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San Francisco Chronicle

Alameda County Backers Regroup After Failure Of Transit Tax Measure; [FINAL Edition]

[Laura Hamburg](#), *Chronicle Staff Writer*. [San Francisco Chronicle](#). San Francisco, Calif.: Jun 4, 1998. pg. A.21

Abstract (Summary)

Although Alameda County voters left skid marks Tuesday on a ballot measure to extend the county's transportation tax, the plan isn't road kill.

"It just means we have to try and try and try again until we get it right," said **AC Transit** Director Clinton Killian of Oakland. "We'll fine-tune Measure B and put it back on the ballot."

Supporters such as bicyclists, BART and **AC Transit** officials, and many southern Alameda County civic leaders championed the list, which ranged from fixing potholes in Oakland to extending BART five miles in Fremont.

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"It just means we have to try and try and try again until we get it right," said **AC Transit** Director Clinton Killian of Oakland. "We'll fine-tune Measure B and put it back on the ballot."

The half-cent sales tax extension to fund more than \$1 billion in transportation projects through the year 2017 failed to garner the two-thirds majority it needed to pass.

Measure B fell far short of the two-thirds approval it needed. It received 58.5 percent of the countywide vote and didn't get two-thirds approval in any city in the county.

Backers believe the lack of a single big-ticket draw -- like the 1986 Measure B plan to widen the traffic-choked Nimitz Freeway -- may have contributed to its defeat. The latest plan included a list of 26 highway and transit projects that failed to rally voters.

Supporters such as bicyclists, BART and **AC Transit** officials, and many southern Alameda County civic leaders championed the list, which ranged from fixing potholes in Oakland to extending BART five miles in Fremont.

In the wake of the measure's defeat, they are gearing up to woo voters with a revamped plan -- one that likely will be on the ballot in the year 2000. Their hope is to make a last-ditch effort to extend the tax before it expires in 2002.

"If we lose again, we'd have to cut (**AC Transit**) bus service by 15 percent," said Killian. "We'd be out of business. We're talking about a four-day-a-week service."

The questions facing Measure B backers are what projects might have to be whacked and which ones would be beefed up to make it more palatable to the voters the next time around.

"It will be tough," said Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, who backed Measure B. "I don't know how we are going to get a measure that everyone is going to agree on. Maybe our transportation infrastructure just needs to shut down before two-thirds of the voters decide it's worth it."

It took nearly two years to come up with the projects list that was turned down Tuesday, said Christine Monsen, director of the Alameda County Transportation Authority, which is charged with administering the money generated by the sales tax.

"Unfortunately, there was a block of environmentalists who were very aggressive in their opposition," she said.

Environmentalists targeted the \$165 million BART extension to Warm Springs. They also objected to the millions of dollars slated to widen highways in the southern part of the county.

"Residents want transportation options, not just wider freeways," said Mike Daley with the Sierra Club. "And we are looking for things that will get people to Silicon Valley like express buses. They are not some heavy, sexy heavy rail like BART, but they will get people in and out of Santa Clara County."

But Haggerty nixed a BART-less Measure B proposal. "I wouldn't support it without the Warm Springs extension, and neither would the leaders in South County," he said.

Opponents say they are willing to work on an alternative regional plan.

"We want to come together and hammer something out," said Ted Nordhaus, an environmental consultant who worked to defeat Measure B. "Let's negotiate a measure that will pass."

"But if they come back with something like what was just defeated, it's going to go down again."

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