



## HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMITTEE

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Special Meeting  
July 1, 2010

Chairperson Klein called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: Klein (Chair), Burt, Shepherd, Price

Absent: none

Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager introduced Rob Braulik the new High Speed Rail (HSR) Project Manager and Richard Hackmann, HSR Intern who will support Mr. Braulik.

### 1. Oral Communications

Bill Cutler from Park Boulevard said that with the initial analysis complete they should take a big picture look at the project. He said there were three important components, one was to articulate community values, provide assurance the alternatives are inclusive enough, and lastly to have an evaluation process in place to choose a good solution. He expressed concern about how the solution criteria would be evaluated.

Greg Conlin encouraged the Committee to continue to study the cost of the alternatives and the funding issues the California High Speed Rail Authority would have with the alternatives. He said there was a \$3 billion differential between Menlo Park and Atherton. The elevated structure would cost less than the trench. He said easier HSR routes existed along Highways 280 or 101.

Nadia Naik discussed some technical memos that had not been made available to the public by the California High Speed Rail Authority. She said the next technical memo was due on June 30, 2010. She wanted the committee to ask for another set.

2. Approval of Minutes from the June 3, 9, and corrected June 17 meetings

Council Member Shepherd said she had submitted corrections that were not included. She said the June 17, 2010 minutes reported that all items on the agenda were continued. She said most items were completed on June 17, 2010. The corridor study was the only item that was continued.

Mayor Burt asked if all other items had been completed.

Council Member Shepherd said there was discussion about letters to the High Speed Rail Authority and discussion about Caltrain providing a presentation to the Committee. She was not at the meeting on the June 9, 2010 and would not be able to vote for those minutes.

**MOTION:** Council Member Price moved, seconded by Council Member Shepherd to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2010 and 9, 2010 meetings, and the corrected minutes from the June 17, 2010 meeting. (as amended)

**MOTION PASSED:** 4-0

3. Review of Rail Corridor Study Scope of Services

Planning Director Curtis Williams spoke regarding the Scope of Services Study. He said it would help inform the High Speed Rail deliberations in a policy sense. In the longer term it would meld with the Comprehensive Plan update. The overall intent was to provide some vision of community values and project character issues. He said there were three parts to the study. The first part was the context of the Comprehensive Plan policies and integrating them into the discussions. The second part was to update the goals and policies around the rail corridor issue. Lastly, the study would provide estimates of Staff and Consultant resources. This phase was 4-6 months to a finished draft EIR on High Speed Rail. They could then start phase two which would be a technical analysis. Phase two would evaluate land use constraints and opportunities, overall planning for neighborhood development, linkages to open space, mixed use potential, transportation components, pedestrian bike travel links, urban design constraints and opportunities, and three alternative land use and transportation scenarios. It would take approximately six months to undertake the process. Staff would then take that information and use it to develop an alternative recommendation for land use and transportation and urban design in the corridor. All of this information will be incorporated into Comprehensive Plan and the Corridor Study. The last part, phase three would take three to

four months. The estimate did not include the environmental review. He gave a summary of total project time and cost estimates, saying it would be about 13-16 months and about \$200,000. He said it would take a couple of months to hire someone so the time line would begin once that person starts. He said Staff worked on community outreach with the suggestion to set up a task force of members from different interested groups to help the community work through the process. He felt this would be a better process than having many meetings with many different multiple boards. He said they would discuss a High Speed Rail Station and the City's policy toward that, though a specific element for this would not be included. He said this was scheduled to go to Council on July 12, 2010. Council budgeted \$90,000 for the fiscal year; they could also take about \$50,000 from the Comprehensive Plan project. He said that was a total of \$140,000 to cover the economic study and about half of it was for this study. They would need approximately \$100,000 in additional funds to get through process. Staff would get more detailed with Council's direction.

Council Member Price asked about the environmental component to the Rail Corridor Study being related to the Comprehensive Plan, she thought it should require an Environmental Impact Review (EIR).

Mr. Williams said it didn't require one, but a program EIR could be included. It might not be called that, or be at a level of detail to a specific parcel.

Council Member Price said it was an update not a start from scratch. She wanted to truncate some of the potential cost. If it were closely linked to the Comprehensive Plan it could apply to this as well.

Mr. Williams that was Staff's thought as well.

Council Member Price said she liked the detail of the report, but wanted to know how Staff thought the phases would overlap.

Mr. Williams said some things could overlap. Some things may also need to be revisited. It was generally a linear proposal but there were components that could shift around.

Council Member Price asked if Staff anticipated the part-time Planner allocations starting work prior to a detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) for other resources.

Mr. Williams said the planner was already designated and could start shortly.

Council Member Price said the implementation would not be deferred then.

Mr. Williams said they could start now.

