CALIFORNIA High-Speed Rail Authority

California High-Speed Rail
BRIEFING: SEPTEMBER 17, 2019 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #3

TO: Chair Mendonca and Board Members

FROM: Boris Lipkin, Northern California Regional Director
Mark McLoughlin, Director of Environmental Services

DATE: September 17, 2019

RE: Staff Recommended Preferred Alternative Identification (CEQA and NEPA) for the San Jose to Merced Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

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Summary

California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) staff recommends that the Board of Directors (Board), acting in its capacity as the state lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pursuant to NEPA assignment[1], identify Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative[2] for the San Jose to Central Valley Wye project extent in the San Jose to Merced Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Staff's recommendation is based on the preliminary engineering, environmental impact analysis, and extensive public, stakeholder, and agency input conducted and received to date. Upon receiving the Board's concurrence, Alternative 4 will be identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIR/EIS.

Identification of the Preferred Alternative and Board concurrence is neither an approval or an implementation decision. The Authority may change the preferred alternative after receiving comments during public and agency review of the Draft EIR/EIS. The Authority anticipates publishing the Draft EIR/EIS in Spring 2020 for public and agency review and comment. Staff will consider and respond to those comments while developing the Final EIR/EIS and, subsequently, staff will return to the Board then to request project approval of an alternative.

Background

The 2005 Tier 1 California High-Speed Train Final Program EIR/EIS deferred selection of a corridor between the San Francisco Bay Area and Central Valley until completion of a second, more focused Program EIR/EIS. The 2008 Bay Area to Central Valley Program EIR/EIS evaluated two network alternatives for linking the Bay Area and Central Valley—the Pacheco Pass and the Altamont Pass—and four alignment alternatives between San Francisco and San Jose. The Authority and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) selected the Pacheco

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[1] Effective July 23, 2019 the FRA assigned its NEPA federal lead agency responsibilities for the high-speed rail project to the State of California, acting through the State Transportation Agency and the Authority, pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding effective July 23, 2019.

[2] A "preferred alternative" is the NEPA equivalent to what CEQA calls the "proposed project"; CEQA requires that a draft EIR identify the "proposed project." For simplicity, this memorandum and supporting documents use "preferred alternative" collectively to mean both the NEPA preferred alternative and the CEQA proposed project.

Pass network alternative and identified a corridor from San Jose south to Gilroy, and then east through Pacheco Pass to the Central Valley to advance for further study in a Tier 2 (project-level) EIR/EIS. These decisions were reconfirmed, following litigation, by the 2010 Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Revised Final Program EIR and the 2012 Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Partially Revised Final Program EIR (Authority 2012a).

The Authority issued a CEQA Notice of Preparation (NOP) on February 23, 2009, and the FRA published a NEPA Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on March 16, 2009, to begin the Tier 2 project-level environmental review process. The proposed project was a high-speed rail system generally following the Caltrain/Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor from San Jose to Gilroy, through the Pacheco Pass, and along Henry Miller Road in the Central Valley. Scoping meetings were held in 2009 and 168 comments were received during the scoping period.

Following the scoping period, the alternatives development and consideration process was iterative from 2009 to 2019. Activities conducted during this process included:

- Scoping for the San Jose to Merced Project Section in 2009
- Preparation of the Preliminary Alternatives Analysis in April 2010
- Preparation of a Supplementary Alternatives Analysis in May 2011
- Preparation of a second Supplemental Alternatives Analysis in July 2011
- Preparation of a Checkpoint B Summary Report concluding in 2014
- Preparation of a Checkpoint B Summary Report Addendum concluding in September 2017
- Preparation of a Checkpoint B Summary Report Addendum concluding in February 2019

Through this process the Authority identified four different, end-to-end Project Alternatives for evaluation in the Draft EIR/EIS. These Project Alternatives, Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4, begin at Scott Boulevard in Santa Clara and end at the intersection of Henry Miller Road and Carlucci Road in unincorporated Merced County. East of Gilroy, the four alternatives share a common alignment because of the mountainous terrain, sensitive natural resources, and land development pattern that characterizes and physically constrains the eastern half of the corridor.

Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4 are shown in attached Exhibit 1. Each alternative identifies a combination of guideway alignment and profile within five project subsections: San Jose Diridon Station Approach, Monterey Corridor, Morgan Hill and Gilroy, Pacheco Pass, and San Joaquin Valley. The variations within these subsections are described below. A more detailed project description is included in the attached staff report, which also reviews the evolution of alternatives development between 2009 and 2019 that led to the present four alternatives.

San Jose Diridon Station Approach Subsection

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 share a common horizontal alignment, with two vertical profile options for a short and long viaduct north of Diridon Station. Alternative 1 would include the short viaduct option, operating in blended service between Scott Boulevard and I-880 before transitioning to dedicated service on viaduct through most of the subsection (including over I-280 and SR 87). Alternatives 2 and 3 include a longer viaduct than under Alternative 1, ascending to dedicated viaduct near Scott Boulevard (rather than south of I-880) and continuing as a dedicated viaduct throughout the subsection (over I-280 and SR 87). In contrast, Alternative 4 would operate blended service within an at-grade alignment that includes two electrified passenger tracks and one conventional/freight rail track predominantly within the existing Caltrain and UPRR rights of way.

Monterey Corridor Subsection

Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 generally follow Monterey Road through the subsection approximately 9 miles between West Alma Avenue and Bernal Way in San Jose. Alternatives 1 and 3 continue predominantly on

viaduct in the median of Monterey Road. Alternative 2 is predominantly at-grade east of the UPRR alignment (between Monterey Road and the rail corridor) through the subsection, reducing encroachment into the UPRR right of way, including railroad grade separations. In contrast, Alternative 4 implements a blended, at-grade alignment predominantly within the existing Caltrain and UPRR rights of way through the subsection.

Morgan Hill and Gilroy Subsection

The subsection extends approximately 30 to 32 miles from Bernal Way in South San Jose to Casa de Fruta Parkway/SR 152 in Santa Clara County. Alternatives 1 and 3 continue predominantly on viaduct on an alignment that bypasses downtown Morgan Hill. In contrast, Alternatives 2 and 4 continue through downtown Morgan Hill, with Alternative 2 predominantly at-grade or embankment east of the UPRR alignment, and Alternative 4 at-grade predominantly within the existing UPRR right of way. From San Martin, Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 continue toward the Downtown Gilroy Station. Alternative 1 is distinguished by an alignment on low viaduct to an aerial Downtown Gilroy Station. Alternative 2 is on an embankment east of UPRR which includes an elevated Downtown Gilroy Station, this maintains a lower profile than the viaduct structure under Alternative 1. Alternative 4 operates on a blended, at-grade alignment predominantly within the existing UPRR right of way to a Downtown Gilroy Station at grade. Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 include a South Gilroy maintenance of way facility (MOWF) and continue on viaduct and embankment across the Pajaro River (Soap Lake) floodplain before entering a short tunnel west of Casa de Fruta. In contrast, Alternative 3 is to the east on an embankment from San Martin, passing over US 101 on a viaduct, then continuing on an embankment approach to the East Gilroy Station and the East Gilroy MOWF, then predominantly on viaduct and embankment across the Soap Lake floodplain. From the floodplain, Alternative 3 would enter the short tunnel described in Alternatives 1, 2, and 4.

Pacheco Pass Subsection

Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 share a common alignment and profile throughout this subsection, extending approximately 25 miles from Casa de Fruta Parkway at SR 152 to I-5 in Merced County. The alignment and dedicated guideway include a long tunnel around the northern arm of the San Luis Reservoir and viaducts over the California Aqueduct, Delta-Mendota Canal, and I-5.

San Joaquin Valley Subsection

Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 share a common alignment and profile throughout this subsection, extending approximately 18 miles from I-5 to Carlucci Road in unincorporated Merced County. The alignment and dedicated guideway is predominantly on embankment along the south side of Henry Miller Road to Carlucci Road, traveling on viaduct over major watercourses, some roadways and a freight railroad branch line, and through the Grasslands Ecological Area (GEA). Other local roadways would be relocated on bridges over the high-speed rail embankment. A maintenance of infrastructure siding (MOIS) would be located along the south side of Henry Miller Road near Turner Island Road.

