



SAN FRANCISCO TO SAN JOSÉ PROJECT SECTION SAN MATEO AND SOUTH PENINSULA COMMUNITY WORKING GROUPS MEETING SUMMARY JUNE 22, 2022

SUMMARY

Introductions & Agenda Review

Joey Goldman, facilitator, welcomed the Community Working Group (CWG) members, and thanked them for joining. He reviewed the meeting agenda, went over meeting guidelines, and introduced Boris Lipkin.

A participant list is in [Appendix B](#).

Statewide Updates

Boris Lipkin, California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) Northern California Regional Director, provided a statewide update on the California High-Speed Rail program. Updates included:

- The [2022 Business Plan](#) was issued in February 2022, adopted by the Authority Board of Directors in April 2022, and submitted to the state Legislature in May 2022.
- The 89-mile [San José to Merced Project Section](#) was approved by the Authority's Board of Directors in April 2022, completing the environmental clearance process.
- The California High-Speed Rail Authority and Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority [reached a funding agreement](#) to modernize Los Angeles Union Station.
- Contracts have been awarded to advance design of the Merced and Bakersfield extensions and the Central Valley Stations.
- Caltrain's first electric trainset has arrived.

Questions, Comments, and Responses

- Questions (Q): A CWG member inquired about sections of the project south of San José. Can the Authority provide more information about how they are facilitating wildlife crossings in Coyote Valley?
 - Response (R): Authority staff responded that the Coyote Valley is part of the wildlife corridors in the San Jose to Merced project section. The Authority worked extensively with wildlife stakeholders, like the Peninsula Open Space Trust and the Nature Conservancy, to minimize the impact of high-speed rail on wildlife and determine the locations of wildlife crossings so they align with plans for conservation in the area. This has been a collaborative process with wildlife conservation groups. The Pacheco Pass is another area where wildlife movement has been thoroughly analyzed. The Authority has included a wildlife overcrossing in this part of the corridor.

- Q: A CWG member asked for an update on the Authority’s coordination with the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) regarding extending electrification south of San José to Gilroy. What progress has been made?
 - R: Authority staff explained that Caltrain owns the corridor between San Francisco and Tamien station (specifically Control Point Lick), and UPRR owns the corridor south of Tamien to Gilroy. The Authority has been negotiating with UPRR and has made progress toward acquiring the rights to use the corridor. UPRR is aware of what the Authority approved in the San Jose to Merced project section and the right of way negotiation will move forward now that environmental clearance is complete.
- Q: A CWG member asked for clarification about the Authority’s proposal for two new tracks in the corridor south of San José.
 - R: The Authority is proposing to include a total of three tracks in this area. In some places there is currently one track; in others there are currently two tracks. The Authority is proposing to add one or two tracks with the intention of having two electrified and one non-electrified tracks along the corridor.

San Francisco to San José Project Section Final EIR/EIS

James Tung, Project Manager for the San Francisco to San José Project Section, provided an overview of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) process. The EIR/EIS is being prepared by the Authority, as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lead agency and designated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lead agency. The process started in 2016 with a Notice of Preparation. The Draft EIR/EIS was published in 2020, and a Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS in 2021. Earlier this month, the Authority published the [Final EIR/EIS](#), which Authority staff will present to the Authority Board on August 17 and 18, 2022. At that time, the Board will consider approving the Final EIR/EIS and directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to issue a Record of Decision (ROD).

The presentation reviewed the Authority’s community engagement activities since 2016, provided an overview of the alternatives in the Final EIR/EIS, and described the basis for identification of Alternative A as the Preferred Alternative.

The following factsheets were shared via Zoom chat with CWG members and attendees:

- [Project Section factsheet](#)
- [Key Changes factsheet](#)
- [At-Grade Crossing Safety factsheet](#)
- [Northern California Light Maintenance Facility factsheet](#)

Rich Walter, consultant with ICF managing the EIR/EIS process, provided an overview of the Final EIR/EIS. The Final EIR/EIS is a comprehensive document that fulfills federal and state environmental review requirements, allowing the Authority to approve the project and proceed to final design and construction. The environmental document includes:

- An analysis of alternatives based on the preliminary design, including impacts/effects.
- A list of mitigations proposed to reduce negative impacts/effects.
- Public comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and Revised/Supplemental Draft EIR/EIS and responses from the Authority.

