

Date: September 24, 2025
W.I.: 1111
Referred by: Commission

ABSTRACT

MTC Resolution No. 4724

Resolution of Appreciation for **Shimon Israel** on the occasion of his retirement from Metropolitan Transportation Commission after 23 years of service.

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RE: Resolution of Appreciation for **Shimon Israel**

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Resolution No. 4724

WHEREAS, Shimon Israel is retiring from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in October after 23 years of dedicated and joyful practice in the mysterious arts of travel modeling, forecasting, survey construction and administration, and other forms of data analysis; and

WHEREAS, Shimon is a nationally recognized expert in U.S. Census data and served from 2012 to 2020 on the Board of Census Transportation Planning Products, where he helped improve data resources used by planners across the country; and

WHEREAS, after earning a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz and embarking on a short stint as a substitute teacher in his native Oakland, Shimon broke into the data analysis business in the Chicago area, where he collected and tested wastewater samples for a lab hired by a group of private sector clients doing business with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District; and

WHEREAS, Shimon eventually returned to the Bay Area to perform similar work for a global environmental consulting and engineering services firm engaged in the cleanup and transfer to local governments of decommissioned U.S. Navy properties, including Naval Air Station Alameda, the Hunter's Point and Mare Island Naval Shipyards, and the former Point Molate Naval Fuel Depot; and

WHEREAS, Shimon after several years abandoned the base-cleanup field, decamping temporarily to the Pacific Northwest to pursue a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning at Portland State University, where through coursework and internships he received his first exposure to travel modeling; and

WHEREAS, once bitten by the modeling bug, Shimon shifted his focus to a different kind of sampling and began laying the foundation for a multivariate career in regional survey programs and survey methodology; and

WHEREAS, upon joining the MTC staff in 2002, Shimon promptly established himself as a steadfast member of the forecasting, modeling and surveys squad and a linchpin of the planning section; and

WHEREAS, alone among current staff members, Shimon contributed to three generations of the Bay Area's travel model — BAYCAST, Travel Model One and Travel Model Two — leveraging his deep institutional knowledge and methodological rigor to maintain MTC's reputation as the gold standard in regional travel modeling; and

WHEREAS, in his role as manager of the Bay Area PUMA Working Group, Shimon coordinated Census Bureau data from the region's 62 Public Use Microdata Areas, allowing researchers, partner agencies and interested members of the public to access Public Use Microdata samples and to develop custom tabulations; and

WHEREAS, Shimon's commitment to public service and his untiring work ethic, generous spirit and affable affect earned the enduring trust of colleagues, consultants, contract administrators and partner agency counterparts alike, and helped him develop particularly strong and productive relationships with staff from Bay Area transit agencies who supported onboard surveys critical for Title VI equity compliance; and

WHEREAS, Shimon to date is the only MTC staff member ever to have managed the transit origin-and-destination survey on behalf of the region's more than two dozen transit agencies; and

WHEREAS, Shimon provided regular reminders about the importance of margins of error and sample sizes when making that critical choice between one-year and five-year ACS datasets; and

WHEREAS, combining his quest for accuracy with his delight in wordplay and penchant for puns, Shimon lifted the spirits of co-workers current, past and no doubt future, as when he

invoked the name of the eminent statistician Thomas Earl Petty to remind colleagues puzzling over a survey methodology challenge that, “the weighting is the hardest part;” and

WHEREAS, Shimon’s inquisitive nature and inherent skepticism appear to have given him a higher-than-median resistance to groupthink and the hoary shibboleths of public agency work, though this hypothesis must be supported by additional data, which in turn must be analyzed, scrutinized and synthesized; and

WHEREAS, whether strengthened by his apparent immunity to received wisdom or simply seizing an opportunity to buy low, Shimon plans next to take his data-crunching talents to the field of public health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the staff and commissioners of MTC express their deep disappointment that Shimon is moving on from MTC but nonetheless thank him for his years of dedicated service to the task of better understanding how the people of the Bay Area live, work and travel; celebrate his open and adventurous spirit and his cheerful acceptance of others’ foibles as the beneficial byproducts of his free-range Oakland youth; appreciate his willingness to share and explain data with anyone who might ask; aim to emulate his commitment to reply to all incoming emails within 24 hours; and extend to Shimon, his wife Nancy and their daughter Hazel best wishes for many more years of inquiries and insights, rewarding travels near and far, and serendipitous discoveries of all kinds.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Sue Noack, Chair

The above resolution was entered into by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission at a regular meeting of the Commission held in San Francisco, California, and at other remote locations, on September 24, 2025.