



August/September Project Activities Update – San Francisco to San Jose High Speed Rail Section

To Peninsula Rail Program participant:

Summer turns to autumn with plenty of news on the high-speed rail project.

The outreach efforts continue and as a result of meeting with close to twenty cities transportation agencies, other agencies and interested citizens, the Project Team listened and was able to announce the following commitments in an effort to build California's first environmentally friendly high-speed rail system. We want to ensure that cities, counties, transportation and other agencies, and citizens actively participate in the development of a statewide high-speed train system that best meets the needs of the region and statewide objectives.

The six key commitments by the Authority to encourage public engagement in this include:

1. Create and facilitate an advisory Policymaker Working Group composed of elected officials from each of the cities to provide policy-level input. This enhances the existing Technical Working Group allowing optimum coordination between City and agency staff and policy makers;
2. Provide regular public updates regarding project details through use of Cable TV, e-newsletters, websites and other communication vehicles;
3. Coordinate and participate as a sponsor in high-speed train system, public Design Workshops, including Alternatives Development Workshops this fall;
4. Incorporate Context Sensitive Design Principles into project planning and outreach;
5. Provide outreach to community groups such as homeowner associations, business, labor, environmental and civic organizations, etc; and
6. Include opportunities for the community to provide input and get their questions answered through staffing community events such as farmer's markets and other venues.

Our effort reflects the Authority's commitment to fostering public engagement along the Peninsula rail corridor. Strong public participation makes a better project.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved. Given the increased level of interest, some cities are sponsoring their own workshops with experts and engineers from the Peninsula Rail program. A few upcoming events:

- September 3, 2009, California High Speed Rail Authority Board meeting, 10:00 am, Sacramento City Hall, 915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

- September 12, 2009 City of Palo Alto Teach-In 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, Palo Alto City Hall, 250 Hamilton Street, Palo Alto
- September 26, Burlingame Town Hall, 2:00-4:00 pm, Burlingame Recreation Center – 850 Burlingame Avenue, Burlingame

In conclusion, work continues on the high-speed rail project despite a recent court ruling. The California High Speed Rail Authority has issued a statement on the Sacramento Court ruling regarding the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by its Executive Director, Mehdi Morshed issued August 26, 2009.

“Today’s ruling by the Sacramento Superior Court validates the work supporting our comprehensive environmental analysis and clearly finds in our favor on the bulk of key issues, including our projections on project costs, operating characteristics and noise and visual impacts.

Importantly, the ruling found adequate our analysis of the operational and environmental issues related to the Altamont Pass alignment and the decision to not pursue putting high-speed train tracks on the Dumbarton Bridge. The ruling also found adequate support for the Authority’s decision to dismiss an alternative using Highway 101 or Interstate 280.

We remain committed to collaborating with residents and public agencies to build a cost-effective and useful high-speed train system that best meets the needs of both the region and the state.”

Find out more about the California High Speed Rail project by visiting our website at www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov or call the Peninsula Rail Program hotline at 510-587-8640.