

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070

MINUTES OF MARCH 21, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Bendix, K. Gardiner, G. Graham, J. Hronowski, B. Jenkins, S. Klemmer, C. Tucker, B. Wilfley

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, N. McKenna, S. Murphy

Chair Bendix called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. Brian Wilfley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Hronowski/Tucker) to approve the minutes of February 15, 2012 was approved (Wilfley and Gardiner abstained).

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said there is so much anti-rail propaganda against High Speed Rail (HSR) and Caltrain improvements in the community. People want to have a two-track blended system which might work for now, but in the future there might be a need to expand to four-tracks in certain areas of the corridor. He doesn't see many facts to counter the anti-rail propaganda out in the community.

Chairperson's Report – Paul Bendix

CAC Chair Bendix reported former employee Janet McGovern published a photo essay on Caltrain. The book shows how key this railroad has been to so many people for so many years.

Caltrain Modernization Early Investment Proposal

Manager, Government Affairs Seamus Murphy reported:

Blended System

- The initial plans and design for HSR project was for a full four-track system that would be a fully grade-separated between San Jose and San Francisco.
- Elected officials asked for a blended system which would be an electrified system from San Jose to San Francisco that would support both Caltrain and HSR and maximize the use of existing tracks.
- Staff looked at the blended system approach to see if it was viable and found it could be operated in the corridor with a variety of service levels.
 - Without any passing tracks the blended system could support six Caltrain trains and two HSR trains per hour in each direction without passing tracks. If passing tracks were added the system could support six Caltrain trains and four HSR trains per hour per direction.

- The location that was looked at for passing tracks was between Hayward Park and Redwood City. Staff is looking at other locations for additional phases.
- Staff has completed the initial Capacity Analysis to show that the blended system has merit and is feasible.
- Once these findings were reviewed, staff was asked to look at a number of different service considerations.
- Staff is testing service to the Transbay Terminal, the addition of Dumbarton Rail and what capacity could be achieved if Baby Bullet service is operated.
- The model staff is looking at is a three-track section for passing tracks instead of four.
- The other study being done is the grade crossing and traffic analysis. This is an assessment of all the at-grade crossings that exist along the corridor to determine what impact additional train service would have on the gate down time.
- The blended system alternatives would feed into the California High Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA) environmental process moving forward.
- Caltrain has told the CHSRA we are against the four-track proposal on the corridor and only willing to embrace a blended system approach that is primarily two-tracks in the corridor.
- The CHSRA Business Plan was released and includes the blended system concept and also discusses early investment in existing rail systems.
- CHSRA is revising their Business Plan and revisions include a more clearly defined set of early investment options that would exist for the Bay Area section.

Memorandum of Understanding

- Southern California has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that identifies \$1.3 billion in projects for early investment and the Bay Area regional transit agencies are working on a list of projects.
- The timeframe being considered is 2020 which is consistent with the Southern California MOU.
- The CHSRA has informed staff there is potentially up to \$1 billion in Proposition 1A funding that could be utilized in Northern California and these funds must be matched dollar-for-dollar with local, regional or non-Proposition 1A State or Federal money.
- Specific improvements for the region include electrification of the Caltrain system, the advanced signal system that includes the Federal mandated Positive Train Control and the purchase of electric trains which Caltrain has received a waiver from the Federal Railroad Administration to operate on the corridor with mixed traffic.
- Key projects in the additional investment include:
 - The downtown extension
 - HSR and Caltrain system integration
 - Infrastructure upgrade
 - Stations upgrade

- Rail crossings upgrade
 - Passing tracks
 - Storage/maintenance facility
- The Draft MOU posted on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) website includes a funding plan with all the matching funds identified that would make Caltrain electrification, the signaling system and electric multiple units (EMU) achievable. The MOU discusses accomplishing these projects as the early investment projects in the Bay Area and discusses limiting the eventual HSR project to the blended system and specifies that before investments are made in the Caltrain electrification project that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be updated to reflect change in conditions and concerns that have happened since 2009 and will be recirculated.
- The MTC will consider this MOU on March 28. The MOU would be considered by all the additional parties. All the parties are entities in the Bay Area that have an interest or role in the funding, planning, construction or operation of the system.
- The CHSRA Business Plan will be released next week and will embrace the same early investment strategy that is contemplated in the MOU and is to be considered at the CHSRA meeting on April 5. The CHSRA has the responsibility to submit the revised Business Plan to the Legislature.

