Correspondence as of February 12, 2021

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Dear Mayor Howard and Council,

The attached letter substantiates and elaborates on the comments I made at the January 13th Council meeting and closes off with a couple of alternatives not currently being considered by staff and consultants including a solution that could reduce Caltrain traffic through downtown Redwood City by a third of pre-COVID levels at full buildout.

I am also attaching last year's presentation for the new Council members.

Sincerely,

Roland Lebrun

CC
Caltrain Board
CHSRA Board of Directors
MTC Commissioners
Caltrain CAC

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.
Dear Mayor Howard and Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to substantiate and elaborate on the comments I made during the January 13th Council meeting and close off with a couple of alternatives not currently being considered by staff and consultants.

1) The expectation that grade separations will somehow eliminate train horn noise in downtown Redwood City is incorrect: *every train going through a station must sound its horn* to warn passengers on the platforms, regardless of whether the train will stop at the station or whether there are any passengers on the platforms at the time of the pass.

2) It is impossible to operate a train at 110 MPH on a track immediately adjacent to a platform, hence the design proposed by the consultants will eliminate one of the benefits of grade separations which is to allow trains to operate at speeds in excess of 125 MPH.

3) The High Speed Rail Authority has long contemplated a mid-Peninsula stop which would require a minimum of 4 tracks and two 1,400-foot-long outboard platforms which cannot possibly be accommodated in downtown Redwood City.

4) While a Dumbarton Rail connection in downtown RWC may work for southbound passengers headed for the East Bay and vice versa, it is unreasonable to expect northbound passengers headed for Facebook or the East Bay to travel all the way north to downtown RWC and somehow make a transfer to a southbound train headed for the East Bay.

**Alternatives not being considered**

Please consider asking staff why trains that do not stop in downtown Redwood City should be passing through downtown at all, let alone on an elevated structure(!)

As an example, the Caltrain Business Plan contemplates operating up to 478 trains/day at maximum buildout. Assuming a stopping pattern where 25% of these trains would stop in Downtown Redwood City, it is unclear why the other 360 trains should also be passing through downtown.

One alternative could be to tunnel two passing tracks between Whipple and Highway 84 (1.5 miles). In this alternative, the number of daily trains passing through downtown RWC at maximum buildout would be similar to pre-COVID service levels (92 trains/day) and the business case for grade separations would be greatly diminished because the remaining trains would be travelling at much slower speeds as they approach and depart Downtown RWC.

**A phased approach**

While the above alternative contemplates 120 stopping trains/day at maximum buildout, a future operator may elect to increase the number of downtown RWC stops to 160 trains/day or more at a later date. This increase in train traffic would reintroduce the need for grade separations but the construction
impact on adjacent properties would be greatly diminished because the viaduct would consist of an elegant two-track structure with “gullwing” platforms contained entirely within the existing right of way (all passing would take place in the tunnels).

Cost of tunneling

Conventional wisdom characterizes tunnels as “too expensive” but the real cost of undergrounding (up to $1B/mile in some cases) comes from underground stations, not the tunnels per se. As an example, while the cost of San Francisco’s 1.6 mile Central Subway may exceed $1.6B, the twin-bore tunnels were constructed for $238M.

Redwood Junction

As stated above, the High Speed Rail Authority have long considered a mid-Peninsula stop and went as far as analyzing models that leveraged the existing passing tracks south of Highway 84 even though there were no plans to build a station in Redwood Junction at the time.

Such a station would offer the following advantages:

- A High Speed Rail stop with a direct rail connection to Facebook and the East Bay
- Cross-platform transfers between HSR and local and express Caltrain service
- Up to 8 stops/hour in Redwood City (4 downtown and 4 at Redwood Junction)
- An additional mid-Peninsula passing opportunity for High Speed and express Caltrain service catching up with slower trains
Redwood Junction and the downtown tunnels

The Caltrain Business Plan anticipates operating up to 12 trains/hour/direction in the Peninsula at maximum buildout (8 Caltrains and 4 HSR), so a potential service pattern could be:

- 4 trains stopping at Redwood Junction
- 4 trains stopping downtown
- 4 trains not stopping at either Redwood Junction or downtown

In this scenario, there would be only 4 trains/hour passing through downtown, so a full-buildout scenario would result in a 33% reduction in pre-COVID Caltrain traffic through downtown RWC (4 trains/hour vs. 6 pre-COVID).

