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For Immediate Release

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Suit Filed Against City's "Google" Bus Project

Broad coalition of community, labor, and environmentalists files suit against unfair and illegal program

San Francisco, CA: The Coalition for Fair, Legal and Environmental Transit, SEIU Local 1021, tenant activist Sara Shortt and labor leader Alysabeth Alexander filed suit today in San Francisco Superior Court seeking that the City's "Commuter Shuttle Pilot Program" be set aside. The suit alleges that the project is in violation of the California Vehicle Code which prohibits any but common carriers (public buses, school buses) to pull into red zones, designated as bus stops. The suit also alleges that City abused its discretion and violated the California Environmental Quality Act by exempting the Shuttle Project from environmental review.

"We know that these buses are having devastating impacts on our neighborhoods, driving up rents and evictions of long-time San Francisco residents," said Sara Shortt. "We've protested in the streets and taken our plea to City Hall to no avail. We hope to finally receive justice in a court of law."

Alysabeth Alexander is Vice President of Politics for SEIU Local 1021. "Time and time again, we have seen a double standard from Mayor Ed Lee. He has one set of rules for the tech industry and another set of rules for the rest of us. In the last 3 years, the City issued over 13,000 citations to vehicles in red zones, but only 45 were issued to the tech buses."

"When tech buses use residential streets and those with bike lanes, it makes our roadways more dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. When tech buses are loading in a red zone, it wreaks havoc on traffic and delays MUNI," said Cynthia Crews of the Coalition for Fair, Legal and Environmental Transit. "And it is illegal!"

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San Francisco has been in the midst of hyper-gentrification that has been driven in part by the rise of the tech industry. Evictions and rents are up dramatically, with the fair market rent now over \$3000. Multiple studies have shown that housing costs have increased at a greater rate within walking distance of shuttle stops.

Among the defendants named are the City and County of San Francisco, Mayor Ed Lee, the Board of Supervisors, the SFMTA, and a number of companies believed to be providing shuttle services including Google, Apple, and Genentech.

The prohibition against private shuttles and vehicles stopping in bus zones is codified in Division 11, Chapter 9, Section 22500(i) of the California Vehicle Code:

No person shall stop, park, or leave standing any vehicle whether attended or unattended, except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic or in compliance with the directions of a peace officer or official traffic control device, in any of the following places: (i) Except as provided under Section 22500.5, 12 alongside curb space authorized for the loading and unloading of passengers of a bus engaged as a common carrier in local transportation when indicated by a sign or red paint on the curb erected or painted by local authorities pursuant to an ordinance.

"Common carriers in local transportation", as cited in the Vehicle Code § 22500(i) above, are not defined in the Vehicle Code. However, the Public Utilities Code defines "common carriers" as entities that provide transportation to the public or any portion thereof for compensation. This definition appears to exclude shuttles as they are not available to the public for compensation but are restricted to private groups such as a company's employees in the case of regional commuter shuttles."