

**CalMod Local Policy Maker Group (LPMG)  
Summary Meeting Notes for April 25, 2019**

**Summary Notes**

The purpose of these notes is to capture key discussion items and actions identified for subsequent meetings.

City / County	Representative or Alternate	Present
Atherton	C. Wiest	X
Belmont	J. Mates	
Brisbane	T. O'Connell	X
Burlingame	E. Beach	X
Gilroy	C. Tucker	
Menlo Park	R. Mueller	X via phone
Millbrae	R. Holober	
Mountain View	J. McAlister	
Morgan Hill	R. Constantine	X
Palo Alto	L. Kou	X
Redwood City	S. Masur	X
San Bruno	R. Medina	X
San Carlos	R. Collins	X
San Francisco	P. Supawanich	
San Jose	S. Jimenez	X
San Mateo	E. Rodriguez	X
Santa Clara	K. Watanabe	X
South San Francisco	K. Matsumoto	X
Sunnyvale	N. Smith	X
San Francisco BOS	TBD	
San Mateo BOS	TBD	
Santa Clara BOS	TBD	

Chair: Gillian Gillet

Acting Chair: Emily Beach

VACANT SEATS: Santa Clara BOS, San Francisco BOS, San Mateo BOS

CALTRAIN STAFF: Casey Fromson, Sebastian Petty

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Gillian Gillett called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m.

## 2. Staff Report

Casey Fromson, Caltrain Government and Community Affairs Director, told members that the LPMG meetings are now being video recorded and will be posted to the Caltrain website following the meeting. There is also now a call-in option for members who cannot attend the meeting in person. There will be two spots available per meeting for call-in and those that call in will need to comply with the Brown Act of California.

## 3. Caltrain Business Plan

Sebastian Petty, Caltrain Senior Policy Advisor, provided an update on the development of a 2040 service vision. The presentation discussed ridership projections, grade separations, and grade crossings.

*LPMG members' key comments regarding the Caltrain Business Plan discussion included the following:*

- *A member asked if Caltrain staff can remind the members of how they're considering future planned development along the corridor and as various cities are planning future growth, are these considered. (Caltrain staff answered, that they are using regional Plan Bay Area 2040 projections and taking city projections into account when applicable. Caltrain has incorporated approved jurisdictions' plans that include higher projections than those used in the 2015 Plan Bay Area projections. Caltrain hasn't included any plans that are contemplated or were approved after the Caltrain Business Plan modeling occurred in 2018.)*
- *A member commented that what they see in the three scenarios is that their community has two trains per hour at the stops. They just approved plans that will result in increased growth, and already have high ridership. They hope Caltrain can look at city-approved growth patterns, particularly in cities that aren't proposed to receive increased service. The member hoped that staff ensures that every community wins a bit. (Caltrain staff commented that they will do that, and need to address some variation that can occur. Caltrain tried the best they could to fit the service to where growth is projected, and it is challenging. Caltrain is a physically constrained corridor. Some places will be physically impossible to add infrastructure, but service increases would require overtakes. This is a balancing exercise, to match service with achievable infrastructure. Caltrain will come back to show options and variations, but do need to be clear that there are trade-offs.)*
- *A member asked if Caltrain has looked at how SB 50 would affect ridership and the increase in density associated with that, if it passes. (Caltrain staff answered no, they haven't looked at this issue yet. Caltrain could do some modeling, but it is a nuanced conversation. Current projections don't reflect SB 50. If the demand for service increased dramatically above what is projected in the Business Plan, we would still need to consider that the corridor is physically constrained. There are real trade-offs to consider regarding service and infrastructure. Staff said they would be happy to follow-up individually with the member on the topic of SB50.)*
- *A member commented that for south Santa Clara County, they've been told that electrified Caltrain service is dependent on High Speed Rail (HSR). The member expressed that their community is in desperate need of increased service. The member stated that it is concerning to hear that it is tied to High Speed Rail and asked if Caltrain could explain what that means. (Caltrain staff replied that HSR's and the State of California's efforts to negotiate the ownership of that corridor with Union Pacific is a fundamental first step to electrifying that corridor.*

