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Clerk of the Napa Superior Court  
By: C. Brennan  
Deputy

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Napa Superior Court  
Court Executive Office

July 19, 2017

The Honorable Boessenecker  
Superior Court of California  
County of Napa  
825 Brown Street  
Napa, CA 94559

**RE: Response to the Grand Jury 2016-17 Final Report titled Napa Valley Transportation Agency Vision 2040 Plan – County Traffic Problems Need Comprehensive Plan with Measurable Results**

Dear Judge Boessenecker:

The Grand Jury report referenced above requests three separate responses. This response is specific to the Napa Valley Transportation Authority's (NVTA) Board of Directors. The NVTA Executive Director's and County Board of Supervisor's response will be sent separately.

The NVTA board appreciates the efforts undertaken by the Grand Jury and the work it does on behalf of the citizens of Napa County. We further acknowledge that its responsibilities are challenging and appreciate that the members of the Grand Jury are dedicated to completing a comprehensive review of NVTA's work product and that the Grand Jury is committed to developing an honest and thorough evaluation to ensure Napa's communities are being well served.

**Findings:**

**Finding 1** A majority of interviewees view the Vision 2040 Report's proposed highway improvement lists, bike lanes, and new buses as insufficient to solve Napa County's traffic congestion problem.

RESPONSE: The NVTA Board of Directors neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding and concurs with the NVTA Executive Director's July 19, 2017, letter responding to the Grand Jury report.

**Finding 2** No quantifiable measurements are in place for the Board or the public to assess Napa County congestion management goals, determine results on a timeline, or evaluate the efficacy of NVTA budgets and spending.

RESPONSE: The NVTA Board agrees with this finding in part. NVTA staff works with Napa Valley's jurisdictions to develop long range project and program lists that meet NVTA Board established goals in the Vision 2040 plan. Projects approved for funding by the NVTA board are selected from these lists. The NVTA board agrees that some of the Vision 2040 goals are difficult to quantify.

**Finding 3** The NVTA does an inadequate public relations job of educating the community of all their responsibilities, activities and progress toward achieving goals.

RESPONSE: The NVTA Board of Directors agrees with this finding in part. The NVTA Board of Directors agrees with the NVTA Executive Director's July 19, 2017, letter responding to the Grand Jury report. The Board of Directors recently authorized a new full time Public Information Officer position to ramp up the agency's public communications efforts. The Board also acknowledges the recent work completed by NVTA staff in this area, but recognizes that outreach efforts need to be sustained and innovative communication techniques be employed to ensure that NVTA is clearly communicating to all members of Napa Valley's communities.

**Finding 4** The NVTA needs to better utilize data and travel demand software to (a) project future transportation conditions, (b) forecast the need for and the potential effectiveness of transportation projects and infrastructure improvements, and (c) identify the impact of land use development.

RESPONSE: The NVTA Board of Directors neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding. The NVTA Board of Directors believes that the discretion for determining an approach to travel demand is highly technical and defers to the expertise of NVTA staff members in coordination with consultants and Napa Valley jurisdictions' transportation professionals. The Board of Directors has approved funding for various modeling activities and is supportive of the Executive Director's approach to balancing outcomes with the agency's limited resources. The Board further encourages staff to collaborate with other transportation agencies to ensure the agency is up to date on best practices in a number of areas, including travel demand modeling practices.

**Finding 5** The most salient suggested actions in V2040 were made by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Napa County Farm Bureau.

RESPONSE: The NVTA Board of Directors neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding. The NVTA Board takes comments from NVTA committees and members of the public very seriously and works closely with staff to incorporate comments into NVTA's plans and practices.

**Finding 6** The NVTA is missing opportunities to promote Napa County as a test market for transportation technology companies investing in new research and development.

RESPONSE: The NVTA Board of Directors neither agrees nor disagrees. The NVTA has no jurisdiction over the County's streets, roads, and highways. We encourage

NVTA staff to reach out to technology groups and organizations and to identify proven technologies that can improve how transportation is deployed in Napa Valley. Individual board members are also actively researching technologies such as autonomous vehicles and supportive of partnering with organizations to bring technologies to Napa. While the Board is enthusiastic about emerging technologies, technology development falls outside the scope of the agency's responsibilities.

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1.** By November 30, 2017, the Napa County Board of Supervisors form a multidisciplinary task force that includes traffic, economic, employment, and housing experts to make recommendations for the comprehensive planning, innovative solutions to traffic congestion and funding sources.

RESPONSE: The Grand Jury requested that the Napa Board of Supervisors respond to this recommendation, therefore, the NVTA Board of Directors has no comment.

**Recommendation 2.** The NVTA Board set clear expectations, determine goals, and timelines to establish quantifiable traffic congestion performance targets with measurable results and annual progress reports to the public, starting in January 2018.

RESPONSE: This recommendation will be implemented. The Board of Directors will work with NVTA staff and its Technical Advisory Committee to re-establish goals and objectives and to identify measurable targets as part of the next countywide transportation plan, which is scheduled for adoption in 2020.

**Recommendation 3.** The NVTA seek new, dependable sources of funding ideas specifically for traffic congestion improvement actions by July 2018.

RESPONSE: This recommendation has been implemented. The NVTA Board of Directors concurs with the NVTA Executive Director's July 19, 2017, letter responding to the Grand Jury report.

**Recommendation 4.** The NVTA prioritize and approve future expenditures based on quantifiable and achievable short and long range goals, starting in July, 2018.

RESPONSE: This recommendation is already implemented. The NVTA Board of Directors concurs with the NVTA Executive Director's response to the Grand Jury dated July 19, 2017.

**Recommendation 5.** The NVTA test new technologies and traffic management software starting in 2017.

RESPONSE: NVTA disagrees with and respectfully declines to implement this recommendation, as it is neither warranted nor reasonable. Using public funds to test new technologies is highly risky, and the NVTA Board has a fiduciary responsibility to

ensure tax dollars are spent on their intended purpose. The NVTA Board concurs with the NVTA Executive Director's July 19, 2017, letter responding to the Grand Jury report and underscores that the NVTA does not manage traffic and therefore testing "traffic management software" is an inappropriate use of NVTA revenues.

**Recommendation 6.** By January 2018, the NVTA have a plan to promote Napa County as an ideal test market for companies investing in transportation technology and market research and development.

RESPONSE: NVTA disagrees with and respectfully declines to implement this recommendation, as it is neither warranted nor reasonable. NVTA does not have resources to encourage the development of new technologies. The NVTA Board of Directors encourages staff members to use its connections to partner with other agencies and private sector firms, provided that the agency identifies grant sources for this purpose in order to minimize risks to the agency's financial standing.

The NVTA Board of Directors appreciates the work that the Grand Jury does, and invites any further questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. White", written in a cursive style.

Peter White  
NVTA Board of Directors, Chair

cc: NVTA Board of Directors  
County of Napa Board of Supervisors