

SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP MEETING SUMMARY MAY 28, 2019

SUMMARY

Introductions & Agenda Review

Boris Lipkin, Northern California Regional Director, thanked members for participating and indicated that the Project Update Report was released on May 1, 2019 and included a letter from the new Authority Board Chairman, Lenny Mendonca, appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom. The Project Update Report is available on the Authority's website at the following link:

http://www.hsr.ca.gov/docs/about/legislative_affairs/SB1029_Project_Update_Report_050119.pdf

The following questions, comments, and responses were recorded following the introduction. The comments and questions are grouped by topic and do not reflect the order of conversation.

Central Valley Construction

- A member asked what was considered when comparing market sizes and revenue projections of the high-speed rail operations between the Bay Area and the Central Valley.
 - Authority staff replied that the Bay Area and Central Valley markets were compared under the assumption that Caltrain service would not change but that San Joaquin service in the Central Valley would. The Authority found that the saturated Bay Area market did not generate enough revenue compared to the Central Valley given high-speed rail would be the only service in the area.
- A member asked if Gavin Newsom knew the Early Train Operator's (ETO) findings prior to the State of the State Address.
 - Authority staff responded that the ETO had already begun their analysis prior to Governor Newsom taking office.

Cost and Funding

- A member asked what the three largest drivers of cost are in constructing high-speed rail and what options are available to reduce cost per mile of construction.
 - Authority staff responded that civil works such as tunnels, bridges and viaducts are the costliest construction expenses. The ETO evaluation concluded that there may be some opportunities for cost savings in the construction of the large structures, which the Authority will explore in preparation of the 2020 Business Plan.
- A member asked to what extent the Authority negotiated with the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) prior to FRA's letter stating its intention to revoke funds.
 - Authority staff replied that the FRA did not communicate any dissatisfaction with meeting the grant funding requirements nor was a remediation plan ever discussed.

Safety and Security Characteristics of High-Speed Rail

Simon Whitehorn, Deputy Director, Operations and Maintenance, discussed the scope of safety and security characteristics for typical and planned high-speed rail operations.

The following questions, comments, and responses were recorded following the presentation. The comments and questions are grouped by topic and do not reflect the order of conversation.

Incursion Walls

- A member asked what the incursion wall height will be.
 - Authority staff replied that in Fresno it will be up to 15 feet tall.
- A member asked if incursion walls are used in the United Kingdom.
 - Authority staff responded that incursion walls are not used in the United Kingdom as high-speed rail lines do not run adjacent to other rail services.

Wildlife Crossings

- A member asked what prevents humans from using wildlife crossings.
 - Authority staff replied that wildlife crossings will be monitored. They will also be located largely in sensitive wildlife areas that are not heavily populated.
- A member asked for a description of the wildlife crossings.
 - Authority staff responded that the crossings are tunnels underneath the tracks with visibility to the other side for animals to cross safely.
- A member asked where wildlife crossings would be used.
 - Authority staff answered that wildlife crossings will be constructed in areas to reflect wildlife migratory patterns. Exact locations are being coordinated with resource agencies.

Other

- A member asked how the Authority is preparing to obtain regulatory approval and evaluation of equipment.
 - Authority staff responded that coordination with the FRA and other regulatory agencies is ongoing to develop appropriate regulations to streamline high-speed rail operations. Staff also noted that the European Union is providing supplemental information on technical specifications about interoperability, which will be required for adoption of high-speed rail nationwide.
- A member asked if the skirts on the grade crossings are strong enough to prevent a vehicle from entering the area.
 - Authority staff replied that the barriers themselves are designed to absorb considerable force but that they would not stop a vehicle traveling at high speed.
- A member asked if the Authority had considered partnerships with academic institutions to identify opportunities to generate supplemental electricity along the corridor.
 - Authority staff responded that the Authority is considering the cost of power generation on an ongoing basis. Caltrain and high-speed rail are both investigating power regeneration as part of the introduction of new rolling stock.
- A member asked if other countries encounter filling issues with engineered track foundations when crossing diverse terrain.
 - Authority staff replied that there are examples in the United Kingdom of tracks going over different terrains.

- A member asked if the Authority is considering a pontoon solution along portions of the alignment that may be susceptible to flooding due to sea level rise.
 - Authority staff responded that the Authority is working with the Bay Conservation Development Commission (BCDC) to assess and address the vulnerability of high-speed rail in future climate scenarios, but the current environmental footprint has not identified the use of pontoons.
- A member asked what the design life of the project is.
 - Authority staff replied that the project will be engineered to a 100-year design life.

Preferred Alternative Engagement Update

James Tung, San Francisco to San Jose Project Section Project Manager, gave a presentation updating members about the PA selection criteria and engagement process.

The following questions, comments, and responses were recorded following the presentation. The comments and questions are grouped by topic and do not reflect the order of conversation.

Northern California Sections

- A member asked if the two Northern California sections have separate environmental documents.
 - Authority staff responded that both sections have their own documents and outreach schedules.
- A member asked if the separate environmental documents had any overlap.
 - Authority staff replied that the two sections overlap between Scott Boulevard in Santa Clara and Alma Avenue in San Jose.