*Caltrain is hoping to provide clearer answers based on a board decision on a future service vision. This will allow Caltrain to work with the member to identify interim steps leading to the long-term. As a short term service improvement, in 2019, Caltrain is revising the schedule to South County to better meet the needs of the riders. In 2021, Caltrain will be working towards adding a 4<sup>th</sup> train for the South County service.)*

- *A member noted that Stanford University's general use permit is not yet approved and asked if this been considered in Caltrain's service planning efforts. (Caltrain staff answered, no. They've considered existing approved plans, but not plans that haven't been approved.)*
- *A member asked if Caltrain looking at what the Business Plan would include if High Speed Rail does not materialize. The member commented that this is the elephant in the room in terms of service levels and that cities are planning around it but aren't even sure it's going to happen. (Caltrain staff answered that they are talking about the long-range vision which includes certain assumptions, such as High Speed Rail existing in the future, not four-tracking through the whole corridor, and maintaining local service to all stops. Caltrain is planning in a way that will allow us to make incremental improvements and adjust to HSR plans.) The member followed up by asking when financing will be evaluated, and weighing benefits vs. the cost. (Caltrain staff answered that they are evaluating the business case now. Members will see some cost numbers related to grade separations tonight and Caltrain will prepare more as they continue through the analysis. Caltrain will provide a complete picture of costs and benefits at the Board workshop in the summer. Financing and funding will be addressed during the second part of the plan. Once the Board makes the service vision decision, Caltrain will start to think about the steps needed to achieve the vision and identify funding needs and resources.)*
- *A member asked if it fair to say that increased capacity is going to require increased capital investment, e.g., more passing tracks. (Caltrain staff answered in general, yes. Caltrain has shown three scenarios. None of these are a recommendation, they are intended to show different levels of investment and infrastructure and how these translate to service and capacity growth.)*
- *A member asked how realistic it is that the downtown extension will be done in the next 10 years. (Caltrain staff answered that the project has been environmentally cleared, but it has not been funded. Like many mega-projects, there are a lot of political commitments and approved projects that are needed but not funded.) The member followed-up, asking if there is a projected cost. (Caltrain staff answered that \$3-4 billion for the core components plus \$2 billion for the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension, which is separate from the DTX but sometimes discussed as a combined project.)*
- *A member asked, regarding the moderate growth scenario, if it is correct to say that by 2040 the system would be short by 35% of the anticipated demand. (Caltrain staff answered that at the peak of the peak period, yes Caltrain would not be able to comfortably handle the expected demand. Looking at all-day ridership, and then constraining it to capacity, Caltrain would lose 4% over the course of the day. The issue is that the times people are not fitting on to the train are not spread out throughout the day – it's usually at the highest peak time.)*
- *A member asked if Morgan Hill and Gilroy are not shown because they are part of the 28 crossings on the Union Pacific corridor. (Caltrain staff answered that this area will be addressed later in the presentation, but, yes, it is different because Caltrain does not manage the tracks.)*

- *A member asked if Caltrain staff went further, looking at what causes a crossing to have higher volumes. (Caltrain staff answered no, and that this is based on pure traffic volumes for background data.)*
- *A member asked if the gate downtimes shown account are just for when the gates are down, or if it includes when the gates are coming down, traffic light cycles, and anticipated train approaches. The member asked if not, would the actual impact would be higher. (Caltrain staff answered that this includes the gates down time only, not traffic light cycles or anticipated train approaches. This would be different at each crossing.)*
- *A member asked while Caltrain is reviewing the gate downtimes associated with grade crossings, if High Speed Rail is considered. (Caltrain staff answered that this takes both Caltrain and High Speed Rail into account.)*
- *A member commented that South San Francisco is planning for significant job growth in the area east of 101. Many of these people live in San Mateo County. The city is projecting major growth, and is not done planning. (Caltrain staff answered that have been talking to South San Francisco staff and are accounting for planning and projects in progress.)*
- *A member asked if there is a line item for station improvements in south Santa Clara County. (Caltrain staff answered yes, not as part of grade separations, but as part of the total costs.)*
- *A member asked what it means to say that Caltrain has carried a single general allocation cost across south Santa Clara County. (Caltrain staff answered that it means they are holding this general amount allocated for grade crossing improvements in this area, but it's unclear exactly what this would be for.) The member followed-up asking, if the \$1.4 billion is built into the scenario to address grade separation infrastructure in that area. (Caltrain staff answered yes, the \$1.4 billion is included in all scenarios to address grade separation and at-grade crossing infrastructure in south Santa Clara County.)*
- *A member asked if costs discussed were in today's dollars. (Caltrain staff answered that these are in 2018 dollars.) The member followed-up asking, for perspective, if the whole electrification project costs \$2 billion. (Caltrain staff answered yes.)*
- *A member commented that they appreciate the thorough presentation. Regarding funding, with such a huge cost number that they are looking at, does Caltrain have a sense of when they would develop a strategy to access available funds. The member asked if this was going to be a tax measure, federally funded, or a combination. The member asked what is the big picture thought about funding. (Caltrain staff answered: All the above. The pitch Caltrain would make about why it's important to think corridor-wide is because then you can tie these costs to service of the railroad and not just to the localized benefits each one would provide. Funding will need to come from multiple sources and there is much work to be done on this issue)*
- *A member commented that it is really helpful to have context and understanding, and that it would be helpful to also have scenarios and modeling showing the benefits of a system-wide grade separation program. In addition to safety, there are also health benefits from reducing idling cars and the impacts to residents, and potential quality of life impacts. The member suggested that as the Caltrain team is building out the plan, they will need a strong case with good rationale to bring forward to colleagues and communities.*
- *A member noted that the group talks about Caltrain as a commuter rail, but the corridor is moving beyond the concept of a commuter rail and that there is an opportunity to change how members are thinking and talking about the system.*

