



CITY COUNCIL RAIL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting
April 13, 2011

1. Roll Call

Council Member Klein called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. in the Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: Klein, Shepherd, Price

Absent: Burt

2. Public Comment

Edmond Petersen expressed concern over High Speed Rail (HSR) in three areas: 1) the unattractive nature of High Speed Rail, the elevations, 2) expropriation of properties and 3) noise issues. He stated that cost issues were separate from the other issues and should be considered separately.

Hinda Sack spoke regarding the Charleston Meadows Association meeting the previous night. Association Members had concerns over the upgrades on the gates in this area. She noted the swinging gates in this area were actually an impediment versus an improvement. Full, four-quadrant crossings at the gates were not achieved. It was hoped a noise abatement program would be looked into for this area as well. The members were also concerned about the reported costs of \$1.5 million per crossing. She was looking for further information on how these crossings could be used more safely.

3. Caltrain Information Discussion with Supervisor Liz Kniss, Santa Clara County Representative to the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB), CalTrain Technical Staff and others

3A. Caltrain Financial Picture Update, Short-term and Long-term; Caltrain

Short and Long-term Planned Capital Improvements; Current Status of Memorandum of Understanding between the California High Speed Rail Authority and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board.

Supervisor Liz Kniss polled those present about their public transportation usage, and then went over the statistics and history of Caltrain. She reviewed Caltrain's history beginning in 1863, its current governing bodies and Board of Directors, representative cities and counties, districts and authorities, directors and managers. She gave a summary of ridership including bicycle, car and shuttle runs to offices. She discussed the fare box revenue dollars versus BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) dollars. She detailed the self-sustaining nature of MUNI (San Francisco Municipal Railway), which was three times higher than that of SamTrans, and four times higher than VTA (Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority). She cited the main reasons for Caltrain usage included traffic avoidance, dollar savings, and lack of car ownership. She also cited Staff's determination that riding Caltrain netted the rider a savings of approximately \$9,000 per year versus automobile commuting. She discussed the deficit situation with Caltrain, noting it was the only Bay Area Transit system with no permanent dedicated source of funding. Caltrain had funding shortfalls for the last several years but balanced their budget using short-term solutions. She spoke to the JPB (Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board) partnership of SamTrans, VTA, and MUNI discussing various proposals. She said the VTA had worked to find solutions, at their last meeting and developed five proposals for stopgaps. An additional meeting was planned for April 7, 2011. A revised proposal for weekend service was also reviewed as well as the Caltrain operating deficit and additional funding sources. In closing, her position remained that train service and ridership were of vital importance to the Bay Area.

Council Member Klein thanked Supervisor Kniss for the presentation and gave an overview of the High Speed Rail Committee purpose and function. He noted the City of Palo Alto had taken a number of positions on High Speed Rail but it had taken almost no position on Caltrain except to say Caltrain was crucial to maintaining transportation in the area. However, the City had never, for example, taken a position on any specific Caltrain proposals or any long-term financial solutions. Many meetings were planned in the future before recommendations reached the City Council phase.

Council Member Shepherd stated she was a regular Caltrain Commuter. She noted she did see the vision for better connections throughout the Bay Area. She encouraged MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) and everyone involved to support the creation of these connections so there were succinct and intelligent connections for users. She asked if there was any further

information on the consideration of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the High Speed Train Authority, or if this was scheduled to be covered in the meeting.

Supervisor Kniss stated she would be available after the meeting for information on this.

Council Member Shepherd realized this was not the exact focus of the meeting, but she also wanted to stay current with what was going on. She stated she was also very appreciative of the GO Passes and the way Stanford University has stepped up. She noted a summit with the transit managers throughout the Valley may also be beneficial since there is a shortage of information about the GO Passes practice.

Supervisor Kniss stated Stanford University cutting back on their “no new net trips” made the GO Pass all the more important.

Council Member Price addressed the slide presentation section regarding the operating deficits and other potential sources of funding. She asked Ms. Kniss to clarify, by order of magnitude, some of the various cited options. Also, she stated she did not feel this was a funding issue but that it was a governance issue. In this mix of discussions, she hoped they revisited or reintroduced the capital quarter funding model as it applied, or not, to the peninsula rail corridor. She asked about the amount of money attached to preventative maintenance.

Supervisor Kniss stated MTC had substantial resources, but also had a great number of transit systems looking to use these resources. Negotiations were going well; however, Caltrain was run by SamTrans which prioritized bus transportation. They had tried to attach strings to these funds, but had not been successful. She understood she did not answer the question directly, but she hoped to give a sense about where they were. She reiterated there were resources within MTC.