Council Member Shepherd asked if this was coming from Planning and not High Speed Rail Staff. She wanted to confirm that questions about the Corridor Study should go to the Planning Director.

Mr. Williams confirmed that questions should be directed to him. He said that Planning and the City Managers Office would work closely together but it was a Planning responsibility.

Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager said that the City Manager's office would be the central project coordinator.

Council Member Shepherd said she understood the preliminary economic study was already approved, she wondered if it could go further into complementing some of the community interests in a station study.

Mr. Williams said the economic study would discuss the potential economic benefits and downfalls to a station to the extent information were available. He said that generally be more of a policy discussion versus a detailed station plan.

Council Member Shepherd said it would be a quick study for economic impact but it would not discuss the station option.

Mr. Williams said the report would have some information to help develop a policy. It would not however, have design specifics as part of an economic study.

Council Member Shepherd said that it will help go into that period where the High Speed Rail Authority will ask Cities whether or not they want a station.

James Keene, City Manager said there would be aspects of many subject areas but in a general manner.

Council Member Shepherd said it would be wise to pull that part out to accelerate the process.

Mr. Emslie said the next set of technical documents will be focused on the station.

Council Member Shepherd said she wanted to be prepared for those documents. She asked if the task force will have a Comprehensive Plan in addition to or part of the report.

Mr. Williams they don't have a task force for the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Shepherd asked if there would be facilitators for the community meetings.

Mr. Williams said he wasn't sure if it would be the consultant or facilitators.

Mayor Burt said he wanted to discuss the sequence of both the corridor study and the immediate tasks that will feed into the study. The economic analysis will start immediately and would take three months but Staff wasn't planning on waiting until the end of three months, instead they would build the knowledge base as they went along.

Mr. Williams agreed that Staff would build their knowledge base as they progressed.

Mayor Burt confirmed that they would get technical documents on the station within the next month or two.

Mr. Emslie said it would likely be in the next month.

Mayor Burt it would be August by the time it was done. He suggested use of a prior analysis as an early set of reference documents to allow us to see the station with some concept of possible physical designs.

Mr. Williams agreed.

Mayor Burt suggested that Phase one would be commencing early was the vision and context. He confirmed that Phase One work could start prior to hiring a contractor.

Mr. Williams confirmed that it could.

Council Member Price said she heard a corridor study had been done in the 1990s.

Williams wasn't aware if it had a station or not. He recalled that a study on the El Camino corridor was done, but he did not remember a rail corridor study.

Mayor Burt confirmed there was no study in the 1990s.

Council Member Price confirmed that station concepts included possibilities of not only University but also California Avenue and San Antonio.

Mr. Williams said they should look at the parameters for all of those, so far the conversations had been University Avenue.

Council Member Price said that all work would be folded together as a foundation for the early Phase One work.

Mr. Williams agreed that it would.

Mayor Burt said he thought the documentation was specific to the High Speed Rail stop station, not the impacts of the High Speed Rail on the various stations.

Mr. Williams said he thought it was correct.

Mayor Burt said they had two aspects to station consideration. Would University Avenue Station be a High Speed Rail stop, and the corridor study would be about the various stations from Palo Alto's point of view.

Mr. Williams said that California Avenue had been mentioned at other meetings

Council Member Klein said it could be called the Rail Corridor Community task Force. He asked how it would be formed.

Mr. Williams said it would be a Staff driven task force. Staff would identify what the member representation would be, but then it would probably go before Council.

Council Member Klein asked if it should be a Brown Act Task Force.

Mr. Williams said they would have to discuss it. He thought the meetings should be public anyway.

Council Member Klein confirmed that it was not yet clear whether or not Staff or Council would appoint the members.

Mr. Williams confirmed that it wasn't clear, although they had anticipated a Staff appointed task force.

Mayor Burt thought going to Council was to endorse how Staff intended to compose a task force or was it to have Council affirm appointments. Council affirming appointments would drive a Brown Act.

Mr. Keene said the start up can be done fairly quickly.

Council Member Klein said there were some difficult policy decisions to make as a result he didn't believe it would be appointed quickly.

Council Member Price said this would not delay the background research; it needs to continue to move along.

Mr. Williams said that was correct.

Council Member Klein said the task force issue raises the question of who reviews the work. Currently there were three different groups prior to getting to the City Council: the Task Force, the Planning & Transportation Commission and the High Speed Rail Committee. He asked which group would review the Staff Reports.

Mr. Williams said the direction would be to work with the Task Force primarily. Until such point as they need a recommendation the Planning Commission and the High Speed Rail Committee.

Council Member Shepherd asked if this review was going to be similar to the time a Task Force reviewed the Comprehensive Plan. She wanted to know if they could use the same model for processing information.

