

**HSR City Council Committee****Members**

Patrick Burt
Larry Klein
Nancy Shepherd
Gail Price

Special Meeting

Thursday, May 20, 2010
8:00 am – 10:30 am (special start time)
Council Conference Room
Civic Center
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA

Minutes

Mayor Burt will arrive late.

1. Oral Communications

Public Comment: Greg Conlon said he has been following this process for three years. He wants the job to get done correctly.

Public Comment: Jack Ringham said Palo Alto should take a position as soon as possible, whether it wants a station versus an underground option.

2. Approval of Minutes from the April 15, 2010 and April 29, 2010 Meetings

CM Shepherd moved to approve. CM Price seconded the motion. All ayes. Minutes approved.

3. Presentation by Hatch Mott Peer Review of Alternatives Analysis

Steve Emslie introduced John Townsend from Hatch Mott McDonald, who provided the alignment and peer review of the High Speed Rail Authority's Alternative Analysis.

Mr. Townsend said his organization analyzed the alignment and peer review of HSRA's Alternative Analysis. The berm/retaining wall alternative was not carried over. He also said the deep tunnel option for South Palo Alto was retained, but much of the tunnel will be in a covered trench. In the Deep Tunnel Option, there would be no station in Palo Alto because the tunnel is too deep below the existing station.



HSR City Council Committee

Mr. Townsend stated cross-sections at particular locations are not shown. We need more detail to see what cross-section is used at specific locations.

Mr. Townsend explained how a cut-and-cover tunnel would be situated 20-feet below San Francisquito Creek, while a bored-tunnel would be situated 85-feet below San Francisquito Creek.

Mr. Townsend stated there has been no discussion on construction impacts at this point in time. In terms of rail operations, the whole corridor would be shared. Caltrain would run 10-trains per hour, while High Speed Rail would also run 10-trains per hour.

Mr. Townsend said regarding cost, a cut-and-cover tunnel, a U-wall and a bored-tunnel are the most expensive options per mile.

Mr. Townsend stated in summary, all options are feasible from an engineering point of view; however alignment is not specific to Palo Alto.

CM Price asked for clarification that there was no clear methodology in assuming cost, to which Mr. Townsend confirmed.

Chair Klein asked if we can really make any sensible comments, given the large amount of incomplete information in the document.

Mr. Townsend said it would be better to make some comments, than none at all.

Mr. Emslie introduced Jeff Smith, an Environmental Analyst with whom Palo Alto is working with.

Chair Klein said he is curious about cost estimates. He asked if these figures seemed accurate, based on Mr. Townsend's experience.

Mr. Townsend responded yes.

Chair Klein inquired if Palo Alto High School would still be viable. Mr. Townsend answered that possibility has not been looked at yet in terms of noise.



HSR City Council Committee

Mr. Smith said with the documents we currently have in our possession, there is not enough information to know the full effects.

CM Shepherd asked if a deep tunnel option would be used, will there be a cost for an at-grade option for Caltrain.

Mr. Townsend answered yes.

Chair Klein asked if there is sufficient information to make a decision.

Mr. Smith said not a detailed one. We cannot make decisions as to what is preferred yet, just what is feasible.

Mr. Townsend showed maps/visuals of different options at various locations throughout Palo Alto.

Chair Klein asked if there are any options that would require reconstruction of Oregon Expressway.

Mr. Townsend answered yes, with the cut-and-cover option.

CM Shepherd asked if the aerial viaduct option has been eliminated for Menlo Park.

Mr. Townsend responded yes.

Rita Wespi commented that certain options will require taking of lanes of traffic – she questioned if we really want to do that.

Beth Bunnenberg, representing the Palo Alto Historical Association, stated the Palo Alto Unified High School District vote unanimously to preserve buildings and landmarks within the study area. Their recommendation is a deep tunnel option.

Nadia Naik commented that the Mountain View City Council will be reviewing the Alternatives Analysis at their next City Council meeting.



HSR City Council Committee

Jack Ringham said there is a significant omission with the ROW acquisition cost associated with each alternative. Temporary acquisition of property can do permanent damage.

Greg Conlon emphasized the most important element at this point is to create a business plan. We need to determine the value per acre in downtown Palo Alto.

Leanna Hunt stated the realtor community is very concerned. The City should investigate noise impacts.

Hinda Sack said there is no issue of a large wall – there would just be a wall covering the wheel-well. She wondered if there is an economy scale for a below-grade station.

Mr. Townsend stated that obviously a deep-station is much more difficult to build and would not be cost effective.

Mayor Burt arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Chair Klein asked how land-use costs will be affected. He wondered if there would be a neighborhood study.

Mr. Townsend responded that it has been proven that any time a metro system is built, land-use around and near the station goes up in value because people realize the benefits of being close to a public transportation system.