I hope this makes sense.

Please feel free to reach out if you would like any additional information, including examples of how these solutions were implemented in London and Amsterdam.

Sincerely,

Roland Lebrun

Cc

Caltrain Board

CHSRA Board of Directors

MTC Commissioners

Caltrain CAC
London and Redwood City

A tale of two stations:
London: Ebbsfleet International
Redwood City: Redwood Junction
Ebbsfleet International

London

Paris

Medway Towns
Two stations into one
Dear Mr. Lebrun,

On behalf of the City Council, thank you for writing to express your concerns regarding the Sequoia Station Project. Each Councilmember has received your comments and they will be considered when the City Council discusses this item at its meeting tonight, February 8, 2021.

Please note that no City Council action will be taken on February 8; the agenda item is to provide an update on the creation of a Transit District in Redwood City. This effort, which includes consideration of rail grade separations, the redevelopment of Sequoia Station shopping center, designing a new CalTrain station, accommodating improved bus service, and preparing for a potential rail connection to the East Bay across the Dumbarton Rail Bridge, will take approximately 18-24 months, with many opportunities for public engagement.

Please visit this website to learn more. We also encourage you to visit a virtual open house here.

In Community Spirit,

Diane Howard
Mayor of Redwood City
(650) 208-4774
Dear Chair Davis,

Further to the installation of digital Grade Crossing Predictors at Virginia and Auzerais, please direct staff to provide the following information for each crossing pursuant to Government Code §6250 et seq:

1) Engineering drawings
2) Parts list including manufacturer, part/model number and quantities
3) Task and/or work order(s)
4) Observed warning times at the following approach speeds: 5 MPH, 10 MPH, 15 MPH, 20 MPH, 25 MPH, 30 MPH, 35 MPH and 40 MPH

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request.

Roland Lebrun
Dear Mr. LeBrun – this email is to confirm receipt of your records request received on 02/08/2021 regarding “the installation of digital Grade Crossing Predictors at Virginia and Auzerais” and 1) Engineering drawings, 2) Parts list including manufacturer, part/model number and quantities 3) Task and/or work order(s), and 4) Observed warning times at the following approach speeds: 5 MPH, 10 MPH, 15 MPH, 20 MPH, 25 MPH, 30 MPH, 35 MPH and 40 MPH.

We will produce any responsive records that are neither privileged nor exempt from disclosure by the California Public Records Act. We will work reasonably and diligently to determine if the District has responsive records, and will provide those records to you promptly, with document production occurring on a rolling basis as needed. However, we are sure that you will understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused staff-time shortages and put inordinate stress on all District functions. Due to the requirements set forth in California’s Executive Order No. 33-20, it may therefore reasonably take some time to collect and appropriately review records prior to disclosure.

We will provide you a status update as to your request as soon as possible.

Best,
Dora Seamans
Executive Officer/District Secretary
Dear Chair Davis,

Pursuant to Government Code §6250 et seq., please direct staff to provide copies of the engineering drawings for both tracks (MT-1 & MT-2) of the Guadalupe bridge replacement project.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request.

Roland Lebrun
Dear Mr. LeBrun – this email is to confirm receipt of your records request received on 02/08/2021 to provide copies of the engineering drawings for both tracks (MT-1 & MT-2) of the Guadalupe bridge replacement project.

We will produce any responsive records that are neither privileged nor exempt from disclosure by the California Public Records Act. We will work reasonably and diligently to determine if the District has responsive records, and will provide those records to you promptly, with document production occurring on a rolling basis as needed. However, we are sure that you will understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused staff-time shortages and put inordinate stress on all District functions. Due to the requirements set forth in California’s Executive Order No. 33-20, it may therefore reasonably take some time to collect and appropriately review records prior to disclosure. We will provide you a status update as to your request as soon as possible.

Best,
Dora Seamans
Executive Officer/District Secretary
Dear Chair Holt,

Please consider directing Mr. Brick to reach out to the City's Art Commission with a view to educating himself about the finer points of public participation in WebEx meetings.

Thank you in advance.

Roland Lebrun
Hi Roland,

Thank you for your email. I will share with Jason Blick, TJPA IT Director.