The results of technical analysis conducted to date of the different design configurations of Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 revealed meaningful differences in environmental and community consequences. These differences are summarized in greater detail in the discussion below and described in detail in the attached staff report.

Community Outreach and Feedback Received

The Authority has proactively sought meaningful dialogue with stakeholders, resource agencies, municipalities, landowners, community leaders, and interested members of the public to secure the broadest possible participation in the development, identification and preliminary evaluation of the project alternatives. The Authority has frequently held public meetings to inform the development of the project design and the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS. In the last three years, over 500 meetings with key stakeholders, public agencies, and community organizations have been held throughout the project extent.

Authority staff has engaged with the public in a variety of ways, including hosting regular technical and community working group meetings, conducting public open houses, participating in monthly Local Policymaker Group and City/County Staff Coordinating Group meetings[3], small group meetings, participation in local events, presentations at community meetings, and responding to public inquiries and questions. Most recently, the Authority conducted outreach activities in July and August 2019 concerning the staff-recommended Preferred Alternative with stakeholders and members of the public to receive their feedback for the Board of Directors to consider when identifying the Preferred Alternative. These activities included:

July 2019

- San Jose-Morgan Hill Technical Working Group
  July 8, 2019
- Gilroy-Los Banos Technical Working Group
  July 8, 2019
- Morgan Hill-Gilroy Community Working Group
  July 10, 2019
- Coyote Valley and Pacheco Pass Conservation Community
  July 10, 2019
- Grasslands Ecological Area Stakeholders
  July 15, 2019
- San Jose Community Working Group
  July 16, 2019
- Morgan Hill City Council
  July 17, 2019
- City/County Staff Coordinating Group Meeting
  July 17, 2019
- Local Policymaker Group Meeting
  July 25, 2019

August 2019

- San Jose Open House
  August 15, 2019
- Gilroy City Council
  August 19, 2019
- San Jose City Council
  August 20, 2019
- Los Banos Open House
  August 21, 2019
- Monterey Corridor Working Group
  August 22, 2019
- Gilroy Open House
  August 22, 2019

September 2019

- Santa Clara City Council
  September 4, 2019
- Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
  September 10, 2019

Approximately 300 community members, stakeholders, and agency officials attended briefings and meetings on the staff-recommended Preferred Alternative throughout the project corridor during the outreach period in July and August 2019. Feedback received during the outreach process generally supported Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative but also included interest in grade separations, concerns about train horn noise at at-grade crossings and stations, and questions about potential impacts on wildlife movement and waterfowl habitat. There was also broad support for improved passenger rail service including the connection between the Silicon Valley and the Central Valley facilitated by this project section, the extension of Caltrain service to Southern Santa Clara County, and a desire for a Los Banos area high-speed rail station. A more comprehensive and detailed summary of the feedback received during the outreach process is provided in the *San Jose to Merced Project Section Preferred Alternative Outreach Summary Report*.

[3] The Local Policymaker Group and City/County Staff Coordinating Group are made up of one elected official and relevant staff members, respectively, from each of the cities along the Caltrain Corridor. Caltrain convenes the group on a monthly basis and the Authority has a standing agenda item each month.

Prior Board Action

- On April 8, 2010, Authority staff presented the 2010 San Jose to Merced Preliminary Alternatives Analysis (PAA). The Board concurred with the staff recommendation.
- On May 5, 2011, Authority staff presented the 2011 San Jose to Merced Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA). The Board concurred with the staff recommendation.
- On July 14, 2011, Authority staff presented the second 2011 San Jose to Merced Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA). The Board concurred with the staff recommendation.
- On April 12, 2012, the Board adopted Resolution #HSRA 12-13, which adopted the *California High-Speed Rail Program Revised 2012 Business Plan*.
- On August 4, 2015, the Board adopted Resolution #HSRA 15-15, which authorized staff to issue a Request for Qualifications to procure a contract for Environmental and Engineering service for the San Francisco to San Jose and San Jose to Merced Project Sections.
- On November 17, 2015, the Board adopted Resolution #HSRA 15-18, which authorized staff to enter into a contract with HNTB Corporation for E&E Services for the San Francisco to San Jose and San Jose to Merced Project Sections.
- On September 19, 2017, the Board adopted Resolution #HSRA 17-17, which authorized staff to execute an amendment to the Environmental and Engineering contract with HNTB.
- On May 15, 2018, the Board adopted Resolution #HSRA 18-08, which adopted the *California High-Speed Rail Final 2018 Business Plan*.

