



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 6831)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 4/11/2016

Summary Title: Draft Comment Letter on Draft 2016 CHSRA Business Plan

Title: Approval of a City of Palo Alto Comment Letter Regarding the Draft 2016 California High Speed Rail Authority Business Plan

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

Recommendation

That Council review and approve the attached draft comment letter and delegate to the Mayor the ability to modify the draft letter prior to submission, if needed, in a manner that is consistent with both the draft letter and existing City rail policies.

Background & Discussion

On February 18, 2016 the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) released their Draft 2016 Business Plan.

As a part of the CHSRA's release of their Draft 2016 Business Plan they are soliciting comments from stakeholders. The deadline to submit comments on the document is April 18, 2016.

This draft business plan, which is required by Assembly Bill 528 (Lowenthal, Chapter 237, Statutes of 2013), summarizes what has occurred over the last two years including areas such as funding, financing, ridership, and risk management.

In their Draft 2016 Business Plan, the CHSRA highlights three key objectives to move their program forward:

1. Initiate high speed rail (HSR) passenger service as soon as possible and generate revenues to attract private sector participation;
2. Make strategic, concurrent investments throughout the system that will be linked together over time including investments that connect state, regional, and local rail systems; and

3. Construct additional segments as funding becomes available which requires completing the environmental analyses for every mile of the program, including the SF to SJ project segment.

A link to the Draft 2016 Business Plan is below:

http://www.hsr.ca.gov/docs/about/business_plans/DRAFT_2016_Business_Plan_0201816.pdf

The CHSRA is required by Public Utilities Code Section 185033 to prepare, publish, adopt, and submit an updated Business Plan to the Legislature on May 1, 2016.

Attached for your review is a draft City of Palo Alto comment letter on the CHSRA Draft 2016 Business Plan (Attachment A).

The letter was drafted at the direction of the Palo Alto City Council Rail Committee by an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of Mayor Burt and Councilmember DuBois working with both staff and Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design (CARRD).

Also, attached for your review are the following:

1. The two-page CHSRA press release on the Draft 2016 Business Plan that expands on much of what is summarized above (Attachment B);
2. The process letter the City of Palo Alto sent to the CHSRA and Caltrain on January 26, 2016 encouraging both agencies to use the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) planning process (Attachment C);
3. The response letter from Caltrain to the process letter the City of Palo Alto sent (Attachment D); and
4. The response letter from the CHSRA to the process letter the City of Palo Alto sent (Attachment E).

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Revised Draft City of Palo Alto Comment Letter on the Draft 2016 CHSRA Business Plan_4-11-2016 (PDF)
- Attachment B: CHSRA Press Release on Draft 2016 Business Plan_2-18-2016 (PDF)
- Attachment C: Process Letter from Palo Alto to the CHSRA and Caltrain_1-25-2016 (PDF)
- Attachment D: Caltrain Response to the Process Letter from Palo Alto to the CHSRA and Caltrain_2-19-2016 (PDF)
- Attachment E: CHSRA Response to the Process Letter from Palo Alto to the CHSRA and Caltrain_3-3-2016 (PDF)

Draft

April 11, 2016

Dan Richard
Chair, California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 1160
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: City of Palo Alto Comments on the California High Speed Rail Authority Draft 2016 Business Plan

Dear Chair Richard:

On February 18, 2016 the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) published its Draft 2016 Business Plan (Draft Plan). As you know, the CHSRA must prepare, publish, adopt, and submit a business plan to the State Legislature every two years. Included in that process is a requirement that prior to submitting the Business Plan to the State Legislature the CHSRA must publish a draft business plan and solicit public comment for no less than 60 days.

Below are six key themes the City believes the CHSRA should address in greater detail in the Plan:

1. The impact of high speed rail (HSR) service on Caltrain service;
2. Shared use corridor operational conflicts under the Blended System;
3. Inadequate planning and funding for the 42 at-grade crossings between San Francisco and San Jose;
4. Unsecured Caltrain electrification funding;
5. The role of Context Sensitive Solutions; and
6. The general lack of detail for the San Francisco to San Jose segment.