Thanks,

Lm

Lily Madjus Wu
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C: (415) 949-9500
www.tjpa.org

Please consider the environment before printing this message.
Dear Chair Holt,

Further to my 1/25 email (below), please consider directing staff to zoom in on the area between the Transit Center and Embarcadero after the presentation to facilitate a discussion of the collateral damage resulting from the existing DTX alignment as well as potential solutions designed to eliminate any condemnations.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Roland Lebrun
Dear Chair Mandelman and Commissioners,

While I appreciate the TJPA’s consideration of phasing multiple aspects of the project as currently proposed, there has been no progress in the last 20 years addressing the following issues:

- Lack of a plausible connection with the next Transbay crossing (LINK21)
- Lack of a plausible connection with the existing Caltrain tracks at 16th Street
- Lack of a plausible connection with BART and/or MUNI light rail
- Lack of a plausible solution addressing the loss of 50% of the existing train box capacity to the 2nd Street curve and the commensurate loss in potential future Transbay capacity caused by making it impossible to accommodate full-length (1,400-foot-long) high speed trains across the Bay
- Lack of a plausible solution eliminating a gigantic crater on 2nd Street and the resulting impacts on adjacent buildings
- Lack of a plausible solution that would make it possible for Caltrain to vacate the 4th & King railyard

I therefore believe that **now is the last and final call for revisiting the 7th Street alignment** to address the above issues as follows:

- Advancing a design connecting the Transit Center to the Embarcadero seawall **without ANY condemnations**
- Restoration of the full 1,500-foot train box capacity **without the addition of a $400M train box extension**
- Advancing a design that fully integrates the PAX as an extension of the DTX and **eliminates any significant surface impacts north of Townsend Street**
- Advancing a 7th Street/UCSF station concept that integrates Caltrain, High Speed Rail, Capitol Corridor and BART connections in a single structure connected via light rail (N & T extensions) to the Arena, the Ballpark, Central SOMA and Chinatown
- Advancing a **phased design** for the 7th Street station passing tracks (total 4 tracks) to eliminate the need for a third track between Townsend and the Transit Center

Given that a study of the above solutions would be within the City's (not the TJPA's) purview, please consider issuing a change order to the existing PAX initiation contract with a commensurate increase in contract capacity (currently $1M).

Last but not least, I believe that there is sufficient regional nexus in the above proposal for MTC and/or the High Speed Rail Authority to fully match the existing PAX initiation contract thereby increasing the contract capacity to $2M-$3M.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Roland Lebrun

CC

MTC Commissioners
CHSRA Board of Directors
Caltrain Board
TJPA Board of Directors
SFCTA CAC
Caltrain CAC
TJPA CAC

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.
Just wanted to follow up, as people rarely write in when things are going well.

Last summer there was really a significant problem with excessive idling at the 4th and King location, idling was so loud you could clearly hear it in the lobby of the buildings at Lusk @ King (in between 3rd and 4th st) even over rush hour traffic. It was a pervasive rolling him that never stopped, sounding like the diesel engine was idling at 50-70% throttle.

Since then, Idling noise is down, I would guess, at least 80% since last summer. It's been slowly increasing as of late but it's still much better than it was before. Occasionally we'll hear an engine fast idling, but it's no where near as bad as it used to be

So anyways thanks for adjusting the noise levels in our neighborhood, it's much more pleasant to walk around outside, as well as endure the pandemic inside as well.

Chad Hedstrom
Please see attached. The chosen color, is destroying the view of our mountains. Can we please move forward, on correcting this situation?

Martin

On February 3, 2021 9:46:57 AM PST, Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net> wrote:
Hi Brent,

How are you doing with this request? Were you able to put a number on repainting the top half of one or more poles at the University Ave station? If it is easier, the whole poles could be repainted. I have noticed that the other two stations in Palo Alto, are either black or the standard forest green.

Martin

On 1/15/21 8:48 AM, CalMod@caltrain.com wrote:

Hi Martin,

Thank you for the call on Wednesday morning. It was helpful to get a better understanding of your concerns. As I committed on the call, I will bring your request to my management team for consideration. I aim to get you a response by the end of next week.

Have a great weekend,

Brent Tietjen, Government and Community Relations Officer
SamTrans | Caltrain | TA
1250 San Carlos Ave.
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306
tietjenb@samtrans.com