



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Hans F. Larsen

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED
TRAIN PROJECT

DATE: 08-31-10

Approved

Date

9/2/10

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions related to the California High Speed Train project:

1. Accept staff's report and presentation on California High Speed Rail Authority's proposed project scope and status of the project, including a history of City's guiding principles and advocacy positions.
2. Accept staff's report and presentation and evaluation of California High Speed Rail Authority's proposed design alternatives for Downtown San José area consisting of aerial and tunnel options.
3. Discuss, consider, and approve a City's position of support for one the following policy alternatives for the proposed project alignment in the Downtown San José area:
 - a. Endorse California High Speed Rail Authority recommendation to eliminate from further study the tunnel alignment and continue further study of an aerial trackway alignment located partially within the Route 87/280 freeway corridor as part of the environmental process, subject to California High Speed Rail Authority approval of a Cooperative Agreement with City ensuring the project will provide an attractive, world-class architectural design and addresses City concerns, such as possible noise and visual appearance of the aerial alignment through Downtown; or
 - b. Advocate that the California High Speed Rail Authority prepare a full environmental study for both aerial and tunnel design options.
4. If policy alternative noted in above Recommendation "3a" is approved by Council, direct staff to negotiate a Cooperative Agreement for City Council consideration at the Council meeting on October 5, 2010.

OUTCOME

The recommended actions help facilitate the City Council's full understanding of the California HST project and support development of a City position concerning the project design for the Downtown San Jose area. The City's policy input on High Speed Train alignment preferences for the Downtown area is needed prior the CHSRA Board meeting on October 7, 2010.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Jose has been a strong supporter of the HST project since its inception in 1996. The project has significant benefits for San Jose and the entire State of California related to mobility, economic vitality, sustainable growth, and environmental quality. Key policy advocacy issues for San Jose have related to: 1) ensuring high quality service through the selection of the Pacheco Pass alignment, 2) facilitating a world-class transit hub in Downtown San Jose, 3) early implementation of a project segment in the San Francisco to San Jose corridor, and 4) delivering a quality project that mitigates community impacts and aligns with City's development goals.

Stimulated by allocations of State and Federal funds totaling over \$11 billion, the project is partially funded and can be implemented in phases. Environmental clearance and preliminary design work is in progress and the selection of preferred design options are being pursued by the CHSRA.

A significant policy issue for San Jose relates to the design of the HST in the Downtown San Jose area. The preliminary recommendation by the CHSRA is for an aerial design in the Downtown area. On October 7, 2010, the CHSRA Board is scheduled to further address the preferred design for Downtown San Jose.

The key policy questions and issues raised in this report for City Council review and action regarding the HST project are as follows:

1. Are the City's best interests served by an aerial design or a tunnel design for the HST project in the Downtown San Jose area?
2. If the aerial design is preferred, can a Cooperation Agreement between the CHSRA and City be developed to ensure that the visual and sound impacts are addressed to the City's satisfaction? What are the important principles and terms that need to be included in the agreement?
3. If the tunnel design is preferred, the City needs to advocate for further study of this option as part of the HST environmental review process.

BACKGROUND

Project Benefits

The California High-Speed Train (HST) project was initiated in 1996 with the formation of the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), a state entity responsible for planning, constructing, and operating a high-speed train system serving California. The key benefits to San Jose and the entire State of California from the HST project include:

- Provide transportation services to accommodate growth of California's population to 50 million people by 2030, and help facilitate "smart growth" around urban transit hubs.
- Remove millions of passenger trips from congested freeways each year and avoid future overcrowding of California airports by creating high-speed options for long-distance travelers.
- Improve the environment as high-speed trains use 1/3 the energy of air travel and 1/5 the energy of auto travel and thereby eliminating 12 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions each year.
- Enhance the economy by generating 600,000 construction-related jobs.
- Significant development opportunities for increased jobs and capital investment in Downtown San Jose through the provision of high quality frequent transportation serving major cities in California and to workforce commuting from northern and central California to jobs in San Jose's driving industries.

