

**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

Submitted Electronically

April 20, 2017

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

Re: Board of Directors Workshop/ Special Meeting (Items 3.3 and 3.1Aa)

Dear VTA Board of Directors,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed 2016 Measure B Program Area Guidelines and on the fare policy updates that are being considered at tomorrow's study session.

Measure B Program Area Guidelines

SPUR was a strong supporter of the Measure B campaign in order to realize our county's ambitious goals for mobility, sustainability and quality of life. The projects that will be funded by Measure B will either bring us closer to or farther from a better future.

Local Streets and Roads: We appreciate that VTA will require Complete Streets best practices to be applied to all projects funded with Measure B dollars.

Bicycle & Pedestrian: 1) We appreciate that this program area will provide support for education, planning and construction activities. 2) We recommend making more resources for bicycle and pedestrian improvements available in the early years of Measure B in order to make significant progress towards mobility and sustainability goals. Many cities and the county have goals of improving mobility and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the near future in order to avoid the worst of climate change (often by 2020, in-line with state-mandated targets). To that end, it may be worthwhile to make more resources available in the next few years rather than to divide the program evenly over thirty years in two-year increments.

Caltrain Grade Separation: We recommend removing the restrictions on "maintaining tracks at grade level with traffic and pedestrian access either over or under tracks"; this language seems prescriptive given that some of the designs and tradeoffs for each of the eight grade separations have not been developed.

Caltrain Corridor Capacity Improvements: SPUR recently published *The Caltrain Corridor Vision Plan*—a long range plan to grow Caltrain service and capacity in the Caltrain and 101

SAN FRANCISCO

654 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 781-8726

SAN JOSE

76 South First Street
San Jose, CA 95113
(408) 638-0083

OAKLAND

1544 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 250-8210

spur.org

Corridors—in partnership with the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Stanford and SAMCEDA. Some investments in capacity are needed improve Caltrain service and safety, regardless of whether electrification is funded. We recommend that this program funding be available for improvements that are identified before or after the completion of the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project. This could include improvements to service/schedule design, stations or station access that grow capacity and ridership.

Highway Interchanges: We recommend that VTA delay roadway widening projects proposed as part of the highway interchanges program until VTA adopts a policy replacing Level of Service with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for transportation analysis. It is possible that some of the proposed projects will no longer be needed as mitigations under a VMT framework, which would help cities reach their sustainability goals and use taxpayer dollars efficiently.

County Expressways: **1)** We recommend that VTA and/or the County delay any expressway widening projects that may be part of this program area until VTA adopts a policy replacing Level of Service with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for transportation analysis. It is possible that some of the proposed auto-oriented projects will no longer be needed as mitigations under a VMT framework, which would help cities reach their sustainability goals and use taxpayer dollars efficiently. **2)** We strongly recommend that VTA require that projects apply Complete Streets best practices as part of the Master Agreement with the County in administering this program. **3)** We strongly recommend that VTA establish performance criteria (such as VMT) as part of their evaluation of projects for funding eligibility.

Transit Operations: **1)** We support the use of transit operations dollars to enhance the frequency of the core bus network and to address funding gaps as VTA moves to a new fare policy and implements new means-based fare policies (e.g., deeper subsidy for youth fares). **2)** We also encourage VTA to use the transit operations funding program to support greater integration of fares between operators, reducing or eliminating penalties for transfers on trips that are not taken on VTA.

Fare Policy

We encourage VTA to create fare policies that minimize confusion and complexity, and make it easier and simpler for people to take trips across multiple operators. VTA could take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Clipper 2.0 upgrade to simplify transit fares and pursue regional fare integration. This is particularly important for the investments that VTA is making at Diridon Station, which will have a very high number of transfers and multi-operator trips. We also encourage VTA to embrace the potential for Clipper 2.0 to incorporate other mobility options, such as bicycle share and on-demand vehicles—particularly as VTA is exploring ways to improve access to fixed routes and replace some coverage services. Measure B transit operations funds can provide a backstop for potential revenue impacts in the short-term.

Thank you for your leadership in building a transportation network that works better for more people, more often. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have at 408-638-0167.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Laura Tolko', with a stylized, cursive script.

Laura Tolko
San Jose Policy Director

cc: Scott Haywood