- Revisions to the Draft EIR/EIS made in response to comments.

The presentation included background on the comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and the Recirculated/Supplemental EIR/EIS, changes between the Draft EIR/EIS and Final EIR/EIS. It also provided an overview of the locations of key materials in the document. A quick reference guide to the Final EIR/EIS is in [Appendix A](#).

Questions (Q), Comments (C), and Responses (R)

- Q: A CWG member asked about extending the Bayshore Station platform further south. What is the passenger experience impact?
 - R: Authority staff explained that in the Preferred Alternative the Caltrain southbound platform will be extended approximately 600 feet to the south creating a longer platform at the station. This was a change from the Draft EIR/EIS design, where the southbound platform was relocated 600 feet to the south.
- Q: The CWG member followed up to inquire what necessitated extending the southbound platform?
 - R: Authority staff responded that the extension is due to the shift in the LMF lead track, which moved the columns of the straddle bent structure further from the mainline tracks. This allowed for more room to preserve the original southbound platform. Instead of completely relocating the platform, the project team was able to keep much of it in place and extend the platform further south.
- Q: A CWG member asked if the Millbrae-SFO Station Design will include a 1:1 replacement of Caltrain and BART parking, or will parking be reduced?
 - R: Authority staff responded that the parking replacement at Millbrae-SFO station would be a 1:1 replacement under the Preferred Alternative.
- Q: A CWG member asked about an appendix to the EIR/EIS, which was a series of maps outlining all the parcels from San Francisco to San José. The CWG member observed color-coding indicating permanent easement of the Authority. Can the Authority clarify whether the easement means that there will be displacement and/or demolition?
 - R: Staff explained that the Authority has an easement over Caltrain-owned property and the map the CWG member is referring to shows these Caltrain-owned areas. The Authority's EIR/EIS includes a conservative estimate of the land that the Authority would use as part of the blended system with Caltrain, as shown in the Final EIR/EIS [Appendix 3.1-A](#). As design advances, the ultimate need for right-of-way will be determined more precisely.
- Q: A CWG member observed that the cost estimate in the EIR/EIS shows that the cost has increased, and it is surprising that so much of this is due to real estate. The CWG member asked, if high-speed rail would be sharing Caltrain tracks through a blended system, then where are these increased real estate costs coming from?
 - R: Authority staff explained that there is about \$1.2 billion of the total \$5.3 billion that is also covered in the San José to Merced Project Section. The environmental documents for both project sections have an overlapping area and so the cost for that overlap is accounted for in both, but it is a single cost. Also, the LMF is currently in a landfill area that would require remediation and site preparation, which is part of the real estate

cost. The cost estimate is conservative, and there could be optimization as the design advances.