Discussion

When comparing Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4, Authority staff established a range of criteria to evaluate the alternatives to find the best balance between three sets of differentiating factors:

- System Performance, Operations, and Capital Costs;
- Community Factors;
- Environmental Factors.

Comparative tables for system performance, community, and environmental factors are included in the detailed staff report attached to this memorandum. Following is a high-level summary of the factors affected by the project elements that differentiate the four alternatives.

Systems Performance, Operations, and Capital Costs

The key differentiators are operational speed between San Jose and Gilroy, proximity to transit corridors, peak hour average representative travel time, and capital costs. The lower operational speed of blended service within the Caltrain and UPRR rights of way between San Jose and Gilroy would have peak hour average representative travel times up to 6 minutes longer than the dedicated alignments under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. However, Alternative 4 has lower capital costs than the other three alternatives. Alternatives 2 and 4 would follow existing transportation corridors more closely than Alternative 1 (because of the Morgan Hill Bypass) and Alternative 3 (because of the Morgan Hill Bypass and the East Gilroy alignment). Alignment length and operational speed from Gilroy to the San Joaquin Valley, and operations and maintenance costs would not differ substantially between the four alternatives.

Considering capital cost differences, Alternative 4 is approximately $4 billion less than Alternative 2 and approximately $7 billion less than Alternatives 1 and 3. Capital cost estimates were developed by utilizing recent bid data from large transportation projects in the western United States and used bottom-up unit pricing to reflect common high-speed rail elements and construction methods with an adjustment for Bay Area labor and material costs. All material quantities for the project alternatives are based on the Authority's preliminary 15-percent-complete design standard. The capital costs reflect a conservative scope and sufficient project footprint to

accommodate project refinements and mitigation through final design for construction documents. This allows the Authority to evaluate worst-case maximum impacts in the Draft EIR/EIS and reduces the risk that environmental clearance does not cover all potential impacts.

*= Best Performing Alternative

Criteria	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Alignment length (miles)	89	89	**87***	89
Operational Speed (mph)—San Jose to Gilroy	Up to 175	**Up to 195***	Up to 175	Up to 110
Operational Speed (mph)—Gilroy to Central Valley Wye	Up to 220			
Proximity to transit corridors (miles)	43	**50***	35	**50***
Peak hour average representative travel time between San Jose and Gilroy (minutes)	17-18	17-18	**16-17***	23
Proposition 1A Service Travel Time Compliance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Estimated capital costs (2017$ billions)	$20.5	$17.7	$20.8	**$13.6***
Estimated annual operations and maintenance costs (2017$ millions)	$162			

Community Factors

The key differences in community factor outcomes result from placing the high-speed rail alignment predominantly within the existing Caltrain and UPRR rights of way or in a new dedicated high-speed rail corridor between San Jose and Gilroy. Alternative 4 would result in the fewest overall permanent displacements of residential units, businesses, agricultural structures, and community or public facilities when compared to Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Alternative 4 would also result in the fewest permanent conversions of Important Farmland compared to the other alternatives. Alternative 4 would result in the fewest visual impacts and the fewest permanent road closures.

Alternative 4 would have the lowest impacts on minority and low-income populations associated with aesthetics and visual quality, community cohesion, and displacements. However, Alternative 4 would require the most mitigation to offset the impact of gate down-time on emergency vehicle response times.

Alternative 3 would result in the fewest severe noise impacts, because of alignments across rural or farmland areas with few nearby residents. Alternative 4 would result in the most noise impacts due to sounding of high-speed rail train horns on approach to roadway grade crossings and Caltrain stations along the blended, at-grade alignment. Pursuit of quiet zones by local municipalities could reduce the severe noise impacts of Alternative 4 to a level comparable to Alternative 3. Finally, Alternative 3 would be least consistent with the Gilroy General Plan and the Authority's goals of locating high-speed rail stations in downtown areas.

