



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of September 30, 2021

Correspondence as of September 29, 2021

Subject

1 Regional Governance



September 29, 2021

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

RE: Caltrain Governance Special Meeting #5, September 30, 2021

Dear Board Members,

We urge the Caltrain Joint Powers Board (JPB) Board Members to reach a near-term governance agreement as soon as possible, support a Caltrain Executive Direction position that is contractually accountable to the JPB, commit to considering regionalized governance options, and get Caltrain focused back on recovery and implementing the 2040 service vision and completing electrification by 2024.

At this pivotal moment in Caltrain's evolution, JPB members must be able to function as true partners. Caltrain is undergoing a major reorientation to serve post-pandemic riders that will be more diverse, and less commute-oriented. The Caltrain service vision and equity policy that generated broad enthusiasm from residents and businesses and inspired voters to support Measure RR, demands strong board oversight. Regional efforts to better integrate transit services from a customer perspective are exciting and demand direct board engagement. Finally, major capital projects underway and in the planning phase require board-level attention.¹ **The JPB's top priority must be to swiftly reach agreement on a near-term self-governance oversight approach that will allow the members to provide appropriate board-level oversight and direction.**

¹ Between Caltrain electrification, Diridon station redesign, grade separations, DTX, there are \$20+ billion of capital projects in planning or construction within the corridor, excluding the \$30+ billion Link21 project.

Based on staff's presentation and memo, the new options seem to deliver reforms that increase accountability of the agency to the JPB while still minimizing costs. The proposed dedicated Caltrain Executive Director will bring needed additional oversight that is essential for both Caltrain and SamTrans at this time of rapid change. The specific sub-option selected matters less than achieving near-term agreement that will allow JPB Board Members to be effective partners in governance.

In setting aside the costlier governance options, the JPB must commit itself to earnest participation in regional governance conversations, acknowledging that self-directed options fall short of achieving important goals from the public and riders' perspective. **We recommend that the JPB's 2021 self-governance agreement set a firm deadline within the next 2 years that requires the JPB to evaluate which longer-term governance model is best suited for Caltrain as part of a regionally coordinated transit network.** A commitment to evaluate regional options will also provide an opportunity to assess how the self-directed governance changes are achieving the stated goals and whether other adjustments are needed.

Finally, we agree that past commitments regarding the Caltrain ROW costs must be met. We support the concept of formal mediation, or any other path that will bring an objective assessment of what these costs are so that parties can be held accountable to their commitments and rebuild trust.

Thank you for your consideration of these points and for prioritizing customer-oriented transit.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Kass
Transportation Policy Manager
SPUR

Gwen Litvak
Senior Vice President, Public Policy
Bay Area Council

Ian Griffiths
Seamless Bay Area

Jason Baker
Senior VP ,Transportation Health & Housing
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Adina Levin,
Friends of Caltrain