Grade Crossings

- A member commented, citing a recent study by Stanford, which the Authority should look into normalizing the reality of drivers sitting at traffic lights significantly longer due to the increased number of trains at grade crossings.
- A member commented that community members involved in the San Francisco Rail Alignment and Benefits (RAB) process observed how length, number, and speed of trains impacted traffic at grade crossings.
- A member commented that grade crossings affect emergency services response times, which are critical for isolated areas like Mission Bay.

Preferred Alternative Discussion

Comments were provided during the discussion session on how CWG members would like to carry out the discussion during the summer meeting on the staff-recommended State's Preferred Alternative:

- A member commented the Authority needs to explain why the project is needed.
- A member suggested that information be shared on how high-speed rail creates and promotes local businesses.
- A member requested more lead time to review the information and discuss with members of the community prior to providing the Authority with feedback on the PA.
- A member would like additional tools to guide the discussion on the PA with their constituencies.

- A member suggested allowing members to review open house materials in advance to provide feedback to the Authority on messaging.
- A member recommended that the Authority explicitly detail how high-speed rail integrates with other regional transportation projects like the Downtown Extension to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Visualizations

- A member asked what the speed of the train is in the visualizations.
 - Authority staff responded that high-speed rail trains will operate at up to 110mph between San Francisco and San Jose.
- A member asked how long the quad gates take to be deployed.
 - Authority staff responded the deployment time depends on the location of the trigger point. The design and location of the quad gates requires coordination with Caltrain to manage grade crossings along the corridor.

Partner Updates

Casey Fromson, Caltrain, updated Working Group members on the status of the Caltrain Electrification Project by describing its features and benefits and outlining what is covered in the Caltrain Business Plan.

The following questions, comments, and responses were recorded following the presentation:

- A member asked how Caltrain is coordinating with the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA).
 - Caltrain staff replied that Caltrain has representation on the TJPA Board and provides peer review of their plans to ensure they meet Caltrain specifications and reflect future planning.
- A member asked if Caltrain is considering equipment storage requirements for future rolling stock.
 - Caltrain Staff responded that the Caltrain Business Plan is identifying the overall needs for Caltrain's future operations, which includes understanding storage needs. This effort includes coordination with San Francisco staff and stakeholders on Caltrain planning efforts within the city.

Doug Johnson, San Francisco Planning Department, provided Working Group members with an overview of the Rail Alignment and Benefits (RAB) Study.

The following questions, comments, and responses were recorded following the presentation:

- A member asked if there is coordination between the RAB study and the high-speed rail environmental document.
 - Authority staff responded that the Authority coordinates with San Francisco staff involved in the RAB project and will continue to do so through implementation of high-speed rail and RAB.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- A member of the public commented that the Central Valley rail line would require additional investments. They added that grade crossing barriers need ABV, planned area district, and

California Public Utilities Commission permits for construction. They concluded by noting the Authority does not have exclusive rights for operating at less than 125 mph and asked who the lead agency for environmental review should be between Gilroy and the Salesforce Transit Center.

ATTENDANCE

Affiliation	Name	Present
Bay Area Council	John Grubb	No
Bay Area Council	Gwen Litvak	No
Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee	Bob Planthold	No
Coalition of San Francisco Neighborhoods	George Wooding	No
Friends of Caltrain (San Francisco)	Andrew Sullivan	No
Friends of DTX	Brian Stokle	No
On Lok, Inc.	Vickie Huynh	No
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition	Janice Li	Yes
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce	Mary Young	No
San Francisco Giants	Josh Karlin-Resnick	No
San Francisco Tomorrow	Jerry Levine	No
San Francisco Transit Riders	Thea Selby	Yes
SPUR	Arielle Fleisher	No
South Beach Mission Bay Business Association	Patrick Valentino	No
South Beach, Rincon, Mission Bay Neighborhood Association	Bruce Agid	No
South Beach, Rincon, Mission Bay Neighborhood Association	Alice Rogers	Yes
Transportation Advocate	Wilbert Din	No
University of California, San Francisco	Aimee Alden	No
University of California, San Francisco	Tammy Chan	Yes
Urban Land Institute	Linda Klein	Yes
Urban Land Institute	Jay Paxton	No
YIMBY Action	Laura Foote	No
(No Affiliation)	Paul Bendix	Yes
(No Affiliation)	Ted Olsson	Yes

Authority Staff: Boris Lipkin, James Tung, Simon Whitehorn, Morgan Galli, Yosef Yip, Joey Goldman, Zach Barr, Kelsey Rugani

Guest presenters: Casey Fromson (Caltrain), Doug Johnson (San Francisco Planning)

ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS

- The Authority will upload the PowerPoint presentation to the Authority website at the following link: https://www.hsr.ca.gov/communication/info_center/events.aspx
- The Authority will post the visualizations shared at the meeting online.
 - Pacheco Pass Visualization, available here: <https://vimeo.com/309808886/40686db369>
 - San Mateo Quad Gate Grade Crossing, available here: <https://vimeo.com/332315271/de9f81a974>
- A meeting summary will be developed and distributed to CWG members.