UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

May 17, 2010

Mr. Eric Eidlin
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
201 Mission Street, Suite 1650
San Francisco, California 94105

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor, Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, California (CEQ #20100130)

Dear ~~Mr.~~ Eric Eidlin:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

EPA provided comments on the first Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for this project in a May 21, 2004 letter. EPA then reviewed a revised March 2009 DEIS and provided comments on April 27, 2009. We rated the revised DEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2). Our review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) finds that all of our concerns have been addressed. We again commend the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for seeking to provide public transportation options to residents of the Bay Area.

In our comments on the original and revised DEISs, we expressed concerns that low-income and/or minority communities could be impacted by changes in other transit services due to redirection of operations funding from local bus services to the BART extension. This could have impacts on these communities if they rely on local bus services. We commend VTA's commitment to maintaining service levels on other transportation modes when this project becomes operational and to improving BART-to-bus connections in the corridor. We also support the recommendations of the operations analysis, noted in the FEIS, which calls for VTA to focus services in areas where ridership potential is highest, including low-income communities.

Due to the ongoing planning and environmental review process for the segment of the proposed California High Speed Rail system that is proposed to be located in the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor project area, we recommend that FTA and VTA continue regular coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration and the California High Speed Rail Authority to ensure compatibility of the two projects.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. When the ROD is signed, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Mulvihill (415-947-3554 or mulvihill.carolyn@epa.gov) of my staff.

Sincerely,

Connell Dunning

Connell Dunning, Transportation Team Supervisor
Environmental Review Office
Communities and Ecosystems Division

cc: Tom Fitzwater, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
David Valenstein, Federal Railroad Administration
Dan Leavitt, California High Speed Rail Authority