



SAN JOSE TO MERCED COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP MEETING SUMMARY October 25, 2021

SUMMARY

Introductions and Agenda Review

Joey Goldman, the meeting facilitator, welcomed Community Working Group (CWG) members and thanked them for joining. Joey introduced California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) staff, shared the webinar objectives, and reviewed the agenda.

A participant list is in [Appendix A](#). The presentation is available on the California High-Speed Rail Authority's [website](#).

Boris Lipkin, Northern California Regional Director, introduced Stephen Tu, the new Northern California Engagement Manager.

Statewide Updates

Boris Lipkin reported on updates from the statewide program, including construction updates, environmental analysis milestones for project sections in Northern and Southern California, as well as the status of various federal and state funding sources.

Questions, Comments, and Responses

- A CWG member asked how many people are currently working on constructing the project.
 - Authority staff responded that 1,000 people are working on the project daily and that while it depends on trade specialty, each person works on the project for one month on average.
- A CWG member asked whether rail in the Central Valley is not being electrified and will be used for diesel trains.
 - Authority staff responded that some members of the State Assembly have suggested that we run a diesel/battery train in the Bakersfield to Merced segment, but for the project to meet the Authority's requirements, all work being advanced is based on fully electrified service.
- A CWG member asked whether the project will be discontinued if the Central Valley segment does not become electrified.
 - Authority staff answered that this proposition is not in the proposal put forward by the Authority or the Governor, nor is it what the voters approved.

Sustainability Report

Meg Cederoth, Director of Planning and Sustainability, presented highlights from the [2021 Sustainability Report: Building an Equitable Future](#). Meg emphasized that the Authority has developed and will continue to implement sustainability practices that inform and affect the planning, siting, designing, construction, mitigation, operation, and maintenance of the high-speed rail system. Meg shared information about the Authority's Platinum-level Envision award, the highest possible award from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure. She also explained the Authority's approach to recycling construction waste and encouraging development around high-speed rail stations.

Meg shared a summary of the California High-Speed Rail [2021 Climate Adaptation Plan](#).

Questions, Comments, and Responses

- A CWG member asked whether the Authority would employ battery storage companies owned by those not supporting state projects, like Elon Musk.
 - Authority staff responded that there is an opportunity to flex the scale of the project to meet multiple priorities and values including companies with solid supply chains that avoid environmental harm, recycling vendors, and lifecycle processes that ensure reuse. While the project is not yet in the procurement stage, it will prioritize sustainable practices.
- A CWG member asked whether the project would allow advertising on trains or at stations.
 - Authority staff responded that the train operator will help with advertising decisions on trains and at stations if there are any.
- A CWG member asked for the project team to comment on the relationship between Salesforce Station and Link21 and whether Salesforce Transit Center will prevent consideration of a new Link21 Transbay tube.
 - Authority staff answered that Salesforce Transit Center is a station in San Francisco that connects will be connected to the existing Caltrain corridor. While Link21 is looking at the addition of another Transbay rail crossing that may connect to the transit center or to another transit hub, the design of the Salesforce Transit Center will not prevent consideration of new Transbay tube as a part of the Link21 project.
- A CWG member asked whether the project will be powered by the PG&E grid, and if so, how the Authority would ensure the sustainable sourcing of power during outages.
 - Authority staff responded that the project would be integrated with the PG&E grid and that power purchase agreements toward renewable energy are being made with the power providers. There will be connections in multiple locations to maintain power to ensure resiliency and redundancy in the system. The Authority is looking to use purchased land in the Central Valley for solar development and battery storage to reduce power load, operating costs, and ensure reliability during outages.
- A CWG member asked if there will there be a dedicated solar field for powering trains.
 - Authority staff answered that there are opportunities for solar field incorporation that are being considered.
- A CWG member asked whether there will be solar panels on the trains to ensure life support and cooling capacity.
 - Authority staff responded that backup power will be provided from the overhead catenary and other auxiliary reserves.

Northern California Updates

Morgan Galli, Northern California Deputy Regional Director, and Rachel Bickert, Northern California Outreach Specialist, presented the Northern California update.

Rachel Bickert reviewed where the San Jose to Merced Project Section is in the environmental process, shared an overview of the public comment period for the Revised /Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) and reported on recent in-person outreach events.

Morgan Galli explained the steps leading up to the release of the Final EIR/EIS and the Authority Board meeting where the Board will consider approving the Final EIR/EIS and Record of Decision (ROD). Morgan also described what activities will take place after completion of environmental clearance, including the changing nature of

stakeholder engagement post-Record of Decision (ROD), and transition away from the CWG format to other outreach opportunities.

