



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of August 6, 2020

Correspondence as of August 6, 2020

# Subject

- 1 Caltrain Sales Tax) & Draft Equity, Connectivity, Recovery, & Growth Framework
- 2 Sales Tax Opposition
- 3 Sales Tax Support

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', written in a cursive style.

Laura Tolhoff  
SPUR Regional Planning Policy Director

**From:** [Bill Hough](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** public comment on item 3 on special JPB Board agenda 8/6/2020  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 5, 2020 7:22:24 PM

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I am writing in my capacity as a voter and taxpayer residing in Santa Clara County. Please add this public comment to the record.

I am horrified that Caltrain is proposing ANOTHER sales tax increase. Vote NO. Over the last several elections, voters in Santa Clara County have passed multiple tax and fee increases including gas taxes, two bridge toll increases, three VTA sales taxes, Santa Clara County's Measure A 1/8 cent sales tax, the state prop 30 ¼ cent sales tax and the 2010 Measure B Vehicle Registration Fee of \$10. Additionally, we're on the hook to pay back numerous state bond issues including high speed rail, the Proposition 1 water bond and the infrastructure bonds of 2006.

It is time to reconsider transportation finance. People are seriously hurting from the never-ending shutdowns and the last thing we need right now is another bump in the sales tax. When the virus scare began, the congestion problem went away when companies began encouraging staff to work from home at least part of the time. Let's encourage more working at home when the virus scare is over. This tax would not be necessary if there were not as much demand.

These regressive taxes contribute into making the Bay Area a horribly expensive place to live; especially for people of modest means, who must pay the greatest percentage of their income in these regressive taxes and fees. Each increase by itself does not amount to much, but the cumulative effect is to add to the unaffordability of the region. The tax proposal fails to take into account that residents are taking an economic hit from the never-ending lockdowns. Recommending a sales tax increase during these difficult times is simply tone deaf. Since the shutdowns began, government has shown little sympathy to residents who have been ruined financially.

A better idea is to do a top-to-bottom review of Caltrain's spending and figure out how they can participate in the sacrifices demanded of normal residents. If you feel Caltrain must have more money despite increased working from home, the solution is diverting existing funds from the overpriced BART extension to San Jose (eliminate the Santa Clara portion and/or expensive tunneling alternatives) or high speed rail. Better yet, raise taxes on the rich tech companies that are responsible for the congestion problem. Either way, stop the sales tax increases.

Please vote to make sure this awful idea gets nipped in the bud. At the very least, make sure the tax has a "sunset date" so we are not stuck with this forever.

If you feel Caltrain must have more money despite increased working from home, please consider raising taxes on the rich tech companies that are responsible for the congestion problem.

William Hough

**From:** [Brad Bulger](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** upcoming sales tax and governance resolutions  
**Date:** Thursday, August 6, 2020 7:56:48 AM

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As a one-time and, I hope, future future frequent rider on Caltrain, I urge you to support the resolutions for the sales tax initiative and governance issues. I know that the process has been crappy and that a sales tax is not great, especially staring down another huge recession, but Caltrain has to survive to get to a better place. There are so many improvements under way and still to come. Don't let foolish little people stop you. I \*need\* Caltrain to be running in that day to come where we all return to work in person. I literally would have to quit or move without it.

Thank you.

Brad Bulger  
Daly City

**From:** [Joe A. Kunzler](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Plz pass the governance reform & sales tax  
**Date:** Thursday, August 6, 2020 8:01:09 AM

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Dear Caltrain Board;

Joe A. Kunzler here. Some of you have heard me roll in hot at your local government meetings about Caltrain. For those of you that have not, I was going to ride Caltrain last March as a tourist and then the pandemic hit. Therefore happy to give some time to help the strong women in the Bay Area like Adina Levin, Jayme Ackermann and Monica Mallon save Caltrain.

Really asking you guys continue to come together as a team and save Caltrain. Not terribly impressed with all the brinksmanship over a governance crisis where the case for a crisis wasn't there. I will save further thoughts for the epic gladiator match Friday at the SF Board of Supervisors.

I would also add the more you can together for and with SF BART, the better. Seamless Bay Area rocks in my blunt opinion.

The simple reality is this: Public transit is essential for essential workers and post-pandemic a recovery for tourism. For Caltrain to be more accessible and to survive the Covid-19 medical-economic crisis; a sales tax measure must pass. Period.

Yours;

Joe A. Kunzler  
[growlernoise@gmail.com](mailto:growlernoise@gmail.com)  
@TransitGeekJoe on Twitter

**From:** [Sarah Cummings](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Caltrain is a necessity  
**Date:** Thursday, August 6, 2020 8:19:01 AM

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Hello,

As a SF resident without a car, I have depended on Caltrain to travel from SF to the South Bay. Many people are in the same situation and Caltrain is a necessity. Without Caltrain, people will be left behind as not everyone will be able to take a ride-share or use a private car. Please keep Caltrain running so we can make SF Bay Area more sustainable and also make travel within the area accessible for the residents of the Bay Area.

Thanks,  
Sarah Cummings

Sent from my iPhone