- Q: A CWG member asked about the parcels in Appendix 3.1-A that are outlined in black, and not colored in. Why are those being shown as outlined?
 - R: Authority staff responded that this outlining was to show that these parcels are adjacent to properties that would experience a permanent easement or a temporary construction easement (TCE) or would potentially be impacted by a partial TCE or acquisition. The outlines are just to show the edges of the parcels for context. The map available online at maphsrnorcal.org allows users to zoom in to see the specific permanent and temporary property impacts.
- Q: A CWG member asked why there would be any demolition or widening outside of fencing and grade-crossings since Caltrain is already electrifying the corridor ahead of high-speed rail completion?
 - R: Authority staff explained that there are two situations where high-speed rail needs may not fit within the existing Caltrain right of way (not including stations and the LMF): 1) communication facilities in some areas which affects property outside of the right of way, and 2) curve-straightening, some of which is outside Caltrain tolerances.
- Q: A CWG member wondered whether the Authority studied the possibility of locating the Millbrae-SFO high-speed rail platform south of the main platform.
 - R: Authority staff clarified that south of the station there are several curves, which would not accommodate station platforms because they need to be located on straight track. To maintain user functionality, high-speed rail platforms need to stay aligned with the BART and Caltrain platforms for ease of transfers within the station.
- Q: A CWG member stated that the Millbrae-SFO station Reduced Site Plan (RSP) Design Variant is better for the community of Millbrae compared to the Millbrae-SFO Station Design as part of the Preferred Alternative. In addition to the planned transit-oriented development (TOD), there are plans for multiple additional developments in that area. It is hard to envision how the Preferred Alternative design would not preclude these developments from moving forward. The CWG member inquired how a TOD proposal could proceed quickly if the Preferred Alternative is approved.
 - R: Authority staff explained that the approved TOD in Millbrae conflicts with the Authority's needs for tracks and platforms at the station. As described in the land-use section of the Final EIR/EIS, the staff-recommended Preferred Alternative for Millbrae-SFO Station will not preclude development, and the Authority hopes to be able to achieve the goals of the City of Millbrae's TOD project through future collaboration with the City and property owners in the area.
 - C: The CWG member commented that negotiations regarding the Millbrae development and high-speed rail station have been occurring behind closed doors and expressed frustration that they had not led to a solution.
- Q: A CWG member stated that the Millbrae City Manager once showed images of land acquisition north of the station area along Hemlock Avenue as a TCE or permanent property impact and noted that this does not seem to get much attention in the EIR/EIS. The CWG member asked for clarification on this from the Authority.

- R: Authority staff responded that there are parts of the existing railroad corridor that have utilities that would need to be relocated, and this may extend the utility easement into backyards along Hemlock Avenue. As the Authority advances design, they hope to reduce this impact. The Final EIR/EIS analyzed impacts from the largest anticipated footprint.
- Q: A CWG member inquired about the Board certifying the Final EIR/EIS. What does it mean for future planning with partners if the Board approves this document? What becomes the mechanism for continued negotiation and planning with cities and stakeholders? Will there be an opportunity for more creativity in the future?
 - R: Authority staff explained that, from a CEQA perspective, the Board certifying the document would allow the project to move forward into design and acquire property once funding is secured. There will be areas where the Authority will need to continue to work with local jurisdictions and property owners to address issues that may come up. This NEPA/CEQA process is not the end of the discussions, and some topics may require additional analysis as the Authority continues to coordinate. The Authority wants to work collaboratively with jurisdictions and is ready to be at the table.

Next Steps

Stephen Tu, Northern California Engagement Manager, shared information about [the upcoming Authority Board of Directors meeting](#). The Board meeting will take place on August 17 and 18, 2022. Public comment will take place on August 17. At this meeting, the Board will consider whether to:

- Certify the Final EIR/EIS as CEQA Lead Agency.
- Approve the Preferred Alternative and related CEQA decision documents.
- Direct the Authority CEO to issue the ROD under the Authority's NEPA Assignment.

CWG Discussion

CWG members were invited to check in and share their thoughts, feedback, ideas and concerns. Joey facilitated the discussion and asked CWG members to share their thoughts. Comments were as follows:

- A CWG member stated that, in the big picture with a gigantic project like this, the main thing is to listen. There is a lot at stake. The CWG member expressed appreciation for the work that the Authority has done to date and noted that business community has been supportive of high-speed rail. The Final EIR/EIS addresses the public comments and the issues and concerns raised. The CWG member emphasized a concern regarding construction and long-term impacts to freight. For the long term, the main concern is the operating windows, noting that freight currently travels outside of the approved operating windows. The CWG member wondered if the Authority would restrict freight movement to the minimally required windows or would accommodate the reality of increased freight movement needs.
- A CWG member recommended that the Authority Board continue to listen to the community and address the areas of disagreement with Brisbane and Millbrae. The South San Francisco Unified School District has expressed concerns with emissions on the east side of the City of South San Francisco, which would be improved by taking cars off the road through high-speed rail service. The CWG member recommended the Authority highlight the emission reductions.