Project History and General Status

Since 1996, plans have been developed for an 800-mile rail network serving the state's major population and business centers as shown on Attachment 1. In 2005, a Program EIR was adopted for the HST plan. A separate Program EIR was developed for the Bay Area portion of the HST project addressing the alternatives of routing the HST in either the Pacheco Pass corridor (the preferred plan) or the Altamont Pass corridor. Legal challenges to the selection of the Pacheco Pass corridor are being addressed by the CHSRA and are anticipated to be resolved in the near future.

In 2008, the CHSRA identified a \$43 billion "priority segment" for the project extending between San Francisco and Anaheim, with major station stops in San José, Fresno, and Los Angeles. The schedule goal for completing this segment is 2020, subject to funding availability. Future segments would include extensions to Sacramento and San Diego.

In November 2008, California voters approved the HST Bond Act providing state funding for the project in the amount of \$9.95 billion. Additionally, \$2.25 billion in Federal Recovery Act funds have been awarded to the California HST project. The project is approximately 25% funded and the following three initial construction segments are proposed: San Francisco to San José; Merced to Fresno; and Los Angeles to Anaheim.

Currently, 14 HST systems are in operation in other parts of the world in Europe and Asia, and 7 other countries are planning systems including within South America and the Middle East. In April 2009, the US Department of Transportation issued a "Vision for High-Speed Rail in America" setting forth a strategic plan for building a "world-class network of high-speed passenger rail corridors". In the United States, 10 regional HST systems have been identified. Within the nation, the California HST project is at the most advanced level of development for a true "bullet train" system with speeds over 200 miles per hour.

San José Advocacy Efforts and Guiding Principles

Since the inception of the HST project, San Jose elected officials and staff have been actively engaged in supporting the project and advocating for San José interests. The local benefits of the project include expanded regional access to San José area jobs, businesses, cultural and tourist attractions, all of which help enhance San José's economy. Additionally, high-speed train service improves local quality of life for San José residents by providing convenient travel access to various destinations around the state. Further, the overall environmental benefits of the HST project align with the "Green Mobility" goals outlined in the City's "Green Vision".

San José's specific advocacy goals related to the project have been guided by the following principles:

- Seek high quality HST service for San José that provides frequent and direct connections to and from major statewide destinations. *This goal is accomplished by CHSRA selection of the Pacheco Pass alignment and has been part of the City's legislative priorities.*
- Locate HST station in Downtown San José and create a world-class transit hub at Diridon Station with functional and architectural significance. *This goal is part of the Diridon/Arena Strategic Development Plan adopted in 2002, the Downtown Strategy Plan adopted in 2005, and the City's updated Economic Development Strategy adopted in 2010. Additionally, an attractive Downtown HST station is consistent with IstaCT Silicon Valley goals to enhance Downtown San Jose as the urban center of Silicon Valley.*
- Seek early implementation of a HST project segment in the San Francisco to San José corridor including upgrades and electrification of the Caltrain system and expansion of the Diridon Station. *This goal is contained in Council Resolution # 75127 adopted in October 2009 as part of the San Francisco/Silicon Valley HST Investment Strategy developed in partnership with MTC, Caltrain, VTA, and San Francisco.*

- Develop HST project in a manner that addresses City and resident concerns, provides a high quality design, and is compatible with future development goals. *This is a general goal for all regional projects in San Jose and this goal has been reinforced as part of the guiding principles established by the Diridon Area Good Neighbor Committee.*

Project Design Status and Alignment Options in San José

Original Program Alignment

The initial design concept for the HST project (referred to as the Program Alignment and generally established in 2005) specified a 20-mile trackway through San José located directly adjacent to the existing Caltrain service corridor. The project requires two dedicated HST tracks for mainline segments and four tracks at station areas.

Through the southern areas of San José, the proposed HST tracks are “at grade” along Monterey Highway and in the Communications Hill area. Local street crossings are elevated over or lowered under the tracks. Through the Greater Gardner area, south of Downtown, the proposed HST tracks are on a widened raised berm next to the Caltrain tracks. In the Downtown area from north of Route 280 to Taylor Street, the trackway would be elevated above the existing Caltrain tracks, and is about 60-foot high at the Diridon Station. The elevated alignment in Downtown is planned due to existing constraints that preclude an at-grade alignment. North of Taylor Street, a below grade trench or tunnel is proposed to avoid conflicts with the complex merging of Caltrain, ACE, Amtrak and freight trains.

