

February 27, 2020

Lenny Mendonca, Chair
California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 95814
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Draft 2020 Business Plan Comments

Dear Chair Mendonca:

Golden Empire Transit District (GET) in Bakersfield supports the 2020 Business Plan as drafted, including the pursuit of a Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment for the high speed rail project. This Central Valley segment will leverage the maximum degree of connectivity to other rail services while project development continues in other parts of the state.

This interim operating segment, when coordinated with other improvements detailed in the Draft 2020 Business Plan, will create significant benefits for not just the citizens of the Central Valley, but for the citizens of the entire state of California. A service extended to Bakersfield, and a station here, provides important air quality improvements and economic opportunities for our community. The success of this early interim service is essential for implementing the envisioned statewide high speed rail system.

Specifically, GET is pleased to note on Page 70 of the Draft 2020 Business Plan that it is recommended that the Authority proceed with the acquisition of right-of-way necessary to extend the project south of Poplar Avenue to Bakersfield. As a property owner at the planned location of the Bakersfield station, GET is particularly anxious to expedite the conveyance of our property to the Authority.

GET presently operates and maintains its bus fleet and administrative duties out of a facility located at 1830 Golden State Ave. in Bakersfield. In order to remain operational at its current location at the present time and into the near future GET is preparing to make some significant improvements to our facilities. The planned improvements include \$5,280,000 in estimated electrical infrastructure improvements to support a future Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) fleet anticipated to be purchased in order to comply with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit Rule (ICT) that was adopted by CARB in December 2018. GET has done detailed planning of its bus fleet replacement requirements to come into compliance with the ICT. In doing so we have concluded that we need to plan to implement a mixed fleet of battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell technologies as neither technology is yet fully developed and dependable to meet our service requirements. As such, we will need not only electrical infrastructure, but also hydrogen fuel compressing capabilities to fuel the fuel cell buses.

On February 18, 2020 the GET Board of Directors awarded a contract to purchase five (5) hydrogen fuel cell buses in 2020 (our first purchase of ZEBs). We will need to implement fueling infrastructure to support these vehicles at an estimated cost of \$8 million to \$10 million dollars on top of the electrical

infrastructure improvements detailed above. We must scale the infrastructure improvements to service our entire fleet as incremental infrastructure improvements would be duplicative construction and cost prohibitive.

GET is presently working on a replacement schedule for additional ZEBs beginning in 2023 when we have twenty-four (24) buses that are scheduled for replacement. The exact phase-in of electric versus fuel cell is still in development and is subject to change as time and experience with both technologies progresses. The ICT requires that in 2029 and after 100% of our bus purchases are ZEB so that by 2040 our entire fleet is ZEB technology. GET must submit a plan to CARB by July 2020 regarding how we will comply with the ICT. Uncertainties regarding our facility are making it difficult to develop that plan. In addition, the types of support facilities we need are major investments that GET's Board of Director's are reluctant to make at its present location knowing we may be relocating.

GET is poised and ready to cooperate with the High Speed Rail Authority on the acquisition of our property for your project. Ideally, we would desire to be relocated by 2024, which is when we anticipate taking delivery of ZEBs ordered in 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft 2020 Business Plan. GET asks that you approve the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield operating segment and that your agency move ahead aggressively to get that segment built.

Sincerely,



Cindy Parra

Chair, Board of Directors

cc: GET Board of Directors
King King, CEO