- A CWG member expressed frustration with the slowness of this process. Other countries can move their projects forward much more quickly. The CWG member also shared comments regarding the following:
 - Passing tracks at the Redwood City Caltrain station. This station would be used for passing tracks under the Caltrain 2040 Service Vision. While Alternative A accommodates current Caltrain service, there will be a need for more passing tracks with future Caltrain service. The Authority needs to come to the table and cooperate with Caltrain to solve the problem of passing tracks.
 - Grade separations. The CWG member expressed optimism for addressing grade separations where possible and moving forward with quiet zones in areas where grade separations are not yet planned. This process should be accelerated as a goodwill gesture and a great help along the peninsula.
- A CWG member concurred with comments about the need for sensitivity for coordinating with Caltrain, and excitement for the movement away from car-centric transportation and toward transit.
- A CWG member expressed support for the vision of high-speed rail to help address climate change. The space between San Francisco and San José is filled with some of the most important communities, employers, and economic drivers – a corridor that supports trade, communities, and cities that seek smart growth strategies around transit stations. The CWG member cited cities like Millbrae, Redwood City, and San Mateo as good examples of fostering development near transit and facilitating the creation of new housing. Uncertainty regarding funding is a big concern, and the fight over funding is frustrating after having voted for high-speed rail funding years ago.
- A CWG member shared their vision of housing adjacent to public transit to help address both the climate crisis and housing crisis, which are top of mind. They said they engaged in the high-speed rail project to help achieve the goal of transit-oriented development in Millbrae next to a transit system that is not going to be dependent on fossil fuels. The CWG member expressed optimism for the Authority and the City of Millbrae in reaching solutions for accommodating both the residential developments and high-speed rail. The sooner high-speed rail becomes reality, the closer we are toward achieving carbon mitigation.
- A CWG member stated that Atherton has the first quiet zone on the Peninsula and they are working to extend that by installing quad gates on Watson Avenue. The CWG member noted some issues requiring resolution, including accommodating 10 trains per hour across the Peninsula, and grade crossings.

Public Comment

Members of the public were invited to share their comments. Their comments are summarized below:

- A commenter expressed frustration with the following elements related to the City of Millbrae:
 - The City of Millbrae as a stakeholder. The commenter believes that the Authority does not consider the City of Millbrae as a stakeholder in the project and expressed surprise related to this.
 - Notifications. The commenter stated that there are three neighborhoods in Millbrae that did not receive notices and will be impacted. In particular Center Street is not shown in the project, yet it's the only way in or out for a neighborhood.

- Loss of revenue. The commenter stated that the EIR/EIS describes in multiple places that the City of Millbrae would experience a loss of revenue. The commenter shared an opinion regarding fire danger and other perceived threats from unhoused people who exit transit at Millbrae Station and enter the community.
- Lack of collaboration. The commenter said the Authority is not interested in collaborating with the City of Millbrae. The commenter expressed disappointment with the EIR/EIS recommendations, saying Millbrae is getting a surface parking lot, a station head house, and more noise.
- A commenter stated their support for high-speed rail in terms of the environment and public transit. They also described the need for affordable housing and encouraged the Authority to explore more alternatives in Millbrae to provide housing or other developments instead of building a parking lot. There are opportunities to work together. If the Authority provided a parking structure instead of a parking lot this could provide the same number of spots with less space and allow the City to build more housing units. The member of the public would like to see more collaboration, creativity, and better incorporation of public feedback into the designs. Regarding Hemlock residents, the commenter noted that there are families who live there who are especially concerned about construction impacts.

Closing Remarks

Boris wrapped up the meeting by thanking the CWG members for their contributions and dedication to the project. The input provided through the public engagement process has been invaluable and made for a better project.