Refined Project Design Alternatives

In February 2009, the CHSRA initiated a “notice of preparation” for a project-level environmental clearance and preliminary engineering for the HST project, and solicited input for design refinements to the original Program Alignment. For San José, two separate but coordinated project design segments were developed covering the areas from: 1) San Francisco to San José Diridon Station, and 2) San José Diridon Station to Merced. Draft environmental reports are being prepared for both segments with a completion date of December 2010 for the San Francisco to San José segment and July 2011 for the San Jose to Merced segment.

During 2009 and through mid-2010, CHSRA staff conducted or participated in over 20 meetings with San José community groups and numerous project alignment options were evaluated and discussed. The following three key changes to the original Program Alignment have been most actively considered:

- Realign HST into the Route 87/280 interchange area to avoid impacts to the Greater Gardner neighborhood. *On June 3, 2010, the CHSRA recommended support for the 87/280 alignment and withdrawing the Gardner alignment from further consideration.*

- Build HST in a tunnel through the Downtown San Jose area. *On June 3, 2010, the CHSRA recommended withdrawing further consideration of the Downtown tunnel alignment and focusing only on a Downtown aerial alignment.*
- Build HST elevated or in a tunnel north of Taylor Street. *On August 5, 2010, the CHSRA recommended preparing a full environmental study for both a tunnel and aerial alignment for north of Taylor Street.*

At this time, the CHSRA's recommended HST plan for San José consists of the alignment or alignment options summarized below and illustrated in Attachments 2A, 2B, and 2C:

1. at-grade next to Caltrain corridor in the Monterey Highway and Communications Hill areas,
2. aerial along the 87/280 corridor in the Tamien and Gardner areas,
3. aerial in or near the Caltrain corridor in the Downtown to Taylor area, and
4. aerial or tunnel near the Caltrain corridor north of Taylor to the Santa Clara city limits.

Downtown San José Alignment Options

The most controversial element of the HST plan in San José relates to the Downtown alignment and whether the HST should be on an aerial trackway or in a tunnel. In December 2009, the CHSRA recommended to withdraw the tunnel option from further study as part of their alternatives analysis process. In January, 2010 Mayor Reed, Councilmember Liccardo and Councilmember Oliverio sent a letter to the CHSRA requesting further study of the tunnel option (see Attachment 3).

The CHSRA agreed to conduct further study of the tunnel option and provide further community outreach on the issue. Between January and May 2010, CHSRA and City staff worked to define the "best aerial" and "best tunnel" design options. An evaluation of these two options is provided below in the "Analysis" section of this report.

On June 3, 2010, the CHSRA released their Preliminary Alternatives Analysis report addressing the Downtown alignment issue and they recommend withdrawing the tunnel option from further study and assessing the option as "impractical" based on the following factors: construction risk, poor soils, high groundwater, extensive surface disruption, lengthy construction schedule, very high construction costs, and impacts to the planned BART project. For the Downtown area, the CHSRA recommends development of only the aerial alignment with the trackway located within Route 87/280 area to minimize impacts to the Greater Gardner neighborhood. A community meeting was held at the Gardner Community Center on July 21, 2010, to review the latest CHSRA analysis and recommendations.

On June 7, 2010, staff provided a verbal status report to the Transportation and Environment Committee and reported on the June 3, 2010 actions taken by the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) recommending the withdrawal from further study the tunnel alignment

option in Downtown San Jose. The Committee approved a recommendation to have the full City Council consider a position regarding the Downtown design options for HST project and consider the alternative of seeking a full environmental study of the Downtown tunnel design. This staff report supports the Committee direction for Council review of the issue.

