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Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Councilmember Kansen Chu

SUBJECT: COUNCIL RESOLUTION FOR
BART

DATE: April 30, 2009

APPROVED:

DATE:

4/30/09

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct the City staff to conduct an analysis in preparation for a resolution to be placed on a future City Council agenda to oppose Berryessa as the end terminus station for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project.
2. Direct Staff to explore other alternatives for the end terminus station with VTA and return to the City Council within 60 days with station proposals.
3. Direct Staff to return to the City Council with report on the progress of improving transit transfer connection for BART and Light Rail.

BACKGROUND

With the recent recommendation from the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to build BART only as far as the Berryessa area of San José, I recommend the City Council to oppose Berryessa as the end terminus station for BART.

When the voters passed Measure B in 2008, they were under the impression that the BART extension would go through Downtown San José. Piecemeal of the end terminus to Berryessa is not and was not the intention of the City of San José voters who wanted to see the BART train to connect through Downtown San José. It does not make sense for BART to stop at Berryessa because it is a bedroom community with many existing traffic issues such as the US 101/Taylor Street interchange, improvements to the US 101/Oakland Road interchange, and the widening of Berryessa Road that will only be exasperated if it is turned into the final stop for BART. Berryessa residents and the City of San José residents did not sign on to having thousands of drivers going through their neighborhoods from nearby cities to ride the BART to the East Bay and the greater Bay Area.

Historically, when the discussions around bringing BART to the Berryessa neighborhood began more than a decade ago, many residents in the Berryessa community were opposed to the project. The residents since have supported the BART line going through their neighbourhoods to Downtown San José because they have been assured that the impacts will be minimal due to

proposed mitigations to reduce noise. In public discussions in the past ten years, the proposal for the end terminus in Berryessa was never presented to the residents.

Berryessa as the end terminal was not made public until San Jose Mercury Newspaper reported it on February 28, 2009. The BART Environmental Impact Statement was released on March 13, 2009 for public comment and it will be closed on May 8, 2009 with no public outreach in District 4. It is clearly not enough time for the residents to learn about the impacts of the end terminus in their neighborhoods. There is a need to address the potential parking and traffic concerns prior to build out which will be cost prohibitive for the City to address. As I understand it, there are other options to explore other than Berryessa as the end terminus. The draft BART Environmental Impact Statement clearly indicated three alternatives that were developed by the Federal Transit Administration and VTA: the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Project Alternative (BART extension into Santa Clara County for approximately 16.1 miles), the Berryessa Extension Project Alternative (Berryessa as the end terminus station), and the No Build Alternative in the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor. At this time, I request City Staff to work with other agencies to explore additional alternatives for the end terminus station that will better serve the City of San Jose residents.

Furthermore, in order to increase the ridership and flow of BART and light rail, we need to do our due diligence in the planning of transit transfer connections to ensure the most transit-friendly connections between both systems. The Milpitas transit connection is of immediate concern to the City of San José. I have seen the proposed conceptual site plan for the Milpitas station and believe that a good amount of ridership will be lost due to the poor transit transfer connections between BART, light rail, and bus lines. In order to have the greatest amount of ridership, we need to ensure that our transit transfer connections are the easiest, safest, and most flawless connection possible in terms of transitioning between both transportation systems. I acknowledge that our Staff has been working with VTA to propose a better transit transfer connection and I look forward to seeing the revised conceptual site plan for the Milpitas station.

I request that the Rules Committee place an item on the City Council agenda to discuss conducting an analysis to prepare for a resolution to oppose Berryessa as the end terminus station of the BART line and direct Staff to explore other alternatives for the end terminus station with VTA and return to the City Council within 60 days with station proposals. Also, I request for Staff to return to the City Council with a report on the progress of improving transit transfer connection for BART and Light Rail.

As a long time and ardent supporter of BART to San José, I share the same vision with many community members to see the system built in its entirety as originally proposed. Our fundamental belief is that the BART to San José project must be balanced by sound planning to ensure quality of life to existing residents. Also, while we are still years away from build-out, now is the perfect time to review transit connections to ensure a strong ridership base. At the end of the day, we need to stand up for the will of the voters and work in the best interest of the City of San José residents to protect our neighborhoods.