

# Memorandum

To: EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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From: STATE AGENCIES' EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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Subject: Committee Member Reports

## Summary:

Members of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) may provide written or verbal reports highlighting Committee or related activities they are participating in. These reports may be outside of the Committee's scope and are intended as informational updates.

## Background:

### Member Reports

#### *Keri Akemi-Hernandez*

#### 1. "Know Your Rights" Resources

This refers to providing people—especially those who might be vulnerable—with information about their legal rights, particularly in situations involving law enforcement or immigration officers. These resources help ensure that:

- Individuals understand what they are and aren't required to say or do if questioned by authorities.
- They know how to protect themselves legally, like their right to remain silent or to ask for a lawyer.
- Materials are often tailored to immigrant communities, Indigenous peoples, farm workers, and others who may face targeted enforcement.

#### 2. Caution with Phones and Laptops When Traveling

This is a safety/privacy reminder aimed at people who:

- Travel by airplane, especially internationally or near borders.
- Use devices (phones/laptops) that have social media apps or communications that could be misinterpreted.
- Could be subject to extra scrutiny from airport security or customs officers, who in some cases may ask to search devices.

This part of the message suggests:

- Being mindful of what’s stored on personal devices.
- Knowing that border agents may request access to phones or laptops.
- Understanding that people have some rights to refuse, though refusal can sometimes lead to delays or further questioning.

### **3. What to Do If Approached by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement)**

This focuses on preparing citizens—and especially immigrants or mixed-status families—for a possible encounter with ICE. Resources should explain:

- What ICE agents can and cannot do (e.g., they generally need a warrant signed by a judge to enter a private home).
- What individuals should and should not say or do (e.g., don’t run, stay calm, ask to see a warrant).
- How to document the encounter and get legal help.

### **4. Why This is Needed**

The request is based on:

- Escalating tensions in the community, possibly due to immigration enforcement, profiling, or targeted surveillance.
- Specific concern for farm workers and Indigenous communities, who are often:
  - Less likely to have access to legal resources.
  - At higher risk of exploitation or abuse.
  - More vulnerable to being targeted due to language barriers, lack of documentation, or systemic discrimination.

*Howard Wong*

## **SAN FRANCISCO/ BAY AREA TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

# **SF MUNI SERVICE CUTS---BIG DEFICITS AHEAD**

By Howard Wong, AIA, Member Interagency EAC

## **DEFICIT BECOMES REALITY---WITH FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY LOOMING**

SFMTA’s (SF Municipal Transportation Agency) Board of Directors voted (4-3) to proceed with summer service cuts, opting not to tap \$7 million in reserve funds (10% of operating budget). At two previous board meetings, the Board had rejected service cuts of \$50 million

for Fiscal Year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), directing staff to probe operating efficiencies and alternative funding. With Muni Funding Working Group input, Muni staff had whittled down service cuts to \$15 million and then to \$7 million. With a huge \$320 million budget deficit looming in Fiscal Year 2026-27, the Board's dilemma was either to start limited route changes now versus "kicking the [inevitable] can down the road", that is, sustaining service while pursuing nebulous funding/ ballot measures.

### **COUNTER-ARGUMENT TO SERVICE CUTS: LOSS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE**

Three members of the Board of Supervisors and transit advocacy groups had endorsed zero service cuts, better unifying the electorate for a run at local/ regional/ state funding. Service cuts would decrease ridership, customer satisfaction and revenue---triggering further cuts and harming seniors/ low-income people. Temporary service cuts tend to become permanent. However, under federally-mandated Title 6, Muni staff's analysis of summer service cuts showed no disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged communities.

### **SUMMER SERVICE CUTS: LIMITED BUT IMPACTFUL TO NEIGHBORHOODS**

Summer service cuts center on the transit-rich Market Street corridor, where bus lines overlap. From western SF, the 5 Fulton, 9 San Bruno and 31 Balboa buses would turn around and go back outbound once they reach Market Street on weekdays---requiring transfers onto other Market Street lines. The 6 Haight-Parnassus and 21 Hayes buses would be combined into one line, turning around at Hyde & Market/ Civic Center Station. For neighborhoods most affected, especially for seniors/ disabled/ low- income, their testimonies highlighted significant hardships in daily life---hard to see at the macro-planning level.

### **FISCAL CLIFF IS DEEP: NEW MINDSET IS NEEDED**

In short, post-pandemic state and federal funds run out in July 2026. Work-at-home and new commute patterns dampen ridership numbers and fare revenue, especially for BART and Caltrain (falling a daunting 60% and 70% respectively). Muni ridership has steadily improved, but 25% below previous highs. Without new sustainable funding, Muni could cut bus lines, shorten routes, frequency, evening hours and maintenance---as much as 50% cuts. By no means is the SF Bay Area unique: Chicago transit faces a \$700 million deficit---equivalent to 40% service cuts, elimination of half its bus lines, ending of weekend buses and more. As in transit-rich countries around the world, public transit needs a national funding plan---if for no other reason than to compete economically and technologically.

### **POLITICOS AND TRANSIT ADVOCATES PRESS FOR NEW FUNDING**

THREE MAJOR TRANSIT FUNDING EFFORTS IN THE WORKS. First, years in development across nine Bay Area counties, a MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) Regional Transportation Funding Measure is advancing with SB 63,

authorizing a 10-15 year sales tax measure on the November 2026 ballot. Specifically: a ½-cent sales tax in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Counties---with up to 1-cent in San Francisco. San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties can opt into the measure by July 31, 2025. Partially solves Muni’s structural deficits---not generating as much funds as a 30-year tax measure over nine counties---but best measure possible, given regional political constraints. More on the political nuances to this ballot measure in the future.