On August 16, 2010, Mayor Reed, Councilmember Liccardo and Councilmember Oliverio sent a second letter to the CHSRA reiterating San Jose's past preference for a full study of both the aerial and tunnel options and noting the intention for the full City Council to address this issue in September (see Attachment 4). The CHSRA Board is expected to further evaluate public input on the topic as part of a Supplemental Alternatives Analysis report for the San José to Merced HST project segment at their Board meeting on October 7, 2010.

ANALYSIS

This section of the report provides an analysis of the two primary HST design options for the Downtown San José area – the “best aerial” option and the “best tunnel” option. Also included is a summary of staff's professional opinion that the “best aerial” option better aligns with the City's overall interests if the CHSRA can ensure that the aerial trackway have an attractive visual appearance and be positive element of the Downtown skyline. Staff has begun initial negotiations with CHSRA staff on developing a Cooperative Agreement for Council consideration in this regard as discussed further in this report.

Downtown Alignment Comparison (“Best Aerial vs. Best Tunnel”)

Over the past six months, City and CHSRA staff have worked to optimize the best HST design concepts for an aerial and tunnel alignment in the Downtown San José area. The horizontal alignment of these options is shown in Attachment 2B.

The aerial option is located mostly within existing transportation corridors, along Caltrain and in the Route 87/280 freeway interchange area. The elevation of the trackway is envisioned to be approximately 50 to 60 feet high, with an overhead electrification system adding another 25 feet in height. The proposed aerial trackway and elevated Diridon Station structures could have a distinctive design based on examples of other elevated train systems in the world. The CHSRA website has a visual simulation of the elevated design known as the “Iconic San Jose Bridge Simulation” and can be found at:

http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/images/chsr/20100309135219_CHSR_116_C_Bridge_04_withTitles.wmv

The tunnel option would be located mostly under private properties in a new tunnel easement and have a trackway elevation approximately 60 feet below ground. The most challenging and expensive element of the tunnel option is the construction of an underground station with a four-track station platform in the Diridon area. A HST has a station length of 1400 feet and the

underground station box would be equivalent in dimension to the Empire State Building (in New York) laid on its side or the length of four football fields laid end to end. Table 1 provides a comparative evaluation of the two HST design options for the Downtown area.

Table 1 – Comparison of HST Design Options for Downtown San José

(+ and - indicate the best or worst option respectively for the evaluation category)

Evaluation Category	Best Aerial	Best Tunnel	Comments
Transportation Service and Project Delivery			
Intermodal Connectivity	+	-	Underground station has less convenient connections with other transit systems
BART Compatibility	+	-	HSR tunnel causes a deeper, more expensive BART station and tunnel
Capital Cost	+	-	Tunnel is 5 times more expensive (\$0.5B vs. \$2.5B)
Construction Risk	+	-	Poor soils and high groundwater create risk for higher costs and worker safety
Operating Cost	+	-	Underground station requires extra operating costs for ventilation and lighting
Schedule	+	-	Construction schedule is significantly longer for tunnel and underground station
Emergency Response	+	-	Tunnel requires extraordinary emergency response actions (a SJFD responsibility)
Community and Environmental Impact			
Construction Length	+	-	Underground station has a long duration construction period in Diridon area
Property Acquisition	+	-	Tunnel requires buying land and easements from over 80 parcels
Sound	-	+	Aerial may have more community sound impact than tunnel
View Blockage	-	+	Aerial will have a visual above ground presence in the Downtown area
Economic Development			
Development Opportunity	+	-	Underground station limits development on prime land in Diridon area
Iconic Architecture	+	-	Aerial provides opportunity for a distinctive addition to Downtown skyline
City Visibility	+	-	Aerial provides visibility of Downtown San José from HST passengers

Transportation Service and Project Delivery

In the evaluation category of "Transportation Service and Project Delivery", the aerial option is clearly superior. An elevated trackway and station facilities have a substantially lower cost to construct with a difference in the range of \$2 billion. The construction duration is shorter and the ongoing operating costs are lower. It should be noted that an underground station and tunnel will require special emergency response equipment and training programs to be managed by the San Jose Fire Department to address possible emergency incidents. A major advantage of the aerial option is that it does not affect current planning and design for the BART extension to Downtown San José, which includes a subway station at Diridon. With an underground HST station, the BART tunnel and station would need to be lowered resulting in added costs caused by a deeper station structure within the groundwater table.

