
From: shirleyq@capitolcorridor.org
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2016 4:41 PM
To: ctp2040@DOT
Subject: CTP2040 30-day Public Review Period 02/29/16 - 03/29/16 Comments

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Shirley Qian (shirleyq@capitolcorridor.org) on March 29th, 2016 at 04:40PM (PDT).

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Chris Ratekin
Chief, Office of State Planning Division of Transportation Planning Department of Transportation P.O. Box 942874
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SUBJECT: Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) Comments for CTP 2040

Dear Mr. Ratekin:

As the managing agency of the Capitol Corridor intercity passenger rail system, we commend Caltrans for recognizing passenger rail as an important player in achieving the goals of reducing GHG and VMT set in CTP 2040. Improving the frequency and reliability of passenger rail systems as part of the multi-modal transportation system in California has a substantial impact on reduction in VMT on the road system, and current efforts to shift to renewable diesel in train locomotive motors promise even more GHG reduction possibilities for passenger rail. However, frequency and reliability for passenger trains usually come with a high price tag. Railroad infrastructure is a linear system, which requires improvement planning at the corridor-level in order for significant benefits to be realized, and railroad infrastructure, like the highway and surface road network, is expensive to build and maintain. Most passenger trains in California must also share the railroad corridors with freight

trains, which limits the frequency of passenger train service. Passenger trains and freight trains operate at different frequencies and serve very different customers, and the two characteristically different uses of the same railroad infrastructure lead to inefficiencies for both types of systems. Planning for significant improvements to the State passenger rail system for the next few decades will need to balance the needs of public transportation demands and those of freight goods movement, which requires big thinking and substantial capital.

The CCJPA has begun the big thinking process for the Capitol Corridor in the form of our Vision Plan Update (adopted 2014) to prepare our train service for the next 20-50 years. In the Vision Plan Update, the Capitol Corridor is envisioned as the future transit spine of the emerging Northern California megaregion, connecting the greater Sacramento area to the San Francisco Bay Area. Capitol Corridor, as the transit spine, would operate at much more frequency and reliability than current day and would also seamlessly integrate with other larger regional rail systems such as High Speed Rail, the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit regional metro system, and Sacramento Regional Transit. In order to achieve higher frequency and reliability, Capitol Corridor and other passenger trains and freight trains must be separated as

much as possible, whether spatially or temporally, so that passenger trains have the necessary amount of runtime slots on the tracks. There are still enou!

gh railroad alignments in parts of the Northern California megaregion that provide the possibility of complete spatial separation of passenger and freight trains, given that necessary improvements are made along certain alignments, and in other parts of the megaregion, construction of a new separate railroad alignment could be worth the consideration. A co-benefit of passenger and freight rail separation or passenger rail dedication would be improving the efficiency of the freight goods movement as well.

Another broad benefit of certain Vision Plan strategies is improving neighborhood connectivity and public safety. To improve safety, the railroad tracks that Capitol Corridor trains operate on in the future would be completely grade-separated, thereby minimizing interaction between trains and general automobile, bike, or pedestrian traffic. Grade-separation also has the co-benefit of decreasing train travel time (by increasing maximum train speed limits) and improving train service reliability. The neighborhood connectivity benefit is envisioned by undergrounding certain sections of the railroad tracks or turning abandoned railroad tracks that have separated neighborhoods into multi-use pathways.

All of the strategies or alternatives discussed in the Vision Plan Update require extensive collaboration and coordination with multiple partners, public and private. Strategic negotiations with Union Pacific Railroad, the owner of the majority of the railroad infrastructure in the Northern California megaregion, will be critical. In this regard, CCJPA staff is actively coordinating with Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transportation staff on the development of the California State Rail Plan 2018. We are also prepared to collaborate and coordinate with regional, county, and municipal planning efforts as those opportunities arise to achieve the vision of a more frequent and reliable Capitol Corridor service, the transit spine of the Northern California megaregion.

Including the rail recommendations discussed above in various levels of State transportation planning documents is critical to transforming mobility in California and supporting economic growth and environmental sustainability. We appreciate the opportunity to highlight passenger rail needs in the context of the CTP 2040 and are encouraged with the alignment of the goals of the CTP 2040 with those of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority s long-term plans.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Shirley Qian, Planner, at (510) 874.7491 or shirleyq@capitolcorridor.org.

Sincerely,

David B. Kutrosky
Managing Director, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

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