*= Best Performing Alternative

Effects	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Community Factors				
Displacements				
Residential displacements (# of units)	147	603	157	**68***
Commercial displacements (# of businesses)	217	348	157	**66***
Agricultural displacements (# structural improvements)	49	53	49	**40***
Community or public facilities displacement (# of units)	7	8	5	**1***
Commercial displacements (SF)	**411,000***	1,800,000	994,000	448,000
Agricultural structure displacements (SF)	**407,000***	1,206,000	1,489,000	542,000
Agricultural Farmland				
Permanent conversion of Important Farmland (acres) [1]	1,036	1,181	1,193	**1,033**
Aesthetics and Visual Quality				
Visual quality effects	Viaduct Elevated Stations	Embankment and Viaduct Elevated Stations Roadway Grade Separations	Viaduct Elevated Stations Alignment in Rural Area (East Gilroy)	**At-grade alignment Existing Right-of-Way***
Land Use and Development				
Consistency with City of Gilroy General Plan policy encouraging Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in downtown station area	**Yes**	**Yes**	No	**Yes**
Noise				
Severe noise impacts with noise barrier mitigation (# of sensitive receptors)	231	194	**173***	275
Severe noise impacts with noise barrier mitigation and if local municipalities implement quiet zones (# of sensitive receptors)	223	194	**173***	179
Traffic				
Increase in 2040 peak travel time in Monterey Corridor (NB—AM/PM, SB—AM/PM, minutes)	NB—8/20 SB—6/12	NB—27/5 SB—16/17	NB—8/20 SB—6/12	**NB—0/5 SB—1/8***
Permanent road closures – San Jose to Gilroy	10	19	**8***	**8***
Permanent road closures – Gilroy to Carlucci Road	**7**			

Effects	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Emergency Vehicle Access/Response Time				
Areas of potential delay to emergency vehicle response times	**Monterey Corridor due to Monterey Road narrowing**		**Monterey Corridor, Morgan Hill, Gilroy due to gate-down time**	
Types of mitigation needed to minimize emergency vehicle delays	**Vehicle detection equipment**		Vehicle detection equipment, additional emergency equipment for existing fire stations, new fire stations, and potentially additional ambulance services	
Environmental Justice (EJ)[1]				
EJ proportion of total significant and unavoidable impacts on local views.[2]	50%	**NA[3]**	67%	**NA[3]**
EJ proportion of total residential displacements	60%	66%	**50%***	**50%***
EJ proportion of total business displacements	87%	92%	**82%***	83%
Comparative level of increase on fire department response times (lower number is less delay)	**1**	3	**1***	4
EJ proportion of total moderate and severe noise impacts[4]	49%	65%	**45%***	76%

[1] Criteria used for evaluation are those subjects where the in-progress EIR/EIS analysis indicates disproportionate impacts to low income and minority populations.

[2] As indicated by impacts on visual landscape units.

[3] These alternatives have no significant and unavoidable impacts on visual landscape units.

[4] Noise impacts after noise barrier mitigation.

Environmental Factors

Across all of the differentiating environmental factors, Alternative 4 had lower impacts than Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Building and operating Alternative 4 within a blended, at-grade alignment predominantly within the existing Caltrain and UPRR rights of way between San Jose and Gilroy would result in the lowest overall permanent impacts to wetlands and aquatic resources, habitat for special-status plant species and listed wildlife species, existing wildlife corridors, conservation areas, permanent use of 4(f)/6(f) park resources, and built environment historic resources when compared to the dedicated alignments of Alternatives 1, 2, or 3.