Community and Environmental Impacts

In the evaluation category of "Community and Environmental Impacts" the perspective is mixed. Placing the HST in a tunnel has the benefits of having the construction underground and generally out of view of the public. Although it should be noted that electric-powered, high-speed trains are usually quiet. Under the aerial design option the HST would be located mostly within existing transportation corridors where other transportation systems already generate noise, such as cars and trucks within the freeway, or heavy rail freight and passenger trains in the Caltrain corridor. With a trackway height of 50 to 60 feet, the noise source is generally higher than the location of sensitive noise receptors and short walls along the trackway edge can further minimize sound levels. Further, most buildings in the Downtown area have extra sound insulation due to the presence of the airplanes traveling to and from Mineta San Jose International Airport.

A major challenge with the tunnel option relates to the construction that would be required to excavate a 60-foot deep station, within the groundwater table, with a width of 120 feet and a length of 1400 feet. Construction operations will create disruption for a period estimated to be in the range of 5 to 7 years. The immediately adjacent land uses such as the current Diridon Station, HP Pavilion, and the proposed ballpark could experience issues related to noise, dust, and construction trucks hauling excavated soils, of which would need to be evaluated and possibly mitigated through the environmental process.

Additionally, the tunnel option involves the acquisition and/or securing easements with over 80 properties. The tunnel also passes beneath homes in the Lakehouse historic district that will require special measures to address issues related to settlement and vibration. Conversely, the aerial option is located mostly within existing transportation corridors. The largest acquisition of property for the aerial option would be for an aerial easement through the parking lot area of the Orchard Supply Hardware site south of San Carlos Street.

Economic Development

In the evaluation category of "Economic Development", the aerial option has significant benefits for the City. The aerial option is most compatible with future development opportunities and does not create the severe construction restraints likely associated with the tunnel option. A major disadvantage of the tunnel option is that the underground station would greatly limit development opportunities on what is considered a premier development block located between Diridon Station, the HP Pavilion and the planned ballpark site.

A key asset of the aerial option is that it provides for increased visibility of San José and the Downtown area for millions of annual passengers that will travel by HST. With a tunnel option there is no visibility for Downtown San José. In addition, the aerial option affords the opportunity to develop a distinctive visual design for the aerial structure. The aerial trackway and elevated Diridon station will have a significant visual presence on the Downtown San José skyline. Through the thoughtful application of architecture and art, the City has the opportunity to make the HST part of an attractive visual image for Downtown San José that reinforces the vision of Downtown as the creative urban center of Silicon Valley.

City Staff Opinion on the Best HSR Option for the Downtown Area

City staff believes that San José's best overall interests are served by the HST project with an aerial alignment having a high quality visual design that also addresses City concerns, such as noise, and visual presence. The key benefits of this option are as follows:

1. Maximizes Economic Development Opportunity
2. Minimizes Construction Cost and Length
3. Adds Positive Visual Amenity to Downtown Skyline
4. Avoids Impacting Scope and Cost of BART Project
5. Reasonable Project Cost
6. Provides Best Opportunity for Early Implementation of Bay Area HST Service and Diridon Station Expansion

Cooperation Agreement with CHSRA

Based on the foregoing, staff recommends that the City Council supports CHSRA recommendation to eliminate any further study of the tunnel alignment option and continue to study the aerial 280/87 alignment discussed in this memorandum, subject to the City Council approval of a Cooperation Agreement to be negotiated and considered by the City Council on October 5, 2010. An essential condition of the City's support of the CHSRA recommendation to eliminate the tunnel option from further study and continue to study the Aerial design option is to ensure that the CHSRA agrees to a Cooperative Agreement with the City that addresses City concerns, such the quality visual design that will be an integral part of the project scope and budget. Members of the community have expressed concern that without such assurances, the

City could regrettably get stuck with an “ugly” design that resembles the former Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco or the Berlin Wall.

