



**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

June 4, 2019

To: San Jose Mayor and City Council

Re: **Agenda Item 6.2 (Rail Corridor Plan for San José and Inter-Agency Agreement)**

Dear Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers:

SPUR is writing in support of a Rail Corridor Plan for San José and Inter-Agency Agreement. We applaud the partners for taking this step which can further promote collaboration in developing a seamless and integrated rail network across the Bay Area and Northern California Megaregion.

In 2015, SPUR released *Seamless Transit*, the first extensive publication on *How to make Bay Area public transit function like one rational, easy-to-use system*. Now, SPUR is developing a Regional Strategy, an aspirational civic vision for the Bay Area for the next half century and a policy roadmap to achieve it. As part of this, SPUR is developing a mega-regional rail strategy that builds off the vision from the 2018 California State Rail Plan which intends to integrate the rail services statewide, creates a seamless network and advances a strategy for sustainable regional growth.

San Jose and its central station are at the crossroads of four major megaregional corridors: the Peninsula, East Bay, Tri-Valley and South Bay. **The success of the station as a regional and statewide mobility hub, bringing passengers to San Jose and taking them to points beyond, will have implications at the local and megaregional level.**

Locally, Diridon Station's rail capacity will play a significant role in whether or not San Jose transforms into a major employment and transit destination. Getting the rail alignment right in San Jose will also be critical to maximizing the number of people who can and will use the transit services. The rail infrastructure is the one thing you cannot change for 100 years.

**Therefore, the Rail Corridor Plan for San José is one of the most important plans that the city will create at this juncture in the city's infrastructure planning.** This effort could be the prototype for a megaregional network planning and implementation strategy, ultimately saving time and money to tax payers by building a network that is more efficient, integrated and less expensive to operate.

As the City Council considers directing the City Manager to develop a scope of work for the Rail Corridor Plan for San Jose and inter-agency agreement, we suggest the following.

**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) 827-1900

[spur.org](http://spur.org)

**1) The Rail Corridor Plan for San José should clearly identify the steps toward building an integrated rail corridor in San José.**

We recommend the Rail Corridor Plan for San José focus on coordinating and reaching agreement amongst the multiple transit agencies' capital improvement plans in order to create a consistent capital and operating strategy for increased rail service for the public.

**2) The Inter-Agency Agreement should clearly identify all the roles that need to be filled in order to plan, fund, deliver, manage and operate an integrated rail network in San José, and beyond.**

We recommend the Inter-Agency Agreement call out the following main roles:

- Transit Coordinator: Entity that performs network planning and integration, marketing and administrative functions. Their key role is to facilitate the integration of modes and services into a pulsed-hub network.
- Corridor Manager: Entity that typically owns the railway infrastructure (tracks and rights of way) and stations along the corridor. It is responsible for operational planning and capacity allocation, as well as some level of long-term planning.
- Operator: An operator provides passenger service.

By researching international best practices for rail networks, we found that successful transit networks rely on institutions whose roles and responsibilities are split in a systematic way across one country or even continent. Decades of learning and rail service design have provided institutions such as *SNCF Réseau / SNCF Mobilités* in France, *ProRail / NS / NS Stations* in the Netherlands with a consistent framework to operate under: clarity and specificity on a vision, common objectives, technical requirements, accountability to each other and to contractors, high caliber construction management teams, etc.

It is important to recognize that multiple stakeholders are playing one, or more, of the roles identified above in our region but are not listed among the partner agencies in the staff memo. MTC leads the Clipper Program as a transit coordinator. BART is simultaneously the transit coordinator, corridor manager and operator for its system. The San Joaquin and Capital Corridor Joint Power Authorities develop passenger service plans as transit coordinators and operators. The State of California also took over some transit coordination functions by analyzing the market needs for passenger rail service across existing and projected rail corridors.

The Inter-Agency Agreement for the Rail Corridor Plan in San José has an opportunity to truly create a seamless coordinated network that delivers the services the public has invested in and expects and could become the best practice for the Northern California Megaregion.

**3) The Inter-Agency Agreement should not assign roles and responsibilities based on jurisdictional boundaries, amount of funds contributed or the willingness of agencies to participate. Instead, it should designate the best agency suited for the role in the long-run.**

SPUR is pleased to support this effort and looks forward to being involved as a thought-partner and champion for realizing a seamless rail network.

Thank you for considering this perspective on megaregional rail network planning.

Sincerely,



Nicole Soultanov  
San Jose Project Manager



Teresa Alvarado  
San Jose Director

cc:

Nuria Fernandez, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
Teresa O'Neill, Board Chair of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
Brian P. Kelly, California High-Speed Rail Authority  
Lenny Mendonca, Board Chair of the California High-Speed Rail Authority  
Jim Harnett, Caltrain  
Gillian Gillett, Board Chair of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Power Authority