Council Member Price said that was a large task force with around 50 members.

Mr. Keene added that managing decisions between many groups would create a need for a formalized way of connecting the community with the Task Force. A technical advisory group could be another sounding board or location for Staff work to receive feedback. He recommended a Staff driven task force to stay on any type of schedule. He said that Staff was building a schedule on the website to cross link with some activities. Spending this amount of money would create generalized planning tools that would not be definitive. How Staff will manage evolving alternatives will be key. Ultimately we want something that will work with Caltrain even if High Speed Rail never happens.

Mr. Williams said that they didn't want too much technical analysis, but still required some alternatives.

Lynda (A Public Speaker) suggested a creative approach. She said she was open to the idea of a California Avenue station. If they don't know we are considering that they won't know to include it in the information.

Bill Cutler said the greatest failure would be lack of adequate stakeholder involvement. An explicit stakeholder engagement plan is needed, part of which would be to make a role for a task force community liaison, and to add more than nine members from stakeholder groups.

Tony Carasso liked the corridor study. He thought the task force should report to the High Speed Rail Committee. Planning & Transportation would not have that deep knowledge to provide feedback. The City Manager said it would need flexibility because it changes fast, the consultant needed to be nimble.

Nadia Naik said that the City of Mountain View was considering a potential station. She added that consistency of community meetings was important. She requested a digest document to update the public.

Rita Wespi agreed that outreach was important in each phase. All tasks should be considered for money allocation, including outreach. She discussed some different rail designs as part of a legislative update.

Mayor Burt discussed the Community Liaison concept, he said they many want to look at a previous process that identified the specific stakeholder groups. He said that representative could then define their own set of community values for their own interests; it leverages the work of the group really well. Unfortunately, it also took a long time. The challenge was now how to learn from the good and bad practices.

Council Member Shepherd said she would be interested to hear how the stake holders were brought into the process on the 12<sup>th</sup>. She asked for clarification about a traffic study.

Mr. Williams said it was difficult to know what level in the process it would be completed in. A preliminary level should into enough detail to know how neighborhoods would be affected, and what the impact of increased development would be.

Council Member Price said Phase One and Two would overlap so it would be to the City's advantage to complete them within one to six months. Compressing and accelerating the process was important. The draft EIR in due to be completed in December 2010 or January 2011.

**MOTION:** Council Member Price moved, seconded by Council Member Shepherd that the High Speed Rail Committee recommends the City Council approve the Draft Rail Corridor Study and that the item goes before the Council on July 12, 2010.

Council Member Price said they had discussed the study many times it was important and relevant.

**INCORPORATED INTO THE MOTION WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAKER AND SECONDER** that the community task force shall be appointed by Staff, advisory to Staff, designed as representing stake holder groups, and hold open meetings.

Council Member Shepherd said she thought this would be vetted more between now and the Council meeting.

Mayor Burt said that his goal was to speed up the process. Council appointments take too long. The task force could still be open meetings, but it could still be less formal.

Council Member Klein said he would vote no as the motion was premature and will be counter productive. He thought this could take focus away from High Speed Rail and not produce the expected results. There were too many moving targets. He said that in order to have a meaningful corridor study they needed to first know what was going to happen with High Speed Rail and CalTrain. This was spending money on unneeded and unfocused items. He thought they would probably not want a station. But it was important to keep an open mind. They would need to start thinking about their response to the High Speed Rail Authority's Draft EIR that would be released early in 2011. He said that ridership figures were flawed, and an effort to make sure those numbers were meaningful was important, until then the rail corridor study was premature. They needed to be proactive. He stated that High Speed Rail was not Palo Alto's project, and being proactive, coming up with alternatives, and approving designs was not constructive. It was counter productive. He was concerned that alternatives that included elevated High Speed Rail would be interrupted by the Authority as being acceptable.

Council Member Price said she felt this would help them focus. Having input into the Draft EIR was a good beginning. It was important to the community to have this input.

Council Member Shepherd said the more information she had the more she felt able to articulate a response to any decisions made by the High Speed Rail Authority.

Mayor Burt said this had been a useful discussion. They will be able to make an informed recommendation to Council. He reminded them that there was a value in going through the process.

Council Member Klein voiced concern that they hadn't thought though the use of citizen input. He wasn't clear on what the lines of communication would be.

Council Member Shepherd said the Chair of Committee should meet with the City of Mountain View to discuss their ideas for a station.

Council Member Klein asked for clarification.

Council Member Shepherd said the City of Mountain View was looking at a San Antonio station which would be close to Palo Alto potentially affecting the need for a Palo Alto station.

Mr. Keene said the Staff had had some preliminary conversations with relevant City of Mountain View Staff. They will continue to have conversations with them.