- *A member asked if Caltrain is still looking at putting something on the ballot for next year for a dedicated source of funding. (Caltrain staff answered that they will have a discussion on this exact topic at the next Caltrain Board meeting. Tying back to the Business Plan, this could be a potential component of overall funding sources. Caltrain staff added that they are just showing the need now, not the funding sources.)*
- *A member commented that they had a VTA update regarding Measure B and how much is needed to get a fourth daily train to Gilroy. The member also commented that there was a question about the use of Measure B dollars to overhaul the trains currently being used and that there doesn't seem to be anything in Measure B about whether these funds can be used for maintenance. The member asked how this plays into electrification of the UP line. (Caltrain: at this time, Caltrain doesn't have a detailed cost breakdown of the capital and operating costs to run a fourth train for South Santa Clara service. However, VTA in several meetings has committed Measure B funds (cap and operational) to help fund the additional service. There haven't been discussions yet, about any Measure B funds committed to electrifying the South County line.)*
- *A member asked if potentially doubling the length of the platform figured in to the estimated costs. (Caltrain staff answered no, not yet. When overall costs are evaluated, they will consider platform extensions, though doubling the platforms lengths hasn't been considered yet. There is concern at some stations with platform lengths. While it sounds less impactful, it can result in other types of impacts such as impacts at crossings, but is worth considering and may be evaluated in future analyses.)*
- *A member noted that we are in the vision stage of the Caltrain Business Plan and that it is so important to stay focused on this. If the members are going to live in a sustainable world, it is up to themselves to build up this rail spine so that it serves everyone. The members cannot continue the current path and must go this direction. Caltrain is building a strong case for this. How to accomplish this will be a challenge.*
- *A member asked, who would pay for shared technical resources along the corridor? The member noted that it is a great idea since some cities don't have the resources to study impacts of grade separations. The member asked to what depth has Caltrain gone to, in analyzing combined improvements? (Caltrain staff answered that this is a huge topic and there is a limit of what the Caltrain Business Plan can do related to this. A substantial corridor-wide study is needed. In the remainder of the Business Plan, Caltrain can develop a more detailed scope of what this could look like. Caltrain has identified the need for this in the Caltrain budget next year; it would be about the scale of the business plan itself, as work to come.)*
- *A member noted that they are experiencing significant growth and are finding it difficult to imagine how upcoming legislation could impact our cities and towns. The corridor is already transforming and service levels are already impacted. The future is here.*
- *A member commented that one thing that hasn't been addressed yet is timing. There is a question about demand, and how we implement grade separations and who leads that work – this will inform the corridor-wide grade separation study. The grade separations have so much more meaning to communities than the business plan. Grade separations are a placemaking opportunity.*
- *A member noted that the City of Santa Clara doesn't have any grade separations to be concerned about regarding Caltrain, but understands that this can make a difference for other*