Council Member Price asked if there was range for preventative maintenance.

Supervisor Kniss stated it was a fair amount of funds. This was not the issue, however. It was the short-term funding they were discussing. The intercity trains were funded by the State whereas the commuter trains were not funded.

So this was a potential source of funding if Caltrain was recategorized as an intercity train. 3B Caltrain Technical Staff Regarding Caltrain Long-term Plans; Staff and Technical Support; Description of Electrification Proposal; Status of Electrification Environmental Impact Report; Discussion of Long Term Plans for Grade Separation; How would Electrification Work with and without the

Construction of High Speed Rail; Alternative Views of Caltrain Regarding Long-Term Plans.

Marian Lee, Executive Officer CalTrain Planning and Development, spoke on three key topics including the electrification project, EMU (electric multiple unit) versus DMU (diesel multiple unit), and HSR and Caltrain MOU. She continued with information on the Caltrain Modernization Program, the upgraded signal system, Positive Train Control (PTC), the electrification project and expanding services. The guiding principles were addressed as well as structural deficits, and provision of more services and environmental improvements. She discussed the electrification project stating that her presentation was consistent with information and documentation which had been released to the public. This included project distance, service, trains, peak hours, directions, key structural elements and traction power facilities. She reviewed ridership forecasts. Funding was discussed with details of operations, diesel fuel costs versus electric service costs. Mitigation of negative environmental impacts were discussed, as well as aesthetics and biological resources. She moved on to discuss the key milestones and the timeline of rail from 1999 to 2004, including electrification and EIR (Environmental Impact Report) certification. She addressed local issues raised over electrification, which delayed the project, as these concerns needed to be addressed. She noted the various steps Caltrain Staff had taken in communicating with the Community Coalition on HSR to determine guiding principles and a tiered environmental clearance. CalTrain Staff worked on clarifying the language and hoped to return to the Board for certification. She discussed the electrification project schedule. She stated in 2015 they would have a revenue service. If this were just an electrification project the final design could be in 18 months, with three years construction, and one year of testing. She spoke on Caltrain and High Speed Rail coordination. She spoke regarding the Peninsula Rail Program (PRP) run by Bob Doty who was tasked with running both CalTrain and HSR. Mr. Doty left the PRP in December 2010. She clarified she was not Mr. Doty's replacement and represented Caltrain only. There were two projects being coordinated by CalTrain regarding HSR. One was the PTC/CBOSS (Positive Train Control/Communication Based Overlay Signal System). They had released a Request for Proposal (RFP), and were currently reviewing the submissions. They attempted to access HSR funds to benefit both Caltrain and HSR. The second coordinated project was the electrification project. They had given input to the HSR design and to the HSR regarding the EIS/EIR Analysis. The next one- to two-year planning focus was an update of the strategic plan and ridership forecast. The HSR EIS/EIR interface included a review of their alternatives and design. The supplemental efforts promoted by Caltrain included a Caltrain system and station area impact analysis, station area planning, and a local economic analysis at a micro level and venue capture.

She discussed the revised HSR Schedule, the San Francisco to San Jose Environmental Impact Survey/Environmental Impact Report public release which was scheduled for fall 2012 with completion in the summer of 2013. The San Jose to Merced EIS/EIR public release was scheduled for early 2012, with completion in the fall of 2012. The construction/revenue service for HSR was yet to be determined.

Council Member Shepherd asked if the 51 miles of electrification included Gilroy, and if not, why.

Ms. Lee stated the initial project included the Gilroy station. During fund analysis, factoring in the Gilroy section made the overall project not as cost effective because there was lesser ridership in that segment of the Caltrain system. When the Gilroy segment was removed, the overall project was more cost effective.

Council Member Shepherd asked what the rail speeds were in the Caltrain system.

Ms. Lee said 79 MPH max, at electrification, which is the same speed the trains run at currently.

Council Member Shepherd asked what percentage of the engineering studies were complete.

Ms. Lee stated 35 percent of the engineering studies were complete.

Council Member Shepherd asked when the Committee might see this information.

Ms. Lee stated it was scheduled for the next meeting.

Council Member Shepherd stated a substation was proposed in Palo Alto very close to neighborhoods which was concerning. She also noted speeds of trains could not go over 79 mph unless they did grade separations.

Ms. Lee said the speed could be increased but there was a cap that triggered grade separation.

Council Member Price asked when the Committee could expect an update on the strategic plan.

Ms. Lee stated it was in their work plan for summer 2011, it was scheduled out

for about eight months. She stated this was a long period of time but required a planning process with local participation.

