

CITY OF SAN MATEO



Answers to Frequently Asked Questions Regarding High Speed Rail

We have received a number of inquiries related to high speed rail. Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions

FAQ's Relating to Property Impacts and Eminent Domain

- Q: Will my property be affected by eminent domain?**
- Q: What is timeline for eminent domain proceedings?**
- Q: If my property were to be impacted by HSR, how much advance notice will we receive?**
- Q: Has money been budgeted for purchasing private property for right-of-way?**
- Q: What compensation would be given to property owners who are in the vicinity, but will not have their property acquired by eminent domain?**
- Q: How would eminent domain affect my property taxes (would we be allowed to carryover our taxes to another property?)**
- Q: What is compensation/fair market value for my home?**
- Q: What are plans to deal with any job loss associated with eminent domain?**
- A:** *We will not know the extent to which eminent domain will be necessary, the timing of the process, nor the answers to specific questions about eminent domain until after the Project Level Environmental Impact Report has been certified, and the project enters the design phase. Information will be developed and presented at subsequent workshops that may help individual property owners evaluate potential impacts to their property however, this information will be preliminary and the final outcome may change as the design process proceeds. The CAHSRA does have some general information relating to right of way/eminent domain on their website:*
<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=faqs&cat=9123>

FAQ's Relating to Design and Environmental Impacts

- Q:** How long will it take to construct HSR in San Mateo?
- Q:** How will noise, vibration, construction, dust, disruption, lost business, etc., affect me? How will this be mitigated?
- Q:** What is the plan for accident prevention and safety? How will accidents be mitigated?
- Q:** Will parking be adequate?
- Q:** What type of mitigation will be provided if the tunneling option is selected?
- Q:** Are adequate plans being made to coordinate impacts on existing transit system?
- Q:** What are the widths needed for each grade separation option?
- Q:** What is the configuration that has the least property loss?
- Q:** Have any hazardous materials (i.e. asbestos) been used in construction of the railroad? What will happen if that is dug up?
- Q:** Will planned housing developments nearby be delayed?
- Q:** Loss of housing; will city plan for additional housing?
- Q:** Will heritage trees be protected?

A: *We will not know the answers to these questions until the Environmental Impact Report has been released by the High Speed Rail Authority. During the process of reviewing the EIR we will examine the impacts and advocate for any needed mitigations. We will not have answers regarding construction timelines or methods until the project has entered the detailed design phase. The Alternative Analysis is based on 2% engineering information. Updated information will be available at the 15% design level which is expected to be release within the next several months.*

FAQ's Relating to Public Notice

- Q:** How were/are people informed of these workshops?
- A:** *Notification of both workshops was sent to property owners and occupants within 250 feet of the rail corridor. These notification cards typically arrive approximately 2 weeks prior to the workshop. In addition, a community flyer announcing the workshop was distributed for posting at all public facilities; electronic copies of the agenda were sent to anybody who signed up on our website to receive email updates; a press release was distributed to the local media; and a notice was placed on our cable TV channel.*
- Q:** What measures have been taken to include the non-english speaking community?
- A:** *We have communicated with various contacts within the multi-lingual/multi-cultural community, requesting that they help us share information about the project, and have offered to perform language-specific outreach to any group who asks.*

Other Questions Raised at March Workshop

Q: What type of rail alignment will be used in my area?

A: The Alternatives Analysis document provides one option for areas South of Highway 92 (a raised/elevated alignment) and two options for alignments North of Highway 92 (a raised/elevated alignment or a depressed/tunnel alignment).

Q: Will our say in this process have any impacts?

A: YES! The purpose of these workshops is to receive community input regarding the alignment options, and subsequently make a recommendation to the HSRA regarding San Mateo's preferences

Q: If the cost differential for a preferred option of a tunnel is more expensive than the other options, can our City be given the chance to make up that differential?

A: The project will fund the options selected by the HSRA. If the HSRA prefers a tunnel option, no additional funding will be necessary. If the City wishes to implement a different option than what is recommended by the HSRA, the City will have the option to provide additional funding to cover the difference. However, the magnitude of these costs could be hundreds of millions of dollars. The ability of the City to make up this difference is a question that remains to be answered.

Q: City putting in money for grade separations; where is that money coming from? Are you pulling from GF or impacts to other programs?

A: The money being used for grade separations is from developer impact fees. These are one-time charges applied to new development projects as a part of the overall mitigation for cumulative traffic impacts.

Q: What are the economic benefits of HSR on business in San Mateo?

A: The HSRA has done some macro-economic analysis of all benefits provided by HSR, but we have not identified any specific to San Mateo. We will raise these issues as the process progresses and share answers as we receive them.

Q: Concerned about the speed of the planning process - would like more time to review

A: *We have requested additional time to review the Alternatives Analysis (original review period was 45 days) and an extension has been granted. The HSRA has not placed a deadline on that extension; however, in order to have an impact on the project, we are aiming to submit San Mateo's comments within 60 days.*

Q: Concerned SM is not joining Peninsula Cities Consortium (PCC)

A: The cities of Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, Menlo Park and Palo Alto formed a group called the Peninsula Cities Consortium to provide input into the process of reviewing and constructing the high speed train project. Representatives from the City Council and Public Works Department have attended meetings of the PCC. The impacts of HSR to San Mateo are unique and at this time, we have not identified significant shared interests with the PCC member cities. We will have the option to work with adjacent cities in the future if we identified shared interests.

