

**SAN JOSE TO MERCED  
COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP  
MEETING SUMMARY  
MARCH 3, 2021**

## **SUMMARY**

### **Introductions and Agenda Review**

Joey Goldman, facilitator, welcomed the Community Working Group (CWG) members, and thanked them for joining. He introduced California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) staff, shared the webinar objectives, and reviewed the agenda.

A participant list is in Appendix A. The presentation is available on the California High-Speed Rail Authority's [website](#).

### **Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan**

Boris Lipkin presented an overview of the Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan. Every two years, the Authority is tasked with releasing an updated Business Plan for public review and adoption by the Authority Board of Directors. The 2020 Business Plan release and adoption was delayed, allowing the Authority time to analyze the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the high-speed rail program. The Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan looks at the pandemic's effects on all areas of the program including (but not limited to) workforce, revenue, costs, and schedules. It also introduces the Authority's revised approach to risk management in light of the pandemic.

The Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan was released on March 12, 2021, triggering a 30-day public review period, which was to be followed by a vote on its adoption by the Authority Board of Directors on March 25, 2021.

Boris Lipkin concluded the presentation by sharing optimism about a positive relationship with the Biden administration, and the opportunities that support might offer.

### **Questions, Comments, and Responses**

- A member asked what are the High-Speed Rail Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) goals, and if they are being met.
  - Authority staff answered that the SBE program has a 30 percent goal for small business participation, including a 10 percent DBE participation goal and 3 percent DVBE participation goal. They said they would provide the CWG members with additional information about how the goals are being met.
- A member asked if the High-Speed Rail Project will receive less income from cap-and-trade sales due to the pandemic.
  - Authority Staff responded that they received less than the expected cap-and-trade revenue due to the pandemic. The Authority updated their projected cap-and-trade revenue in the Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan to account for the pandemic's effects on the economy.

## California High-Speed Rail Funding 101

Boris Lipkin presented information about funding sources for the California High-Speed Rail program since its inception. The four main funding sources are Proposition 1A bonds, federal recovery act grants, federal appropriation, and state cap-and-trade revenues.

### Questions, Comments, and Responses

- A member asked in which project section would construction next occur once funding is available.
  - Authority staff responded that the construction is underway in the Central Valley and that the next section slated for construction are the extensions to Merced and Bakersfield. From there, the goal is to complete construction from the Central Valley to Silicon Valley. Construction of the Pacheco Pass tunnel will take the longest time. Authority staff added that other future work includes the extension to Los Angeles, where the rail alignment will pass through two additional mountain ranges.
- A member asked about the image of the pergola in the Central Valley, and if construction of the High-Speed Rail Project in the Gardner neighborhood will be of the same magnitude.
  - Authority staff clarified that construction in the Central Valley looks different from what it will look like in Gardner. In Gardner, under the preferred alternative, high-speed trains and Caltrain will share the same alignment. Authority staff offered to meet with the CWG member to review designs in Gardner.
- A member asked if the reduced cap-and-trade revenues would lengthen the timeline of the overall project.
  - Authority staff stated that reduced revenues could impact the project timeline if funds are not available when they are needed for construction. Staff said they update the Business Plan every two years to adjust their planning to account for funding fluctuations.
- A member observed that construction in the Central Valley appears piecemeal (i.e., there is construction of isolated overpasses and pergolas), and asked for the reasoning behind this construction phasing practice.
  - Authority staff responded that the construction approach of initiating projects that take the longest to build first, such as pergolas or overpasses, is standard practice to being with long-lead time items. They shared that building the guideway to connect these structures will happen quickly, and that the first construction package will be largely complete by early 2022.
- A member asked how construction sequencing decisions are made by the Authority. For example, would construction in Morgan Hill occur before the Pacheco Pass tunnel is built? They also asked what would happen to the constructed sections if the rest of the funding were not secured.
  - Authority staff responded that construction prioritization decisions are challenging to make and that funding limitations and timelines add another level of complexity. One factor that affects prioritization is whether the project has benefits beyond high-speed rail service alone. For example, upgrading the track in Morgan Hill would also benefit the Caltrain system which is why it could be sequenced ahead of the Pacheco Pass construction under certain circumstances.
- A member asked whether the Authority would consider an alternative route like Panoche Pass if the Pacheco Pass' geology makes construction too costly there.
  - Authority staff said they looked at Panoche Pass in 2008 and determined Pacheco Pass to be a better option. There is a firm commitment to Pacheco Pass due to a decade's worth of studies that support that route decision and have advanced its implementation.
- A member asked how the Authority will pursue federal funding opportunities.
  - Authority staff shared that the current stimulus bill includes some funds for transit recovery, though there are not funds for high-speed rail. There is the potential for a large federal infrastructure bill, which would present a funding opportunity.

