

September 22, 2022

Dear Bay Area Rapid Transit Board:

We are writing to urge you to keep the BART mask requirement in place, in large part because much of your rationale for reinstating the mask requirement in July persists.

Levels of COVID-19 transmission levels in every county in the Bay Area remain high or substantial. And we are entering the fall and winter months when each year we unfortunately have seen a spike in COVID cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

Despite suggestions that the pandemic is over, more than 400 people are still dying from COVID every day in the United States.

BART's courageous choice to maintain mask requirements reflects the system's role as a lifeline for sustained transportation, social engagement and economic sustainability. Maintaining BART as a safer space against COVID transmission protects essential workers like BART employees who have borne the brunt of illness and death during this pandemic. Importantly, it keeps public transit accessible for disabled/high risk people and seniors, who continue to be disproportionately impacted, as they travel to essential medical appointments, work, or to see loved ones.

As a mass transit entity, BART has chosen to be a mitigator and not an incubator of COVID transmission. We thank you for that and urge you to continue that role now, and during potential upcoming surges.

We also write to oppose passing the authority to institute a mask requirement to the BART General Manager, in large part because the implications of such decision making are widespread and far reaching beyond the system's operations. We believe such significant oversight should remain with the BART Board of Directors who are directly accountable to their constituents and the transit riders.

We have so appreciated your fervent support of mask requirements, access for disabled people and seniors, community care, and public health, and we are calling on you to continue to do so, as COVID is far from over.

Respectfully submitted,

Organizations

1. Roots Community Health Center, Noha Aboelata, MD, CEO
2. Umoja Health, Kim Rhoads, MD, Founder
3. Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD), Ingrid Floyd
4. Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness, Monique LeSarre, Executive Director
5. Center Of Hope Community Church, Pastor Brondon Reems
6. Hip Hop For Change, Eric Sasz
7. Umoja South San Mateo County, Kala Mehta, Co-Lead
8. La Familia, Aaron Ortiz, CEO

9. East Bay Getting to Zero, ZJ Eskman, Communications and Partnerships Manager
10. Centro Legal de la Raza, Monique Berlanga, Executive Director
11. True Vine Ministries, Donna White Carey, MD, MS, Executive Pastor
12. Live Free USA, Michael McBride, Lead Pastor
13. African American Wellness Project, Michael A Lenoir MD, President
14. Rise Up Solutions, Roxanna Bautista, Lead
15. Homies Empowerment, Dr. César A. Cruz, Founder
16. Glad Tidings International COGIC, Marion Harris, Director Health Ministries
17. Bay Area Community Health Advisory Council, Lisa M. Tealer, Executive Director

Individuals

1. Eva Pardo, MPH, Research Data Analyst
2. Samuel L. Washington III, MD MAS, Physician, UCSF
3. Sabrina Azucena Rivas, B.S. Biological Sciences
4. Sidney Tchanyoum, Student
5. Joanna L Sizemore, BS, Health Sciences/ Public Health Student, SL 2050 / CSUEB
6. Teja Pattabhiraman, Policy Analyst
7. Marsha J. Treadwell, PhD
8. Gary Blodger, Outreach Specialist, Umoja
9. Valerie Kao
10. Shantanu Srivatsa, MscGH, Medical Student, UNC MD/PhD
11. Nehanda Imara, Community Advocate
12. Emma Hunt, BS Public Health, Community Health Worker
13. Jamie C. Harris, Ed.M., Oakland Resident
14. Chinomnso Okorie, MS, Research Data Analyst, Umoja Health
15. Destinee Lanns
16. Diane Lewis, Consultant
17. Jay Pugao, Director/ Caretaker of Media and Communications
18. Rev. Dr. Todd Benson, Pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Oakland
18. Sophy S. Wong, MD, Medical Director
19. Kevin Epps, Community worker
20. Zhonnet Z Harper, Breast Cancer Navigator
21. Beth Bourdeau Duke, PhD
22. Yadiel Plascencia, MPH, Project Manager
23. Tavi Baker, MPH, Associate Director, Center for Community Engagement & Manager, Ethnic Health Institute
24. Lauren Hamilton, Educator
25. Zachary Smith, Umoja Health
26. Albert Burluson, Director of Operations, Umoja Health
27. Cassandra Robertson, RN MSN, Retired
28. George Woods, MD, LFAPA, Chief Scientific Officer, Crestwood Behavioral Health
29. Edwin D. Charlebois, MPH, PhD, Professor of Medicine
30. Meg Bowerman , RN,MSN, Retired, St.Columba

31. Andreas Mitchell, MD, MPP, Primary Care Physician, Roots Community Health Center
32. Aisha Mays, MD, Director of Adolescent and School Based Services, Roots Community Health Center
33. Jennifer Saeturn, BS
34. Yolanda Thomas, MA
35. Godfrey Wilson, MPA, HEALTHCARE, UCSF
36. Annemarie Charlesworth, MA
37. Roxanna Bautista, Consultant, Rise Up Solutions
38. Dannielle McBride, MD, Physician
39. Clyde W. Oden, Jr., OD, MPH, M.Div, Retired AME Pastor
40. Danika Mortis, Sr. Program Coordinator
41. Patty McCormac, BSN, RN, PHN, Senior Director, Programs, National Kidney Foundation
42. Mary Alvarez-Nutting, FNP-C, Senior Clinical Services Manager, Roots Community Health Center
43. Steven John Thompson, Oakland Resident
44. L. Brad Lambert, Outreach Coordinator, WORLD (Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases)
45. Yvonne Woods, MA
46. Salamah Locks MS, APRN-BC, PHN, Gerontologist
47. Nichol Randall, MPH, Research Financial Analyst
48. Elisa C Cecaci, Wellness Resource & Outreach Coordinator, East Oakland Collective
49. Thin Han
50. Pantea Javidan JD, PhD Faculty, Stanford School of Medicine, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Human Rights in Trauma Mental Health Lab