*= Best Performing Alternative

Effects	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Environmental Factors				
Biological Resources				
Permanent impacts on jurisdictional waters and wetlands (acres)	104	111	116	**101***
Permanent impacts on habitat for special-status plant species (non-overlapping acres)	1,171	1,178	1,183	**1,146***
Permanent impacts on habitat for listed wildlife species with the most impacts overall (California tiger salamander, acres)	2,273	2,329	2,471	**2,146***

Effects	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Wildlife corridor impacts	**Avoids east Gilroy; fewer Soap Lake floodplain impacts***	**Avoids east Gilroy; fewer Soap Lake floodplain impacts***	Impacts in East Gilroy; more impacts in Soap Lake floodplain	**Avoids east Gilroy; fewer Soap Lake floodplain impacts***
Permanent impacts on conservation areas (acres)	**427***	432	481	**427***
Section 4(f)/6(f) Resources				
Permanent use of 4(f)/6(f) park resources (#/[acres])	4 (4.8)	6 (7.4)	5 (5.0)	**3 (1.4)***
Built Environment Historic Resources				
Number of permanent adverse effects on NRHP-listed/eligible resources (# of resources)	8	9	7	**5***
Number of permanent significant impacts on CEQA-only historic resources (# of resources)	2	4	**1***	**1***

Additional Policy Considerations

The recommendation of Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative includes several policy considerations beyond the three sets of differentiating factors described above. Policy considerations include the following:

- **Caltrain Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project.** All high-speed rail alternatives are compatible with the Caltrain electrification project between San Francisco and the Caltrain Tamien Station in San Jose.
- **Caltrain Business Plan and Service Vision.** Caltrain is currently developing a Business Plan to address forecasted increases in travel demand and ridership by developing a service vision for the future of the service between San Francisco and Gilroy. One of the goals discussed during the the Caltrain Business Plan process has been to provide more regular all-day service to South San Jose and Southern Santa Clara County. Alternative 4 is the only alternative that would provide electrified passenger rail infrastructure in a blended configuration that would allow for extension of electrified Caltrain service to Gilroy.
- **BART Silicon Valley Extension.** All high-speed rail alternatives would avoid impacts to the planned extension of BART to San Jose, including BART stations at Diridon Station and in Santa Clara.
- **State Rail Plan and Other Passenger Rail Service Planning.** The Authority has consulted the State Rail Plan and with other passenger rail providers so that the alternatives would not impede plans for expansion of ACE, Capitol Corridor, and TAMC (Monterey County Rail Extension) passenger rail service. All high-speed rail alternatives would provide adequate capacity at the San Jose Diridon Station and the Gilroy Station for the planned expansions of other passenger rail services.

In summary, when compared to Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, Alternative 4 (shown in attached Exhibit 2) would provide the best balance of system performance factors, community factors, environmental factors, and policy considerations. Based on the above information, staff recommends that the Board identify Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative under CEQA and NEPA in the forthcoming Draft EIR/EIS.

Legal Approval

The legal office has confirmed that the Board may take the concurrence action being requested by staff.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

The estimated capital cost of Alternative 4 is $13.6 billion in 2017 dollars and as stated above has the lowest estimated capital cost. This alternative is consistent with the alignment identified as part of the statewide Phase 1 high-speed rail program in the 2018 Business Plan, although the design and other assumptions have been further refined resulting in the capital costs not being comparable. Construction costs for the San Jose to Central Valley Wye segment are outside the scope of the 2019 Baseline approved by the Authority's Board on May 21, 2019, and therefore do not affect the currently authorized budget.

REVIEWER INFORMATION	SIGNATURE
Reviewer Name and Title: Thomas Fellenz Chief Legal Counsel	Signature verifying budget analysis: Original Signed By Thomas Fellenz September 9, 2019
Reviewer Name and Title: Brian Annis Chief Financial Officer	Signature verifying legal analysis: Original Signed By Brian Annis September 9, 2019

Recommendations

Based on the analysis and outreach summarized above, staff recommends that the Board identify Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative under CEQA and NEPA in the forthcoming San Jose to Merced Project Section Draft EIR/EIS.

The Board is not approving an alternative at this point. Staff will return to the Board in the future for final project approval with consideration after the Final EIR/EIS.

