

**SAN JOSE COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP
MEETING SUMMARY
JULY 16, 2019**

SUMMARY

Introductions and Agenda Review

Joan Isaacson, facilitator, welcomed the Community Working Group (CWG) members, presented the meeting objectives, and reviewed the agenda.

Refining the Alternatives: Collaboration with Partner Agencies, Stakeholders, and Members of the Public

Dave Shpak, Acting Project Manager, presented a summary of collaboration with partner agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public that helped shape the range of alternatives.

Characteristics of Alternatives

Shpak presented a summary of the characteristics of the four alternatives in the project extent.

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

- A member asked if the alternatives could be blended across subsections.
 - Authority staff replied that the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) is required to identify a preferred alternative amongst the four defined alternatives. Blending design elements of alternatives, or the development of hybrid alternatives at this time would change the range of alternatives in the Draft EIR/EIS. The Authority may reconsider the alternatives after receiving public and agency comments on the Draft EIR/EIS.
- A member commented that their neighborhood cannot be seen on the section map.
 - Authority staff acknowledged that the large scale of the presentation maps did not provide location-specific details. Staff offered to discuss more detailed maps of engineering designs with the neighborhood association.

Identifying a Preferred Alternative

Shpak presented the conclusions of the technical analysis that led staff to recommend Alternative 4 as the State's Preferred Alternative.

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

Traffic

- A member asked how Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 increase traffic on Monterey Road.
 - Authority staff responded that Alternatives 1-3 require narrowing of the 6-lane portion of Monterey Road. Alternatives 1 and 3 include a viaduct in the median of Monterey Road and

Alternative 2 would require up to two lanes for constructing an embankment and grade separations.

- A member asked if the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) would consider grade separations as a traffic or safety mitigation.
 - Authority staff replied that the Authority is not considering grade separations as part of the project in blended corridors where operating speeds do not require them (such as between San Jose and Gilroy in Alternative 4) and recommended the member comment on the Draft EIR/EIS.
- A member commented that they were concerned that the City of San Jose “road diet” would increase traffic on Monterey Road would occur regardless of high-speed rail.

Emergency Vehicle Response Time and Access

- A member asked if the impact to emergency vehicle response times would drop to zero for Alternative 4 if grade separations were added.
 - Authority staff responded that it would not because grade separations would require reconfiguration of the roadway network, likely including constraints upon intersection turning movements.
- A member commented that impacts to the Gregory Plaza Neighborhood did not seem to be considered in the staff recommendation. They expressed concern that emergency vehicle access would be limited by gate down times blocking one of two ways to access the neighborhood being affected.

Noise

- A member asked for clarification on quiet zones and how they affect noise impacts.
 - Authority staff responded that the implementation of quiet zones would reduce severe noise impacts of Alternative 4 by eliminating train horns at roadway crossings. Staff further clarified that quiet zones require an agreement between the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and a local jurisdiction and are not going to be proposed as mitigation because the Authority cannot apply for one itself.
- A member asked if high-speed rail trains will sound their horn going through each station along the peninsula.
 - Authority staff responded that the Authority will follow Caltrain operating rules which require sounding horns at each station as the train passes through. If a local jurisdiction implements a quiet zone, horns will not be used when a train passes through a grade crossing but may still sound horns when going through a station if Caltrain rules don't change *Coordination with Partner Agencies*
- A member commented that the Authority should coordinate with the Diridon Integrated Station Concept (DISC) process in selecting a preferred alternative.
 - Authority staff clarified that the DISC process is a separate, but related, process that is still in the conceptual phase. The high-speed rail project is examining the required infrastructure for high-speed rail the entire state and is currently in the environmental review process in Northern California. The Authority is actively engaged with the DISC process, but the Authority's environmental clearance of the needed infrastructure for high-speed rail is at a more advanced stage than the DISC, which is currently in the planning phase.
- A member asked if the DISC process identified a vision that was inconsistent with the Authority's Record of Decision (ROD), would the Authority prepare a Supplemental EIR/EIS.
 - Authority staff replied that the environmental strategy for DISC would be determined once there was more work done to define the project and that the right approach would be determined together by the DISC partners.

- A member asked how changes in Caltrain’s future service levels would affect the Authority’s final decision on a preferred alternative.
 - Authority staff responded that Caltrain’s long-term plans currently accommodate high-speed rail trains and that the staff-recommended State’s Preferred Alternative would accommodate blended operations. However, the Authority is not assuming changes in Caltrain service from approved levels. If infrastructure is needed for any future changes then there would need to be additional environmental clearance.
- A member asked if additional analysis would be required for high-speed rail if the DISC process selected a low (25-foot) aerial option for Diridon Station.
 - Authority staff reiterated that the two processes are separate, and the DISC process has not achieved sufficient planning or design definition to evaluate potential project impacts. The Authority’s analysis of the high aerial alternatives (1-3) may provide useful information for the DISC process as it evolves from vision to enough specificity to start environmental clearance.

