

August 4, 2020

Board of Directors  
Caltrain Joint Powers Board  
P.O. Box 3006  
San Carlos, CA 94070

**RE: Caltrain Sales Tax (Item #9) & Draft Equity, Connectivity, Recovery, & Growth Framework (Item #10), August 6, 2020**

Dear Board Members:

First, SPUR wishes to thank Caltrain's board and staff for the hard work required to reach a compromise on the 1/8 cent Caltrain sales tax. We urge you to approve the resolution to place this item on the November 3, 2020 ballot.

Second, SPUR applauds Caltrain's intention to prioritize immediate recovery planning and to integrate equity and access needs into near-term recovery actions. SPUR strongly supports the agency's effort to link these immediate actions with longer-term service planning and infrastructure goals.

We appreciate that that Caltrain cannot make date-specific commitments to implement equity, access, and recovery plans due to the present financial crisis and uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. However, we encourage the Board to make the intention of this framework more tangible and provide greater public accountability by defining a specific timeline for revisiting implementation, including:

1. A deadline for approving specific performance metrics that will be used to manage the implementation of this framework, and
2. A commitment to review this framework one year from date of approval when staff will be in a better position to update the policy with more specific deadlines and concrete actions.

SPUR wishes to highlight several key parts of the framework and propose several additions:

- We strongly support the proposed review of the Caltrain pass programs (policy item 2.B.3) as a tool to increase equity, particularly given that current pass users have high average incomes and low per-ride costs, the significant role of employer-subsidized passes, and the need for many riders to use first-and last-mile connections that may add additional costs
- For near-term rail coordination planning (policy item 3.B), we applaud the focus on BART at Millbrae, but we also urge immediate focus on Diridon Station. Although the Diridon Station redesign is a long-term capital project, near-term decisions being made regarding land development, station configuration, transfers, train storage, and maintenance will impact regional rail coordination for decades to come and require strong engagement from Caltrain.
- We recommend a new sub-policy under the equity section (new policy item 2.C) to address TOD and station area land use. This framework should reference equity and affordability policies in

Caltrain's recently adopted Rail Corridor Use Policy and TOD policies and consider further changes to parking policies, land use, and housing affordability, consistent with the equity goals that are driving this framework. This section should commit to the development and adoption of effective anti-displacement policies for station area planning and development.

- The framework should acknowledge that a more diversified Caltrain ridership supports overall ridership growth and a more resilient system, illustrated by Caltrain's sustained loss of riders during the pandemic which is exacerbated because of the white-collar nature of the ridership.
- The framework should consider, not just service planning, but how station and train designs can broaden Caltrain's accessibility (e.g., sheltered waiting areas at more stations; or station surfaces that work better for elderly, strollers, and wheelchairs.)

SPUR looks forward to ongoing engagement with Caltrain staff and board members as this policy evolves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Laura Tolhoff', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Laura Tolhoff  
SPUR Regional Planning Policy Director