- A member asked if the Amtrak line will connect to high-speed rail in the Central Valley prior to construction of the Merced to San Jose section.
  - Authority staff responded that there will be an Amtrak connection at Merced, which will connect riders to Oakland and Sacramento.

**VTA Discussion (Bernice Alaniz)**

Bernice Alaniz and Gretchen Baisa provided a partner update on behalf of the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) focused on the BART to Silicon Valley project.

**Questions, Comments, and Responses**

- A member asked why BART does not plan to connect to San Jose International Airport.
  - The presenter shared that rail corridor constraints, particularly turn radius, make it impossible.
- A member asked if BART plans an extension to South County — Morgan Hill, San Martin, or Gilroy.
  - The presenter shared that VTA’s current focus is reaching Santa Clara. They are looking at future connections for high-speed rail and Caltrain to reach Gilroy.
- A member asked why VTA is able to tunnel in downtown San Jose, but the Authority cannot.
  - Authority staff answered that they looked at creating an underground station but there were issues with the water table. San Jose City staff in the meeting added that they conducted an independent study of this issue and reached a similar conclusion. Authority staff said they will share information about that analysis with the CWG.

**Additional Discussion**

Joey Goldman invited CWG members to ask any other questions or share comments.

- A member asked if it is realistic to rely on cap-and-trade funds through 2030 while companies are leaving California.
  - Authority staff responded that they continue to plan for cap-and-trade funds, but they are paying attention to this pattern.
- A member asked for updates on at-grade versus a grade-separated alignment on Monterey Road.
  - Authority staff shared that the design for Monterey Road has not changed, but the City has set aside money to look at grade separations. There remain challenges in collaborating with Union Pacific (UP) on the Monterey Road alignment, and the Authority along with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), is continuing discussions with UP.
- A member commented that, as a Morgan Hill resident, there is a safety concern when traveling over the seven roads that cross the UP track. Adding more trains to this track would exacerbate access issues related to traveling around the city and would lead to increased safety issues.

**Public Comments**

- None

**Action Items and Next Steps**

- Share Community Working Group meeting summary.
- Share Authority SBE and DVBE goals with CWG member.
- Discuss Gardner design with CWG member.
- Share City of San Jose study re: underground station. (Complete)
- Share VTA’s presentation. (complete)

