

PUBLIC COMMENT

BART Board Meeting

April 28, 2022

Item 5-A

From: Dan Meltzer
To: BART Board

Subject: Require mask wearing on BART **Date:** Friday, April 22, 2022 5:02:34 PM

To whom it may concern,

Mask wearing has been such a cornerstone of our pandemic response and has allowed us to conveniently and collectively take a step to control the spread of disease. While widespread vaccination still seems to be the single most important way to protect our community, mask wearing, especially when in small and/or crowded spaces, has also been critical.

I feel unsafe when I am in public transit and I see people without masks on, and it makes me less inclined to use BART or other public transit. For my friends who are immunocompromised, or live with or care for someone who is, it is even more risky to ride public transit next to unmasked people that may or may not be infectious with COVID. I am afraid personally for my own safety, I am even more afraid for friends who now have to more carefully weigh the balance between using public transit and contracting a potentially very serious disease. It seems unconscionable to me that we are ready to throw away an effective low barrier public health strategy because some people feel it is inconvenient. Please keep BART safer for disabled people, kids under 5, workers, and our whole community by requiring mask wearing while on BART.

Thank you, Dan Meltzer (San Francisco, 94117) From: Barbara Haya
To: BART Board

Subject: Please do reinstate the mask mandate on BART

Date: Saturday, April 23, 2022 11:12:28 AM

Dear BART Board of Directors,

I am sure that you are receiving pressure in many directions and I appreciate the hard decisions you need to make quickly.

I do want to let you know the impacts BART's lifting of its mask mandate has on me and my family. Because of the risk of Covid, including long Covid which we do not yet fully understand, we will only take BART if masks are required. BART's current policy means that we will not be able to take BART and so are forced to drive when we go into the city.

I do hope that you might reinstate the mask mandate. I am a strong advocate for public transportation and want BART to thrive. I suspect that many others feel the same as I do.

Many thanks, Barbara

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Barbara Haya, PhD

Director, <u>Berkeley Carbon Trading Project</u>, Goldman School of Public Policy Research Fellow, California Institute for Energy & Environment University of California, Berkeley bhaya@berkeley.edu

202-306-0576-cell

From: <u>no-reply@bart.gov</u> on behalf of <u>Chandonia</u>

To: BART Board

Subject: BART Board of Directors Comment from John-Marc Chandonia

Date: Saturday, April 23, 2022 6:09:21 PM

First Name: John-Marc Last Name: Chandonia Email: jmc@sfgreens.org Phone: 4152855696 City: SAN FRANCISCO

State: CA Zip: 94110

Subject: opposing mask mandates

Comment: I am a daily BART rider, and I'm writing in opposition to agenda item 5-A, the proposed mask mandate through July 18. According to an article published on SFGate on April 21, UCSF COVID experts Dr. Bob Wachter and Dr. Jeanne Noble both noted that the cloth masks most riders wore on BART prior to the mask mandate being lifted provide no protection against omicron, and give people who really need protection a "false sense of reassurance." They also stated that even the commonly worn surgical masks provide little to no protection to other riders, and they recommended that people who are vulnerable to COVID wear high quality masks such as N95 masks in order to protect themselves. Therefore, a mandate that BART riders wear masks, including masks that are ineffective against COVID, does not protect anybody and will only encourage people to drive instead of taking BART.

From: Joe A. Kunzler
To: BART Board

Cc: Rebecca Saltzman; Alicia Trost; avaziri@sfchronicle.com; ricardo.cano@sfchronicle.com;

 $\underline{jessica.flores@sfchronicle.com;}\ \underline{news@kalw.org};\ \underline{kpixnewsassign.editors@cbs.com;}\ \underline{BreakingNews@kron4.com};$

Mike Lindblom

Subject: Public Comment on Item 5A, Amendment to the BART Customer Code of Conduct

Date: Sunday, April 24, 2022 4:11:24 PM

24 April 2022

RE: Public Comment on Item 5A, Amendment to the BART Customer Code of Conduct

Dear BART Board and esteemed CCs;

It is hopefully NO SURPRISE to any of you Directors that I strongly support a mask mandate. I have CC'd some of the media covering this situation in the hope the info and speech will elucidate how we got here in their future coverage. When you want COVID-19 to be gone and not to get the damn virus itself, then you support public health.

