



December 19, 2023

Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
375 Beale St Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. Fremier,

I am writing to express my support for MTC's important initiatives to integrate fares and service plans among transit agencies in the region. In particular, broader programs to provide transit passes, particularly among low- and modest-income residents, present great opportunities to increase ridership and provide greater social equity. MTC can provide an essential role in driving these programs while insuring equitable allocation among the agencies of the shared revenues.

However, I share concern with many local, state, and federal leaders about the recent discussions on consolidation of Caltrain and BART. Since Caltrain is not receptive to such a merger, this would constitute a forced takeover of one agency by another. The two agencies operate different and incompatible modes of transit, track systems, labor relations, and governance systems.

VTA is one of the agencies directly responsible for funding Caltrain and we have not had any conversations with MTC about this topic. Furthermore, Caltrain is a partner agency that is highly valued by the residents and workers of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. I have significant concern that pursuit of a merger of these agencies would be unwelcome by our electorates and jeopardize critical support for the prospective regional transportation measure.

Any regional transit measure should first and foremost seek to improve the delivery of transit service and improve the rider experience. MTC's recent conversations and polling regarding consolidation of specific transit agencies has detracted from the important focus on improving the customer experience.

Caltrain consolidation discussions should not move forward without justification, engagement and support from the key agencies along with the community and elected leaders involved with Caltrain. We have not seen any policy justification from MTC on why consolidation is needed to improve fares and schedule coordination.

Achieving a better transit landscape that serves riders and communities will take regional unity, and we are eager to continue our partnership to improve the quality transit for the Bay Area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Pat Burt'.

Patrick "Pat" Burt
Chairperson, Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority