**Subject:** Public Comment to February 19, 2021, VTA Board of Directors Workshop
**Date:** Thu, 18 Feb 2021 14:02:03 -0800
**From:** Matt Kennedy <mattchookennedy@gmail.com>
**To:** board.secretary@vta.org

VTA Board members,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer additional information to the Board in making a decision on the future of the Light Rail system. Specifically, I would like to address the risks and challenges of "Exclusive ROW Transit".

As the President of LoopWorks, the company creating the Milpitas Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system, I would like to address the risks listed in the slide presentation. While they do present big risks for traditional mass transit systems with which VTA is familiar, PRT technology would dramatically reduce the risks involved:

•Multi-billion dollar infrastructure investment. While the presentation notes that PRT meets speed and capacity requirements, full grade separation would be required. PRT in Milpitas will be fully grade separated, but without requiring ground-level ROW. If the entire 42 miles of LRT were replaced with PRT technology, the cost is estimated at $1.26B using a $15M/mile one way cost ($15M X 2 directions X42 miles). Additional cost would be incurred if the LRT infrastructure were replaced, but would be reduced by the value of that infrastructure on the used market or scrap recycling value.

•Long implementation timeline. LoopWorks expects the Milpitas PRT system to be operational within 5 years. Thus, VTA could expect a similar time horizon as that for automation (5-15 years).

•Major disruption of construction. While building and protecting ground-level ROW for mass transit technologies would involve major disruptions, PRT only needs a few square feet of ground-level disrupting every 60 - 90 feet. Such minimal ground-level impact combined with quick construction time means the disruption will be far less.

•Lengthy up-front planning, outreach, permitting. Again, securing ground-level ROW is far more challenging that securing necessary easements for PRT.

•Proprietary solutions, emerging technologies. While existing PRT installations use proprietary technologies, the Milpitas PRT system will use an "open source" technology for the hardware and a software control system from a Bay Area company (Transit Control Solutions, Inc.). PRT has been technically and financially viable for the past 40 years, but institutional inertia and fear of political consequences has impeded progress. So, although it could be considered as "emerging", the Milpitas version of PRT is well within the abilities of current technologies.

Two additional points:

- While LRT trains can speed up to 55 mph, their average speed is only 15 - 25 mph. Because PRT vehicles go non-stop from origin to destination, average speeds are closer to the design limit of 40 mph.
- Rather than replace the LRT system, LoopWorks recommends that the Board consider using the technology to serve as feeders to the existing LRT stations.

For more detailed information, please note:
· Our website (MilpitasPRT.com) will answer most questions.
· In-depth questions are answered in one of our many documents including the LoopWorks Business Plan, Bylaws, and large-format poster of the project.
· If you cannot easily find the answer to your question, please call me at 323-788-5865. Leave a voice mail message if I do not answer immediately and leave the best time to return your call and I will get back to you with an answer or an on-line place with the answer.

In the words of President Biden, “We’ve already waited too long to deal with this climate crisis. We see it with our own eyes. We feel it. We know it in our bones. And it’s time to act.”

Best regards,
Matt Kennedy

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