Other

- A member asked if the four alternatives could be combined.
 - Authority staff replied that there are four end-to-end alternatives under study for the Draft EIR/EIS. If some form of hybridization was to occur, it could happen between the Draft and Final EIR/EIS.
- A member asked if the identification of a preferred alternative is a federal requirement.
 - Authority staff replied that the identification of a proposed project is a requirement under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is federal policy for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on projects funded under the last two federal transportation funding acts.

Outreach Update

Morgan Galli, Northern California Regional Stakeholder Manager, presented a timeline and next steps for collecting community feedback on the staff-recommended State’s Preferred Alternative and sharing feedback with the Authority Board.

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

- A member commented that comments on the staff recommendation are due only one day after the Los Banos Open House.
 - Authority staff responded that there would be feedback forms collected at the open house and that members of the public may also provide comment at the September 17th Board meeting.
- A member asked what the Authority is planning between publication of the Draft and Final EIR/EIS.
 - Authority staff replied that after the Draft EIR/EIS is published there is a 45-day comment period during which the Authority will be hosting open houses and public hearings along the corridor.
- A member asked if there is an opportunity for members of the public submitting a comment on the Draft EIR/EIS to follow up with the Authority after they provide a response.
 - Authority staff clarified that the Final EIR/EIS will include responses to all comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS. Members of the public may follow up during a public hearing.

Discussion of the Staff-Recommended State’s Preferred Alternative

Isaacson asked the CWG members to complete a worksheet with a series of questions about the staff-recommended State’s Preferred Alternative. A summary of CWG member feedback collected in the worksheets is presented in Appendix A.

The following questions, comments and responses were recorded following the worksheet exercise:

- A member commented that staff seemed to use relatively small differences to justify which alternative performed the best.
- A member commented that they felt a lot of the Authority's work has been done in a vacuum and the community-supported partial trench from Capitol Expressway to Chynoweth Avenue was not considered.
 - Authority staff responded that the range of alternatives had been developed over a long period of time with heavy community involvement but that the fundamental design question was what infrastructure was needed to operate high-speed rail. The Authority is also working with the City of San Jose, VTA, and Caltrain to develop a Rail Corridor Plan that will look at options for grade separation in Monterey Corridor.
- A member requested additional time to complete the worksheet.
 - Authority staff responded that CWG members may email completed worksheets to Morgan Galli by August 22.
- A member commented that cost seemed to be a driving factor in the staff recommendation and suggested that cost savings from the other alternatives should be invested in tunnels or other infrastructure in San Jose.
- A member requested additional detailed documentation of the rationale behind the selection of the staff recommendation.
 - Authority staff replied that the detailed rationale provided to the Board on September 17th will be available publicly and the full environmental analysis will be available when the Draft EIR/EIS is released at the end of 2019.
- A member commented that community factors listed on the worksheet did not reflect topics such as safety concerns that have been discussed frequently by CWG members.
 - Authority staff requested that CWG members include that feedback on the worksheet. Staff also clarified that the worksheet is focused on differentiating factors, and all the alternatives must meet the same state and federal safety requirements, which is why safety is not a differentiating factor.
- A member commented that the alternatives analysis presented today does not provide information on local impacts. They felt the State's Preferred Alternative should take neighborhood and CWG concerns into account, rather than be based on the end-to-end alternatives.
 - Authority staff clarified that the information presented during the meeting is only a summary of the analysis of the differentiators at the project section level because that was the basis upon which the Board was being asked to act. The full environmental analysis with local information will be included in the Draft EIR/EIS.
- A member requested to view the engineering blueprints.
 - Authority staff invited any members wishing to discuss detailed engineering drawings to follow-up with Authority staff to arrange a meeting.
- A member commented that the Authority should consider segmenting the project section to analyze and consider localized impacts as part of the staff recommendation.
- A member expressed frustration that the community-supported partial trench option for the Monterey Corridor had not been considered or included in the staff recommendation.
- A member commented that grade crossings were a significant concern.
- A member commented that different geographies preferred different alternatives.
- A member commented that a blended system with Caltrain and high-speed rail is a smart investment.
- A member asked if Alternative 4 meets the 2 hours and 40 minutes travel time requirement from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

