

Dear Members of the City Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in joining the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

I was elected to the City Council in Saratoga in November 2022, and would bring a fresh perspective as a young advocate representing the various cities in Santa Clara County at the MTC. I'm born and raised in the Bay Area, and have a variety of experiences that would make me an excellent candidate:

1. Traffic Safety Commission, Saratoga: For five years I served on Saratoga's Traffic Safety Commission, where I worked with residents, city staff, engineers and various public agencies to address resident concerns related to traffic safety. I have worked on over 100 locations across the city and worked through staff to engage with neighboring cities on shared conflict areas. I led the Commission twice.
2. Transbay Joint Powers Authority, Vice Chair of CAC: For five years I served on the CAC for the Transbay Joint Powers Authority as the Caltrain representative, and presented to the board numerous times. I served as Vice Chair for the last three years after declining to run for the Chair position. As part of my work at the TJPA, I saw the opening, closing and reopening of the Salesforce Transit Center firsthand, and worked closely with TJPA staff to prioritize and seek funding for the TJPA's ambitious DTX goals over the coming decade. I also gained a regional perspective on the interoperability of various agencies.
3. Lifelong Public Transit Advocate: I might only be 36, but I'm a lifelong fan of public transit. I've lived in the South Bay, East Bay and San Francisco, and have traveled to 30+ countries while taking public transit wherever I go to best understand the experience in various countries. High quality public transit can help save our planet and make our lives better. How many hours have we all lost sitting in traffic on 101 or 237? Safety in transit is also a personal value of mine: I am a former member of the Flight Safety Foundation.

I'd be humbled and honored if appointed to the MTC, and thank you for considering my candidacy.

Best,
Belal Aftab
Councilmember, City of Saratoga