



December 6, 2022

Rebecca Saltzman  
President  
Bay Area Rapid Transit Board  
P.O. Box 12688  
Oakland, CA 94604

Dear President Saltzman,

On behalf of a coalition of member companies facilitated by the Bay Area Council, we are writing to express our collective concerns with safety, cleanliness, and reliability in BART trains, stations, and surrounding public areas and to offer our support to provide feedback, recommendations, and resources as needed. As you know, public safety is the core of a functioning and productive society and vital for attracting and retaining a competitive workforce. As we continue to bring employees back into the office or consider plans to do so, it is critical that we address public safety first and foremost and do so with a sense of urgency before more serious incidents take place or become the norm for our region's public transit systems.

Crime is on the rise in the Bay Area and is of particular concern on our public transportation systems. Data from September's BART Chief of Police Monthly Report shows a 53% increase in violent crime and nearly 40% increase in property crime from this time last year. Additionally, the Bay Area Council Employer Return to Work surveys, a bi-monthly poll of the Bay Area's largest employers on their current work plans and future plans to bring employees back to the office, consistently show an overwhelming number of respondents concerned about transit safety: In the most recent survey from September of this year, two thirds of respondents stated that they are somewhat or very concerned for themselves and their employees' personal safety when riding public transit. Finally, according to the 2022 Bay Area Council Poll, an annual survey that collects data from both the business community and voters, nearly 40% of respondents cited personal safety as the reason that they do not take public transit in the Bay Area more frequently.

The Bay Area Council's 300+ member companies employ a large swath of the region's workforce, many of whom have multiple options to commute to and from work. Through our direct line of communication with these employees, we know that safety, cleanliness, and reliability are the main reasons why they choose to drive to work instead of use public transportation or decide not to commute to work at all. We know that BART is taking steps to address these issues, for example with the development of the Progressive Policing Bureau, upcoming fare gate improvements and other station hardening efforts, and strengthening recruitment initiatives. However, we believe that more needs to be done and are confident that working in partnership and furthering investments in improvements to create a safer and more comfortable rider experience will attract riders back to BART and help financially sustain the system moving forward.



The Bay Area Council is proud to have been the leading voice that called for the creation of the BART system more than 50 years ago, and since then has led several regional funding campaigns to raise billions of dollars to modernize, expand, and maintain BART's infrastructure over the years. We profoundly want BART to succeed and thrive and are eager to work in partnership with you to return riders to the system, both for the benefit of our employees and for the vitality of the region at large, but can only effectively do so if improvements are made.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working together in unison to continue to make the Bay Area safer for all who live, work, and visit. Should there be any questions, concerns, or need for more information, please contact Laura Hill, Bay Area Council Policy Director, at [Lhill@bayareacouncil.org](mailto:Lhill@bayareacouncil.org).

We the undersigned urge the BART Board and staff to work closely with the Bay Area Council to make changes that will restore ridership and create a world class system.

Sincerely,

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Bay Area Council

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Managing Director  
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Alaska Airlines

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