

December 10, 2014

Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 N 1st Street
San Jose, CA 95134

Re: Support of 12.11.14 Board of Directors Agenda Item 7.2 – Santa Clara Caltrain Station
Pedestrian/Bicycle Tunnel Extension Project

Dear Chairperson Kalra and VTA Directors:

SPUR supports the staff recommendation to authorize funding of the pedestrian/bicycle tunnel extension at the Santa Clara Caltrain Station, connecting the station with destinations on the east side of the tracks. Quality connections to transit are essential to making transit useful. As stated in SPUR's 2014 policy report, *Freedom to Move*, transit works best when: it serves an area of high demand with strong anchor uses; the land uses surrounding transit have highly walkable urban design; and there are well-designed bicycle and pedestrian paths to and from stations to destinations.

Adjacent to the east side of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station is the approximately 18,000-seat Earthquakes stadium, multiple community soccer fields and a proposed development project (Coleman-Highline), planned for 1.5 million square feet of office/R&D, two hotels, and 50,000 square feet of retail when fully built out. These uses will draw tens of thousands of people to this site, many of whom have the potential of arriving by Caltrain and bus service to the station. Connecting this growth area to the station with a well-designed pedestrian/bicycle connection is key to encouraging transit use.

The Pedestrian/Bicycle tunnel project:

- Encourages pedestrian and bicycle access to the uses planned directly adjacent to the station, which will reduce the number of vehicle trips and auto congestion in the area.
- Improves the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians traveling between the Caltrain Station and the east side of the station. Currently, bicycles and pedestrians must ride or walk along major arterial roads to access the stadium and other destinations, the majority of which have no bicycle infrastructure.
- Demonstrates a collaborative, joint investment between VTA, the City of San Jose and the developer to fund the tunnel construction and facilitate this connection. This type of shared responsibility and vision between private capital, public agencies, and jurisdictions should be emulated throughout the region.

With this support, SPUR further encourages three actions by VTA, the City of Santa Clara and the City of San Jose to maximize the use of transit to the destinations surrounding the Santa Clara Caltrain station:

- Work with the Earthquakes and users of the private development sites (current and future) to offer transit passes to game attendees and tenants and workers of commercial sites (e.g. Ecopasses).
- Work with the developers of the adjacent land uses to design to design a strong pedestrian/bicycle connection from the station to their site(s) and to the Earthquakes stadium. Connections should be clearly marked, lit after dark and indicated on all current and future project site plans.
- Encourage the project design of the adjacent uses to adhere to VTA's urban design principles and orient to the Caltrain station. For example, the currently proposed site design of the Coleman-Highline project could be stronger if it more fully embodied best practices in urban design, as enumerated in VTA's adopted Community Design and Transportation Manual and SPUR's *Getting to Great Places* report. These principles call for placing building faces, active uses, and pedestrian access along clearly demarcated pedestrian routes, both public and private. Walkability, and hence the facilitation of transit ridership, is best served when public and private investments are mutually reinforcing and built around a clear, common spatial and circulatory approach to the station area.

We are available at the convenience of VTA, city agencies, and project proponents to support the implementation of these objectives.

Respectfully yours,



Leah Toeniskoetter
SPUR San Jose Director

Cc: San Jose City Council
Cc: Santa Clara City Council