when they get off a bus or exit a station. Excellent pedestrian, bicycle, and other pollution-free transportation options should seamlessly connect public transit to communities and destinations, supporting door-to-door trips that don't require a car.

#6: Plan communities and transportation together

High quality public transit should be at the heart of communities across the Bay Area. Transportation should be closely aligned with our region's land use, promoting a connected network of transit-oriented, walkable communities that expands access to affordable

housing and job opportunities, while reducing car travel and greenhouse gas emissions.

#7: Prioritize reforms to create a seamless network

A regionally integrated, world-class transit system won't happen on its own -- it will take leadership, unprecedented levels of cooperation, and changes to existing local, regional, and state policies. The cities, counties, public transit agencies, regional authorities, business leaders, advocacy groups and elected representatives of the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California "megaregion" must prioritize the broad public interest and urgently work together collaboratively to advance critical reforms. Our future depends on it!