Council Member Price noted if they were at 35 percent, she assumed they were at conceptual engineering. She stated they must have some station area impacts and station area planning associated with some of the engineering work that was done at this point for the electrification. She said a critical issue was the environmental clearance. She asked if CalTrain had an assessment of NEQA (National Environmental Quality Act) versus CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act). She discussed the baseline of environmental data becoming outdated.

Ms. Lee stated the average shelf life was approximately three years. She stated there was a second draft, between the draft and the final. It took longer than anticipated due to the struggles to fund the project. Staff worked with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to reassess some of their technical analysis in order to see what required updating. Updates were to deal with the shelf life issue. In addition, typical tiered environmental processes amendments and addendums happen at the conceptual design phase at about 10-15 percent. Another assessment occurred at about 35 percent and again at 65 percent. The discussion occurs to make sure what is being cleared is the design at 35 percent. Moving forward they anticipate more changes which triggers the need to see if a supplement or amendment is needed.

Council Member Price likened Federal funding to that of a moving target and something that needed to be watched closely. She stated the public-private partnership was a great concept with some real potential but was difficult to pull stakeholders together.

Council Member Klein suggested they were comparing apples to oranges when comparing diesel fueling to electrification. He asked what the numbers looked like in 2035 for diesel since that was the relevant comparison, and not 2008.

Ms. Lee said she did not have those numbers with her but had been asked those questions before. Further questions and cost comparisons between the systems were planned for future meetings.

Council Member Klein clarified there would be a separate meeting specifically on how Caltrain decided to do electrification rather than DMU or any of the other alternatives.

Ms Lee stated that was part of the current discussion as well.

Council Member Klein stated he had questions which he classified as Plan B and Plan C. Plan B was whether or not there was a plan if High Speed Rail disappeared today. Plan C involved what would happen if HSR continued but with no funding for electrification on the peninsula as stated by the Administration of the Federal Governments not footing the bill for HSR in California. In that case, he asked what Plan C would be with regard to California HSR continuing.

Ms. Lee said they did not have those alternate plans. That was one reason to update the strategic plan. She stated a scenario with no High Speed Rail was the key reason they wanted the environmental documents certified. This cleared the electrification project and helped them to advance the project. Without High Speed Rail their biggest challenge would be to come up with a new funding strategy. She stated this was typical of large capital projects. She understood the Joint Powers Board and the General Manager intended to come out of the economic dip with a short-term fix. There was a long-term vision to get a dedicated revenue source as well as a modernized system. She noted there remained a commitment to provide more service to all the local entities along the corridor.

Council Member Klein asked what date the EIR was published, the EIR they were currently considering.

Ms. Lee stated this EIR was published in July 2009.

Council Member Klein stated he had read there were many concerns that this was out-of-date and stale. He asked if she shared this concern.

Ms. Lee said Staff was concerned at one point; however, they felt more comfortable on their reassessment of this, prior to the FTA approving the document. They reviewed these studies and updated the document. The project was aided by the fact that there was an existing right-of-way.

Council Member Klein, speaking to the electrification as the subject of the EIR, assumed that the work was done prior to the passage of the High Speed Rail Bond Measure in 2008. He asked if the electrification planned under the EIR was the same as that electrification that would occur if High Speed Rail came up the Caltrain right-of-way.

Ms. Lee stated this was not the case.

Council Member Klein asked how these two issues worked in tandem.

Ms. Lee explained the project within the EIR was the electrification without High Speed Rail. It spoke to the Caltrain project within this document. The way this was coordinated with High Speed Rail gave those documents the 35 percent design and also the environmental impact analysis. They knew as they developed the design they had to enable Caltrain to have the types of services they had envisioned for their electrification project. The document was self-contained with the independent utility. This was also used to coordinate with the High Speed Rail project.

Council Member Klein returned to his discussion of Plan C. If one were an advocate for High Speed Rail, with the assumption that it would eventually arrive, he asked if there were discussions underway at Caltrain on what can be done short-term during these delays.

Ms. Lee stated there were two major discussion items at present. Short of any answer or resolution, she stated there was concern about the whole program disappearing and what happen then. There was also the thought of High Speed Rail building up in the Central Valley, and what would happen if they built up there and then run out of funds. There was also the announcement recently by High Speed Rail in January or February where they discussed a phased implementation with less encroachment into local communities, which provided a lower level of high-speed rail service. This was another reason Caltrain considered engaging stakeholders in the dialogue over Caltrain strategic planning.

Council Member Klein revisited the discussion of alternatives to electrification. He noted further speakers were present in this regard. He mentioned a study out of Toronto on this, and asked if Caltrain had a similar study.