Listed below is additional information the City would like to provide on the six key themes listed above:

1. The Impact of HSR Service on Caltrain Service

- A. The impact that HSR will have on the quality of Caltrain service, specifically without the construction of passing tracks, is significant and is not adequately addressed in the Draft Plan.
 - i. Due to different train speeds, it appears under the Draft Plan, that HSR will degrade the performance of Caltrain service. It appears that adding four HSR trains per hour (two HSR trains per direction per hour) to future Caltrain service of 12 trains per hour (six Caltrain trains per direction per hour) may significantly degrade the performance of the Caltrain system. In addition, the differing train speeds and resulting bunching of trains will have negative impacts on corridor capacity and reliability of at-grade crossings. This impact will negatively affect the performance and connections of other modes of transit that operate parallel and perpendicular to the corridor.
 - Attached to this letter is a string diagram developed by a Caltrain consultant in addition to an article by Green Caltrain titled "High Speed Rail to Bay Area first – how will this affect the Caltrain corridor?" This article provides additional information on the string diagram and helps put the string diagram into context.

2. Shared Use Corridor Operational Conflicts Under the Blended System

- A. The Draft Plan fails to analyze, recognize the impact of, or plan for level boarding throughout the Blended System corridor.
 - i. The lack of level boarding at non-HSR stops causes Caltrain delays, which on a shared corridor, decreases capacity and schedule adherence for both the CHSRA and Caltrain.
- B. The Draft Plan does not provide the structure of the operating agreement between the CHSRA and Caltrain that should be provided. The operating agreement needs to clarify which train system has priority in the event of conflicts, which agency will be the controlling agency on the corridor, and the business relationship between the CHSRA and Caltrain.
 - i. The operating agreement belongs in the Draft Plan because it could require additional capital investments and funding depending on the arrangement.
 - ii. Since the Draft Plan restricts Caltrain to 12 trains per hour (six trains per direction per hour) the ability of Caltrain to meet the rapidly growing demand for its transit services is severely constrained. Consequently, train and platform lengthening, as well as the necessary funding, are essential mitigations due to the fact that the CHSRA is taking capacity alternatives away from Caltrain.

3. Inadequate Planning and Funding for the 42 At-Grade Crossings Between San Francisco and San Jose

- A. Exhibit 4.2 of the Draft Plan provides significant detail for the unfunded Burbank to Anaheim segment of the CHSRA system. Similar analysis should be provided for the San Francisco to San Jose segment.
- B. The Draft Plan does not adequately analyze or address the critical issue of the sequencing of what grade separations need to be constructed prior to implementation of the Blended System so that construction costs, and impacts to system service, are held to a minimum. The Draft Plan must give full consideration to the severe impact the construction of grade separations would have on the system once there are up to 20 trains per hour (10 trains per hour per direction). The cost of constructing grade separations later - while operating more-and-more trains on the corridor - will likely make the construction of those grade separations significantly more expensive and therefore significantly less likely than before the initiation of CHSRA operation. Therefore, phasing needs to be included in the Draft Plan as part of any cost analysis.

4. Unsecured Caltrain Electrification Funding

- A. The City of Palo Alto is concerned that at this time the Caltrain electrification project is facing an approximately \$600 million shortfall. The Draft Plan fails to account for that shortfall and what the impact would be on HSR if that shortfall is not met.

5. The Role of Context Sensitive Solutions

- A. The City continues to believe that Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is the most effective process to identify and address issues and alternatives related to the Blended System. The process being proposed by the CHSRA is not CSS. Not utilizing CSS is likely to result in the failure to evaluate the full range of corridor alternatives resulting in a less effective system design,

poorer resolution of issues, and a more contentious outcome that will result in a less successful and timely project.

