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January 21, 2025

Nick Josefowitz

Vice Chair, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and

Andrew Fremier

Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

375 Beale Street, Suite 800

San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Inclusion of Caltrain Enhanced Growth Scenario in Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint

Dear Vice Chair Josefowitz and Executive Director Fremier:

Caltrain staff would like to extend our sincere appreciation as the Plan Bay Area 2050+ process continues towards final completion and adoption by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The Final Blueprint for Plan Bay Area 2050+ identifies long-range transportation investment priorities and regionally significant projects that will ensure that the entire Bay Area has a land use and transportation network that is equitably, environmentally, and economically sustainable. We appreciate the considerable time and effort MTC staff has dedicated to advancing the project to this point.

We are pleased to note the inclusion of the Caltrain Enhanced Growth Project (Phase 1 and Phase 2) in the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint as RTPID 25-T11-175 – Caltrain Service Frequency Upgrades. The Caltrain Enhanced Growth Project builds upon the recent, significant investment in electrifying the Caltrain corridor. Since electrified service commenced in September 2024, Caltrain ridership has increased nearly 40 percent on weekdays and over 100 percent on weekends. The Caltrain Enhanced Growth Project will further capitalize on the completion of the electrification project to meet the transit demands of the San Francisco Peninsula/South Bay by significantly increasing station stops along the Caltrain corridor. Moreover, the project will benefit the region by enabling Caltrain to provide the future service and capacity needed to make the maximum use of the Portal. It will be foundational to the development of an integrated regional rail network.

Under the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP) with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Caltrain was required to maintain service levels of at least 114 trains per weekday, 6 trains per hour per direction (tphpd) during peak hours,

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at the outset of electrified service. However, Caltrain has received a temporary waiver from the FTA to operate at reduced service levels for up to three years or until average weekday ridership reaches 63,598 riders, whichever occurs first, starting from the required completion date of December 31, 2024. By 2028, per the FTA waiver, Caltrain is obligated to increase service to 6 tphpd. Therefore, incorporating Phase 1 of Enhanced Growth as a near-term project (prior to 2035) in Plan Bay Area 2050+ accurately reflects the timeline for these service enhancements, which only require additional operating funds and no additional capital investment. Further, the additional capital and operating investments identified in Phase 2 of Enhanced Growth (after 2035) will allow Caltrain to substantially increase capacity to the system and expand frequent, transit-level service to more communities, including Equity Priority Communities, along the corridor.

Additionally, we appreciate and endorse the inclusion of the Portal in the Final Blueprint, as it is a transformative infrastructure project that will enhance connectivity, sustainability, and access for residents throughout the Bay Area.

Finally, we would like to reiterate the importance of programmatic categories in the Final Blueprint towards enhancing the transportation network for the region. In particular, grade separation projects play a critical role in enhancing the safety and reliability of the Caltrain corridor and the communities we serve. As we plan for Enhanced Growth with additional service that may create new circulation and mobility challenges, a modern, improved corridor is essential. Grade separations and grade crossing improvements can mitigate these impacts and provide broader community benefits by separating the rail corridor from the roadway, improving community circulation, and facilitating enhanced multi-modal transit. We also appreciate the inclusion of other programmatic investments to enhance the regional rail network, such as San Jose Diridon Station.

As Plan Bay Area 2050+ progresses towards completion and adoption, we look forward to continuing to collaborate with MTC staff and other operators to improve connectivity for current and future transit riders across the Bay Area region, Northern California mega-region, and throughout the state.

Sincerely,



Michelle Bouchard
Executive Director, Caltrain

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