Attachments

- Draft CEQA Resolution #HSRA 19-05
- Draft NEPA Resolution #HSRA 19-06
- Exhibit 1, Alternatives Evaluated in Detail in the Draft EIR/EIS
- Exhibit 2, Alternative 4: Staff-Recommended Preferred Alternative
- Preferred Alternative Staff Report for the San Jose to Merced Project Section
- Preferred Alternative Outreach Summary Report

Exhibit 1 – Alternatives Evaluated in Detail in the Draft EIR/EIS

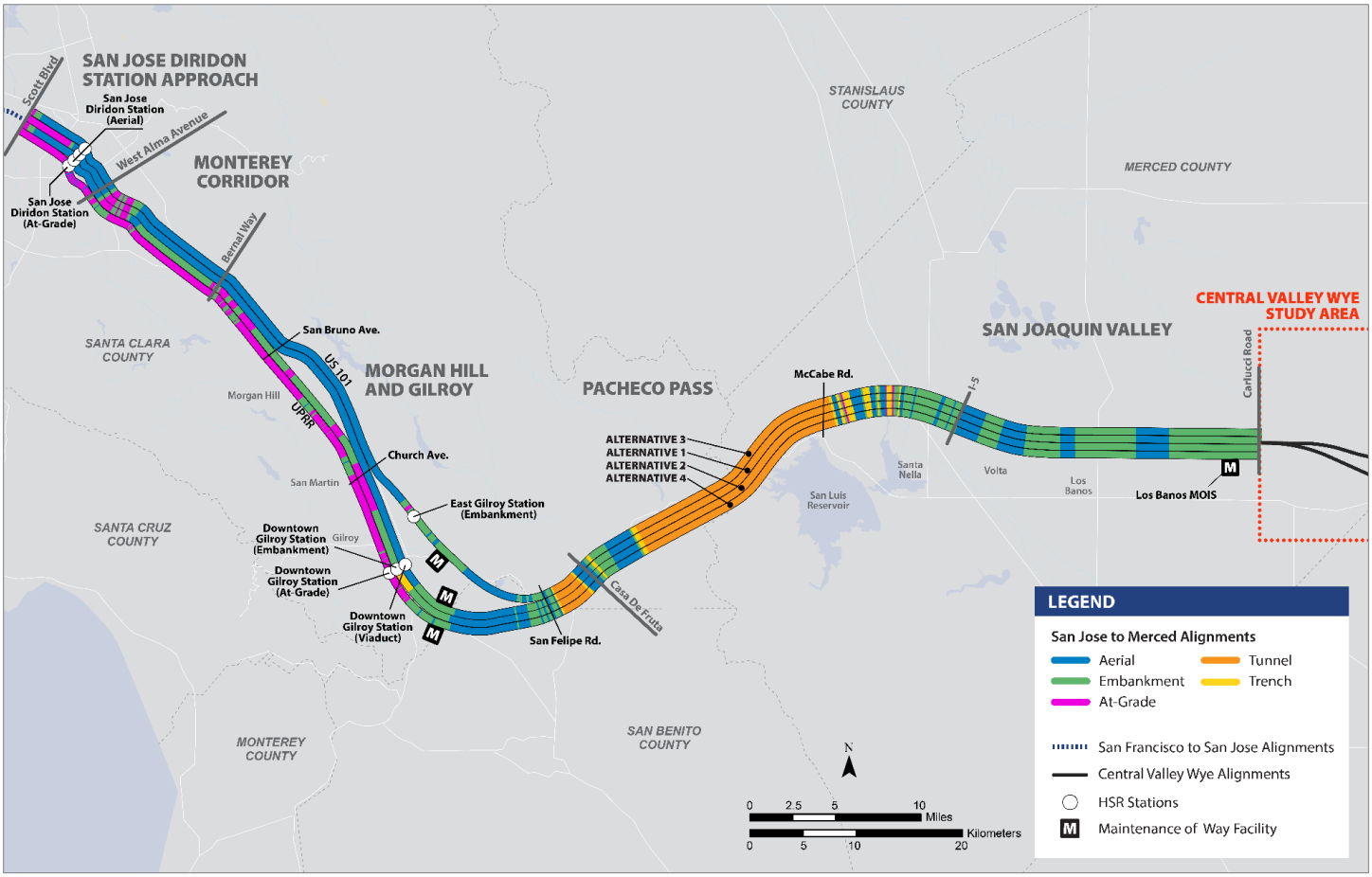

Exhibit 2 – Alternative 4: Staff-Recommended Preferred Alternative