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John Swiecki, AICP
Community Development Director
City of Brisbane
50 Park Place
Brisbane, CA 94005

Re: Development around the Bayshore Caltrain Station (Brisbane Baylands)

Dear Mr. Swiecki:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on future development around the Bayshore Caltrain station. We encourage the city to promote the redevelopment of this underutilized brownfield site with compact development that provides new homes at a range of incomes and creates walkable transit-friendly neighborhoods with a vibrant mix of homes, shops, offices, and open space. Such a development pattern will help address the region's housing crisis, provide opportunities for healthy living for residents and workers, support the local economy, relieve development pressure on the region's open spaces, and provide other environmental benefits.

Addressing the region's housing crisis

The Brisbane Baylands site offers one of the last large-site infill development opportunities in the Bay Area. Providing new homes for a range of incomes in a compact development style in this strategic location will help meet the region's significant housing needs. It will also allow more residents to live near where they work rather than face a grueling commute home, thus improving the quality of life for all Bay Area residents.

Providing healthy transportation choices

The land around the Bayshore Caltrain Station provides a unique opportunity to allow those who live and work in the area to access to an array of transportation choices, including heavy-rail, buses, biking, and walking. Numerous studies demonstrate that access to transportation choices results in high usage of those amenities. For example, according to a recent MTC study, Bay Area residents are ten times more likely to

use transit if they live and work within a half mile of a major transit stop (1). Likewise, San Francisco has documented a 96% increase in number of individuals biking since 2006, with highest usage in those areas where the city has invested in bicycling infrastructure (2). Increasing the use of transportation options improves community health outcomes, minimizes time stuck in traffic, helps ease the strain on the regional transportation network, and reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Supporting the local economy

By promoting compact, mixed-use development within the existing urbanized area, Brisbane could tap into an array of well-documented economic benefits (3). For example, studies show developing in focused growth patterns provide a savings of 9.2% in local lane-miles constructed and 11.8% in local road costs as well as 8.6% reductions in water and sewer infrastructure (4). These savings would benefit the whole region, with more resources available to build our local economies and improve our quality of life.

Providing environmental benefits

Jurisdictions around the Bay Area are increasingly recognizing the significant positive environmental effects of compact infill development. For example, in the City of Mountain View, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the city's General Plan 2030 concluded that providing more infill homes within the city would improve commute patterns, reduce overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions, and minimize the need for single-occupancy car trips.

Greenbelt Alliance's 2012 report *At Risk: The Bay Area Greenbelt* concluded that over 322,000 acres of open space—the equivalent of 10 cities the size of San Francisco—remain at risk of sprawl development in

¹ New Places, New Choices: Transit-Oriented Development in the San Francisco Bay Area, 2006 - Metropolitan Transportation Commission http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/tod/TOD_Book.pdf

² <http://www.sfbike.org/main/city-city-bicycle-count-report-shows-a-dramatic-96-increase-in-ridership/>

³ For examples, see:

Smart Growth America's *Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development* (2013) <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/building-better-budgets>

Center for Clean Air Policy's *Growing Wealthier: Smart Growth, Climate Change and Prosperity* (2011) <http://www.growingwealthier.info/index.aspx>

American Lung Association in California's *Land Use, Climate Change & Public Health Issue Brief* (2010) <http://www.lungusa.org/associations/states/california/assets/pdfs/advocacy/land-use-climate-change-and.pdf>

TransForm's *Windfall for All: How Connected, Convenient Neighborhoods Can Protect Our Climate and Safeguard California's Economy* (2009) <http://www.transformca.org/windfall-for-all>

Bartholomew, Winkelman, Walters, and Chen *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change* (2008) <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/growingcoolerCH1.pdf>

⁴ *TCRP Report 74: Costs of Sprawl*

the Bay Area (5). To ease development pressure on these lands, we must all work together to encourage infill development while we work to increase protections for our natural lands.

Conclusion

Compact walkable development around the Bayshore Caltrain station can provide significant environmental, social, and economic benefits to the City of Brisbane and the larger Bay Area region. We encourage the city to examine these benefits as it explores future land uses in this area.

Sincerely,



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⁵ <http://www.greenbelt.org/at-risk/>