Ms. Lee noted the Toronto study was in their packets. She stated Caltrain had completed a similar study but it was short of what the stakeholders wanted to see. Within their environmental document, the board wished to include an environmental-friendly technology. They looked at technologies which were supported by electricity. Light rail was looked at well as third rail, EMUs, and the like. Diesel options were not looked at. Electric based alternatives were looked at, and this was how they landed at their EMU recommendation. Further EMU/DMU discussions will be helpful in the future.

Council Member Klein noted BART selected a non-electrification option for its extension.

Ms. Lee stated this was beyond her scope of knowledge. She stated EMU/DMU technical experts and could speak to this at the next meeting. Another layer of

discussion included applying those technologies to existing corridors. This brings with it further challenges which were different than creating a new extension. Existing infrastructure issues came into play.

Council Member Shepherd expressed concern about a lack of due diligence on the analysis that High Speed Rail has produced regarding ridership. She stressed the importance that these numbers be accurate. She reiterated the importance of the Board setting up procedures for the stakeholders to follow going forward. She was interested in seeing Caltrain run at high speed for commuter service, but repeated the need for a due diligence which she had not seen up to this to this point. She also discussed peer reviews and her further expectations for the Joint Powers Boards in their representation of the peninsula corridor.

Anthony Waller, a former SamTrans Caltrain Planner, stated Staff contacted him to speak. He discussed a need he had identified for Caltrain, which he felt had been previously overlooked by Staff. He noted when the Transbay Terminal Development began its ramp-up Caltrain was excluded from the railway space by High Speed Rail who appeared to have higher ridership needs.

Because of this, he noted Caltrain was not rerouted through the Transbay Terminal. While Caltrain was a successful commuter railway, he noted it was the least successful commuter railway in terms of attracting downtown ridership. He stated it was the most successful commuter railway in terms of reverse commuter ridership, however. He stressed the Committee and the Council urge Caltrain to get the train routed to the Transbay terminal, and that the train was capable of larger ridership load. He also urged Supervisor Kniss in her role on the Caltrain Board to have their Staff renegotiate CalTrain's space in the Transbay terminal.

Council Member Price said in the last 10-15 years there was an extension project for the Caltrain station into downtown. She asked for an update on the status of this project.

Mr. Waller said when the Transbay project began the original impetus was for much space to be given to various bus agencies. The final design of the rail station building was office and retail, which resulted in a tiny six-track terminal. High Speed Rail, and their ridership estimates, stated they needed all that space for themselves. Nothing further was left for Caltrain.

Dan McNamara, San Carlos, representing FNCF (French National Railway Corporation) commented on diesel fuel versus electrification. He noted General Electric had a new hybrid locomotive, battery and diesel, and also had natural gas options to be looked at in the future. He stated this was a step forward and

reasonable price-wise, but ultimately an electrified railway made more sense. He noted France took the opposite approach where the environment came first. He noted the City of Palo Alto had a backwards approach by comparison. He stated the peninsula needed to focus on what works for the environment first.

Public Comment

Hinda Sack said the presentation was a repeat of the same Caltrain information she had heard in years prior. She stated the EIR stressed this was an urban community dominated by the right-of-way. She disagreed and felt this was a suburban community which was trying to avoid domination by the CalTrain's right-of-way. She attended the long-term planning meeting for the Friends of Caltrain. She stated there was no consensus on the vision moving forward. She said if there was enough frequency and speed, speeds would increase, requiring grade separations. She also did not see viable funding options. She felt EMUs were an interim solution.

Dan McNamara stated the capital costs for electrification were \$785 million. He asked if there were any other capital improvements, or if that was the power stations and the overhead catenary system cost estimates.

Ms. Lee stated there were estimates for improvements to stations. Modifications were slated for maintenance facilities. These were all included in the totals. The primary cost factors were in the poles, wiring, and power stations.

Council Member Price asked for additional information regarding General Electric's hybrid locomotive.

Mr. McNamara stated this was a significant step forward. General Electric was designing a hybrid freight locomotive. This was not a passenger locomotive but could be used for passenger service. All acceleration was done by battery power, just as in a hybrid car, recharged as it moved down the tracks and under dynamic braking. Another significant advantage included that it was silent on acceleration out of the station. Ultimately, he stated an electrified railway was obviously the way to go because it mitigates the air pollution factor. Diesel, by comparison, runs dirty. He stressed there was a way to use electrification, blend it into the peninsula and save all the trees, preserving the environment.

