

June 1st, 2020

California High-Speed Rail Authority
Attn: Draft 2020 Business Plan
770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comments for the Draft 2020 Business Plan Regarding the Downtown Rail Extension (DTX) Program from Friends of the Downtown Extension (FoDTX)

Dear California High-Speed Rail Authority,

On behalf of the Friends of the Downtown Rail Extension (Friends of DTX), we would like to express our support for the 2020 Business Plan, and its updated strategy for completing California's ambitious high-speed rail program.

We at Friends of DTX are committed to ensuring the completion of San Francisco's Downtown Rail Extension (DTX) that will stretch Caltrain from its current terminus at Fourth and King Street Station to the new Salesforce Transit Center. It is our hope that supporting this program will also ensure that future high-speed trains will be able to service downtown San Francisco without the need for a temporary terminus at Fourth and King Street Station, maximizing the ability to attract passengers from the most convenient San Francisco location.

This connection to the transit center will link also Caltrain and high-speed rail with eight Bay Area counties and the State of California through nine other transit systems: AC Transit, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SFMTA, SamTrans, WestCAT Lynx, Amtrak, paratransit, and Greyhound. The transit center will bring these transportation systems under a single roof, and create a pedestrian and bike friendly community where residents and workers have convenient access to rapid and safe public transit, retail, open space, and other neighborhood amenities.

We would therefore like to address some concerns we have with the current draft 2020 Business Plan. In the current plan, the goal is to get the DTX ready for construction in the next two years. Assuming a slightly delayed ground-breaking in 2023, this would mean a completion date of 2030. This target is now one step closer thanks to the recent approval of the San Francisco Peninsula Rail Program Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU seeks to implement a new organizational structure to support the development of the DTX to a ready-for-procurement status and make direct recommendations to the TJPA Board of Directors regarding a set of work program activities.

However, the current draft CA High Speed Rail 2020 Business Plan calls for the initial Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line to originate and terminate at San Francisco's Fourth and King Street Station. With a target completion date of late 2031, this puts commencement of line operations behind the projected completion of the DTX program.

To better serve the public and because the timeline warrants it, we recommend that CAHSR add an additional service plan to start and end the Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line at the Salesforce Transit Center. Doing so would:

- maximize the ability to attract passengers from the core of the San Francisco downtown, the most convenient location for both direct access and for access by potential riders from throughout the City and region
- maximize operating cash flows for the system, thus attracting potential private financing and providing more capital to further expand the system
- Generate additional value by improving connections with other forms of transportation and enhancing the overall user experience
- Provide easy access to over 100,000 jobs within a half-mile radius of the Salesforce Transit Center
- Ensure convenient connections to the East Bay via AC Transit bus service, as well as to all four of BART's transbay lines. Caltrain's latest business plan, for example, concluded that ridership would jump an incredible 25% just by extending service from Fourth and King Street Station to the transit center.

With such impressive ridership potential, we at Friends of DTX believe it's critical for the 2020 Business Plan to include an operating scenario that assumes service to the Salesforce Transit Center with the opening of the Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line in late 2031. Doing so will maximize passenger connections, ridership and cash flow for the system, and help ensure a successful commencement of the 'Valley to Valley' Line.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Michael Gimbel
Co-Founder, Friends of DTX