To proactively address this issue, Mayor Reed met with CHSRA Chief Executive Officer Roelof van Ark on August 27, 2010 to discuss the framework of a Cooperation Agreement between the CHSRA and San Jose. This agreement is considered to be a trend setting approach for formalizing a collaborative partnership between the CHSRA and local agencies. The **guiding principles and key business terms** City staff are pursuing for the Cooperative Agreement with CHSRA regarding an aerial HST design are as follows:

- CHSRA to work with San Jose community and stakeholders to identify issues, opportunities and general design preferences.
- CHSRA to provide funding to allow City to hire its own independent architectural and urban design expert to assist in facilitating the City’s interests.
- CHSRA to prepare visual design guidelines for HST facilities that are approved by the City Council. The visual design guidelines would address such topics as mass of structures, column spacing, general architectural concepts, sound attenuation walls, material quality, and public art opportunity areas.
- The City to participate in the selection of architectural and engineering designers and artists hired for final design.
- The City to participate in the final design approval for the project.

City and CHSRA staff are already engaged in drafting the proposed Cooperative Agreement. If Council provides further direction in that regard on September 14, 2010, a finalized proposed agreement will be before Council for approval at the October 5, 2010 Council meeting.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The selected City Council policy direction will be communicated to the CHSRA Board in advance of their Board meeting on October 7, 2010.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Alternative #1: City Council selects aerial alignment for Downtown area subject to approval of a Cooperative Agreement with CHSRA ensuring the project will provide an attractive visual design.

Pros: The aerial design best meets City's objectives related to economic development, minimizing construction impacts, avoiding impacts to BART project and supporting timely project implementation. Aerial design is recommended by CHSRA.

Cons: CHSRA authority may not agree to support City goals for an attractive visual design.

Alternative #2: City Council advocates that the CHSRA prepare a full environmental study for both aerial and tunnel design options.

Pros: Further environmental study of tunnel option retains opportunity for a HST design that has no visual impact and less noise impacts

Cons: The CHSRA does not support the tunnel option and has determined that the current analysis has provided sufficient information to determine the tunnel option is not viable due to issues of high cost, construction risk, construction impacts, lengthy implementation schedule, and impacts to BART project.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

Public outreach for this report includes website posting as part of the Council Agenda

Community/Stakeholder Input

A project of this magnitude requires significant community and stakeholder input. The CHSRA staff and consultants, working with City staff, have held numerous community meetings in San José as this project has progressed through the conceptual stages and early environmental clearances. More recently, CHSRA provided opportunities for ongoing public input on the Preliminary Alternatives Analysis as follows:

- June 21st at the San Jose Unified School District Offices
- June 23rd at the Diridon Area Good Neighbor Committee
- July 21st at the Gardner Community Center

Several themes have been raised and evaluated, these include:

- The community (particularly Gardner/North Willow Glen) appreciates the removal of the Program Alignment along the existing Caltrain tracks through the Gardner neighborhood from further consideration.
- If an aerial option is the alternative selected for development through San José, then the visual/aesthetic/noise impacts must be addressed.
- Members of the Downtown community have indicated a desire for further consideration of a tunnel option through the full environmental process.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the Office of the City Manager and the City Attorney's Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

The recommended actions that facilitate implementation of the California HST project are consistent with General Plan policy goals related to transportation service, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

BUDGET REFERENCE

Not applicable.

CEQA

Not a Project. The recommended actions are advisory to the CHSRA. The CHSRA is in the process of preparing an EIR for the High-Speed Train project.

/s/

HANS F. LARSEN
Acting Director of Transportation

For more information, please contact Hans Larsen at (408) 975-3835.

Attachments

California High-Speed Train Map, Statewide Overview



High Speed Train Project Downtown Alignment Options



High Speed Train Project Alignment Options North of Diridon



Chuck Reed
MAYOR

January 6, 2010

California High Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear California High Speed Rail Authority Board Members:

On behalf of the City of San José, we respectfully request continued study of the underground option at the Diridon Station EIR/EIS alternatives analysis process.

On December 3, 2009, the High Speed Rail Authority's board reviewed several options for alignments into and from Diridon station, in downtown San José. Staff recommended that the Authority exclude all but two alignments from further consideration: one elevated route along the existing Caltrain right-of-way, and another elevated option along the 87-280 freeway corridors.

