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PUBLIC COMMENT SFCTA FULL BOARD 10-25-22 AGENDA ITEM 3

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FROM:

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TO:

Clerk of the Transportation Authority

San Francisco County Transportation Authority

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**PUBLIC COMMENT OPPOSING SFCTA FULL BOARD October 25, 2022, AGENDA ITEM 3:
[“Final Approval] Approve the Transportation Authority’s Project Priorities for the Senate Bill I
Local Partnership Competitive Grant Program”]**

This Public Comment OPPOSES SFCTA Agenda Item 3, in particular the proposed “SFPW: Transbay Howard Streetscape Improvements.” [“Project”] Please distribute this to all members of the SFCTA Board in advance of its October 25, 2022 meeting.

The Project proposes an increment of \$12,875,000 to eliminate traffic lanes and parking on a busy downtown arterial and to construct protected bicycle lanes on Howard Street from the Embarcadero to 4th Street. The Project has already been partially implemented as “Vision Zero Quickbuild Projects” for which no accounting is provided, and states it will also extend from “4th to 11th Street, nearly two miles.” The total is not just the \$12,875,000 today, but is **\$66,175,175** for this *one* bicycle Project! (Packet Attachment 1, SB1 “Priorities”).

Just today one of the large tech offices on Howard Street, “Snapchat,” shuttered its operations with more than 1,200 layoffs. (<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/snapchat-closes-san-francisco-office-17530730.php>) In short, if any office workers rode bicycles to offices on Howard Street, they haven’t done so since the new age of remote work. Thus, obstructing vehicles and commerce on Howard Street for this \$66,175,175 bicycle path is one more stupendous waste of public money, much like the dismal billion-dollar (including bonds) bicycle path on a raised sidewalk called “Better Market Street.”

The alleged CEQA review is claimed to be part of the “Transit Center EIR.” It is not, and the Project will clearly have significant impacts on transportation, congestion, parking, air quality, VMT, energy consumption, and public safety, affecting emergency vehicles, and evacuation in emergencies, with no proposed mitigation measures or alternatives in the “Transit Center EIR” for those impacts. This Project cannot be lawfully approved without environmental review and mitigation under CEQA.

The SFCTA “Citizen Advisory Committee” did not hear the Howard Street Item-- one more reason to NOT approve it today-- because “this item was not ready for presentation to the CAC in September because staff needed to gather additional project details.” (Packet [Staff Memo, 10/11/22, at page 4].)

Meanwhile, SFCTA’s Citizen Advisory Committee will consider on October 26, 2022 another \$941,758 in bicycle funding, including “Bike to Wherever Day Sponsorship 2023” \$41,758; “Bicycle Safety Education and Outreach \$110,000 (both of which are grants *without* competitive bidding to the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition); “Beale Street Bikeway” \$640,000, and “BART Hearing Loop,” a total expenditure of \$941,758 in Prop. K sales tax funds. The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition has fewer than 10,000 members, less than one percent of San Francisco travelers. According to MTA’s data, the bicycle mode share (preferred travel mode) is less than three percent of San Franciscans. (Corey, Canapary & Galanis Research: San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Travel Decisions Survey 2021, p. 5.)

The public’s approval of Proposition K and SB 1 did not contemplate huge expenditures for bicycle projects. This public money should be spent on improving travel for the 97% of the public that does not have the leisure time and money for bicycling.

Because it does not comply with CEQA, please do *not* approve the \$12,875,000 in SB 1 public money today (SFCTA FULL BOARD, AGENDA ITEM 3 [AND SFCTA CAC AGENDA ITEM 6]) for the “Howard Streetscape Plan,” and do not approve the \$941,758 in more bicycle funding under Proposition K (SFCTA CAC AGENDA ITEM 7).

Mary Miles