

September 30, 2019

Honorable Chair Gillian Gillett
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain)
1250 San Carlos Avenue – P.O. Box 3006
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

RE: CALTRAIN BUSINESS PLAN – ADOPTION OF LONG RANGE SERVICE VISION

Dear Chair Gillett:

The City of Palo Alto appreciates the opportunity to share with you its comments regarding the proposed adoption of the Caltrain Business Plan - Long Range Service Vision scheduled for review at the October 3, 2019 Joint Powers Board meeting. Producing a long range vision is a difficult endeavor, and we want to thank Caltrain staff for the high caliber work in preparing this document. As you proceed with reviewing adoption of this and other Caltrain Business Plan documents, we request that you consider the following issues:

1. **Grade separations:** Grade separations are essential to providing safe and reliable service, especially considering the increases in service frequency envisioned in the Long Range Service Vision. The Long Range Service Vision acknowledges that it is dependent on grade separations but does not commit to addressing grade separations prior to the adoption of the Long Range Service Vision. Due to the criticality of grade crossings to an enhanced service vision, we request that a commitment to address these issues be included with the adoption of this document.
2. **A coordinated approach to funding and construction:** As Caltrain moves forward with the remaining components of the Business Plan, it is necessary for Caltrain to consider incorporating options for a corridor-wide approach to grade crossing design criteria, funding, and timely implementation/construction. We support the revised staff recommendations which provides enhanced language towards “Completing the Caltrain Business Plan including additional analyses of issues related to funding, connectivity and access, and equity as well as the identification of a detailed implementation program of next steps and follow on work.” As Caltrain conducts additional analyses of funding, we would request that Caltrain also investigate its ability to participate in grade separation bond financing.

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- 3. Evolving the organization and governance:** The continued development of the business plan represents an opportunity to think broadly and expansively about Caltrain’s governance model for the delivery of rail service on the Peninsula. As such, the City supports the revised staff recommendation which recommends “evolving Caltrain in a manner that best prepares the railroad to deliver the service vision by deliberately and transparently addressing the issues of service delivery, internal organization and governance.” We look forward to seeing a robust inter-agency engagement process for future discussions surrounding this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the adoption of Caltrain’s Long Range Service Vision.

Sincerely,



Eric Filseth, Mayor
City of Palo Alto

cc: Jim Hartnett, Caltrain Executive Director
Sebastien Petty, Caltrain Director of Policy Development
Casey F Casey Fromson, Caltrain Government and Community Affairs Director
Jeannie Bruins, JPB Board Member, representing a city in Santa Clara County
Cindy Chavez, JPB Board Vice Chair, representing Santa Clara Board of Supervisors
Palo Alto City Council
Ed Shikada, Palo Alto City Manager
Chantal Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager
Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official

