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Vice Chair

April 9, 2014

Mr. Steve Heminger
Executive Director
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

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MTC

Dear Mr. Heminger:

I understand that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission will be meeting to decide which projects to recommend for TIGER funding. There are many meritorious projects in our region and I will be supporting those that serve my constituents, but I want to remark upon one that is of special concern.

The Caltrain project in South San Francisco has many important purposes. First, it will directly contribute to passenger rail safety. Separating passengers from trains is critical to the growth of Caltrain as it electrifies, and TIGER funding is ideally suited to contribute to this objective. Second, freight trains stored in this area should be separated from passengers. An objective of the TIGER program is to make freight rail more efficient and therefore the money spent on passenger safety meets this objective.

Third, moving the Caltrain station will create an enormous opportunity for transit-oriented development along Grand Avenue and in the surrounding area. A significant transportation hub should exist at the South San Francisco station because it is ideally located near San Francisco and conveniently within reach of jobs further south, but the current location of the station behind a concrete interchange/barrier makes it unlikely that a large amount of housing would be built near the station. We all agree that TIGER funding should contribute to higher-density, transit-oriented development. Funding this project, which ultimately will lead to the station being moved so that it fronts on Airport Boulevard and Grand Avenue, will directly contribute to this TIGER-compliant objective.

Fourth, a convenient and safe connection to the South San Francisco Caltrain Station opens up new job opportunities for city residents at locations throughout the Peninsula and the greater Bay Area. Significantly, and without any additional housing, the connection of the downtown neighborhoods with the station will create new transportation opportunities for lower-income

residents living near the station. Studies indicate that 28% have household incomes at or below the federal poverty level, and that 87% of residents in the station planning area are members of minority populations.

I support TIGER funding because I trust that regional decision makers will make recommendations that help federal authorities identify regional priorities. While many meritorious projects exist, all jurisdictions should have a fair chance to be funded. I hope that the South San Francisco Caltrain station project will be thoroughly reviewed by the staff of MTC and ultimately by the commission's members. If you want transit-oriented development to be embraced by the public, an outcome that benefits all income levels, an increase in freight rail efficiency, and an increase in pedestrian/passenger safety, then I respectfully suggest that this station is a significant opportunity for MTC and our nation.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jackie Speier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jackie Speier

KJS/bp