First, the Medical Case

I apologize in advance if any of you feel slighted in the least me citing a Washington State source that's been profiled in <u>The Nation</u> and <u>The New York Times</u>; but here's what Olympic Peninsula, Washington State's Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry, MD has to say about masking on public transit from a 19 April 2022 Clallam County Public Health briefing where I raised the issue beforehand in public comment:

The one thing I did want to touch base on briefly, as one of our commenters mentioned, is that the mandate for masking on transportation did just get stopped yesterday. I do think that is unfortunate. Because transportation, buses, trains, planes are one of the highest risk environments for transmitting COVID-19. And so I do really encourage everyone to wear a high-quality mask in those spaces. And remember, you're not just protecting yourself, you're protecting anyone around you who may be immunosuppressed or anyone who's very young and can mask. So it's important to remember that kids under five are at the highest risk of getting hospitalized for COVID 19 among children, and children, especially two and under cap. So masking in those environments is something you can do for yourself and for others.

So there's the medical reason. **We in TransitWorld have to protect the most vulnerable. Period.**

Second, the Political Case

Then get this... your Alicia Trost went on TransitCenter and <u>blurted out exactly how this</u> <u>mask mandate fightback started</u>:

I'm sitting here thinking, is our job to protect the most vulnerable? Yes. Can we actually create our own mandate? The answer to that is yes. You can't just say it, you actually have to give yourself the legal authority.

So yeah, I worked behind the scenes with our board to make sure they knew that. And I basically put my foot down, and I'm in a meeting yesterday with all men, two of them have no children. And they're like, they just want to take the easy way out, but everyone else is doing it. And now we're free of the enforcement. And I just couldn't I just couldn't do it.

I'm like, "No, we have people relying on us. We live in the Bay Area, they support mask mandates. Let's do this. Let's be the first agency in the country to adopt our own mask mandate, not behind any state order."

...I do think that it's only because I'm a woman and only because I'm a mother that I recognize that why do we have to settle with this? Why do we have to say, we're just going to let the mask mandate go away when we know that we have to protect the most vulnerable?

With that, I hope the below is a powerful sight, a sight you will never forget, a sight that sends a damn message: That some of us transit superfans stand 100% behind what *Alicia Trost* is fighting *for* and are grateful that Exec Director Robert Powers, PE is taking *her* side:



I wore YOUR BART cap with joy last Friday on Sound Transit's Link and when I was visiting Alaska Airlines for my Simple Flying very part-time work. I struck up some good conversations about Alicia and even impressed some Special Operations Transition Foundation veterans at a charity event that evening.

Time to be a Trost

I hope it means something to the Board and Alicia Trost to see and read this. I'm Mr. "Go Sound Transit!" and to feel *morally obligated* to wear a BART cap on Sound Transit, I have to say, I have to say was unimaginable until *Alicia Trost* decided to step up and lead while

my locals went... weak. As President Biden would say: May G*d continue to Bless and Protect our alpha females in this community who will stand up for what is right.

In a world of Putins, be a Zelenskyy.

In a world of Boudins and LaPierres, be a Stefani.

In a world of Rogoffs, be a Trost.

On that note: Thank you, Chairwoman Saltzman, for standing with Alicia on this one because, quite frankly, the forces of good wouldn't be here without you and the political bridge to a vote. Heavy emphasis on you part, Madame Chair, as in all you are & represent, especially being a mother. Also, can I just say this is a real-life LBGTQ-straight alliance in the clutch to save lives & prevent disability? Thanks, because you're damn right as a patriotic heredualsexual disabled bachelor; I find this a beautiful sight because this is America and American exceptionalism! This IS how we "Build Back Better" - throwing our petty differences for national unity into the recycling!

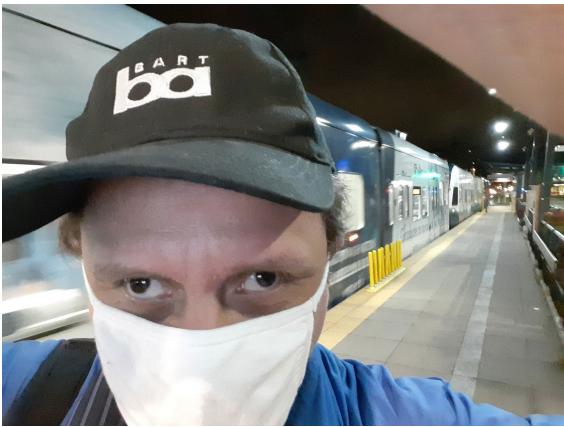
The Kaleidoscope Has Been Shaken...

