

December 30, 2019

The Honorable Jerry Hill  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5035  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Marc Berman  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 6011  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 278 (Beall)/FASTER Proposal – Projects and Principles from the City of Palo Alto**

Dear Senator Hill and Assembly Member Berman:

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, thank you for your support and leadership related to transit-oriented development and for investing in California's infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond. A major priority of the City Council is addressing traffic and focusing on transportation priorities. Working closely with City staff and regional stakeholders, Palo Alto has identified key areas that we feel would benefit not only our community, but the broader Bay Area. We are encouraged by the potential funding for transportation infrastructure projects through SB 278 (Beall), and the subsequent FASTER proposal and we seek your support on this legislation.

Widespread equity in funding transportation projects through SB 278/FASTER will be a major issue for many Bay Area communities. SB 278 provides an exciting opportunity to equitably benefit the entire Bay Area. As you are aware, Santa Clara County experiences extreme traffic congestion and transit crowding, particularly during commute times. Therefore, FASTER should seek to get to the heart of these congestion and crowding issues by funding improvements to both public transit and surface streets. To assist in identifying initiatives aimed at such improvements, Palo Alto offers a key project and priorities to receive funding from Senator Beall's SB 278 and the FASTER program:

- 1)** Caltrain grade separations for four at-grade train tracks in Palo Alto, including the second busiest Caltrain station and where ridership has increased significantly
- 2)** Funding for Caltrain operations, to ensure sustained capital investment for regional projects
- 3)** A clear and accountable governance structure for funding allocations. To ensure equity, achieve proper funding levels, and fully engage the community, we support leveraging sales tax as a funding mechanism, as is currently contemplated, mandating geographic equity in expenditures, proper oversight to ensure system coordination and fund management, and requirements to effectively engage a cross-section of stakeholders in program development.

Palo Alto, in discussion with our neighboring communities in Santa Clara County, is confident that you recognize the need for a concrete decision-making and an operating framework for a seamless transportation strategy which can rely on diverse funding mechanisms. We urge you to ensure that both the legislature and involved parties clearly understand, and have the opportunity to shape, the intent

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behind ensuring the larger success of FASTER. We anticipate providing additional recommendations in the near future based on coordination with other cities and as the legislative proposal takes shape.

Palo Alto looks forward to continuing to work with you to address traffic and transportation priorities. We appreciate your leadership on these and other issues facing our communities. Again, thank you for your work in supporting the future of California's transportation systems and infrastructure. We look forward to engaging in continued discussions regarding SB 278 and the FASTER proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Filseth".

Eric Filseth  
Mayor  
City of Palo Alto

Cc: Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission  
Santa Clara Cities Association  
Valley Transportation Authority  
Townsend Public Affairs