



Date: July 16, 2007

Committee Meeting Date: NA

Board Meeting Date: August 2, 2007

BOARD MEMORANDUM

ACTION X DISCUSSION INFO

TO: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael T. Burns
General Manager

FROM: Jim Lawson
Government Affairs Manager

SUBJECT: Rail Service to Monterey County

Policy-Related Action: Yes

Government Code Section 84308 Applies: No

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Chair to send a letter of support (Attachment A) for the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's (TAMC) proposed rail service extension to Pajaro, Castroville and Salinas.

BACKGROUND:

TAMC is proposing that existing Caltrain service from San Francisco to Gilroy be extended to Monterey County. TAMC staff has been working with both Caltrain and VTA staffs to identify those issues that need resolution in order for this extension to operate within the existing Caltrain system. While several issues of a technical as well as a financial nature exist, VTA staff is supportive of additional rail commuter service in this area. TAMC is requesting a letter of support from VTA for their Federal Transit Administration Small Starts application.

DISCUSSION:

The project proposes to extend the existing San Francisco to San Jose to Gilroy commuter rail service to Pajaro, Castroville and Salinas. The plan is for two weekday roundtrips, increasing to four round trips as demand warrants. This project will provide access to jobs, health care and interregional transportation with air quality benefits. This service will provide an alternative to the highly congested I-101 Corridor.

The project will include capital improvements including but not limited to: a train layover facility, bus facility, additional commuter parking in Salinas, trackage rights, track improvements, right of way acquisition and the construction of new platforms and parking in Pajaro and Castroville.

TAMC staff will be present to provide an overview of the project and respond to any questions.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board may modify the attached support letter, decline to support the project or oppose the project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The project is proposed to have no cost impact on VTA.

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) PARTICIPATION:

N/A

SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (SBE) PARTICIPATION:

N/A

Prepared by: Jim Lawson

July 17, 2007

DRAFT

Mr. Dwayne Weeks
Federal Transit Administration
Office of Environmental Planning, TPE-22
400 7th Street, SW, Rm. 9413
Washington, D.C. 20590

SUBJECT: Support for Rail Service Extension to Monterey County Project

Dear Mr. Weeks:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) would like to extend its support for the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's Rail Service Extension to Monterey County. Initiating rail service in Monterey County will assist in our goal of increasing regional and interregional transportation alternatives. As a partner in the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain), VTA supports commuter rail service and agrees that the expanding areas of San Benito and Monterey Counties will require rail service for the economic benefit of all three counties.

As the economy grows and fuel prices soar, commuters are seeking alternatives to driving alone. Rail Service Extension to Monterey County can become an important transportation option. The Rail Service Extension to Monterey County project is a commuter rail service extension with projected ridership estimates of 530,000 riders per year. The service will provide an alternative to the heavily congested Highway 101 corridor for workers traveling from Monterey County and Santa Cruz County to jobs in Silicon Valley and northward. This service will also make it possible for residents to access health care, shopping and entertainment in the Silicon Valley, San Jose and San Francisco without being forced to fight traffic and congestion on the highways. A potential tie in with the existing Caltrain system could provide potential ridership benefits for both.

The proposed project includes intermodal facilities in three locations in Monterey County, and would encourage transit-oriented developments around the stations in Pajaro/ Watsonville, Castroville and Salinas. The Agency anticipates the start of service in 2011.

VTA supports this important transportation project and asks that you support the Transportation Agency's request for the next phase of work.

Sincerely,

Dean J. Chu
Chair
VTA Board of Directors

cc: Debbie Hale, Executive Director, Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Congressman Sam Farr, CA-17