- Authority staff responded that all alternatives, including Alternative 4, meet the Proposition 1A travel time requirement.
- A member commented that they are happy to not have a viaduct in the Monterey Corridor.
- A member commented that they were frustrated with the project and the impact on development in their neighborhood and suggested that Californians should be given another opportunity to vote on the project.
- A member commented that they would prefer the no project alternative because of the impacts to the existing neighborhood and other ongoing transportation planning processes such as DISC and Caltrain.
- A member commented that communities were previously told that they would not be impacted by high-speed rail and now they will be impacted.
- A member expressed concern that Alternative 4 will not be able to accommodate future service levels.
- A member commented that high-speed rail should go around the North Willow Glen neighborhood on a viaduct. They also expressed interest in hybrid alternatives and felt the existing alternatives do not work for San Jose.
- A member expressed concern that the current alternatives do not consider needs for the area for the next 100 years and would perpetuate existing problems in environmental justice communities.
- A member commented that the criteria examined for the staff recommendation do not reflect community feedback.
- A member commented that the Authority should not choose an alternative that will make existing problems worse and that it would be better to take more properties now in order to reach a better long-term solution.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- A member of the public commented that the Authority announced they were going to reexamine the approach to Diridon Station. The Authority says they want to design the best system possible, but the best high-speed rail system does not destroy neighborhoods that have been historically impacted by environmental injustice. A DISC member mentioned at a recent meeting that high-speed rail would need to build a tunnel. The decision shouldn't be just a high-speed rail decision, it needs to be a San Jose decision. A third track added will add numerous trains. It's not just about losing houses in Willow Glen, it will also increase noise on Jerome Street and in the Gardner neighborhood. It would not just cut off emergency access, Delmas Park would be cut off substantially. San Jose Mayor Liccardo, Councilmembers Davis, Esparza, and Jimenez, have all signed a letter supporting the viaduct option. I will not support any candidate who does not make this a priority on their campaign.
- A member of the public commented that they attended a Caltrain electrification meeting last night and Caltrain shared that electric trains would be restricted to 35 mph in neighborhoods around San Jose. Caltrain also shared an anticipated increase in ACE trains, which run at-grade along the corridor causing significant cumulative impacts in the area. It feels as though the Authority does not listen and provide information, such as noise data that the public requests. The comments and questions CWG members and members of the public shared during the meeting have been the same since the beginning of the process and it seems as though progress has not been made.
- A member of the public commented that San Jose community members are frustrated because the alternative that everyone wants is not being studied. High-speed rail staff are doing their job and they have to meet their deadlines, so modifications are not on the table. For comments to have the greatest impact, they must be made directly to the decision makers and not the staff conducting the analysis. The community needs to participate in the public process and keep the pressure on decision makers to make a hybrid alternative happen.

- A member of the public commented that the Authority has exclusive rights to design and build rail infrastructure for trains traveling above 125 mph. Other entities, such as Caltrain, could be a lead agency in design and building of the rail infrastructure along this corridor if trains will only travel at 110 mph. Caltrain is developing its business plan that includes scenarios above the six Caltrain and four high-speed rail trains an hour that the Authority used for their analysis. There are also plans for a Mega-measure that would generate \$100 billion in funding for projects some of which could be in San Jose. Additionally, the Palo Alto Citizens Advisory Panel is confronting grade separation issues which may provide unique solutions.
- A member of the public commented that they are very disappointed in the responsiveness of the Authority towards their comments over the last decade, specifically regarding impacts to San Jose neighborhoods.

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Members

| Affiliation | Name | Present |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Alma Neighborhood Association | Cyndy Broyles | No |
| Bellarmine College Preparatory | Brian Adams | Yes |
| California Maison Homeowners Association/Metcalf Neighborhood | Jahanzeb Baqai | No |
| California Maison Homeowners Association/Metcalf Neighborhood | Karen Lattin (alternate) | Yes |
| Committee for Green Foothills | Alice Kaufman | No |
| D10 Leadership Coalition | Steve Levin | Yes |
| Delmas Park Neighborhood Association | Bert Weaver | Yes |
| District 10 Leadership Coalition/VEP Community Association | Marilyn Rodgers | No |
| EGOPIC Neighborhood Association | Yazmin Rios | No |
| Flowers Neighborhood Association | Matthew Young | Yes |
| Friends of Caltrain | Adina Levin | Yes |
| Gardner Neighborhood | Kevin L. Christman, | Yes |
| Greenbelt Alliance | Matthew Vander Sluis, Kiyomi Yamamoto | No |
| Guadalupe Washington Neighborhood Association | Ray Moreno | Yes |
| 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 | Dennis King, Ron Gonzales | No |
| League of Women Voters in San Jose and Santa Clara | Bob Ruff | Yes |
| Los Paseos Neighborhood Association | Amy Georgiades | Yes |
| Mexican-American Political Association (M.A.P.A.) | Danny Garza | No |
| Newhall Neighborhood Association | John Urban | Yes |

