



February 26, 2018

Regional Transit Board of Directors
Henry Li, General Manager/CEO
1400 29th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Re: Item 7 - Oppose Limiting Public Participation

Dear Board of Directors and Mr. Li:

The Sacramento Transit Riders Union (Sac TRU) opposes what we see as an intentional and systematic reduction of the public's ability to participate in SacRT Board Meetings. Public participation affords stakeholders the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. **We ask that the Board vote not to amend Title III of the Sacramento Regional Transit District Administrative Code.**

Under the leadership of Henry Li, we have seen SacRT increase efforts to engage public participation and consider public comments in the decision-making process. This item seems to be in direct contradiction of Mr. Li's efforts to increase public participation and we are confused why it is being pursued at this time. SacTRU members have found the opportunity to comment at public meetings incredibly rewarding and appreciate the attention and consideration that the Board and staff gives our member's comments and the robust discussions that follow. We believe including the public in the decision-making process will lead to better transit choices and more enduring support for the final outcomes of this process.

Last month the Board voted to reduce the number of public meetings from twice a month to mostly once a month, and this item would further limit the public's ability meaningfully participate in the decision-making process with the board. Public trust is eroded if outreach appears to be just "going through the motions." An ideal result of public engagement is that participants believe decision makers have respectfully heard and will carefully consider their perspectives, whatever the final decision.

The item states that this is technically not a violation of any laws that govern how an agency conduct public meetings, such as the Brown Act. However, it does seem be an unnecessary change that will undermine the public's faith in the agency's and Board's decision-making process. Our members have been participating in RT's meetings for years and have always been respectful of the process. We believe more public participation will result in better public policy. Better staff outreach and communication with the public, such as was done with the Watt/I-80 project, can help reduce the number of confused and concerned citizens who come to Board meetings, which we saw with the confusion of the property sales that have happened in the last few months. The answer is not to limit those discussions, but to move them to more appropriate venues so that input can be used constructively.

We support Henry Li's increased outreach to members of the public through a variety of events and communication methods. We oppose this unnecessary limiting of public participation. **We ask that the Board vote not to amend Title III of the Sacramento Regional Transit District Administrative Code.** Please include this letter in the public record.

Sincerely,

Sac TRU