6. The General Lack of Detail for the San Francisco to San Jose Segment

- A. The CHSRA needs to clearly outline their communication protocols in the Draft Plan that they will use with both policymakers and staff to ensure no action is taken without community awareness and input.
- B. The Draft Plan should acknowledge the significant impact freight rail operations have on the corridor both now and in the future under Blended System operation.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions or comments please contact Palo Alto City Manager James Keene at (650) 329-2563 or by email at james.keene@cityofpaloalto.org.

Sincerely,

Patrick Burt
Mayor, City of Palo Alto

cc: Palo Alto City Council
Palo Alto City Manager
Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
Senator Jerry Hill
Assemblymember Rich Gordon
Executive Director of Caltrain Jim Hartnett
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board

High Speed Rail to Bay Area first – how will this affect the Caltrain corridor?

The High Speed Rail Authority announced last week at its board meeting and in its [business plan](#) that it is switching the first segment of the route from Southern California to the Bay Area. These are big changes – how will the new plan affect the Peninsula corridor and Caltrain service?

As was earlier floated in the press, the reasons for the shift included challenges traversing mountain ranges, and political opposition in Southern California. Meanwhile, in Bay Area, following agreement on a blended system whereby Caltrain and High Speed Rail will share tracks and High Speed Rail will contribute to electrification, things seem to be progressing more smoothly.

High Speed Rail service by 2025 – faster than driving, cheaper than flying

According to the business plan, by 2025, residents in the Bay Area would see service to Los Angeles that is faster than driving or transit today. The 2025 scenario calls for a five hour train+bus trip, compared to a 7 hour drive, or a 7.5 hour Megabus today. The ticket price assumption in the business plan is \$89, compared to \$100 or much more for a plane ride, which takes 3+ hours including airport security and getting to SFO.

Two Bay Area options for 2025 – SF-Bakersfield or San Jose to almost-Bakersfield

With current funding, the High Speed Rail Authority projects being able to connect from San Jose to about 20 miles short of Bakersfield. An additional \$2.9 billion that the High Speed Rail Authority will seek from the Federal government would allow service from San Francisco 4th and King into Bakersfield.

The business plan seems to be designed as a prospectus to raise the federal funding for the more attractive San Francisco to Bakersfield scenario, which is estimated to bring in \$786 million in net cash flow by 2029, compared to only \$251 million in net cash flow for the scenario from San Jose to “north-of-Bakersfield”, a location so obscure that there isn’t a name for the station.



Economizing on the Peninsula Corridor

The [capital plan](#) calls for the High Speed Rail Authority to keep its commitment to contribute \$600Million toward Caltrain electrification. The proposal also cuts some costs to save money, eliminating of dedicated tracks at Millbrae, and downsizing the approach to Diridon station from aerial to at-grade. The section between Tamien and Gilroy is proposed to travel along a berm, saving \$\$\$.

The capital plan includes some initial investments on the Caltrain corridor, including curve straightening to allow for higher speeds, upgrade of existing tracks and fencing, and 4-quadrant gates at 40 grade crossings for greater safety. The business plan assumes contribution of \$90 million for three grade separations in San Mateo within the Hayward Park to Hillsdale, and a two mile passing track segment there. The capital plan also Includes \$50M per station for high platform upgrades to Diridon and Millbrae, and \$100M for an interim terminal station at 4th & King

However, the capital plan leaves out or defers a number of key investments on the Peninsula

- no funding for Caltrain capacity increases (longer platforms and longer trains), which will be needed to keep up with ridership growth in the early 2020s, and which HSR representatives had offered without commitments as compensation for supporting compatible platforms.
- reduced funding for the Downtown Extension to Transbay. The business plan appendix notes that the allowance toward DTX had been reduced by \$1.5 billion, though there is a \$550M allowance “for work done by others for Transbay connection”
- up to \$500Million for grade separations on the Peninsula “that may be required as environmental mitigation” – but not until after 2030
- no funding for a mid-Peninsula station yet, even if a city wants a station

Impacts on Caltrain schedule and cross-town travel?

The timing of passing tracks and grade separations will be critically important for the performance of Caltrain service and crosstown travel.