In early 2009, the San José City Council convened a Diridon "Good Neighbor" Committee—consisting of local neighborhood, business, and labor stakeholders—to assess the impacts of various emerging opportunities in the Diridon area, including High Speed Rail, a ballpark, and a BART station. On December 7, 2009, the Good Neighbor Committee expressed unanimous opposition to the elimination of an underground option from study in the EIR/EIS.

In following the recommendation of the "Good Neighbor" Committee, we do not presume that an underground option will prove to be the most feasible from a two-dimensional cost-benefit analysis. Nor do we overlook the extraordinary costs that an underground option poses on the Authority, or the environmental impacts of tunneling on groundwater hydrology. We are also cognizant of the financial risks posed by preserving this underground option, because this segment must compete with other segments along the California corridor—and with high-speed rail programs planned in other parts of the country—for scarce federal dollars. By advocating to further study an underground option, we do not seek to slow the EIR process to the point that it could jeopardize the "shovel-readiness" of the project in the eyes of federal funders. We ask that the underground option be further studied through the alternatives analysis process in order to fully address all of our concerns.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing our collaboration on this once in a lifetime project.

Sincerely,

Chuck Reed

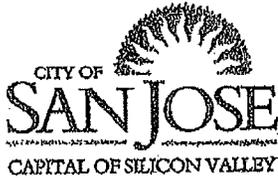
Chuck Reed
Mayor

Sam Liccardo

Sam Liccardo
Councilmember, District 3

Pierluigi Oliverio

Pierluigi Oliverio
Councilmember, District 6



Chuck Reed
MAYOR

August 16, 2010

Mr. Roelof van Ark
Chief Executive Officer
California High-Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. van Ark,

We congratulate on your new role with the California High Speed Rail Authority, and we welcome your leadership. As you know, the City of San José has strongly supported the High Speed Rail project, and our Department of Transportation officials have collaborated well with your staff to explore the benefits and impacts of various alternative alignments through San José.

Nonetheless, no one should confuse the City of San José's support for the project with an acceptance of unmitigated impacts. Our community is very concerned with the potential visual, acoustical, and other impacts of an elevated alignment through Downtown San José at Diridon Station and the surrounding Gardner and Delmas Park neighborhoods.

We write to continue to urge the CHSRA to retain an underground alignment through the Diridon Station within the alternatives analyzed in the environmental process. Contrary to the conclusions reached by CHSRA staff in its June and August reports, we believe that the underground option merits full study, so that the best possible decision can be reached about an appropriate alignment.

In January of this year, we signed a letter to the CHSRA Board, urging that full study of the best underground and elevated options through the conclusion of the alternatives analysis process. In June of this year, our staff presented the preliminary findings regarding San Jose-to-Merced alignment alternatives to our Council's Transportation and Environment Committee. Unanimously, that committee again urged staff to push for full study of both an underground and elevated alignment. The full Council will again take up this issue in September.

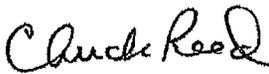
If an elevated alternative is ultimately identified as the preferred option, specific mitigation measures for an elevated alternative must be fully studied and explicitly required within the text of the EIR.

August 16, 2010
Mr. Roelof van Ark

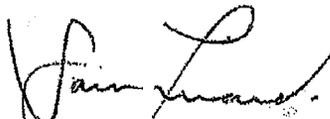
In the meantime, our staff will continue negotiations with the CHSRA for a Cooperation Agreement regarding commitments for specific mitigations of any acoustic, aesthetic, and vibration-related impacts from any potential elevated structure. Such an agreement could help alleviate the concerns in our community about potential impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We look forward to your August 27th visit to San José.

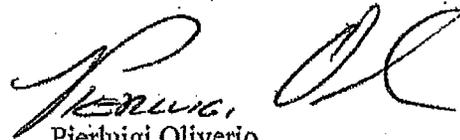
Sincerely,



Chuck Reed
Mayor



Sam Liccardo
Councilmember
District Three



Pierluigi Oliverio
Councilmember
District Six