Cat Tucker said HSR trains would operate at 79 to 110 miles per hour. What speed does Caltrain operate at? Mr. Murphy said Caltrain operates at 79 miles per hour and staff feels there is an opportunity to increase speeds. There is a Federal regulation that requires full grade separation when speeds exceed 125 miles per hour.

Ms. Tucker said there is a lot of discussion between San Jose and San Francisco, so who monitors discussions and focus on the area between San Jose and Gilroy. Mr. Murphy said from a service standpoint it would be Caltrain, but from a HSR perspective, staff is focused on the section of the corridor that is owned by the JPB.

Ms. Tucker asked how she can get updates on the San Jose to Gilroy segment. Mr. Murphy said it would either come from the CHSRA or the City of San Jose.

Chair Bendix asked what the route from the Central Valley to San Jose is. Mr. Murphy said that is the City of San Jose purview. Staff has been focused more on what happens to the project once it gets to San Jose and comes north to San Francisco.

Chair Bendix asked what staff is doing about minimizing impacts to the community. Mr. Murphy said when the blended system guidelines were announced, the focus on aerial structures had more to do with elevation of the tracks to support the catenary system. If there were design alternatives that contemplated moving the existing track elevation to something higher than that in different areas of the corridor they did not think it was a good or necessary approach for the project design and specifically requested those design concepts only be considered in communities that are supportive of elevating the tracks above their current elevation.

Mr. Wilfley said he was at the Senate hearing and there was a comment that the environmental impact statement for this project is impeded by other activities. Is this action impeding Caltrain in the progress that needs to be made? Mr. Murphy said there is a program EIR that comes before the project level that is a broader envelope that assumes a larger project and makes broad assumptions that can be changed when the project EIR alternatives are considered. The program EIR has been the subject of a lot of debate primarily because it identifies the Pacheco alignment as being superior to the Altamont alignment.

John Hronowski said without passing tracks, would six trains for Caltrain be local or limited? Mr. Murphy said the service plan that was looked at, for this purpose, was a skip stop schedule. It assumes Caltrain would be stopping more frequently than the Baby Bullets do today.

Gerald Graham said without the passing tracks, having only two HSR trains does not seem to be enough. Mr. Graham said Southern California is in line for \$1.2 billion in upgrades and Northern California is in line for some too, but how much? Mr. Murphy said the MOU anticipates \$1.1 billion investment in the Caltrain corridor.

Scott Klemmer asked how the six Caltrain trains per hour is relative to today's capacity. Director of Rail Michelle Bouchard it works out to about one additional train in each direction or 20 percent more capacity.

Mr. Klemmer said he recommends putting out the three or four track options as much as possible to grow the service. Mr. Murphy said that by adding one more train it will generate more ridership and projections in the electrification document shows ridership going from 45,000 to 70,000.

Ms. Tucker asked if staff is only supporting two tracks and not four. Mr. Murphy said it is a political issue with going to four tracks and there are certain areas where it is not possible to expand to four tracks.

Bruce Jenkins said he attends all the Friends of Caltrain meetings and there is push back in adding passing tracks from certain communities.

Mr. Klemmer asked if there is the option of adding additional passing tracks closer to San Francisco. Mr. Murphy said it is certainly possible. This is a long-term planning process and staff is taking input along the way.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said people in Burlingame are saying their homes and businesses are going to be destroyed and they are nowhere near the tracks. Palo Alto is planning grade separations that are twice as long as an existing grade separation that can accommodate four tracks at Hillcrest Avenue in Millbrae. He asked if we have to go with the Communications Based Overlay Signal System (CBOSS) or can Caltrain use the system that is used on HSR systems in Europe.

