Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments

Community Advisory Council

April 3, 2026 **Agenda Item 6.a.**

Council Leadership Elections

Subject:

The Council will select its chair and vice chair pursuant to the process adopted at the March 6, 2026 meeting.

Background:

At the March 6, 2026 meeting, the Council approved the election process outlined below. Nominee statements received as of March 26 are included below, and further nominations may be made until voting begins for each leadership position. A chair is required to preside over Council meetings under standard rules of order.

Proposed Leadership Election Process

Nomination Period

- The nomination period for the current term ending in December 2027 opened at the March 6, 2026 Council meeting and remains open until the leadership votes at the April 3, 2026 meeting.
- Any councilmember may nominate themselves or any other councilmember for the position of chair, vice chair, or both.

Candidate Materials

- Candidates may submit a written candidate statement.
- To be distributed to the full Council, written statements must be provided to staff at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed, to meet Brown Act posting requirements.

Candidate Presentations

- Each candidate will have up to two minutes to deliver an oral statement prior to the vote for each leadership position.

Voting Procedures

- Each Councilmember must state their vote or abstention during a roll-call vote.
- A winning candidate must receive 50% plus one of the eligible members present.
    - For example, with 26 current members, 14 votes constitute the winning threshold (assuming all eligible members are present).
- If more than two candidates are running and no candidate reaches the required threshold, the Council will conduct additional voting rounds, removing the candidate with the fewest votes in each round until a candidate achieves the required majority.

Candidate Statements:

Below please find statements from candidates for leadership positions, with Chair candidates followed by Vice Chair candidates, listed in order of submission:

Carina Lieu (Chair)

I am excited about the opportunity to be nominated as Chair of the MTC Community Advisory Council at this pivotal moment. As a newly formed body, I bring my experience as Chair from the previous term to provide continuity while helping establish a strong foundation for our work ahead.

In the last term, I brought structure and facilitation to the Council. I understand the recommendations we developed and have a clear sense of what worked well and where we can improve. I see an opportunity to carry that knowledge forward to shape a collaborative, effective, and action-oriented Council.

I am committed to setting this Council up for success through coalition-building, listening, and a focus on making our work impactful and meaningful. I recognize the many ambitions members bring and aim to channel that energy into collective progress.

Importantly, our bylaws establish two terms within this four-year period. I am committed not only to launching this Council successfully, but also to preparing the next wave of leaders to take the helm in approximately 18 months.

Tim Sbranti (Chair)

I would be interested in serving as Chair of the Council. I have extensive experience facilitating public meetings through my 6 years as Mayor of Dublin, 2 years as Board President for the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District, and my service over the years as Chair of several non-profit organizations. I have always managed timely and efficient meetings by effectively implementing Roberts Rules of Order in a flexible and accessible manner while still ensuring an orderly and inclusive meeting which maximizes participation from all members. I would be willing to put in the extra effort to coordinate closely with the Council, staff, the MTC Commission, and the ABAG Executive Board to develop clear and focused agendas, make fair and balanced appointments, and effectively communicating the Council's feedback. I will always work to keep our discussions focused and pride myself on being prepared, impartial, and collaborative. To the extent feasible, my other goal is to try and build consensus on items before the Council. However, even when there are disagreements, I still want to ensure that divergent opinions are treated with respect while working to create meeting environments where all members feel heard.

Chuck Cantrell (Chair & Vice Chair)

R. Shay Miles (Vice Chair):

I am seeking to serve as Vice Chair of MTC ABAG Community Advisory Council because I believe this new Council has an important opportunity to build a strong foundation from the beginning. One that is grounded in respect, inclusion, accountability, and meaningful community voice. I would bring a collaborative spirit, a deep commitment to equity and accessibility, and the time commitment needed to help the Council do its work well. I also bring an aptitude for organizational excellence, thoughtful preparation, and helping groups stay focused, constructive, and aligned around a shared purpose.

My perspective is rooted in both lived experience and civic leadership. As a representative from Solano County, I understand the importance of making sure communities that are too often on the margins of regional conversations are fully heard and reflected in the Council's work.

If elected, I would be honored to support the Chair, help build a strong and productive leadership culture, and contribute to a Council that is credible, community-centered, and effective.

Warren Cushman (Vice Chair):

Greetings, fellow Council members! This statement is my announcement that I am interested in running for vice chair of this body! I have quite a bit of experience serving on advisory bodies like this including the transit transformation action plan's customer advisory committee! I was elected vice chair of that body! I also currently serve as the vice chair of my community planning council, the Eden area municipal advisory council! I do have extensive knowledge in transportation and housing policy and am committed to change in both issue areas! Of course, disability access is a passion of mine as is equity. I possess skills in consensus building and listening. I believe that I would serve the community well as a facilitator. Please consider choosing me as your leader as we embark on the next chapter of this body! Thank you Warren Cushman

Sonja Shephard (Vice Chair)

I would like to express my interest in being Vice Chair of the MTC/ABAG Community Advisory Council. I have chaired HUD Housing meetings as President, and I have chaired Police Civilian Review Board meetings as Vice Chair. I was also just confirmed as Chair of my town's Community Advisory Commission.

In addition to having firsthand experience, I was also provided training in my 2024 Board and Commissions Learning Institute (BCLI) on other helpful tools when chairing a meeting. For example, how to Amend a Motion to modify, improve or correct the originally proposed Motion. Using techniques like this one ensures that we provide the best outcome for the communities that we serve. My life experiences have also shown me how to facilitate a meeting when topics are sensitive and emotions are passionate. My style is to encourage all opinions and ask that everyone show respect for opinions that differ from theirs. I humbly offer my experience

knowing that there are many good candidates. So, whomever we select, I know that we are off to a rewarding and productive year. I look forward to working with everyone.

Diana Benitez (Vice Chair)

Thank you for the nomination. I'm honored to be considered. My name is Diana Benitez, and I'm a Senior Planner at Canal Alliance in Marin County and a Contra Costa County resident. I have over a decade of experience working at the intersection of environmental justice, land use, housing, and transportation. I previously served more than two years on the Policy Advisory Council, where I developed a strong understanding of MTC-ABAG processes and how regional decisions move forward.

If selected as Vice Chair, I would focus on three things:

- Supporting effective and well-paced meetings with clear, accessible agendas and materials that help all members engage confidently, regardless of background.
- Ensuring every member feels heard and supported, especially given the range of lived and professional experience represented on this council.
- Strengthening the feedback loop between this body and Commission and Board leadership so our recommendations are clearly communicated, tracked, and responded to in a timely way.

I see the Vice Chair role as one of stewardship, supporting strong facilitation, and ensuring this council operates with clarity, equity, and accountability.