Once again, the Kaleidoscope Tony Blair spoke of after 11 September 2001 has been shaken. This time by a Trumper madwoman politician in a robe. Again the pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle. Before they do, let us *Trost* those pieces for justice for all of us. *All of us*.

Because some of us were locked down for thirteen (13!) months or longer waiting for our vaccines to ride transit again. Some of us have fought with honor to get transits to mask & vax up, like at Community Transit. Some of us feel we had to lose long-term friendships over supporting these measures in both Washington and California. But in a world of Rogoffs... be a Trost. Courage begets courage.

If a mask mandate is passed to protect the most vulnerable, this will be BART's second finest hour to help celebrate 50 years - the first being after the 1989 Earthquake when you backfilled for the broken Bay Bridge. How fitting, right, and just it's BART's biggest fan leading the way, actually living the dream we 12s for Transit all have!

Very strategically;



Joe A. Kunzler growlernoise@gmail.com

P.S. I took my BART the other week to see four influential ladies. Alicia being one of them! Here's a photo:



From: <u>Lezak Shallat</u>
To: <u>BART Board</u>

Subject: BART: reinstitute the mask mandate to protect the health of all of us

Date: Sunday, April 24, 2022 4:21:28 PM

Any repeal of mask requirements on public transportation is WRONG. Masks protect the unvaccinated AND the vaccinated. Masks show respect for the health of others. A wayward, politically-motivated ruling from an unqualified judge in another jurisdiction should not override common sense, decency, solidarity and respect for others. Be like Los Angeles and REQUIRE MASKS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

Lezak Shallat 578 26th Ave Apt7 San Francisco CA 94121

Tel: 510 365 9925

I am a resident of San Francisco, grandmother to unvaccinated children, and a case manager to immunocompromised clients of the Shanti Women's Cancer Program

From: <u>no-reply@bart.gov</u> on behalf of <u>B</u>

To: BART Board

Subject: BART Board of Directors Comment from Matt B

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 6:59:11 AM

First Name: Matt Last Name: B

Email: mattyb154@yahoo.com

Phone: City: State: Zip: Subject:

Comment: BART Directors, the eyes of the people are on you. 4 of your 9 positions are open for reconsideration this year. Do the right thing in giving riders back their personal freedom to make a decision whether or not to wear a face mask. The Federal court has spoken. Listen. The eyes of free

Americans are watching.

From: <u>no-reply@bart.gov</u> on behalf of <u>boardofdirectors@bart.gov</u>

To: BART Board

Subject: BART Board of Directors Comment from Daily Rider

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 8:32:17 AM

First Name: Daily Rider

Last Name:

Email: boardofdirectors@bart.gov

Phone: City: State: Zip:

Subject: Got on the train this morning. . .

Comment:

Most people masked, some not. Everyone was fine, getting along with their personal choice. It's time to let personal choice prevail. Let go of your

desire to control others. Focus on running a transit system.

Thanks for your consideration, Daily Rider

From: no-reply@bart.gov on behalf of Dal Pino

To: BART Board

Subject: BART Board of Directors Comment from John Dal Pino

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 10:14:53 AM

First Name: John Last Name: Dal Pino

Email: jdalpino@ftfengineering.com

Phone:

City: Oakland State: California Zip: 94618 Subject:

Comment: I want to encourage the Board to maintain the no mask mandate on BART. It has been two years since the start of the pandemic. People who want to be vaccinated are, many have developed natural immunity and many young people were never at any risk of serious illness as it has turned out. BART advertises that special air filters have been installed on the trains and the air is cleaner there than in most other places. So rather than making BART an uncomfortable service to use and a paternalistic one too, please make BART ridership enjoyable and convenient so we can all move on with our lives. Thank you.

From: BART Customer Service

To: BART Board

Subject: FW: Masks [ref:_00Dd0hrYV._5006T1xCMJS:ref]

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 11:31:02 AM

Hello DSO,

Support comment below.