Earlier studies had shown that the Peninsula corridor could support a blended system with six Caltrain trains per hour and two high speed trains without passing tracks. The

passing tracks are important – and it's not clear when the passing tracks are expected to be implemented or how well San Mateo passing tracks will perform.

If High Speed Rail services is added before passing tracks, or if the passing schedule does not work well, this could severely degrade Caltrain service. Caltrain trains might need to bunch up in smaller segments of time, creating some longer gaps between trains, a confusing schedule for riders, and reducing the potential benefits of electrification to provide a clock-face, regular, more frequent BART-like schedule.

Without passing tracks, the blended system analysis conducted in 2012 by Caltrain and High Speed Rail shows trains arriving in Palo Alto from San Francisco at the following times. There's a 20 minute gap between the 7:30 and 7:52 train, and the other trains are a few minutes apart. This schedule is much less useful than a service that arrives and departs every 10 minutes.

7:21

7:24

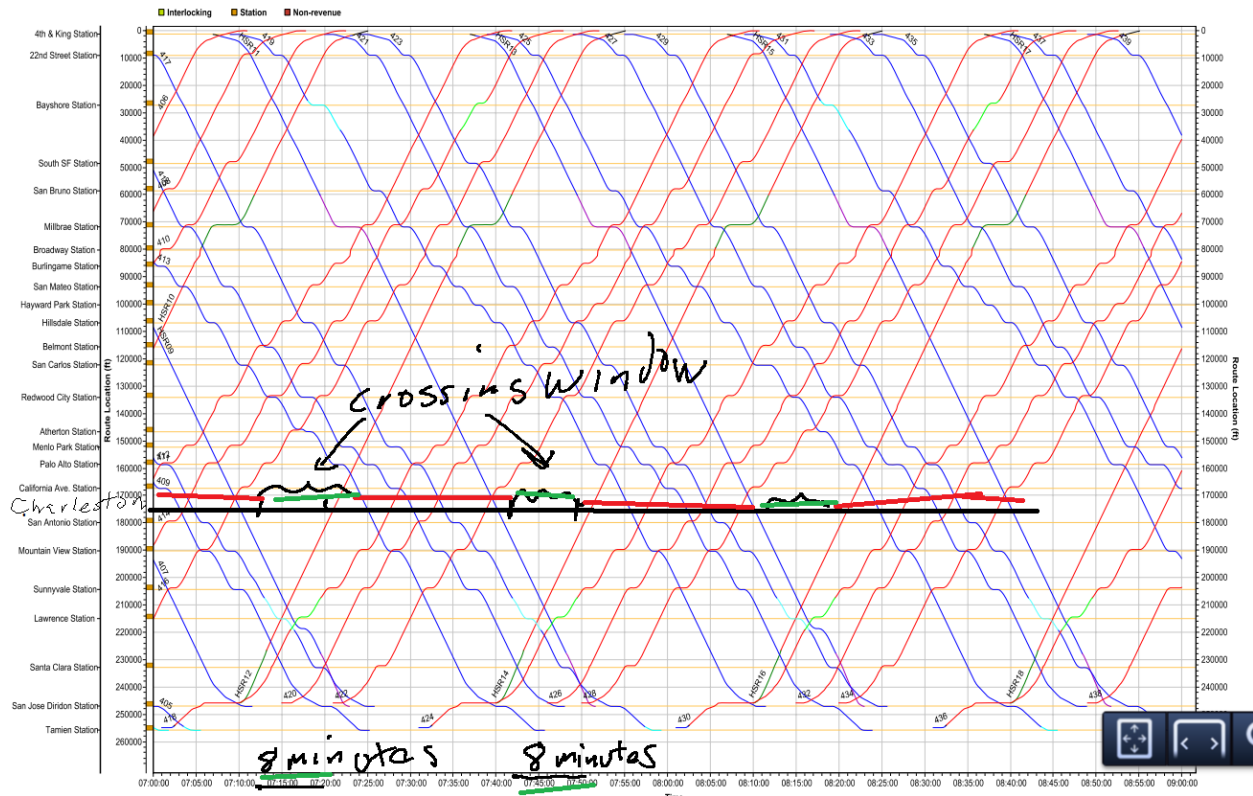
7:30

7:52

7:57

8:01

The inclusion of up to \$500Million for grade separations will help, but will likely not be enough, even with local and regional funding, to address performance at some of the more highly-used intersections which degrade significantly with more frequent service. Bunching would make the situation worse, with gates down nearly continuously for 20 minutes at a time (see green and red horizontal lines).



Commuting from the Central Valley to Silicon Valley?

One of the selling points in the business plan for the switch to a Northern segment is to provide new commute routes, putting Fresno only an hour's commute from San Jose, and enabling Central Valley towns to serve as bedroom communities for Silicon Valley with more moderately priced housing. According to economist Steve Levy as quoted on page 46 of the business plan, "The Bay Area economy is threatened by a shortage of housing and high housing costs that make it difficult for many workers and their families to live in the region where they work... High speed transportation connections between the Bay Area and adjacent areas including Central Valley communities can provide affordable housing and fast car free commuting while at the same time providing support for vibrant downtown areas in these communities."

However, the pricing structure assumed in the revenue model isn't designed for commuting, with an \$83 fare from Fresno to San Jose.

The Business Plan notes that the the High Speed Rail Authority will bring in a private operating partner, which will take the lead on pricing and marketing. This will be an

important set of business questions, regarding how much capacity to provide for medium-distance commute service vs. longer distance travel.