Questions, Comments, and Responses

- A CWG member suggested a panel should be established for people to interface with project managers to ensure that community-level problems from the project don't escalate further.
- A CWG member asked how the public will be participating in design concept decisions and expressed interest in incorporating design elements like murals and cement touches on sound walls and pillars.
 - Authority staff responded that meetings with communities on design details have not been planned yet. As the project nears that stage in the process, the Authority intends to collaborate with local communities on these details.
- A CWG member asked whether the Authority is involved with connecting the current Caltrain terminus at 4th and King with the Transbay Terminal in Downtown San Francisco, and what the cost will be.
 - Authority staff responded that the Downtown Extension Project (DTX) has been environmentally cleared and the Transbay Joint Powers Authority is pursuing funds to advance the design. The initial estimate was approximately \$4 billion, but the new estimate will likely be higher.
- A CWG member asked whether Alternative 4 is still the Authority's preferred alignment and whether that is subject to change.
 - Authority staff responded that Alternative 4, the extension of the blended system on Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Caltrain Right-of-Way, is the preferred alternative in the Draft EIR/EIS. The Board will consider all alternatives when they decide whether to approve the project next year.

Partner Update by Caltrain

Casey Fromson, Director of Government and Community Affairs for Caltrain, provided an update on the Caltrain electrification project and its relationship to the California High-Speed Rail Project.

Questions, Comments, and Responses

- A CWG member asked whether a copy of the presentation will be sent to CWG members.
 - Authority staff answered that a slide deck would be distributed along with a meeting summary.
- A CWG member asked what the timeframe is for riding the new trains.
 - Caltrain staff responded that trains will be in the testing phase in 2022, with full service arriving in 2024.
- A CWG member asked whether there any long-range plans to extend Caltrain service to Salinas or Monterey.
 - Caltrain staff responded that there are no such plans at this time.
- A CWG member asked whether there will be new trains going from South San Jose to Gilroy and whether there is a chance for more connections in San Jose
 - Caltrain staff responded that there are currently three round trips on the southern section of the Caltrain corridor, and that they will introduce an additional trip in the next year. The hope is to provide five round trips based on current agreements in the near-term with a design for more service in the long term. Caltrain would like to provide service every 30 minutes but this needs to be worked through considering UPRR's ownership of the ROW. Caltrain is not currently considering additional stations in San Jose, as there is a VTA route along the corridor in San Jose to provide additional transit options.

Public Comment

- Mark Roest commented that his company, Sustainable Energy Inc., will be mass-producing high performance, clean batteries by 2024 that HSR could utilize. Roest also commented on structural geometry, performance concrete, and a range of other design and construction considerations for incorporation into the project. Roest concluded that the project needs a ribs-and-spine spatial arrangement, with bi-directional group rapid transit as ribs to reach other destinations. The ribs could be built in stacks to accommodate other transportation options will also containing a solar canopy.
- San Jose City Council District 4 representative Marlee Smith asked whether there is a plan for parking at the stations, as there is not currently sufficient parking or transit for last-mile stops. Will the Authority be leveraging partners like VTA? They also asked how HSR will respond to issues with subsidence within the Central Valley due to over pumping.
- Martin Sommer asked what the most effective way is to address a mistake that was made on some recent Caltrain electrification work.
- Amah Mutsun Land Trust President Valentin Lopez commented on ongoing tribal concerns with Alternative 4 and stated that given the reduction in the indigenous population, the Authority should ensure the memorialization of indigenous heritage through artwork and other design elements
 - Authority staff indicated that they would respond to Mr. Lopez's email that was received earlier on these issues.
- Jian Wang commented that they heard that the rail will be built above Highway 101 when running through Morgan Hill. They asked whether this is correct, and if not, where the rail will travel.

APPENDIX A – Participants

Community Working Group Members in Attendance	
Affiliation	Name
Casa de Fruta	Gene Zanger
Downtown Residents Association	Elizabeth Chien-Hale
District 2 Neighborhood Leadership Council (NLC)	Greg Peck
Flowers Neighborhood Association	Mathew Young
Gilroy Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission	Patrick Flautt
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Silicon Valley	Joel Velasquez
Newhall Neighborhood Association	Mathew Bright
North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association	Harvey Darnell
Oak Grove Neighborhood Association	James Patterson
Santa Clara & San Benito Counties Building & Construction Trades Council	David Bini
The Health Trust	Karen Andersen-Lattin

Authority Staff: Boris Lipkin, Audrey Van, Rachel Bickert, Gary Kennerly, Morgan Galli, Anthony Lopez, Stephen Tu, Meg Cederoth, Richard Marcus

Caltrain Staff: Casey Fromson

Kearns and West Staff: Joey Goldman, Rickie Cleere, Celina Horbat