



August 23, 2022

Steve Heminger, Chair
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB)
1250 San Carlos Ave.
San Carlos, CA 94070

RE: Central Coast Service Deployment: Gilroy to Salinas Rail Extension

Dear Chair Heminger and Members of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors:

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) has been developing an extension of passenger rail service from San Jose to Salinas as part of the Monterey County Rail Extension Project. TAMC serves as Monterey County's regional transportation planning agency and is a state-designated agency responsible for planning and financial programming of transportation projects. TAMC is the state-designated rail authority for Monterey County and is provided powers related to the implementation of rail service and for connections to regional and statewide passenger rail service.

In the 2018 California State Rail Plan (Rail Plan), the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) identified the establishment of a regional rail network on the Central Coast with connections from Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Salinas to the state-wide network at Gilroy as a critical component for the future of the Central Coast Region. TAMC has further developed strategic policy and implementation planning through its Kick Start project, for initial service to Salinas, and through the Monterey Bay Network Integration Study, for longer-term analysis of potential service concepts for regional rail connections and additional intercity service to San Luis Obispo.

To continue the effort to establish this new service, the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has launched the Central Coast Near-Term Service Deployment Project, with the primary objectives to:

- Develop a Service Deployment Playbook for new rail service between the San Francisco Bay Area and the Central Coast;
- Design an implementation program that solves for operational needs, administrative agreements/ support needs, and capital investments required to initiate service, aligned with the State's long-term vision for an integrated statewide network; and

- Analyze and articulate relative utility of proposed service concepts and infrastructure interventions across multiple stakeholders.

The Project is being led by the Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transit in the State's capacity providing statewide strategic planning, network integration implementation, and capital/operations funding. It builds on technical analysis developed for the:

- California State Rail Plan (2018)
- Caltrain Business Plan (2022 Service Concepts)
- Gilroy-Salinas Feasibility Study
- Monterey Bay Area Network Integration Study
- Kick Start Project
- Monterey County Rail Extension

This implementation project builds directly on these past efforts and seeks to pivot from 'planning' work and 'studies' toward specific implementation of service in the near-term. In support of these objectives, Caltrans, working through an executive level 'Steering Committee' and a service operation focused 'Technical Working Group', are leading analysis to empower decision making and address the following key questions:

- What is the desired service and operating plan, implementable in the near-term?
- What administrative and funding supports are needed to operate that service and how should they be secured?
- What additional infrastructure, if any, is needed to support the passenger operating plan and host railroad requirements?

Technical analysis, host railroad negotiations, stakeholder coordination, and resource planning will be funded and led by Caltrans, with technical operations guidance and review from Caltrain, and strategic policy guidance from TAMC and other stakeholders.

The Project will provide Caltrans and regional stakeholders with the technical outputs and the operational foundation needed to procure passenger operations and secure agreements necessary to initiate and scale passenger rail on the Central Coast. Aligned to State policy goals and the State's vision for a future statewide integrated network, this service will be planned and delivered in such a way to provide for improved statewide travel and connectivity.

TAMC formally requests Caltrain to further evaluate this extension and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order for this project to progress to further phases of

study, based on the four foundational elements identified in the 2019 Gilroy-Salinas Feasibility Study:

- 1) Service must be cost-neutral for JPB;
- 2) No impacts to service or operations on the Caltrain mainline (San Francisco to Gilroy);
- 3) TAMC, working with the state, must address all risks and liabilities of the new service; and
- 4) No changes to the JPA governance structure.

The MOU will also incorporate a mechanism to reimburse Caltrain for staff time spent on technical operations guidance and other review.

Finally, TAMC recognizes Caltrain's work to provide zero emissions rail service to stations south of Tamien, which will eventually allow the agency to retire its remaining diesel fleet after the completion of the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP) between San Francisco and San Jose. Caltrain partnered with Caltrans to explore battery-equipped Electric Multiple Unit rail vehicle (BEMU) technology for service south of Tamien and is requesting state funding for BEMU vehicles. TAMC fully supports Caltrain's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase ridership and continue to improve the customer and community experience, with the recognition that the implementation of said technology may take years and won't delay the implementation of near-term passenger rail service to Salinas.

TAMC appreciates the continued support from Caltrain staff as we develop this Service Deployment playbook and look forward to our continued partnership to enhance rail service in northern California.

Sincerely,



Todd Muck
Executive Director