The process of studying and advocating for our city's rail interests is not new to San Mateo; we have been doing so for many years. San Mateo has elected to share in the collaborative "Context Sensitive Solutions" approach to work together throughout the planning process with the High Speed Rail Authority and the Peninsula Rail Program. Representatives from San Mateo serve on important committees in the HSR planning process:

- The Public Works Department meets regularly with the cities of Millbrae and Burlingame to discuss and plan our shared interests in the planning of high speed rail*
- The Public Works Department serves on the "Technical Working Group" which is comprised of representatives from every impacted agency along our segment's corridor. This group meets periodically to review preliminary environmental review results and comments on its findings.*
- Public officials serve on the "Policy Working Group" which is comprised of public officials in the three counties impacted by our segment of rail.*

Q: If Sacramento has a \$20 billion debt, will there be another tax or other service cuts?

A: Funding for the project has been set up to utilize a combination of bond funds authorized by Proposition 1A; Federal funds; and funding from private partners. For more information, the HSR Business Plan is available:

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/library.asp?p=8200>

Q: Has study been done on TGV in Europe to compare?

A: The CA High Speed Rail Authority has information regarding how CA HSR compares to other High Speed Rail Systems on their website:

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=faqs&cat=8170>

Q: Why can't HSR be underground the whole way, like BART?

A: The alignment of HSR depends on a number of factors such as physical constraints, operational requirements, environmental impacts, and costs. BART has many aerial structures for these same reasons.

Q: Is it possible to move the rail to the outlying areas and locate outside of peninsula cities?

A: The option of having HSR run along the I-280 or US101 corridor was considered, but not selected. At this point, the only option being considered is aligning HSR within the existing Caltrain Corridor.

Q: Who is paying for High Speed Rail?

A: *Construction of High Speed Rail is estimated to cost \$45 billion. The project is being funded by a combination of sources:*

- *Bonds authorized by the passage of Proposition 1A the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act approved by voters on November 4, 2008 (\$9.95B)*
- *Federal funding (\$17-\$19B from ARRA, other federal loan programs, transportation appropriations)*
- *Local Funding (\$4-\$5B in right of way, parking fees, transit-oriented developments, contributions)*
- *Funding from private investors (\$10-\$12B public-private partnerships, vendor financing, availability payments, etc.)*

Source: HSR December 2009 Business Report Fact Sheet

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news/FactSheetBusinessPlan.pdf>

Q: What will the ticket prices be?

A: *It is estimated that a one-way ticket from SF to LA would cost approximately \$56*

Source: http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/images/chsr/20081021150533_Ridership2.pdf

Q: How many people will ride HSR?

A: *It is estimated that HSR will carry between 83- 117 million passengers annually by 2030*

Source: <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=faqs&cat=8169>

Q: How much does it cost to tunnel per mile

A: *The “cut and cover” or “deep tunnel” options are estimated to cost between 5-7 times more than other available alternatives. Some cost analysis has been performed; however, very broad assumptions were made and there is more uncertainty regarding the specific conditions that would exist along the alignment/profile ultimately selected for implementation of tunneling. Previous studies have estimated the cost for tunneling to be in the range of \$100-\$200 Million per mile. However, it is impossible to know the costs which would be specific to the Bay Area and the Peninsula until the project was put out to bid. Additional information is contained in the CA HSR Tunneling Report:*

http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/images/chsr/20080201150441_Tunneling_Report.pdf

General Comments Submitted at March Workshop

Comment: In future workshops, I suggest there should be emphasis on the overall and region value to better lifestyle and improvement of property values. Somebody should point out "not in my backyard" attitude is not helpful or desirable.

Response: *Comment noted.*

Comment: Suggestion - layout all (3) stations in SM to accommodate (6) tracks - either all at same elevation or stacked. Two tracks for trains stopped at the station's platform. Two for CalTrain thru trains and (2) tracks for HSR. In some cases, the authority may choose to install (4) tracks initially and add the (2) others at a future date.

Response: *Station alternatives will be discussed as the Alternatives Analysis review proceeds.*

Comment: Please offer an online forum for discussion of HSR, chat group, blog, etc.

Response: *The City publishes factual information on our website and frequently provides links to the latest information . At this time, we do not plan to set up a blog or online forum.*

Comment: Below Grade 9th Avenue needs to connect to Sunnybrae School

Response: *We are currently holding these workshops to discuss alignment alternatives*

Comment: This project disproportionately affects the North Central Neighborhood

Response: *Project impacts will be identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Report. During the process of reviewing the EIR we will examine the impacts and advocate for any needed mitigations.*

Comment: Suicide prevention must be done right, right from the start! Two ideas include: 1) pressure plates to alert engineer someone/something is on the right-of-way; 2) a fence that has sliding doors that open at the boarding part of the train and closes just before the train leaves and stay closed until the next train is in place for boarding.

Response: *The City agrees that safety is a priority. The introduction of grade-separations will reduce the incidents of accidents/suicides on the tracks.*

Comment: The City's "Preferred alignment alternatives" were developed prior to the onset of High Speed Rail

Response: *When the Alternatives Analysis is considered by the City Council, these preferences will be discussed. In addition, High Speed Rail has provided our city with an opportunity to realize some of the policies (such as increased numbers of grade separations and tunneling in the downtown) which may not have been financially feasible otherwise.*

Comment: Have HSR end at Diridon (San Jose) and have Caltrain continue passengers, 10 minute delay

Response: *This option was considered, but does not meet the legislative requirements of HSR to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles. The alignment being discussed now reflects a HSR project that will utilize the Caltrain Corridor through the Peninsula.*