Regards, BART CS

----- Original Message -----

From: Linda Sandsmark [kramsnaz@yahoo.com]

Sent: 4/20/2022 8:55 PM

To: webcustomerservices@bart.gov

Subject: Masks

First name: Linda Sandsmark

Email: kramsnaz@yahoo.com

Phone: 5105823550

Subject: Masks

Comment:

Hello,

My family and I would like to thank you for trying to reinstate mask mandates on BART.

We support this reinstatement, in the interest of public health. So many people from all over the world ride BART, and with all the coughing and yelling inside the cars it just doesn't feel like a safe environment.



ref:_00Dd0hrYV._5006T1xCMJS:ref

From: David Dunkle
To: BART Board
Subject: Require masks

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:32:38 PM

Covid sensitive people need masks on everyone on BART. Please keep the mask mandate. I am elderly and will not ride BART otherwise

David

From: Beth Edelstein
To: BART Board

Subject: BART Mask Requirement

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:34:07 PM

To: BART Board of Directors

I am in favor of Director Saltzman's proposal to reinstate the mask mandate on BART. I agree that the requirement that BART passengers continue to wear masks is necessary because of rising COVID case rates in the Bay Area and nationally, We need to protect all transit rides: the very young, as well as older persons and the immunocompromised of all ages.

I want everyone to feel safe in getting out of their private cars and back on BART.

Best, Beth Edelstein From: <u>Deanna Giolas</u>
To: <u>BART Board</u>

Subject: Please Support Reinstating The Mask Mandate

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:46:16 PM

Hello,

My name is Deanna Giolas, and I'm a supporter of Senior and Disability Action. I live in San Francisco, and I'm writing because I'm very concerned that BART has ended the requirement that masks be worn on public transportation.

It has been brought to my attention BART Board President Rebecca Saltzman is introducing a mask mandate requirement proposal at BART's April 28 meeting, and that Bevan Dufty and Janice Li also support it. I fully support it as well, and I hope you will too.

I personally am high risk for severe outcomes from COVID, and, as a result I have felt unable to travel outside of walking distance since the mask mandates were lifted. I feel completely gutted that it feels like those in power do not care to protect the vulnerable in society. Everyone's life matters. Removing mask mandates implies some people's safety and survival matters more than others, which is unacceptable in a compassionate society.

Unfortunately, COVID levels are rising in the San Francisco Bay Area. According to SF Chronicle, the positive test rate in San Francisco has reached 5%, which makes unmasking a huge risk. COVID has been confirmed to kill over 350 Americans a day, and it hospitalizes far more. COVID can easily spread on crowded buses, as well as in BART stations and small elevators. Many disabled people, seniors, people of color, low-income people, and essential workers all rely on public transit, and we need it to be safe. Black, Latine, and Indigenous people have had the highest death rates during the pandemic. Requiring masks is in line with racial equity

The removal of a mask mandate isn't giving members of the community true freedom or a choice; rather it is forcing the vulnerable to incur additional risks during necessary travel. It is unfair to ask disabled and immunocompromised people to never leave their houses in order to protect themselves. This could easily be avoided with a mask requirement or the existence of a percentage of train cars or buses being designated as "mask-only".

Some may say that those who are vulnerable should just upgrade their masks, however even with N95 masks the effectiveness is significantly undercut if you are around many infected unmasked people in close proximity for an extended period of time.

Please help keep San Francisco safe by supporting BART Board President Rebecca Saltzman's initiative.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

-Deanna

From: Annette Montiel
To: BART Board

Subject: COVID-19 is not Over! We need facial masks to be Mandated on BART and all Public Transportation

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:47:24 PM

4-25-22

Good evening!

I am reaching out to all of you to voice that we need the Face COVID-19 Masks to be reinstated on BART and all public transportation for the safety of everyone and especially to our most vulnerable passengers, those with underline health conditions, disabilities, elderlies and young children without vaccines.

We have gotten this far with getting vaccinated and using the face masks and saving lives. Many can not get vaccinated and many continue to be vulnerable to getting severely sick if are exposed to the COVID-19.

My father is 93 years old. He has many underlining health illnesses. He has survived this COVID-19 with the VAX and staying masked when out and especially indoor in public transportation and other indoor areas.

