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This letter expresses the concern of the San Francisco Planning Department (Planning Department), San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) regarding the Beale Street Proposal and sets forth comments on the potential California High-Speed Rail alignments through the City's jurisdiction.¹

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) has received numerous letters from City Agencies as well as the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) outlining why the Beale Street Proposal is not feasible and should not be considered.² The undersigned agencies concur with the content of these letters and would like to reiterate the following points.

The Beale Street Proposal was previously evaluated and dismissed but is now being reconsidered by the CHSRA as the terminal station in downtown San Francisco. The Transbay Transit Center remains the City's choice location for the terminal; indeed it is the only feasible and legal site. The Transbay Terminal/Caltrain Downtown Extension/Redevelopment Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Transbay FEIS/EIR) already analyzed the environmental impacts of a reasonable range of alternatives, including the Beale Street Proposal. The Transbay FEIS/EIR selected the Transit Center as the preferred alternative for the San Francisco terminus of high-speed rail. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are clear that the CHSRA may rely on the analysis conducted in the Transbay FEIS/EIR. The undersigned agencies' staff understands from attendance of several City-County Participating Agency Technical Working Group Meetings that CHSRA indeed intends to rely on the Transbay FEIS/EIR to inform the on-going EIR/EIS for the San Francisco to San Jose High-Speed Train System. As such, there is no need to repeat the consideration of station location alternatives in the CHSRA's current environmental review. The CHSRA may and should rely on the Transbay FEIS/EIR's analysis of alternative sites for the San Francisco terminus of the high-speed rail train.

¹ The Beale Street Proposal appears to be the same proposal submitted to the CHSRA by Don Solem, President of Solem & Associates, in a June 11, 2009 letter, which included schematics of the Beale Street proposal prepared by the Gensler firm.

² Andrew W. Schwartz and Ellen J. Garber, Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP, *Authority to Rely on Completed Environmental Review and Approvals for the Transbay Transit Center; Infeasibility of Alternatives*, August 21, 2009. Fred Blackwell, Executive Director, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Letter to Curt Pringle, Chair of CHSRA Board of Directors*, August 31, 2009.

Ellen J. Garber and Heather M. Minner, Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP, *Transbay Joint Powers Authority's Comments Re San Francisco to San Jose High-Speed Train Project's Preliminary Alternatives*, October 30, 2009.

The Transbay Transit Center is the only legally allowable location under several state mandates, most recently Proposition 1A, which was passed by the voters of California in November 2008. Public Resources Code Section 5027.1 and the Streets and Highways Code Section 30914(c)(22) also explicitly state that the northern terminus of California High Speed Rail must be the Transbay Transit Center. The 2004 voter-approved Regional Measure 2 authorized an increase in area bridge tolls to fund a “new Transbay Terminal in San Francisco, connecting [regional transit] with future high-speed rail ...,” and specified that the new terminal must be located on the site of the existing Transbay Terminal at “First and Mission Streets in San Francisco.” In 2001, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed Resolution 104-01 supporting the extension of Caltrain to a new Transit Center on the site of the current Transbay Terminal to serve, among other things, high-speed rail. Finally, in 1999 the San Francisco voters passed Proposition H, which calls for the station to be built at the Transbay Transit Center. Also, the Beale Street Proposal would be inconsistent with several adopted area plans, including the Transbay Redevelopment Plan, the Rincon-Point South Beach Redevelopment Plan and the Rincon Hill Plan. All of these mandates and plans would have to be amended if the Beale Street Proposal were to be carried out. Furthermore, the CHSRA has already adopted the Transbay Transit Center as the site of the station in previous documents.

As discussed above, the Transbay FEIS/EIR already analyzed the environmental impacts of a reasonable range of alternatives, including the Beale Street Proposal. The Beale Street Proposal was eliminated because it was deemed infeasible. Reexamination of the Beale Street site will only yield the same conclusion – that it is infeasible. Meanwhile, the High Speed Rail Project could lose critical federal funding due to unnecessary delays and distractions.

Aside from not being a legally allowable location, the Beale Street Proposal is infeasible for a multitude of reasons, some of which are outlined below.

- The Proposal would require the acquisition of 201 Folsom Street, a large parcel currently owned by the US Postal Service. The southern half of the property is a major postal processing center, and the northern half is a parking lot which serves the operation. The parking lot has been approved for a high-rise residential development with approximately 800 housing units, including an above-ground parking garage for the U.S. Postal Service. No portion of the property is currently for sale. Neither the City nor the CHSRA would be able to acquire a property from the federal government through the use of eminent domain.
- The Proposal would also require the acquisition of 201 Harrison Street, an existing residential condominium development with over 280 units. The total market value of all of the residential units in the project is in excess of \$140 million. The acquisition and demolition of a residential building of this size would be unprecedented in recent history and likely subject to intense opposition.
- The Proposal would likely require the acquisition and demolition of several other residential buildings along Beale Street, including the Watermark high-rise and South Beach Marina mid-rises. These buildings are built on 80- to 100- foot pilings, precluding tunneling underneath them. The cost of acquiring and condemning these properties could be in the range of \$500

million. In contrast, the Transbay Transit Center alignment makes the most use of public right-of-way, minimizes acquisition of property, and in comparison to the Beale Street Proposal, includes acquisition of few residential properties.