APPENDIX A – Quick Guide to Final EIR/EIS

- Impact in my Community
Volume 1 – [Within each resource section](#), the impact analysis is provided by project subsection:
 - San Francisco to South San Francisco
 - San Bruno to San Mateo
 - San Mateo to Palo Alto
 - Mountain View to Santa Clara
 - San José Diridon Approach

- Responses to Comments
 - Volume 4, [Chapter 17](#) – Standard Responses
 - Volume 4, Chapters 18 to 21 – Responses to [Federal](#), [State](#), [Local Agency](#) and [Elected Official](#) comments
 - Volume 4, Chapters 22 to 24 – Responses to [Tribe](#), [Business and Organization](#), and [Individual](#) Comments
 - Translated copies of responses to comments are available upon request.

- Maps of Alternatives
 - **Volume 1**, [Chapter 2](#), Alternatives – General Maps
 - **Volume 2**, [Appendix 3.1-A](#) – Maps of Affected Properties
 - **Volume 3** – [Preliminary Engineering Plans](#)

- Visual Simulations of Alternatives
 - **Volume 1**, Chapter 3, [Section 3.15](#) – Aesthetics and Visual Quality

APPENDIX B – Participants

AFFILIATION	NAME	PRESENT
Acterra	Lauren Weston	No
Atherton Rail Committee	Paul Jones	Yes
Beresford Hillside Neighborhood Association	Robert Sellers	No
Burlingame Community Leader	Ross Bruce	Yes
Burlingame Resident	Joe Baylock	Yes
Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee	Fernanda Castello	No
Clean Coalition	Craig Lewis	No
Friends of Caltrain	Adrian Brandt	Yes
Friends of Caltrain	Adina Levin	No
Greater East San Carlos Neighborhood	Dimitri Vandellos	No
Homeowners Assoc. of North Central San Mateo	Ben Toy	No
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo	Evelyn Stivers	No
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo	Leora Tanjuatco Ross	No
Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County	Stacey Hawver	No
Loma Prieta Sierra Club	Gladwyn D'Souza	No
Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce	Fran Dehn	No
Millbrae Resident	Nathan Chan	Yes
Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning	Cliff Chambers	No
Muslim Community Association (MCA) of San Francisco Bay Area	Faisal Ahmed	No
Next Path Consulting	Debra Horen	Yes
North Fair Oaks Community	Ever Rodriguez	No
North Fair Oaks Community	Rafael Avendaño	No
Old Quad Residents Association	Patricia Leung	No
Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group (PFRUG)	Greg Greenway	Yes
Peninsula Freight Rail Users Group (PFRUG)	Clem Molony	No
Redwood City Chamber of Commerce	Amy Buckmaster	No
Redwood City Forward	Anthony Lazarus	No
Samaritan House	Laura Bent	No
San Mateo Area Chamber of Commerce	Matthew Jacobs	No
San Mateo County Central Labor Council	Richard Hedges	No
San Mateo County Economic Development Association	Don Cecil	Yes
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition		No
Silicon Valley Central Chamber of Commerce	Christian Pellecchia	No
South Bay Islamic Association (SBIA)	Athar Siddique	No
South San Francisco School Board/Samtrans Citizens Advisory Committee	John Baker	Yes
Stanford University	Jessica Alba	No
Stanford University	Lesley Lowe	No
Sunnyvale Sustainable Affordable Living Coalition	Mike Serrone	No
Sustainable San Mateo County	Bill Schulte	No

AFFILIATION	NAME	PRESENT
Sustainable San Mateo County	Christine Kohl-Zaugg	No
Washington Park Neighborhood Association (Sunnyvale)	Matt Brunnings	No
Youth United for Community Action	Ofelia Bello	No

Authority Staff and Project Team in attendance: Anne Winslow, Anthony Lopez, Audrey Van, Boris Lipkin, Bruce Fukuji, James Tung, Jennifer Vazconcelo, Joey Goldman, Katie DeLeuw, Minming Wu, Morgan Galli, Rebecca Tabor, Rich Walter, Stephen Tu, Vidya Bhamidi