Let us all continue to look out for one another to maintain our community safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Annette Montiel-Eison

Sent from Mail for Windows

From: Allie Bartas

To: <u>jeffrey.tumlin@sfmta.org</u>; <u>MTABoard@sfmta.org</u>; <u>mayorlondonbreed@sfgov.org</u>;

Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org; Grant.Colfax@sfgov.org; Naveena.bobba@sfdph.org;

 $\underline{\text{health.commission.dph@sfdph.org; kimi.watkins-tartt@acgov.org; Lihernandez@cityofberkeley.info;}} \\$

myvoice@actransit.org; eortiz@actransit.org; jyoung@actransit.org; dshaw@actransit.org;

cpeeples@actransit.org; jbeckles@actransit.org; jwalsh@actransit.org; BART Board; Debora Allen; Mark Foley;

Rebecca Saltzman; Robert Raburn; Elizabeth Ames; Janice Li; Bevan Dufty

Subject: We need mask mandates on public transit, NOW.

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:49:47 PM

Hello,

My name is Alexandra Bartas, and I'm a supporter of Senior and Disability Action. I live in San Francisco, and I'm emailing because I'm very concerned that our public transportation agencies have ended the requirement that masks be worn on public transportation. Unfortunately, COVID levels are rising in the San Francisco Bay Area—COVID has been confirmed to kill over 350 Americans a day, and it hospitalizes far more. COVID can easily spread on crowded buses, as well as in BART stations and small elevators. Many disabled people, seniors, people of color, low-income people, and essential workers all rely on public transit, and we need it to be safe. Will you listen to disabled people and seniors and reinstate the mask requirement on public transit?

From: Melinda Hue

To: Debora Allen; Mark Foley; Rebecca Saltzman; Robert Raburn; BART Board; Elizabeth Ames; Janice Li; Bevan

Dufty

Subject: Reinstate the mask requirement on public transit

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 6:20:02 PM

Hi,

My name is Melinda and I have been a lifelong BART rider and advocate. I use BART to commute to work and to get around the Bay Area. I believe that BART has been such an incredible asset to the Bay Area. My son who is four years old has discovered the joy of riding BART and will often ask to ride it recreationally.

I am dismayed that the mask mandate for transit has been dropped and I support BART Board President Rebecca Saltzman's mask mandate requirement proposal. I urge the BART Board to approve this mask mandate requirement.

Unlike some folks, I can make the choice to ride BART. While I certainly can afford to drive to work and pay to park my car, I make the choice to support public transit. However, I don't think I can continue to make this choice if there is no mask mandate, knowing the risks of COVID for my child who can't get vaccinated yet. Therefore, I implore the BART board to approve the mask mandate requirement so I can continue to support public transit and the Bay Area's recovery.

Sincerely, Melinda From: <u>no-reply@bart.gov</u> on behalf of <u>Chapman</u>

To: BART Board

Subject: BART Board of Directors Comment from Charles Chapman

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 6:26:08 PM

First Name: Charles Last Name: Chapman

Email: alohacharles@outlook.com

Phone: City: Oakland

State: Zip:

Subject: For full board: we need masking

Comment:

Masks = good sense Masks = good health Masks = good decision

The pandemic is not over regardless of what judges think and we the riders

need your support and protection

Thank you.

From: Marc Norton

To: <u>Debora Allen; Mark Foley; Rebecca Saltzman; Robert Raburn; Elizabeth Ames; Janice Li; Bevan Dufty; BART</u>

Board

Subject: Restore the Mask Mandate!

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 6:28:27 PM

You all know why. We need to protect the peoples' health. Do it. Now.

Marc Norton San Francisco Marc Norton Online (415) 648-2535 (landline)
 From:
 CATHERINE LERZA

 To:
 BART Board

 Subject:
 Mask policy

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 9:34:09 PM

Dear BART Board:

I urge you to restore the mask mandate as soon as possible. The pandemic is not over and many BART riders have health issues and are at risk of infection and illness. I was eager to get back onto mass transit after these two plus long years and was planning on riding BART regularly again. However, unless the mask mandate is restored, I will not do so.

This is a public health issue! Please make your policy with that in mind. Sincerely

Catherine Lerza 291 Lake Dr

Kensington 94708

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jeremiah Barba
To: BART Board
Subject: Don"t do this.