*cities. In terms of infrastructure needs, Caltrain could try to get federal tax dollars back through the reauthorization bill under consideration. (Caltrain staff noted that they are working on a proposal with Senator Feinstein regarding grade separation funding. If there is a reauthorization bill that comes forward, Caltrain would be trying to secure some of this funding.)*

- A member noted that there were significant modifications to SB 50 and that San Mateo County has developed a map that shows where SB 50 would be in effect. The member noted that most of the El Camino Real corridor would not be impacted by SB 50.*
- A member commented that the culture of rail is much stronger in Europe than it is here. There are a lot of interesting places to see where grade separations have worked well.*
- A member noted that in Hong Kong, rail is underground. It is difficult to comprehend why, in such an innovative place, we can't put the rail underground. Another member followed-up saying that it can be done, it's just very expensive and there is not enough money. Another member noted that the land use is different in Hong Kong. Stations and housing or other development are integrated and major rail infrastructure is often funded through extremely dense surface development.*

*Public Comments:*

- A member of the public commented that as service increases, it will be physically impossible to turn around at Tamien. The easiest way to increase capacity is not massive investment, but to double the length of platforms and high-rise stations. The member of the public believes that this would allow for double capacity without increasing trains. The member of the public also believes that it is unrealistic to run 16 trains per hour without a corridor-wide grade separation strategy and asked why anyone hasn't considered passing tracks in tunnels. The member of the public also believes it would be advantageous to look to the private sector for funding.*
- A member of the public appreciated these presentations and commented on that they are very dense and complete with data, and that they appreciate the effort staff has put into them. The member is very passionate about San Mateo and has attended numerous San Mateo City Council meetings where there have been discussions about grade separations. This year, it was decided they don't need a resolution regarding a grade separation downtown, but only active decisions are taken into account or Caltrain service planning, so the planning is missing some key considerations. The member of the public believes that at a council level, many of the members have done work to prioritize grade separations and that's not reflected here. This is a concern.*
- A member of the public noted that since four tracks and passing tracks are shown for some stations, they wonder if some of the dollars are double-counted? (Caltrain answer: no, they are not double-counted) The member of the public is really glad to see this altogether and making the case to come up with a significant program. The benefits of a regional program can make these more competitive for funding. With a major regional transportation funding measure under consideration, these big picture visions could be achievable. It is important to consider that doing this may not be enough, considering future growth.*

#### **4. Caltrain Electrification Project**

*Item 4, the Caltrain Electrification Project updated was available in the packet. There was no verbal update due to time constraints.*

## **5. California High-Speed Rail (HSR) Updates**

Boris Lipkin, Northern California Regional Director for California High-Speed Rail, updated the members on the preferred alternative and engagement update. Rich Walter spoke about the methodology used in the environmental impact report. Simon Whitehorn presented on the safety & security characteristics of high-speed rail.

*LPMG members' key comments regarding the High-Speed Rail Project discussion included the following:*

- *A member asked how HSR determines which community groups to speak to when doing outreach. (HSR staff said that outreach is determined based on which groups reach out for more information and request a presentation, and also through community contacts seeking out specific community groups. City councils and local government entities are also asked for groups to present to.)*
- *A member asked if the recent threat of loss of federal funding is affecting the project and timeline. (HSR staff explained that there has been a lot of misinformation since the Governor's State of the State address and that the project is focusing on construction in the Merced to Bakersfield, work through environmental clearance for the Northern and Southern portions of the project and meet commitments to bookend projects. The project has never been fully funded.)*
- *A member asked where and when the HSR Board will release its preferred alternative. (HSR staff responded that it will be on September 17 at 10 am in San Jose.)*

*Public Comment:*

- *A member of the public stated that the money previously earmarked for HSR from San Jose to Gilroy was re-allocated for the central California section of the project. The member of the public also said that there is a Finance committee meeting that has directed staff to come up with a preferred alternative in the May meeting.*

## **6. Public Comment**

- *A member of the public mentioned that members should pay attention to the public-private partnership model being pursued in the Dumbarton Rail Corridor.*

## **7. LPMG Member Comments/Requests**

- *A member thanked staff for the call-in option.*
- *The chair floated a proposal to have an additional meeting regarding grade-separations.*

## **8. Next Meeting**

Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.