Interestingly, this version of the business model does not assume very much HSRA revenue from super-express Bay Area commute trips between San Francisco and San Jose ([less than \\$10 million, according to table 6.3 here](#)). These are important assumptions to watch, for those interested in commute capacity, and in the business stability of Caltrain service.

Funding plan and legal requirements

One of the key requirements of the ballot measure that provides funding for the High Speed Rail project is that the system not require a taxpayer subsidy. The minimal Silicon Valley to Central valley segment, from San Jose to north-of-Bakersfield, would just barely meet that condition. The business plan forecasts that the line would make a profit by year 3, and a contract with a private operator could be designed so that taxpayers didn't actually pay a subsidy in the first two years.

In addition to Prop1A bond funding, the business plan proposes using financing (bonds, loans, or other mechanisms) based on an ongoing stream of Cap and Trade funding. The legislature has approved 25% of Cap and Trade funding to go to the High Speed Rail project through 2020. This funding would need to be extended for at least another decade for HSRA to be able to bond or otherwise finance against it.

Once a private operating is making a profit, the HSRA predicts that it will gain access to private capital to fund additional construction to support things like higher capacity on the Caltrain corridor, the Downtown Extension, and continuing service to Los Angeles.

Litigation

Currently, the Prop 1A bond funds are tied up in court. The lawsuit contends that the High Speed Rail project does not meet the requirements of Prop 1A for several reasons:

- It will not be able to make the financial condition of operating without a subsidy.
- It will not be able to make the required travel time of 2:40 between San Francisco and Los Angeles
- It does not yet connect to Transbay Terminal in San Francisco

The Prop1A case was heard on February 11 in Sacramento Superior Court, and a ruling is expected by May. While your blogger is not a lawyer and does not have legal expertise, historically courts tend to give deference to the agency leading a megaproject, with leeway to meet the goals of a longterm project over time, and to modify implementation details if the overall intent of the project is being fulfilled. We'll see within a few months. Whichever side loses is likely to appeal, so the legal saga will continue til the final appeal.

<http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/article59950461.html>

<http://www.sfexaminer.com/timing-cost-of-high-speed-rail-project-face-legal-scrutiny/>

HSRA is [circulating the business plan for comment](#), and it will be presented to the legislature on May 1.