- The area north of Folsom Street that would be required for the Proposal has been rezoned for high-density commercial and residential development following many years of community input. A total of more than 650 residential units and more than 700,000 square feet of commercial space is planned, with construction commencing in 2015. Based on a 2007 market analysis, the area north of Folsom Street has an estimated land value of approximately \$116 million, which has been programmed to help pay the cost of the Transit Center Project, including the rail component. In addition, also based on 2007 estimates, the development would generate net tax increment in excess of \$6.5 million per year, which has also been programmed for the Transit Center Project. Compared to the Transbay Transit Center, the Beale Street Proposal would require more land for construction and require a longer period of time to complete, delaying the receipt of both land sale revenue and tax increment revenue by several years. Under the current schedule for the Transbay Transit Center, construction could commence as early as 2015 on the area north of Folsom Street. Under the Proposal, this development would be delayed while the 12-track station is constructed.
- The Transbay Transit Center is also better situated to accommodate a new tube under San Francisco Bay to serve points to the north and east. Depending upon the final alignment of a new Transbay Tube, the Transbay Transit Center has the potential to operate as a through-station, allowing trains arriving from the Peninsula to continue east under the bay, providing passengers with a one-seat ride and shorter in-station dwell times. Because the inlet to a Beale Street station would be in such close proximity to the bay, it limits the space to accommodate the train movements for both the Peninsula alignment and a bay crossing, and would appear to dictate the alignment of a potential connection. The Beale Street Proposal would require all trains to terminate at the station and reverse out, introducing operational challenges, longer dwell times, and reducing the capacity of the facility. The ability of the Beale Street Proposal to accept an East Bay connection has not been demonstrated, but, even if feasible, this congestion would slow individual train movements and reduce the station's efficiency.

Given the reasons outlined above, the undersigned agencies request that further analysis of the Beale Street Proposal immediately cease. It is not clear on what basis the CHSRA is choosing to pursue the Beale Street Proposal through the *Revised Definition of Alternatives* document. CHSRA staff has repeatedly stated that the Beale Street Alternative must be considered; yet no evidence has been presented to date as to why CHSRA is required to consider the Beale Street Proposal in the *Revised Definition of Alternatives* document, particularly given its infeasibility. CHSRA should indicate in the *Revised Definition of Alternatives* that, after initial consideration, it has determined that it will not carry the Beale Street Proposal forward into the *Draft Alternatives Analysis Report*.

Regarding the remaining alignment south of downtown, the City has the following comments.

Since the high-speed rail system assumes trains will share the existing Caltrain right-of-way or run closely parallel to it in a fully grade separated alignment, it is imperative that Caltrain tracks also be

fully grade separated where San Francisco streets cross the Caltrain tracks at-grade. Specifically, two locations are of primary concern: 16th Street and Mission Bay Drive in the Mission Bay area.

The rail crossing at 16th Street is the most critical at-grade intersection within City limits. 16th Street is the only major road for a two-mile stretch connecting the east side of the City with the west, due to major natural and infrastructure obstacles. This street is the primary and only effective route for traffic, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists travelling between the rapidly developing dense urban districts of Mission Bay and the Central Waterfront on the eastern waterfront, and the existing dense neighborhoods to the west, which also continue to grow.

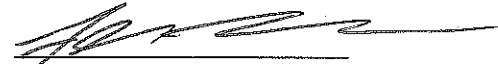
This corridor is an important route for goods movement between the growing Mission Bay community and the areas to the west. The City has invested great resources and energy in connecting these neighborhoods together and creating walkable, bicycle-friendly, and transit-oriented connections. Already a significant thoroughfare, 16th Street is anticipated to be more heavily utilized in the near future due to the development at Mission Bay and the anticipated growth in the Eastern Neighborhoods of the City. Trenching 16th Street under the tracks and leaving the rail tracks at street grade would not be acceptable as it would irreparably sever the two sides of the City and create a hostile and uninviting connection between the two for pedestrians and cyclists. It would not only divide an established community, but depressing 16th Street would require lengthy trenches leading up to the intersection and the depression of other major connecting arterials, including Seventh Street. This would further diminish the attractiveness and viability of major adjacent development parcels, which have been identified as key for neighborhood development and improvement. Additionally, it would present security issues and would block the visual connection of this corridor between the neighborhoods.

As part of the City's Mission Bay Development plan, SFMTA is in the process of extending the 22-Fillmore electric trolley bus to Mission Bay to serve the growing 16th Street corridor and surrounding employment and educational centers. If the intersection were to remain at-grade and Caltrain were electrified, it would require an at-grade crossing of substantially different types of electrical overhead traction power systems. Such an at-grade crossing would be extremely challenging, if not infeasible. While creating a grade separation by depressing 16th Street under the tracks is possible, it is far from optimal. Such an alignment would require a depressed approach on either side of the tracks, which would create considerable physical separations of the community and street network to the north and south of this area. It could also create drainage issues.

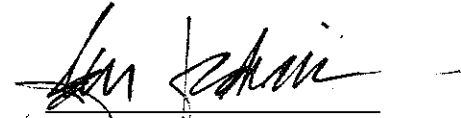
Just north of 16th Street is a recently constructed Mission Bay Drive, which also crosses the Caltrain tracks at-grade. This crossing should also be eliminated by putting the train tracks underground. Presumably, if the tracks were put underground at 16th Street, they could feasibly remain underground at this location as well. It would not be acceptable for the tracks to be entering an underground portal at Mission Bay Drive because this would likely cut off all access across the tracks.

Given the discussion above, tunneling the rail tracks below 16th Street is the only attractive option.
Thank you for your consideration.

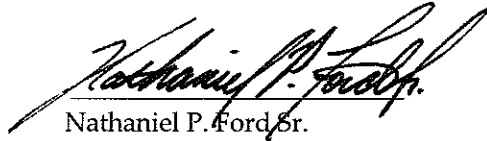
Respectfully,



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