



February 9, 2022

BART Board of Directors  
2150 Webster Street  
Oakland CA 94612

Re: Item 4C- BART's Fiscal Outlook

Dear Chair Saltzman and BART Board of Directors:

Our organizations believe that BART is critically important to the San Francisco Bay Area's way of life and the economy that supports it, and we need a frequent, well-functioning BART to reduce climate pollution and support future growth.

The staff presentation outlines a dire financial future for BART. Service cuts are not the answer. Service cuts would harm people who depend on BART the most and would make it hard to meet ridership demand when it returns. Further, rail's high fixed costs mean that BART can't cut its way into a balanced budget, even if it tried.

We appreciate that the presentation identifies multiple pathways for bridging the gap, including seeking funding from the state general fund, as well as pursuing ballot measures at the 3-county, 5-county and 9-county scale. Though historically each operating agency in the region has pursued funding independently, we think there could be downsides to going it alone now. Adopting a regional approach to a funding measure - at the 5- or 9-county scale, with funding for other operators in addition to BART - also allows for the opportunity to fund regional integration of service, fares, and schedules, which polls extremely well among riders and across all parts of the region.

**While there is much uncertainty about the future, we encourage BART to continue to explore, develop and poll the BART-only (3-county), 5-county and 9-county options. Further, we hope that BART takes the opportunity to seek state funding to support the implementation of the Transit Transformation Action Plan along with its other priorities.**

First, several operating agencies are facing similar financial futures. If agencies independently pursue funding, some voters will be asked to vote for transit multiple times. Not only might this put an undue burden on voters in some counties, but it could create a zero-sum race to the ballot. We encourage



**FRIENDS  
OF  
CALTRAIN**

operators with similar business models and/or overlapping service areas to work together for funding solutions that are mutually beneficial, such as Caltrain and AC Transit.

Second, the recently-adopted Transit Transformation Action Plan outlines a series of steps towards a more integrated regional transit network. However, it is very difficult to have an integrated regional transit network with fragmented funding sources. Indeed, fragmented funding is a chief reason why the Bay Area still does not have a more customer-focused, integrated network despite best intentions. If operators independently seek to bridge the gap, it would further cement the current system for decades to come. A larger and more centrally managed funding source opens up the possibility of more coordinated actions and consistent resourcing to advance shared, customer-focused priorities.

Finally, the financial scenarios, coupled with the large capital program, suggest that the three - county funding system and five-county service territory does not optimally serve BART's riders or taxpayers. Going it alone could again cement the current arrangement.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss BART's financial outlook. We look forward to working with you to support another fifty years of BART.

Sincerely,

Laura Tolkoff, Transportation Policy Director  
SPUR

Ian Griffiths, Policy Director  
Seamless Bay Area

Gwen Litvak, Senior Vice President  
Bay Area Council

Jason Baker, Senior Vice President  
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Adina Levin, Co-Founder  
Friends of Caltrain