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, said it is good that staff pointed out the threshold for speeds and it is quite high. The 79 miles per hour Caltrain is limited to is due to not having an advanced signal system. CBOSS is generic and don't believe Caltrain is going to put out a unique procurement specification that specifically excludes off the shelf technology. Caltrain may have made a rare mistake couple of years ago by blinking when they were bringing the electrification EIR up for certification. Those people that were threatening to sue then are going to sue regardless. At Senator Joe Simitian's meeting Atherton residents said they do not support electrification and do not want catenary in their backyard even though they bought a house next to an industrial land use called Caltrain.

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said he is pleased the CHSRA has agreed to the blended system. It is unfortunate that it has taken a couple of years to come up with this concept. The grade separation issue is very sensitive for all cities because it is very unpredictable and will have an impact on them.

Staff Report – Michelle Bouchard

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Introduced Gerald Francis, General Manager of Transit America. There is incredible amount of positive work being done in the transition. All 11 bargaining units have ratified their union agreements and management staff is in place. There is a high number of Amtrak employees moving over to the new operator which is great news to our customers.
- Performance for February 2012 versus February 2011
 - Monthly ridership is up 19.9 percent.
 - Average weekday ridership is up 15.9 percent.
 - Revenue is up 25 percent.
- President's Day service was up 71 percent over last year.
- Every market is seeing increase in ridership, not just the peak times.
- Fuel has been hedged the past few years and will staff will be bringing a proposal to the May Board meeting to start the process for Fiscal Year 2013.
- Giants season starts next month and Caltrain will provide the same complement of service as in previous years. For weekday day and night games there will be two additional northbound trains and two additional southbound games after the game. For Friday night and Dodger games there will be a third train added to the schedule.
- Last month there were ribbon cutting events for the completion of the Santa Clara and San Jose Diridon construction projects.
- The shoofly has been cutover in San Bruno and this allows the project to continue without impeding service.
- CAC recruitment will begin on April 2. Mr. Klemmer and Mr. Graham's terms are up and both are eligible to reapply. Mr. Wilfley's term is also up, but he has decided to not reapply.

Chair Bendix asked if there is an update on Bombardier wheelchair boarding.

Ms. Bouchard said she has spoken to someone at LTK Consulting and have found a solution, just need to design it.

Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said he noticed the San Jose platforms are still blocked so when will those platforms be used and who will use them.

Committee Comments

Mr. Klemmer said looking through the correspondence over the last month, southbound Train 324 and northbound Trains 267 and 369 are absolutely jammed packed. He encouraged more service be added at the absolute peak times.

Mr. Jenkins said he attended Senator Simitian's meeting in Mountain View and people were signing petitions to stop HSR. He is very impressed with the new director of CHSRA.

Ms. Tucker said the Gilroy City Council voted 5-2 on their preference for the HSR downtown location at modified grade. There have been some cities that have done outreach and gotten buy-in from the community and are supportive, but the fact is some of the data was pretty bad for Gilroy in that it would be taking along the corridor about 14 buildings of businesses through eminent domain. The reality is the other alternative choice that HSR offered was not along the transportation corridor, but along the farmland.

Mr. Graham said last month Deputy CEO Chuck Harvey said Caltrain got \$250 million from the State to buy the right a way and would like clarification on this next month. He thought the money was put up by the three counties. San Mateo advanced San Francisco's share and part of Santa Clara's share so was this in addition to the State funds?

Mr. Wilfley said at Senator Simitian's meeting he was struck by the fact that the Senator was most concerned in making sure that a commitment was made to the book ends.

Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting:

April 18, 2012 at 5:40 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 2nd Floor Bacciocco Auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.