



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Hans F. Larsen

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED
TRAIN PROJECT

DATE: 10-07-10

Approved

Date

10/7/10

RECOMMENDATION

Schedule City Council actions related to the California High-Speed Train project for November 16, 2010, to allow for additional public outreach opportunities related to the proposed project design in the Downtown San Jose area and addressing: 1) a proposed Cooperation Agreement with the California High Speed Rail Authority concerning the visual design of the aerial option, and 2) the California High Speed Rail Authority's response to the September 29, 2010 letter from the San Jose Downtown Association concerning the tunnel option.

BACKGROUND

On September 14, 2010, the City Council accepted a staff report and presentation along with public comment on the California High-Speed Train (HST) project and with a particular focus on design options for the Downtown San Jose area.

The City Council directed staff to continue negotiations with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) to develop and complete a binding agreement that ensures the City have approval authority relative to the project design and construction materials for a proposed aerial alignment in the Downtown San Jose area and to address design and noise impacts in the Monterey Highway area. If an acceptable agreement could not be reached, the City would alternatively send a letter to the CHSRA and seek full study of a Downtown tunnel alignment as part of the full environmental review process.

In anticipation of a CHSRA Board meeting on October 7, 2010 that included actions related to HST design options in San Jose (for the San Jose to Merced segment), the City Council directed staff to complete an agreement by October 1, 2010 for City Council review at their meeting on October 5, 2010.

On September 29, 2010, the San Jose Downtown Association submitted a letter to the CHSRA requesting answers to questions primarily related to the CHSRA's assessment that a tunnel option in the Downtown area is "unfeasible and impractical." The letter was co-signed by eleven

community leaders. A copy of the letter was included as part of The Public Record report provided to the Rules and Open Government Committee on October 6, 2010.

The CHSRA has subsequently rescheduled actions related to the HST design in San Jose to their Board meeting on December 2, 2010. This new schedule allows for additional public outreach opportunities to address design issues for the HST project in the Downtown San Jose area prior to further City Council action on the project.

ANALYSIS

Based on ongoing coordination between City and CHSRA staff, the following is a proposed sequence of activities associated with the HST project:

- Cooperation Agreement – A draft agreement between the City and the CHSRA addressing the September 14th Council direction is planned to be available during the week of October 11th and circulated to the City Council as part of an Info Memo.
- Downtown Association Letter – The CHSRA is planning to complete a response letter to the Downtown Association during the week of October 25th. Copies of the letter will be provided to the City Council.
- Community Meeting – The CHSRA and City will jointly host a community meeting addressing Downtown design issues for the HST project. The meeting is planned to occur during the week of November 1st.
- City Council Action – City Council actions following up on the September 14th City Council meeting are proposed to occur on November 16th.
- CHSRA Board Report – The next report to the CHSRA Board addressing Downtown San Jose design issues is proposed to occur on December 2nd.

COORDINATION

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

/s/

HANS F. LARSEN
Acting Director of Transportation

For more information, please contact Hans Larsen at (408) 535-3835.