Local funding and backup funding

Given this business plan, it is not wise for communities on the corridor from San Francisco through San Jose to depend on the High Speed Rail project to cover needed improvements such as grade separations, Caltrain capacity improvements, and the downtown extension to Transbay. If everything goes smoothly with the High Speed Rail project, it would be in financial shape to start contributing to next-phase improvements closer to 2030. We need regional funding to move forward on Caltrain capacity improvements, grade separations, and DTX sooner than that. And it is prudent for Caltrain to be looking to [potential backup plans](#) in case there are challenges with High Speed Rail's financial support for electrification.

Summary

The 2016 High Speed Rail business plan makes the case that a northern segment could provide service as soon as 2025, but the depends on federal funding for an attractive scenario. In order High Speed Rail's plans to move forward, they will need approval by the legislature including extension of cap and trade, and dedicated funding for HSR. The business plan may also affect the outcome of litigation, whether a judge finds the authority's case credible enough to tap Prop 1A bonds.

For people on Peninsula corridor, we could see better transit service between Silicon Valley, the Central Valley, and Southern California. But important elements for the

Peninsula corridor remain unfunded: grade separations, DTX, passing tracks, Caltrain capacity improvements.

Before these investments in grade separations and passing tracks, there is a risk of degrading Caltrain service and cross-town connections. We'll need to watch the planning process very carefully to demand that the blended system makes local service for the Caltrain corridor better and not worse.



Press Release

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DATE: February 18, 2016

High-Speed Rail Authority Releases Draft 2016 Business Plan, Solicits Public Comments

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) today released the Draft 2016 Business Plan, a foundational document for implementing the California High-Speed Rail program that reflects the transition from planning to construction to providing passenger service. Overall capital costs are reduced from \$67.6 billion to \$64.2 billion. The plan also provides the path forward for the construction and operation of a section of the high-speed rail program, using existing funds, which will generate revenue within the next decade.

“This Draft Business Plan presents a clear path forward within available funding to deliver the system as approved by California voters in 2008,” said the Authority’s Chief Executive Officer Jeff Morales. “By constructing the line between the Silicon Valley and the Central Valley, while also making significant investments in Southern California’s passenger rail systems, high-speed rail service will become a reality in this state in the next 10 years at a lower cost than previously estimated.”

This draft plan, which is required by Assembly Bill 528 (Lowenthal, Chapter 237, Statutes of 2013), summarizes the progress made over the last two years, updates available funding and financing, forecasts ridership, and updates risk management information. In this plan, the Authority highlights three objectives to move the high-speed rail program forward.

The first objective is to initiate high-speed rail passenger service as soon as possible in order to bring benefits to California and generate revenues to attract private sector participation. With existing funding and more than 100 miles of active construction in the Central Valley already underway, the Authority will complete the construction of the high-speed rail line between Silicon Valley and Central Valley by 2024, with operations beginning in 2025.

The second objective is to make strategic, concurrent investments throughout the system that will be linked together over time. Investments that connect state, regional and local rail systems, will provide immediate mobility, environmental, economic and community benefits. For example, the Burbank to Anaheim corridor is of regional and statewide significance and is critical to supporting the economy of Southern California. Today’s plan proposes join with local partners to improve this corridor, including the highest priority grade separations in the state (Rosecrans Avenue/Marquardt Avenue, the Southern California Regional Interconnection Project) and improvements at Los Angeles Union Station. These and other investments identified in this Draft 2016 Business Plan will increase capacity, improve safety in this highly-congested travel corridor, and improve air quality.

The third objective is to construct additional segments as funding becomes available. This requires completing the environmental analyses for every mile of the program and securing environmental approvals. The Authority will continue to move forward with clearing all project sections between San Francisco and the Los Angeles/Anaheim area by 2017.

With the release of today’s draft plan, the Authority is now seeking public comment as part of a 60-day public comment period that will close on April 18, 2016. Comments may be made online, via USPS, and at regularly scheduled board meetings in March and April 2016. Timely comments become a permanent element of the published plan. The Authority



is required by Public Utilities Code Section 185033 to prepare, publish, adopt and submit an updated Business Plan to the Legislature on May 1, 2016.