**Second**, State funding is being sought by State Legislators, Board of Supervisors, and advocacy groups. Historically, California provides less funding to its largest transit agencies than the rest of the country--- Muni/ BART less funding than other California cities/ regions. Legislators are proposing \$2 billion in State budget funds over the next 2 years to address statewide transit operating deficits and capital projects.

Particularly timely, given that California will be hosting the future Super Bowl, World Cup and Olympics--- when cities/ states/ countries transform transit for practical/ political reasons.

**Third**, San Francisco Mayor Lurie is considering a 2026 transit ballot measure, starting a ballot fundraising committee. Lurie envisions a functional and robust transportation system, necessary to “fix” downtown and bolster foot traffic. The planned ballot measure will include reforms for Muni accountability and reliability. San Francisco has elections in June and November of 2026.

**Other Funding**: Like in Pennsylvania, California can flex federal highway funds (billions of dollars) to transit operations---requiring political dexterity, given regional self-interests. Nationally too, California can argue for its fair share of transportation funds---as a donor state that gives more in federal taxes than it gets back (return to source). Also, aside from new funding, big savings in operating costs can come from regional transit integration/ coordination---amongst 27 Bay Area transit agencies and 151 transit-related planners/ providers. By example, three Bay Area state universities are considering merging administrative services to cut costs. Finally, best transit practices, from around the world, demonstrate the social/ economic benefits of sustained state/ provincial/ federal operating subsidies---think New York City, Toronto, Switzerland....

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<p><b>PARKING Meter/ Permit Fees may go up</b>, per a SFMTA proposal to generate an additional \$18 million annually--- including a one-time meter rate increase of 25 cents/ hour, a base rate increase from 50 cents to a dollar, more parking officers, and new technology.</p>	<p><b>‘DAYLIGHTING’ parking tickets delayed</b>---when parking within 20 feet of an approaching crosswalk (Assembly Bill-413). SFMTA planned \$40 citations (even for unmarked spaces)--- but will instead accelerate the red painting of affected spaces, while issuing only warnings.</p>	<p><b>RIDE the 39-Coit Bus/ transit</b> to boost ridership and revenue numbers. Muni is one the country’s most robust transit systems---to explore culture, history, and neighborhoods. BART, Caltrain and Ferry connect unique regional destinations and events.</p>
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**TRANSIT TRAVEL TIDBIT: Tuk Tuks** are beloved three-wheeled motorized rickshaws, common in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and gaining popularity elsewhere. Named for its engine sound, Tuk Tuks are cultural symbols, offering affordable/ efficient door-to-door service and jobs/ income for many families. Maneuvering through congested Southeast Asian streets, Tuk Tuks are sympatico with small stores, vendors, carts, and hawkers---a subculture of low-income peoples eking out a living. Bangkok alone has 9,000 registered Tuk Tuks and is adding more---demonstrating that one key to economic vitality is affordable/ diverse/ low- techy transit, while providing a lot of jobs and unique character to streets.



**TRANSIT TRAVEL TIDBIT: Two-Wheels** are better than four when cruising packed Southeast Asian cities. And parking is easy---motorbikes line up on sidewalks. Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) has a population of 9 million people and 8 million motorbikes---the dominant transportation mode, often carrying two (three if child) passengers and goods. Streaming with motorbikes and other transport, Southeast Asia's vibrant streets are key economic drivers. Even in Bangkok, with its extensive subway/ skytrain system and 46% transit modal share, motorbikes are ubiquitous. While expanding public transit/ bicycling/ walking, planning for motorbikes (greener models) could cut larger cars' footprints on the environment.



**TRANSIT TRAVEL TIDBIT: High-Speed Rail Station (Luang Prabang, Laos)** is an architectural gem for a small city of 55,000 people---though Luang Prabang is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with traditional Lao architecture, European colonial buildings, and 30 Buddhist temples. Of greater significance is that the station is part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Called the New Silk Road, BRI is China’s massive infrastructure program, which aims to connect the globe with road/ maritime projects. The Luang Prabang Station is part of the Boten-Vientiane Railway, linking Laos, Thailand, and China. Albeit political, China has a trade/ economic vision, which is real. The U.S.A. needs a transportation vision too---to compete globally.



**TRANSIT TRAVEL TIDBIT: New Siem Reap- Angkor International Airport (Cambodia)** is a cooperation between Cambodia and China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Under a build-operate-transfer agreement, a Chinese company received a concession to finance, design, construct, own and operate the facility for 55 years, Currently, the airport is underutilized, as tourism waned post-pandemic. As the gateway to the treasured Angkor Wat Temples, Siem Reap does warrant a great airport, striving for 7.5 million international tourists by 2035. Notable is the airport’s architecture: simple, elegant, well-detailed and spatially powerful. For project delivery, build-operate-transfer agreements have benefits-- potentially lowering cost/ schedule overruns.

**PAST SF TRANSPORTATION REPORTS: Howard Wong**

Transit 2025: Tipping Point (January 2025): <https://semaphore.thd.org/transportation-report-2/>

Transit Updates: Positives (October 2024): <https://semaphore.thd.org/transportation-report/>

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