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 9:52:17 PM

Please don't reinstate a mask mandate. There is no scientific basis for it, and it'll just make you look foolish. If folks want to mask, they are welcome to. But it's April 2022 and mandates are useless. Many people must learn to accurately judge risk for themselves again. Masks are nothing more than a virtue signaling facial decoration. Please, don't do this.

Thanks,

Jeremiah

From: Jeremiah Barba

To: BART Board

Subject: Listen to the experts.

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 9:56:00 PM

 $\frac{https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/san-francisco-mask-mandate-17089220.php}{}$

 From:
 Sarah E

 To:
 BART Board

Subject: YES to reinstating a mask mandate on BART

Date: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 9:03:38 AM

Dear BART Board of Directors,

I am in favor of the proposal to reinstate a mask mandate on BART. The mandate is still necessary because of rising COVID case rates in the Bay Area and nationally. We need to protect the very young and the immunocompromised. I want everyone to feel safe in getting out of their private cars and back on BART.

Thanks,

Sarah Edelstein El Cerrito From: Katherine Schaff

To: BART Board

Subject: please keep mask protections

Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2022 3:16:02 PM

To the BART Board of Directors,

I've been a resident of San Francisco for over 15 years. I'm a voter and public health worker. I'm also a person with underlying health issues and so from a personal and professional standpoint, I am writing to ask BART to keep mask protections on trains and platforms.

I've had the ability to work from home for the duration of the pandemic, but many essential workers do not have this ability. Additionally, we know that essential workers are more likely to be people of color who already face greater risk of exposure to COVID. Keeping mask protections on BART will help reduce exposure and racial and health inequities. For others who do not own cars, are our elders, or have disabilities, BART may be the only option for getting around. As we can see, anytime we lift mask protections, COVID rates go up, putting all of these community members at risk.

Public health research is unequivocal. Vaccines are critical and help prevent hospitalization and death, but cannot fully eliminate the risk of COVID or more serious complications. We know that breakthrough infections are common, and while less serious, still pose a risk, especially for the immunocompromised, like myself. I've just started riding public transit again after refraining during the surge, but if mask protections are lifted, I'll either eliminate trips or try to get a ride from someone who will wear a mask.

Additionally, wearing masks can help us protect each other without interfering with local businesses. The false narrative of choosing between COVID protections and economic wellbeing is dangerous, as we now see that when workers are sick, businesses will close and lose money regardless of whether there is a shelter-in-place order.

In the midst of the worst public health crisis of our times, our decisions must reflect public health science. Masks save lives. They make it easier to get around on transit. They allow immunocompromised people some ability to leave their homes. And they are much more effective when more people wear them--if you are the only one wearing one, it's like driving the speed amongst many others who are drunk and speeding. Please center safety and health and keep the mask protections.

Thank you, Katherine Schaff, DrPH, MPH



PUBLIC COMMENT

BART Board Meeting

April 28, 2022

Item 9-A

From: <u>David D</u>

To: <u>VTA Board Secretary</u>
Cc: <u>BART Board</u>

Subject: VTA BART Tunnel design

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 10:21:32 AM

Good morning Chair Jones and VTA Board,

VTA is now saying: "... rising costs of commodities and labor are driving up the price tag. It's just the way the current environment is going and observing other mega projects, she said."

Switching from twin bore to large single bore has refused to accept <u>simple realities and common sense</u>.

- removing 3x soil and muck... = more cost, more risk
- adding 2x plus concrete... = more cost, more risk
- adding 2x plus forms and steel... = more cost, more risk
- adding 3x labor and services... = more cost, more risk
- adding more unnecessary GHG into the environment

Design drives costs.

Simplicity lowers risk.

You know this.

- 1) New hydrology data; leaks and delays in SF Metro tunnel at 100-ft depth, and exogenous economic factors could trigger a look at shallower design.
- 2) Use the FONSI to capitalize on EIRs and design work.
- 3) Reopen the RFPs to allow design/build twin bore with mined stations.
- 4) Reduce excavation, hauling, concrete, steel, forming, labor, time and environmental harm.
- 5) Lower risks of reaching beyond proven designs and technologies in San Jose unique soils.

Reopen the RFPs and reap the benefits. Get out in front of this.

Respectfully,

David Dearborn