Council Member Klein urged not to have that in the motion as it didn't relate directly to corridor study

Mayor Burt said that from a timing standpoint the station discussion was outside this motion. There should definitely be discussions with surrounding communities.

**MOTION PASSED:** 3-1, Klein, no

**MOTION:** Council Member Shepherd moved, seconded by Council Member XXXXX to direct Staff to contact surrounding communities to explore station options and criteria.

Mr. Emslie said Staff had already started the process.

Council Member Price asked if the Committee could expect an update on the discussions at the next meeting.

Mr. Emslie said they could.

#### 4. Discussion of HRS Council Committee Meeting during Council Break

Council Member Klein said he would be in town in August and available to meet if needed.

Mayor Burt said he would be out of town the second and third weeks of August.

Council Member Shepherd suggested the Committee meet once a month during summer break, unless there was an emergency requiring more frequent meetings.

Council Member Price said her vacation plans for the last two weeks of July were not confirmed yet. She asked if it was possible to just have one meeting in August.

Council Member Shepherd agreed.

Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager suggested August 5, 2010 and August 19, 2010 as potential meeting dates.

Council Member Klein confirmed that Mayor Burt was out of town on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Burt said he would be back in town on August 26, 2010

Council Member Price said she was in town on both dates.

Council Member Klein said the August 12, 2010 and the August 26, 2010 could be considered as well.

Council Member Price suggested a meeting request be sent out.

Chair Klein asked for confirmation from the Committee regarding a meeting on August 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Emslie confirmed that the Committee agreed to meet August 5, 2010 and decide at that time if another meeting in August was required.

Council Member Klein said the next regularly scheduled meeting was July 15, 2010 and he would not be in attendance. He asked if Staff had scheduled the Caltrain presentation yet.

Rob Braulik, High Speed Rail Project Manager said it was tentatively scheduled. He asked for feedback from the Committee on specific details they would prefer to have presented.

Council Member Price asked if the presentation would include the electrification plan. She also wanted the status on the Caltrain Operations Plan.

Nadia Naik said that future meetings should include attention and clarification about Senator Simitian's bill and feedback from Senator Simitian's Office.

A member of the public discussed the importance of understanding interoperability and the number of tracks. Cost containment also needed to be discussed.

Council Member Shepherd said she wanted Caltrain to discuss their interoperability with the Committee. She also requested to see their visuals as she understood there was a large substation involved and wanted more information about it. Options for grade separation also needed to be discussed

Council Member Klein agreed saying that grade separations were an important component for them to understand.

Mayor Burt said that along with the grade separation conversation, if Caltrain electrification occurred without High Speed Rail, he wanted to know what the impact of not having grade separation would be on cross town traffic flows.

## 5. Legislative Update

Council Member Shepherd said she had heard about needing to renew the agreement. She asked if that was true.

Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager said it was true and would be discussed on either July 12, 2010 or July 19, 2010.

Council Member Shepherd asked if it would be reviewed by the High Speed Rail Committee first.

Mr. Emslie said it would.

Council Member Shepherd asked if a representative from Senator Simitian's office would be able to provide an update.

Mayor Burt said the language in SB 965 that would allocate funds to their preliminary electrification would did not show up in the amended bill. The alternative that has been discussed is it would be part of a budget rider bill. He said there was not good clarity to CalTrain on the issue. He added that regarding Senator Simitian's SB 1456, it was not a bill that he initiated it had his name as a response to the Governor's initiative. The Committee needed to study the bills ramifications and determine if they would want to advocate modifications or opposition to the bill.

6. Updates and Informational Items
  - a. Update regarding meeting with Caltrain
7. Future Meetings and Agendas
  - a. July 15, 2010 HSR Council Committee
  - b. July 15, 2010 Caltrain Presentation on History/status of Track Electrification
8. Other Business

Mr. Emslie provided a diagram of three potential future conceptual rail configurations. Two of the three were below grade

Mayor Burt asked if the diagram was to narrow the options and eliminate the options that are unacceptable to communities.

Mr. Emslie said that was correct, they were designed focus resources on a narrower band of alternatives. He said the driver was what was set back in the right-of-way. He said the viaduct and the four track options were very similar in their right-of-way requirements. He said that Alma Street could be on top of both options.

Council Member Klein said a lot more information would be needed before a decision could be made.

Mr. Emslie agreed and said it would be discussed further at the Technical Working Group meeting in August.

Mayor Burt asked for the date of that meeting and if the trench was 96 feet.

Mr. Emslie said the widest trench was 96 feet, but several options were close to or smaller than 96 feet. He added that the Technical Working Group meeting was August 15, 2010 in the afternoon.

Council Member Klein said that the California High Speed Rail Authority had sent out a letter saying they would not restart the Alternatives Analysis.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

DRAFT