| Affiliation | Name | Present |
|--|------------------------------|---------|
| North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association | Harvey Darnell | Yes |
| Oak Grove Neighborhood Association | James Patterson | Yes |
| San Jose Downtown Association | Marie Millares (alternate) | Yes |
| San Jose State University | Monica Mallon | Yes |
| Santa Clara & San Benito Counties Building & Construction Trades Council | David Bini, Jean Cohen | Yes |
| SAP Center | Jim Goddard | Yes |
| Senter Monterey Neighborhood Association | Jonathan Fleming | Yes |
| Silicon Valley Leadership Group | Jason Baker | No |
| Silver Leaf Neighborhood Association | Nuria Root | No |
| SPUR San Jose | Teresa Alvarado | Yes |
| The Silicon Valley Organization | Matthew Mahood, Eddie Truong | No |
| Tulare Hill Homeowners Association | Brian Gurney | Yes |
| United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County | Ed Rast | Yes |
| Working Partnerships USA | Jeffrey Buchanan, Asn Ndaiye | No |

Authority Staff: Boris Lipkin, Dave Shpak, Morgan Galli, Yvonne Chan, Joan Isaacson, Mary Beth Day, Zach Barr

Elected Officials: Office of San Jose City Councilmember Dev Davis (District 6), Office of San Jose City Councilmember Sergio Jimenez (District 2), Office of Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren

ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS

- A meeting summary will be developed and distributed to CWG members for their review by August 9.
 - CWG members should send comments on the July Meeting Summary to staff by August 16 for inclusion in the version that will be appended to the Board Memo.
- CWG members who did not already fill out a Discussion Worksheet can share a completed worksheet with Authority staff by August 22.
- CWG members interested in scheduling time for staff to review detailed maps with them should reach out to Authority staff.

APPENDIX A

CWG members were asked how they felt about Alternative 4, the staff-recommended State’s Preferred Alternative.

| Responses | Number of CWG Members |
|--|-----------------------|
| Support Alternative 4 but have some concerns | 4 |
| Prefer a different alternative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWG members supported either Alternative 1 or 2 • No CWG members supported Alternative 3 | 3 |
| Write-in responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt they did not have enough information to form an opinion • Did not support any of the alternatives | 2 |

CWG members were asked how well they thought the staff-recommended State’s Preferred Alternative balances tradeoffs between (1) system performance, operations, and costs, (2) community, and (3) environmental factors.

| Responses | Number of CWG Members |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very poorly | 2 |
| Somewhat poorly | 1 |
| Moderately/no opinion | 2 |
| Somewhat well | 1 |
| Very well | 1 |

CWG members were asked to choose the five differentiating factors that are most important to their community.

| Differentiating Factor | Number of CWG Members |
|---|-----------------------|
| Visual quality effects | 8 |
| Residential displacements | 7 |
| Noise impacts | 6 |
| Community/public facility displacements | 3 |
| Increase in 2040 peak travel time in the Monterey Corridor (San Jose) | 3 |
| Proximity to existing transit corridors | 2 |

| Differentiating Factor | Number of CWG Members |
|--|-----------------------|
| Commercial displacements | 2 |
| Permanent road closures | 2 |
| Emergency vehicle delays | 2 |
| Impacts to environmental justice communities | 2 |
| Alignment length | 1 |
| Operational speed | 1 |
| Capital costs | 1 |
| Agricultural displacements/farmland conversion | 1 |
| Travel time | 0 |
| Consistency with the Gilroy General Plan | 0 |
| Waters and wetlands | 0 |
| Habitat for listed plant and wildlife species | 0 |
| Wildlife corridors | 0 |
| Conservation areas | 0 |
| Parks and recreation areas | 0 |
| Historic places/resources | 0 |

The following key themes were captured in the members' worksheets:

- Strong interest in grade separations and/or a tunnel/trench at key intersections (Skyway, Branham, Chynoweth)
- Concern that staff has not listened to feedback from CWG members and other stakeholders
- Concern that staff recommended Alternative 4 based solely on cost
- Pedestrian access across the corridor as being important
- The State's Preferred Alternative should be selected on a subsection or neighborhood basis
- Make sure high-speed rail does not preclude Caltrain electrification to Gilroy
- Concern that the State's Preferred Alternative ignores the DISC process
- Interest in an elevated Diridon Station
- Interest in removing at-grade crossings at Virginia Street and Auzerai Avenue
- Interest in reducing traffic through the Gardner neighborhood
- Preference for a 25-foot elevated approach to Diridon Station to improve east-west connectivity and fully use the area around the station

- Appreciation that Alternative 4 preserves views and privacy for those living in the Monterey Corridor and will not affect the width of Monterey Road
- Concern about impacts on home values
- Support for high-speed rail and Caltrain to share electrified tracks, with the caveat that Monterey Corridor needs grade separations
- Concern about impact of construction on quality of life
- Appreciation that Monterey Corridor will not have a viaduct
- Acknowledgement that environmental factors (such as waters and wetlands, habitat for listed species, wildlife corridors, and conservation areas) are also important