

September 3, 2015

Board of Directors
Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street
San Jose, CA

Subject: Envision Silicon Valley Evaluation Criteria - Item 7.4

Dear Chair Woodward and Directors,

SPUR is a non-profit, member-supported organization that promotes good planning and good government. We recently published *Freedom to Move: How the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority can create better transportation choices in the South Bay*. We commend the VTA board for convening an open process to develop goals for the County's transportation system, and also evaluation criteria to measure how each project compares against these goals.

SPUR supports the proposal before you for evaluation criteria. We would like to offer two additional metrics for your consideration. Significantly improving the **usability of transit** will be the key to achieving all of these goals, whether they are safety or pollution or travel time reduction. For that reason, we would like to suggest two additional metrics related to transit:

1. Transit wait times. This metric would capture both transit frequency and transit connectivity.
2. Portion of population living within walking distance (1/4 mile) of a place with frequent, all-day, all-week transit service.

SPUR would also like to comment on the decisions that you have ahead of you. Through the Envision Silicon Valley process, you will prioritize investments for the next 30 years. In that time frame:

- BART, Caltrain, and High Speed Rail will connect at Diridon Station. Diridon will become one of the biggest transit hubs in the nation.
- Bikesharing, private jitneys, driverless cars, delivery drones and new small electric vehicles may proliferate.
- Private auto ownership might plummet as shared taxis and delivery vehicles eliminate the need to drive – even in very suburban areas.
- People may pay for transportation seamlessly, using some kind of wearable device.

Also in the next 30 years, Santa Clara County could add roughly 642,000 new residents and 303,000 new jobs¹. How will all these new residents and workers want to get around? What investment should we make today? SPUR suggests focusing investments in transportation that improve access to destinations, those that support walkable, livable neighborhoods and cities, support safety and well-being, increase equity and minimize damage to the environment.

SPUR's research has shown that, in the past, transportation investments to increase access in the South Bay have often worked against each other. For example, road expansions worked against transit success. Land use and transportation decision have also been disconnected.

Going forward, it is imperative that we make transportation investments work synergistically, shifting travel away from the private auto, toward shared vehicles, biking, and walking: the three most cost-, space-, and energy-efficient modes of transportation.

With this new direction in mind, SPUR recommends that the board prioritize the following categories of transportation investments, which should pay dividends for decades to come. We will be providing more in-depth discussion of these in the near future.

- Development of a transit network structure based on all-day, frequent regional transit network (BART, Caltrain)
- Frequent and efficient local and feeder transit service.
- Seamless Transit experience: schedule and fare and trip planning integration, seamless connections.
- Mode shift programs and public/private partnerships, targeted at places and at corridors.
- Develop safe streets that work for all users and countywide bicycle network.
- Grow parking and road pricing and management programs.

In closing, SPUR would like to remind the Board that not everything can be measured, modeled, or forecast. An evaluation process is one input to your decision-making, which we hope will be guided by a long-term vision for thriving and sustainable communities and region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ratna Amin



SPUR Transportation Policy Director

¹ Plan Bay Area, 2013