## APPENDIX A Participants

Community Working Group Members		
Affiliation	Name	In Attendance
Alma Neighborhood Association	Cyndy Broyles	No
Bellarmino College Preparatory	Brian Adams	Yes
Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission	Eldon Chappell	No
California Maison Homeowners Association/Metcalf Neighborhood	Patricia Carlin	Yes
California Maison Homeowners Association/Metcalf Neighborhood	Jahanzeb Baqai	No
Casa de Fruta	Gene Zanger	No
City of Gilroy	Casey Estorga	No
D10 Leadership Coalition	Steve Levin	No
Delmas Park Neighborhood Association	Bert Weaver	Yes
Delmas Park Neighborhood Association	Kathy Sutherland	No
District 10: Leadership Coalition / VEP Community Association	Marilyn Rodgers	No
Downtown Residents Association	Bill Souders	No
Downtown Residents Association	Elizabeth Chien-Hale	No
Economic Blueprint Thought Leader	Ed Tewes	No
Economic Development Corporation	Greg Sellers	No
Flowers Neighborhood Association	Matthew Young	Yes
Friends of Caltrain	Adina Levin	No
Gardner Neighborhood	Kevin L. Christman	No
Gardner Neighborhood	Robert Jones	No
General Plan Advisory Committee	Dick Oliver	No
Gilroy Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission	Patrick Flautt	No
Gilroy Chamber of Commerce	Mark Turner	No
Gilroy Downtown Business Association	Nancy Maciel	No
Gilroy Historical Society/Gilroy Growing Smarter	Connie Rogers	No
Gilroy Planning Commission member, Reid Lerner Architects	Reid Lerner	No
Green Foothills	Alice Kaufman	No
Green Foothills	Brian Schmidt	No
Greenbelt Alliance	Sarah Cardona	No
Greenbelt Alliance	Zoe Siegel	No
Guadalupe Washington Neighborhood Association	Ray Moreno	No
Hayes Neighborhood Association	Brendan McCarthy	No
Hayes Neighborhood Association	Manny Souza	No
Hellyer-Christopher Riverview Skyway Neighborhood Association	Stephani Rideau	No
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Silicon Valley	Joel Velasquez	Yes
League of Women Voters in San Jose and Santa Clara	Karen Nelson	No
League of Women Voters in San Jose and Santa Clara	Bob Ruff	Yes
Los Paseos Neighborhood Association	Amy Georgiades	Yes
Los Paseos Neighborhood Association	Barbara Buchanan	No
Mexican-American Political Association (M.A.P.A.)	Danny Garza	Yes

Mexican-American Political Association (M.A.P.A.)	Terry Padilla	No
Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce	John Horner	No
Morgan Hill Downtown Association	Rosy Bergin	No
Morgan Hill Downtown Property Owner/Developer, Weston Miles Architects	Lesley Miles	Yes
Morgan Hill Economic Blueprint Thought Leader	Karl Bjarke	Yes
Morgan Hill Property Owner	John Kent	No
Newhall Neighborhood Association	Matt Bright	No
Newhall Neighborhood Association	John Urban	No
North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association	Harvey Darnell	Yes
North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association	John Ingco	No
Oak Grove Neighborhood Association	James Patterson	Yes
Planning Commission & Tourism Alliance/Morgan Hill Downtown Association	John Mckay	No
San Benito County Farm Bureau	Richard Bianchi	No
San Jose Downtown Association	Michelle Azevedo	No
San Jose Downtown Association	Marie Millares	No
San Jose State University	Monica Mallon	No
San Martin Neighborhood Alliance	Trina Hineser	No
San Martin Neighborhood Alliance	John Sanders	No
San Martin Neighborhood Alliance	Liz Paredes Bahnsen	Yes
San Martin Neighborhood Alliance	Sharon Luna	Yes
Santa Clara & San Benito Counties Building & Construction Trades Council	David Bini	Yes
Santa Clara & San Benito Counties Building & Construction Trades Council	Jean Cohen	No
Santa Clara ACE	Corinne Winter	No
Santa Clara County Farm Bureau	Jess Brown	No
Santa Clara Valley Water District	John Varela	No
SAP Center	Jim Goddard	Yes
SAP Center	Mike McCarroll	No
Senter Monterey Neighborhood Association	Jonathan Fleming	No
SPUR San Jose	Michael Lane	No
The Silicon Valley Organization	Eddie Truong	No
The Silicon Valley Organization	Matthew Mahood	No
Tulare Hill Homeowners Association	Brian Gurney	Yes
United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County	Ed Rast	No
United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County	Ken Podgorsek	No
VEP Community Association	Rich Giammona	No
Visit Gilroy	Jane Howard	Yes
Working Partnerships USA	Asn Ndaiye	No
Working Partnerships USA	Jeffrey Buchanan	No

**Authority Staff:** Boris Lipkin, Audrey Van, Rachel Bickert, Morgan Galli, Joey Goldman, Abby Fullem, Natalie Raymores, Anthony Lopez, and Natalie Daniel

**VTA Staff:** Gretchen Baisa and Bernice Alaniz