

August 25, 2022

*Sent electronically*

Re: Agenda Item 4 – Other Collaboration Efforts

Dear Members of the Joint VTA- BART Working Committee:

SPUR is a long-time supporter of BART Phase II and we believe it is a critical project to the region. Earlier this year, we expressed our concerns about the impacts of the project's designs for the downtown and Diridon stations on customer experience; integration with and ability to maximize transit-oriented development, as well as the cost and risks associated with the project construction methods.

We are deeply invested in this project's success, and have spent many hours working with VTA, BART and the City of San Jose on the station refinements task force to ensure the best possible project gets built. **We commend the VTA project team, which has taken our concerns seriously and developed new ideas that would, if advanced, improve the project significantly.** These refinements include: (1) adding station entrances on both sides of Santa Clara Street and (2) changing the shape and size of the primary headhouses.

**We strongly recommend making sure this project includes at least two entrances at both the downtown and Diridon stations. These entrances should be located on both the north and south sides of Santa Clara Street. Ideally these entrances will be located at the ends of the platforms to expand access both east and west. We also strongly recommend changing the shape of the head houses, especially at Diridon Station, so the sites can more easily accommodate transit-oriented development.**

**This is the way BART and almost all other urban rail systems are built, and with good reason: it is the best way to design them.** Multiple station entrances are fundamental to the basic functioning of good mass transit systems, both for passengers and for operators. A project that costs this much must get the basics right.

These refinements, if approved, could offer several significant benefits, including:

- Making more space available for transit-oriented development, which would put more people - more potential riders - in walking distance to BART.
- Creating more and better connections between BART and other modes at Diridon Station.

- Creating more and better stations that make it easier and more intuitive for passengers to access as part of their natural path of travel, instead of switching directions multiple times.
- Improving operational flexibility for maintenance and more efficient passenger boarding.

**To continue on this positive path, we request that:**

- The VTA and BART Boards direct staff to continue assessing the feasibility and to determine the critical path needed to deliver these improvements.
- The VTA and BART Boards work with staff to develop the list of possible changes that might require an environmental update and/or additional FTA review, so that this information can feed into an evaluation of refinements.

We recognize that VTA must carefully balance the goals of achieving better passenger experience and transit-oriented development with implementation factors, such as cost, time and schedule, but hope that the needs of passengers will take precedence. A customer-centered approach will lead to the best possible project.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership on this important project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LT' or similar, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laura Tolkoff  
Transportation Policy Director