CM Shepherd established that freight trains would run at-grade in all scenarios, other than a cut-and-cover option and a U-wall.

Chair Klein asked what the next steps are.

Mr. Emslie said information will evolve. The information we have so far will be brought to Council on Monday.

Mr. Emslie said even though we are missing information, our recommendation to Council is to keep all alternative options on the table until they are developed to a higher level of engineering.



HSR City Council Committee

CM Price said we need to reassure the community and let them know what we are doing and where the process is going.

James Keene said establishing the significance of the Alternatives Analysis is very crucial. There will be a tendency to weave these comments into some sort of policy, but we might not get there because we are in a very early stage of the process.

4. Discussion of SB 965

Mr. Emslie said this bill would de-couple funding of High Speed Rail and the electrification of Caltrain.

Mayor Burt said we proposed some changes and Caltrain has accepted them.

Chair Klein asked what the proposal is to recommend to full Council.

Mayor Burt responded we support in concept the notion that SB 965 would allow for expenditures of funds for segment projects that would not pre-determine whether High Speed Rail would or would not be built on the Peninsula.

Chair Klein emphasized we should not just refer to SB 965.

Mr. Keene asked if we should adjust the language changes on our own or in tandem with Caltrain.

Mayor Burt responded that we should do both, and submit our changes to Senator Simitian's office.

Rita Wespi commented the public cannot follow along just yet, because a lot is happening behind the scenes.

CM Shepherd stated we would like to see when High Speed Rail dollars are awarded to Caltrain.

Mayor Burt said we should additionally recommend to Caltrain that language be strengthened, so that after this bill goes through, those



HSR City Council Committee

funds would pass through to Caltrain upgrades if High Speed Rail were not completed. We may want to include that concept in the legislation.

Mayor Burt motioned to create a policy statement, along with Caltrain being able to keep their funding. CM Price seconded the motion.

Chair Klein said we should review the language before we send it out.

Mayor Burt stated the budget does not include grade separations for Caltrain – that would be a future concept.

A vote for the motion was held. All ayes. Motion passed.

5. Discussion of Proposed Corridor Study (referred by City Council 5/17/10)

CM Price raised the issue of what our vision for this corridor actually is. This would help us package our position in Palo Alto – including community values, etc.

CM Price motioned that we allocate resources for a corridor study in Palo Alto to determine our collective values. CM Shepherd seconded the motion.

CM Shepherd stated we need a shared vision.

Chair Klein stated he opposes the motion. This is premature since we do not have all the information necessary. It would not be a good allocation of resources, funding, etc.

Mayor Burt questioned how this study would compare to resources we are allocating. He asked how various alternatives we are presenting would be integrated with a corridor study.

Curtis Williams said we do not have any additional resources to dedicate to this kind of study.

Mr. Emslie said he feels it would be good to conduct a corridor study even with the ambiguities of the Alternatives Analysis.



HSR City Council Committee

Mr. Keene stated there is a lot of reactive work we are going to have to do as a city. There is a schedule that we are not aware of that we are going to have to deal with. This would not just be a corridor study – this would be a change to the entire Comprehensive Plan. The big question is how we get what the tradeoffs are, so we could realistically support it.

Mayor Burt wondered about the scope of the study – there are certain aspects that we are not able to address.

Leanna Hunt said it is paramount we receive much more staff input than what we have gotten so far.

Nadia Naik said she understands the concern for funding, but we need to find implications of grade separations and electrification.

Tony Carrasco stated he supports a corridor study. This would determine traffic impacts, neighborhood desires, etc.

Hinda Sack said she supports a corridor study.

Rita Wespi stated a corridor study would be good for the community. It would be a good strategy.

Mr. Keene said a corridor study is a good idea, but we have to be clear as to what we want so we can start soon. He stated that money is not an issue.

Mr. Williams said he supports the fundamental idea of it, but his thought is to create a scope of work, cost, etc., and then present his findings to determine if a study would be feasible.

Mayor Burt motioned the Committee should recommend to the Council that they request staff to return to Council within 30-days with a scope, cost and prioritization of tasks of a corridor study as it relates to High Speed Rail. Chair Klein seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion passed.

Chair Klein left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.



HSR City Council Committee

6. Review and Consideration of Core Message for Peninsula Cities Consortium

Mayor Burt said since we do not have a scheduled meeting next week, he suggested the Committee form a Subcommittee of two members to work on this document.

Mayor Burt motioned to recommend to the City Council that the Committee work on the PCC Core Message with Palo Alto's newly adopted Guiding Principles and refine and clarify elements of the PCC Core Message. CM Shepherd seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion passed.

7. Updates and Information Items

None

8. Future Meetings and Agendas

Next meeting is two weeks from this date.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, listening assistive devices are available in the Council Chambers and Council Conference Room. Sign language interpreters will be provided upon request with 72 hours advance notice.