The Authority is providing five methods for submitting comments on this draft plan:

1. Online comment form through the Draft 2016 Business Plan website at:
https://www.hsr.ca.gov/About/Business_Plans/Draft_2016_Business_Plan_Comments.html
2. By email at: 2016businessplancomments@hsr.ca.gov
3. By U.S. mail to the Authority:
California High-Speed Rail Authority
Attn: Draft 2016 Business Plan
770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1, Sacramento, CA 95814
4. Voice mail comment at: (916) 384-9516
5. Provide public comment at the Authority's Board of Directors Meeting on March 8 and April 12.

The Draft 2016 Business Plan can be found online at:
www.hsr.ca.gov/About/Business_Plans/Draft_2016_Business_Plan.html

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January 25, 2016

City of Palo Alto
Office of the Mayor and City Council

California High Speed Rail Authority
Dan Richard
Chair
770 L Street, Suite 1160
Sacramento, CA 95814

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
Adrienne Tissier
Chair
P.O. Box 3006
San Carlos, CA 94070

RE: City of Palo Alto Comment Letter on the California High Speed Rail Authority Environmental Clearance Process for the San Francisco to San Jose Segment

Dear Chair Richard & Chair Tissier:

I am writing you regarding the process that has been proposed by the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) for completing the environmental clearance work necessary for the CHSRA's San Francisco (SF) to San Jose (SJ) project segment.

This letter is addressed to you jointly because with the "Blended System" concept no action taken on the corridor by either agency can be done in isolation. Action taken by Caltrain impacts the CHSRA and action taken by the CHSRA impacts Caltrain.

The CHSRA is proposing to have the environmental clearance work for the CHSRA's SF to SJ project segment completed by the end of 2017. The City of Palo Alto believes strongly that trying to complete such a complex process on this timeline is not only rushed but is likely to result in less than desirable results.

Therefore, the City of Palo Alto requests the CHSRA along with the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB) take the following actions:

1. That the CHSRA adjust its timeline for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the SF to SJ project segment so there is adequate time for the EIR and CSS processes;
2. That the CHSRA use the full Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process for developing High Speed Rail (HSR) along the Peninsula as the CHSRA agreed to do under the Peninsula Rail Program (PRP) in 2009. CSS is a clearly defined process used by the United States Department of Transportation and other agencies for project design and implementation. CSS is "a collaborative, interdisciplinary, holistic approach to the development of transportation projects. It is both process and product, characterized by a number of attributes. It involves all stakeholders, including community members, elected officials, interest groups, and affected local, state, and federal agencies. It puts project needs along with agency and community values on a level playing field and considers all trade-offs in decision making. Often associated with design in transportation projects, CSS should be a part of all phases of program delivery including long range planning, programming, environmental studies, design, construction, operations, and maintenance." Source: (www.contextsensitivesolutions.org);
3. That the CHSRA and Caltrain enhance their communication protocols with both policymakers and staff of the cities along the SF to SJ portion of the rail corridor to ensure no action is taken without community awareness and input; and
4. That the CHSRA include grade separations as an essential part of the project description to be evaluated pursuant to CEQA. Failure to include grade separations as an element of the project would not only result in more significant impacts to be mitigated by CHSRA and other agencies, but would

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also effectively segment the cumulative effects of high speed rail operation and subsequent localized construction projects necessary for the CHSRA project to safely and effectively operate.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions or comments, please contact Palo Alto City Manager James Keene at (650) 329-2563 or by email at james.keene@cityofpalto.org.

Sincerely,



Patrick Burt
Mayor, City of Palo Alto

cc: Palo Alto City Council
Palo Alto City Manager
Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
Senator Jerry Hill
Assemblymember Rich Gordon
Executive Director of Caltrain Jim Hartnett
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board





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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 19, 2016

The Honorable Patrick Burt, Mayor
City of Palo Alto
250 Hamilton Ave,
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Mayor Burt,

The JPB Board members and I have received your letter regarding the California High-Speed Rail Authority environmental clearance process for the San Francisco to San Jose blended system segment.