Jerry Carlsen stressed the importance of beginning a dialogue on the subject. He was pleased that there would be future discussions on electrification versus other methods. The corporate governance issue was also of importance as

dialogue between the Board of Directors, the Joint Powers Board and the constituents. He suggested thinking out of the box when looking at the strategic plan. He was concerned that Caltrain was overlooking the European positive control system. He stated other capital purchases, rail cars, scheduling of rail lines and many other benefits could be obtained by looking at an intercity regional transportation rail approach.

Roland Lebrun, stated that High Speed Rail did not belong in the Caltrain alignment. A speed of 79 mph did not need grade separation. He did not understand why SamTrans was spending money on grade separation either. He suggested Caltrain fix their tracks including turnouts and crossovers, which also need redesigning for higher speeds. As far as the environmental concerns, he noted the Caltrain track in front of his home was a third-rail track which was good up to 108 mph. He asked if they were looking at speeds of 79 mph why they were looking at overhead wires. He noted, as well, if Caltrain fixed their infrastructure, they would not need capital for new trains.

Jack Ringham, from Atherton, recapped several points, and noted that the existing EIR was a repeat version of the 2004 EIR, which had been developed with 2002-3 data and covered electrification without High Speed Rail, including no specific plans to integrate electrification with High Speed Rail if it came later. Non-electric alternatives were also not included. Caltrain High Speed Rail cannot be electrified without being completely torn down and rebuilt. Funds were not available for electrification as outlined in the EIR, but funds were available to move ahead with a diesel alternative.

Terry Nagel, Mayor of Burlingame, San Mateo Transportation Authority, spoke on whether or not the phased implementation was really going to help or not. She noted there was a great deal pinned on whether it was a good idea to electrify Caltrain. She stressed the importance of figuring out as quickly as possible if this was feasible or not, and if not to move on to a better plan.

Edmond Petersen agreed with those who were worried about the loss of trees in the peninsula area. He did not understand why trees had to be lost where the rails now were. He did not see this as a problem with electrification. He felt the structural issues with Caltrain were the focus. He stated they could not move forward without a permanent source of funding, and this would not happen with the buses controlling the funds. For electric trains, he noted that top speeds were not as important as acceleration in which electric trains accelerate far faster. He also questioned who was a technical person or engineer, on all of the involved boards, since this input was needed.

William Warren, Palo Alto, had hoped there would be discussion or some type of

passenger survey. He felt what was missing was some definition of what the volume was for passengers. He did not feel this could be known until there was some understanding why people do or do not use trains today and what could be done to increase ridership. Once this baseline was understood, any forecasting was irrelevant.

3. San Mateo Rail corridor Partnership April 20th meeting discussion.

Council Member Klein noted Council Member Burt had been invited to attend this meeting. However, he was unclear if he would attend if this meeting was not open to the public.

Terry Nagel said it was not open to the public. Once the Mayor makes the appointment the meeting had to be noticed and opened. She asked what the mechanism was to make some type of appointment so there would be Palo Alto presence at the meeting.

Council Member Klein noted they are not a member of this group, and Council Member Burt was merely invited.

Ms. Nagel noted then, if he attends the meeting then this breaks up the meeting.

Council Member Klein felt it was important to have Council Member Burt there as someone who can report back to the Committee as well as someone who can make it clear that they are not endorsing any particular position.

4. Discussion of Proposed CalTrain Fiscal Year 2012 Service Impacts
Council Member Klein

Stephen Emslie, Deputy City Manager, noted Staff had provided the Committee with a summary of the proposed service cuts discussed at the last Board meeting. Discussions were continued for two weeks, allowing Staff the time to consult with the other funding agencies in order to come up with funding to eliminate any cuts in service. These discussions continue and outcomes are not known as of yet. These may be reported at or shortly before the meeting on April 21, 2011.

Council Member Klein asked if Staff felt they had enough guidance in that there was no need to take up any specific proposals.

Mr. Emslie stated the Committee had enough information and guidance in that the primary impacts were the loss of weekend services at California Avenue.

Other service impacts were relatively minor for California Avenue and University for weekday service. Some of the services actually increased since California Avenue services reduced with the Baby Bullet, and California Avenue during the week has more train service. The weekend impact is very significant, however.

MOTION: Council Member Klein moved, seconded by Council Member Price to request the Mayor of Palo Alto send a letter to CalTrain regarding the service cuts.

Mr. Emslie stated Staff would circulate a draft of the letter.

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0

Council Member Klein stated the next meeting was scheduled for April 28, 2011. Regular meetings are the third Thursday of each month, unless otherwise rescheduled.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 10:21 a.m.