



October 2, 2019

The Honorable Mayor Tran:

I have been a technologist in the field of public transportation now for almost 45 years. Of this time, I spent 25 years at SF BART. During my early years, I was involved in developing cutting edge transportation control technology for the BART system. Then later, I was tasked with managing BART's R&D Division that studied and reported on developing and promising transportation technologies for BART's consideration.

In this latter role, one of the subjects of investigation was the viability and potential of personal rapid transit and group rapid transit modes of passenger and goods transport. What I surprisingly discovered was that, if properly developed and deployed, these systems can achieve a cost-benefit that is approximately four times better than what can be achieved by more conventional means. Although I retired from BART to pursue other opportunities before the results of my report were given serious consideration by the management at BART, the conclusions I reached stand, and I continue to believe that PRT and GRT systems can become a mode of transport that is superior to other more conventional forms of transport.

That being said, I only have limited exposure to the project being discussed in the City of Milpitas. It is difficult for me to ascertain whether the relatively small system that is being discussed can be built and operated by a non-profit entity. With the relatively small range of coverage of the system planned, the question I would have is whether the ridership will be sufficient to justify the cost. I do believe, and you should understand, that if this initial system is being viewed as an initial deployment of PRT to be later expanded to connected to other PRT lines and networks, the cost-benefit will improve.

While engineering and economic analyses supports a strong case for PRT, the concept has struggled to achieve wide acceptance since its initial introduction at Morgantown, West Virginia in the mid 1970's. Your progressive leadership for the City of Milpitas will serve as an invaluable service to the world of transportation providers and users. I wish you much success.

Yours very truly,

Eugene Nishinaga
President and CEO
Transit Control Solutions, Inc.