We share your desire to ensure strong communication with policy makers, staff and community members about matters that pertain to service along the Caltrain corridor. The JPB is committed to continuing the Local Policy Maker Group and City/County Staff Coordinating Group processes we established several years ago to enhance communications with our stakeholders. These venues and other effective measures will facilitate the success of the JPB's program to electrify and modernize Caltrain.

Best regards,

Jim Hartnett
Executive Director

cc: Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors
California High-Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors
US Congresswoman Eshoo
State Senator Jerry Hill
Assemblymember Rich Gordon
Palo Alto City Council
Palo Alto City Manager

PENINSULA CORRIDOR JOINT POWERS BOARD
1250 San Carlos Ave. – P.O. Box 3006
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306 650.508.6269



CALIFORNIA

High-Speed Rail Authority



2016 MAR -7 AM 10:12

RECEIVED
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

cc: Ed Shikoda
Richard Hockmann
(from Judy Ng 3/7/16)

March 3, 2016

The Honorable Patrick Burt
Mayor, City of Palo Alto
P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear Mayor Burt:

Thank you for your letter regarding the environmental review process currently underway in the Peninsula Corridor. We value your input and the opportunity to work together to ensure that blended rail service is an asset to the Bay Area as well as to the statewide rail system.

We appreciate your concerns regarding the adopted schedule for completion of environmental review of the Bay Area project sections. However, focusing on blended service in the Peninsula Corridor and on the previously studied corridors in the San Jose to Merced project section, we believe that the schedule is reasonable and achievable. In addition, it is important to note that the context-sensitive solutions process (CSS) that you recommend be adopted in your letter is an approach applied within the environmental review process. As we have discussed, we expect to incorporate many elements of this approach into our outreach efforts.

As you know, we are continuing our community integration efforts in support of the environmental review process. We are accomplishing this, in part, by utilizing the outreach venues initiated by our Caltrain partners as part of the Caltrain Modernization program, specifically the City/County Staff Coordinating Group (CSCG), and the Local Policy Maker Group (LPMG) as opportunities for regular stakeholder participation and communication. We are also forming Community Working Groups along both project sections, which will include stakeholders from each city as well as from San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We are also working to schedule regular updates to local City Council's and Boards of Supervisors throughout the environmental review process.

We are committed to broad and meaningful engagement, taking into account the principles of CSS. Further, we will continue to utilize that approach as we work through the required environmental reviews and approvals, keeping in mind the nature of our project on the Peninsula and building on the previous work done by us and our Caltrain partners.

We will ensure that adequate time and resources are dedicated to this engagement as we advance the process. It should be noted that the vital metric here is the level of meaningful and constructive engagement, not how long it takes to complete it. Knowing

BOARD MEMBERS

Dan Richard
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Lou Correa

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Michael Rossi

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Jeff Morales
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
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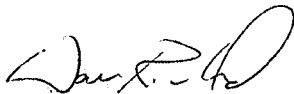
that your goal is meaningful engagement, we are prepared to work with you and your staff.

Finally, grade separations are a central element of discussion in both Bay Area project sections currently under review. The number of grade separations required, the extent of local participation and investment, and the priorities for construction of any grade separations will be determined through the environmental review process.

Our staff stands ready to work with any local community regarding grade separations in their city and specific concerns or recommendations they may have as we move our review forward.

Thank you again for your comments. We look forward to working with you as we move blended rail service in the Peninsula Corridor forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan Richard", is written above the typed name.

Dan Richard
Chairman, Board of Directors
California High Speed Rail Authority

Cc: Members, Palo Alto City Council
James Keene, Palo Alto City Manager
Hon. Anna Eshoo, Member of Congress
Hon. Jerry Hill, Member of the State Senate
Hon. Rich Gordon, Member of the State Assembly
Jim Hartnett, Executive Director, Caltrain
Members, Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board