

July 20, 2020

President Norman Yee  
San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Pl #244,  
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure urgency ordinance

Dear President Yee,

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I am writing to express my strong support for the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's (Caltrain's) efforts in enacting a one-eighth cent sales tax in the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara for the purpose of operating, maintaining and improving Caltrain commuter rail service.

The City of Palo Alto understands that in the absence of significant ridership gains, Caltrain is likely to run out of operating funds before the end of the year. Given the urgent need to identify new funding, **the San Francisco Board of Supervisors must support an urgency ordinance for a 1/8-cent sales tax on the November 2020 ballot.**

Caltrain provides a vital link in the region's transit network, which provides critical alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel. Thousands of essential workers and transit-dependent riders continue to use the service. Former riders have indicated that they are prepared to return to the system when allowed to do so, and as the regional economy continues to struggle, we will likely see a growing number of transit-dependent riders throughout the Bay Area. Allowing Caltrain to fail will leave all of these riders without a transit option. We owe it to the communities we serve to do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

We were excited to learn that Caltrain's recent poll revealed that support for new revenue to maintain and improve Caltrain has increased compared to where it was a year ago. Voters clearly understand how important Caltrain is to regional economic recovery, managing traffic congestion, and enhancing mobility. We cannot let this opportunity to secure Caltrain's future go by. This is an opportunity to save Caltrain, and at the same time create revenue to improve it, tripling ridership and making the system more affordable and accessible for everyone.

Improving Caltrain was always dependent on dedicated funding, but now the system's survival depends on it. Before the pandemic, Caltrain's member agencies signaled that they could not afford to increase their contributions, and now their financial situation is even more precarious. Opportunities to create new funding for transit operations are incredibly limited. With so much at stake, we cannot let this one pass us by.

Sincerely,



Adrian Fine  
Mayor  
City of Palo Alto

Cc:

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board  
San Francisco Mayor London Breed  
San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo  
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors  
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors  
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors

