

CITY OF SAN MATEO
TOP 101 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING HIGH SPEED RAIL



Below are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the State of California's High Speed Rail Project:

FAQ's Relating to Property Impacts and Eminent Domain

- Q1: How will this project affect me, my house and my family?**
- Q2: Will the HSRA take my property?**
- Q3: If my property were to be impacted by HSR, how much advance notice will we receive?**
- Q4: To what extent will the value of my property be decreased?**
- Q5: How much time will the Rail Authority give renters to move out?**
- Q6: How will the cost of each property taken by eminent domain be figured out?**
- Q7: Will any compensation be made for construction inconvenience, or reduction in value of remaining properties?**
- Q8: What is timeline for eminent domain proceedings?**
- Q9: How would eminent domain affect my property taxes (could we carryover our taxes to another property?)**
- Q10: What is compensation/fair market value for my home?**
- Q11: What are plans to deal with any job loss associated with eminent domain?**
- Q12: During construction, will neighboring homes be relocated at HSRs expense?**

A: *The City has created "Frequently Asked Questions" regarding eminent domain related questions which we can answer. The FAQs are posted on our website:*
<http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentView.aspx?DID=6707>

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" has been selected.

- Q13: How do we get questions about eminent domain answered that are NOT answered on the online FAQ sheet?**
- A: *The CAHSRA does have more extensive information relating to right of way/ eminent domain on their website; however, as noted above, at this phase of the planning process, the answers to many specific questions are simply not yet available:*
<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=faqs&cat=9123>
- Q14: Will the City advocate for its residents with respect to property loss? Will the city ensure that residents are compensated fairly?**
- A: *The State of California has an established, well structured process for public acquisition of private property, which is designed to ensure a fair process and proper compensation. The City does not have a legal standing in the acquisition of private property by the State of California (acting as the High Speed Rail Authority).*

FAQ's Relating to Design and Impacts

Q15: How long will it take to construct HSR in San Mateo?

Q16: What will the impacts be – noise, vibration, foundation, wind, soil, drainage, San Mateo Creek, property loss, construction, fumes, dust, hazardous materials, wildlife, parking, graffiti, traffic, high voltage power lines, impacts to business, physiological human impacts etc.?

Q17: What is the plan for accident prevention and safety? How will accidents be mitigated?

Q18: What will be the impacts on nearby planned development projects?

Q19: What will impacts be to remaining buildings? Concerned about creating blight where property is not taken.

Q20: What mitigation efforts will be made to replace any low income housing which is displaced?

Q21: What is the configuration that has the least property loss?

Q22: What parts of a tunnel would be covered? What stays open? Could the stacked tunnel option could be re-engineered to be less wide?

Q23: Are there any alternative venting systems which could be examined (other than open trenches)?

Q24: What would a wall around a trench look like? Walls and power lines should be screened by trees.

Q25: Will pedestrian access from neighborhoods to downtown be maintained during construction?

Q26: Will there be any impacts to properties along El Camino Real?

Q27: Will there be any compensation for lost wages resulting from displaced businesses?

Q28: Will Caltrain run during construction or be shut down? Shoe-fly tracks – or bus bridges?

Q29: Can we please have more information on temporary construction easements?

Q30: How will pedestrians access trains from Hayward park station (pedestrian overpass or tunnel?)

Q31: Will heritage trees be protected?

Q32: How loud will the train be compared to Caltrain now?

Q33: Will the new tracks be east or west of the existing tracks?

A: *We will not know the answers to these questions until the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been released by the High Speed Rail Authority, anticipated for release in December 2010. During the process of reviewing the EIR/EIS the City will examine the identified impacts and advocate for any needed mitigations. We will also identify impacts that the City Council and community do not believe are adequately evaluated in the draft EIR/EIS. We will not have answers regarding construction timelines, methods, pedestrian access or additional information on necessary construction easements until the project has entered the detailed design phase. The 15% design information is scheduled for release concurrent with the draft EIR/EIS.*

FAQ's Relating to Public Notice

Q34: How were/are people informed of HSR workshops?

A: *Notification of workshops was sent to property owners and occupants within 250 feet of the rail corridor. Notification cards typically arrive approximately 2 weeks prior to each workshop. In addition, community flyers announcing the workshops are distributed for posting at all public facilities; electronic copies of the agenda sent to anybody who signed up on our website to receive email updates; press releases distributed to the local media; and notices placed on our cable TV channel.*

Q35: 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. Multi-lingual staff have been present at each workshop to provide translation for anyone who needs assistance.*

FAQ's Relating to the Review Process

Q36: What is meant by "environmental impacts?"

A: *Included among the environmental impacts studied in the EIR/EIS are items such as:*

<i>-Traffic, transit, circulation and parking</i>	<i>-Travel conditions</i>
<i>-Air quality and global climate change</i>	<i>-Noise and vibration</i>
<i>-Energy</i>	<i>-Electromagnetic fields and interference</i>
<i>-Land use, planning, and neighborhoods</i>	<i>-Property Impacts</i>
<i>-Aesthetics and visual resources</i>	<i>-Agricultural lands</i>
<i>-Hazardous materials and wastes</i>	<i>-Public utilities</i>
<i>-Geology and soils</i>	<i>-Cultural resources</i>
<i>-Biological resources and wetlands</i>	<i>-Hydrology and water resources</i>
<i>-Construction methods and Impacts</i>	<i>-Public parks and recreational resources</i>

Q37: What is an EIR/EIS? Please explain what is in this document in simple terms.

A: *These acronyms stand for Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIR/EIS discusses the environmental impacts associated with the project. An EIR refers to an Environmental Impact Report prepared under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An EIS is an Environmental Impact Statement prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).*

A statewide Program EIR/EIS was certified in November 2005 as the first phase of a tiered environmental review process for the proposed high-speed rail system. The CA High Speed Rail Authority, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration, prepared a Draft Program EIR/EIS specifically for the San Francisco Bay Area to Central Valley region, circulated it for public and agency review in 2007, and then completed a Final Program EIR/EIS that responds to comments received on the Draft Program EIR/EIS. The Program EIR/EIS considers, describes, and summarizes the environmental impacts—at a programmatic level of analysis—of the proposed HSR system within the broad corridor between and including the Altamont Pass and Pacheco Pass. In this document, the Authority and the FRA have identified a preferred HSR Network Alternative and general alignments, station locations, mitigation strategies, design practices, and further measures to guide the system's development and avoid and minimize potential adverse environmental impacts. The Final Program EIR/EIS was prepared to comply with NEPA and CEQA. The purpose of the Program EIR/EIS was to help decision makers and the public understand the potential impacts of the proposed HSR System and ways to avoid those impacts. The subsequent project-level environmental review will consider site-specific environmental impacts.

You can view the complete EIR/EIS at:

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/library.asp?p=8052>

Q38: What is difference between project and program level processes?

A: *The Program Level Environmental Process is a broad review process aimed at addressing the cumulative impacts of the High Speed Rail System Statewide. It is based on general alignment choices and assumptions, and does not look at detailed location-specific impacts.*

In contrast, the Project Level Environmental Process will examine site-specific impacts of the preferred alignments, station locations, and High Speed Train operations between San Francisco and San Jose, and will identify specific mitigation measures. The Project Level process will lead to decisions establishing the specific track alignment for each section. The DRAFT Project level EIR/EIS is anticipated for release in December, 2010.

Q39: Help me understand the timeline for the environmental project/program schedule. When is input welcome and how can I provide feedback?

A: *The statewide Program EIR/EIS was certified in November 2005, but was decertified in December 2009 due to a lawsuit. The Rail Authority recently concluded the comment period for a revised Program Level EIR/EIS on April 26, 2010. Before the Authority can re-certify the report, they must consider and respond to all comments submitted; this could take several months.*

The Preliminary Alternatives Analysis was released in April 2010. This report identifies potentially feasible alignment alternatives for further analysis and consideration. This document will be used to inform the project description(s) that will be analyzed in the Project Level EIR/EIS. There is no formal deadline for submittal of comments, but the Authority has encouraged input by June 30, 2010. City staff are planning to present draft comments to the City Council at their June 21, 2010 meeting, for subsequent submittal to the Rail Authority. Anyone interested in submitting individual comments on the Alternatives Analysis may do so in one of the following manners:

- *Via regular U.S. Mail to:*
Robert Doty
California High-Speed Rail Authority
Attn: San Francisco to San Jose Section Preliminary Alternatives Analysis Report Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814
- *Via email with the subject line "San Francisco to San Jose Section Preliminary Alternatives Analysis Report Comments" sent to comments@hsr.ca.gov*
- *Via facsimile transmission to (916) 322-0827.*

The DRAFT Project Level EIR/EIS is expected to be released in December 2010, and the public will have an opportunity to comment. City staff will provide information on how and when to submit comments on our City website once the draft EIR/EIS has been released.

Q40: Concerned about the speed of the planning process - would like more time to review

A: *The City requested additional time to review the Alternatives Analysis (original review period was 45 days) and an extension has been granted. Input should be submitted by June 30, 2010. See answer provided above.*

Q41: Will details regarding the environmental studies be provided to citizens? Will all impacts to noise, air quality, etc. be fully documented?

A: *The Rail Authority plans to make the Draft Project Level EIR/EIS available to the public in December 2010. The EIR/EIS will document impacts to the environment including noise and air quality. The City has retained a consultant with expertise in environmental impacts to review the analysis in the EIR/EIS and determine its adequacy. We may perform additional analysis if we do not feel the impacts to San Mateo have been adequately addressed, and we will certainly make that information available to citizens.*

Q42: Will information be available which compares the noise, vibration, etc., impacts of each alignment and design alternative?

A: *Information on these impacts will be provided in the Project Level EIR/EIS, and that document will only provide impact analysis on the alternatives which are selected for further analysis by the Rail Authority. The reason this analysis is not conducted beforehand is that from a cost and efficiency perspective, it is not efficient to perform this level of detailed analysis on alignment alternatives which are not feasible to construct.*

Q43: When is construction scheduled to start?

A: *Construction of some segments (including San Francisco to San Jose) could begin as early as 2012. The phasing of the construction and identification of the segments to be constructed first has not yet been released.*

FAQ's Relating to Costs and Other Project Data

Q44: I do not understand how this will be paid for. What was the estimated cost of the project?

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>

In comparison, the estimated costs of expanding our highways and airports to meet a demand similar to that expected to be carried by the high-speed train system is \$82 billion (in 2003 dollars). For more information on cost estimates, the HSR Business Plan is available:

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

Q45: HSR will cost more than initial estimates. How will debt be serviced? What happens if funding runs out? Will there be an increase in taxes or service cuts?

A: *The project will utilize a combination of bond funds authorized by Proposition 1A; Federal funds; and funding from private partners. Prop 1A includes a number of fiscal safeguards to ensure there will be adequate funds to construct the project such as significant analysis and review of funding plans, annual audits, establishment of an independent peer review committee to review financial viability of the plan. We cannot, however, predict the future. Any alternate request for funding would require a vote by the electorate. No specific tax increases are currently envisioned to fund High Speed Rail.*

You can learn more on the CA HSRA website:

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=fqas&cat=8159>

For information on project funding, the HSR Business Plan is available:

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

Q46: Who are the “private investors” and what do they get out of this?

A: *The funding of the High Speed Rail project is not feasible without funding from Public-Private partnerships. The Rail Authority's finance team anticipates that the commitment of state and federal dollars will attract private sector funding to the project, and has identified a broad array of public-private partnership opportunities, including project debt financing, vendor financing, system operations and private ownership. For more information visit the High Speed Rail Website:*

<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=fqas&cat=8173>

Q47: With all the concern regarding project financing, will a double-stacked tunnel actually be feasible?

A: *The Rail Authority did not eliminate any design options from consideration due to cost alone. The Rail Authority makes it clear in the Alternatives Analysis Document that all 10 subsections through the Peninsula need to be “stitched together” into a cohesive system, and if the most costly (tunnel) alternatives from San Francisco to San Jose are selected, the project will be infeasible. The HSR Authority staff and consultants are analyzing the constructability of the alignment options presented in the Alternatives Analysis. The results of this analysis is expected to be released by the end of 2010.*

Q48: What is cost of the service going to be?

A: *It is estimated that a one-way ticket from SF to LA would cost approximately \$56. This estimate may be revised as the cost of the system construction and operation are refined based on subsequent detailed engineering.*
Source: http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/images/chsr/20081021150533_Ridership2.pdf

Q49: 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>

Q50: Who produced the ridership forecasts and how were they developed? Are ridership estimates overstated?

A: *Forecasts of ridership and revenue for HSR were developed by Cambridge Systematics (CS), a nationally respected transportation economics and forecasting specialist, over a period of two years (2006-7) through an independent contract funded and managed by the Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission. CS prepared a detailed model of California's current and future population, employment, household characteristics, highway network, air and rail services, and transit systems. Surveys were conducted with California travelers about recent trips and their valuations of travel time, cost, and reliability and that information was combined with data from similar recent surveys from Caltrans, MTC, and the Southern California and Sacramento Association of Governments to help develop specific California-based forecasts of diversion of trips from air, auto, or other rail service to high-speed trains.*
A peer review panel of local, national, and international travel model and high-speed train experts reviewed and commented on the modeling assumptions, methodologies, and results during each stage of development. A full description of the interregional model and the calibration process and the forecasts is available on the High Speed Rail Website:
http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/images/chsr/20080128144738_IMSD.pdf

Q51: The City is putting in money for grade separations; where is that money coming from? Are you pulling from the general fund or impacting other programs?

A: The local 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.

Q52: 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

Q53: It was said 600,000 jobs will be created. How was that number developed how will the Rail Authority keep track of NEW jobs? Will the 600,000 jobs be California resident jobs?

A: *The California High Speed Rail Authority has conducted analysis of the economic benefits and impacts of constructing HSR which indicates the project will draw upon and expand California's skilled workforce, creating nearly 160,000 construction related and jobs and an additional 450,000 permanent jobs by 2035. To read specific information regarding the economic benefits and anticipated jobs creation specific to the Bay Area, you can view the Regional Economic Study report at:*

http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/images/chsr/20081003150751_HSR%20Bay%20Area%20Report%20Final.pdf

FAQs relating to other HSR systems

Q54: How much data is available worldwide already?

Q55: What has happened elsewhere – long range?

Q56: What lessons can we learn from others?

Q57: Has study been done on TGV in Europe to compare?

Q58: Where else in the world do trains travel like this through cities?

A: *There are high speed rail systems throughout Europe and in Asia, and they all travel through cities. It is necessary to construct high speed rail in and surrounding metropolitan areas, as metro areas represent a significant market for high speed rail service and will generate a substantial share of the expected ridership. The High Speed Rail Authority has a dedicated web page full of information on other HSR systems: <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=fags&cat=8170>*

FAQs relating to train horn noise

Q59: How have other HSR systems mitigated noise?

A: *Design features such as sound walls, trenches, tunnels and grade separations have been utilized to mitigate noise. In addition, electrification of services provides a reduction in noise. More detailed information will be available in the draft EIR/EIS when it is released later this year.*

Q60: Will grade separations really solve the problem of train horn noise? Federal regulations require sounding the horns at/through the stations, which will still exist. In the southern part of the City, the noise from the elevated structure will continue to carry long distances, even when tied to the HSR alignment. What specifically do federal regulations require? Until we know for sure we should stop touting HSR as the solution for train horn noise.

A: *The introduction of High Speed Rail and the associated grade-separated rail crossings will alleviate much of the impact of train horn noise, but will not eliminate it completely. The City has been candid about that in staff reports to the Council and Public Works Commission, as well as communications with interested parties; however, we are aware there is potential for misunderstanding. Once the grade separations are completed horn noise will be limited to trains approaching stations. Horn use at existing grade crossings will be eliminated. With respect to the horn requirements:*

At street crossings, train operators are currently required to sound the horn as they approach, travel through, and as they depart an at-grade crossing. Since many of San Mateo's existing at-grade rail crossings are situated closely together, the net effect of conforming to these requirements is that the horns are sounded for seemingly long intervals as the train travels through these crossings. High Speed Rail will provide for grade-separated crossings. This means that train operators will no longer need to sound the horn at street crossings unless the operator observes a potential hazard.

At train stations, train operators are required to sound the horn as they approach. If the train stops at the station, the operator is also required to sound the horn as the train departs. This means that in the vicinity of the existing stations, train horn noise will likely remain unchanged.

We will not be able to comment on the potential impacts of noise generated from an elevated structure until the project level EIR/EIS has been made available (December, 2010).

Q61: If the Hayward Park Station tracks are at grade, will there still be train horn noise?

A: *There will still be horn noise in and out of the Hayward Park station. See the answer provided above.*

FAQs relating to Caltrain, Service, and Existing Right of Way

Q62: Has anyone reviewed current deaths caused by Caltrain? Won't this get worse with High Speed Rail?

A: *The City agrees that safety is a priority. High Speed Rail will allow for the introduction of grade-separated rail crossings, which will reduce the incidents of accidents/suicides on the tracks.*

Q63: Why is Caltrain working on the tracks when we expect to replace them?

A: *Caltrain has put a number of projects on hold, but is making certain safety improvements to improve serviceability. For example, Caltrain has postponed a project to replace bridges in the Northern part of San Mateo, but is instead working to seismically strengthen the existing bridge structures.*

Q64: Will Union Pacific continue to use the tracks?

A: *Yes. However, with the addition of grade separations at current at-grade rail crossing, the need to sound the train horn will be minimized.*

Q65: Who owns the existing Right of Way? Have we been repaid by SF and Santa Clara Counties? Do we have any influence?

A: *The issue of who owns the Right of Way has arisen, particularly questions about whether San Mateo County was ever fully compensated for the purchase of the Right of Way from Union Pacific. To clarify: Caltrain owns the entire right of way between San Francisco and just South of Diridon station in San Jose. Under its trackage rights agreement with Caltrain, Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR) maintains the right to intercity rail along the Caltrain corridor, and is an important stakeholder involved with the implementation of High Speed Rail.*

SamTrans helped each of the three Counties (San Mateo, San Francisco, and Santa Clara) finance the purchase of the right of way from Southern Pacific, the predecessor to Union Pacific. There is a Real Property Ownership Agreement that spells out the terms and conditions of repayment. Under the terms of the Real Property Ownership Agreement, title to the right of way is held by the JPB (Caltrain) from San Francisco to just south of Diridon; SamTrans is a co-owner in fee with the JPB of the portion of the right of way that is in San Mateo County; and SamTrans has a deed of trust on the entirety of the right of way both within and without San Mateo County. SamTrans will relinquish both of these interests at such time as the SamTrans funds are paid in full. Should the partners default on that agreement, SamTrans could exercise its interests in the right of way, but no such default has occurred.

Q66: How are freight trains, Caltrain and HSR going to coexist?

A: *Caltrain and high-speed trains must be able to operate concurrently within the rail corridor. While freight trains use the same type of tracks (standard gauge) as Caltrain and HSR, the Federal Rail Administration will not allow freight trains to operate at the same time of day as the high-speed trains and the electrified trains that Caltrain will run in the future. The number of tracks required will be determined by the level of service. The current infrastructure, with a fully signaled and electrified system, will support up to 12 trains per hour per direction of combined Caltrain and HSR service. As the level of demand increases, certain locations will need to be expanded to three or possibly four tracks to support more frequent service levels, especially during peak travel times. The Alternatives Analysis assumes a four track system in the corridor.*

Air quality regulations specify that diesel powered freight rail operations will need to continue operating in an environment with adequate ventilation. If electrified Caltrain vehicles operate underground along with HSR, the project will need to include costs for construction of and access to underground platforms at Caltrain stations.

FAQs regarding Alignment

Q67: Has it been decided that HSR will run through the Peninsula? HSR tracks should run through the East Bay where there is more land.

A: *The Rail Authority did examine the option of aligning the System in the East Bay through the Altamont Corridor. Ultimately, the Pacheco Pass Corridor through the Peninsula was selected because the environmental impacts were reduced. High Speed Rail is obligated through a legislative requirement to connect to San Francisco. This means that an alignment through the Altamont Pass would require a crossing of the San Francisco Bay, and this would have significant environmental impacts, higher capital costs, constructability issues, and would require considerable acquisition of property. For these reasons, the Pacheco Pass Alignment utilizing the Caltrain corridor through the Peninsula has been identified as the preferred alignment for HSR services between San Francisco and San Jose and is the only option being considered.*

Source: <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=fags&cat=8188>

Q68: Why MUST it be on this existing corridor? Why not build over 101 of 280?

A: *The option of having HSR run along the I-280 or US101 corridor was considered, but not selected by the Rail Authority. The Caltrain corridor alignment would increase intercity connectivity and accessibility to San Francisco and the Peninsula, minimize environmental impacts, and require less acquisition of land and property, since this alignment utilizes the existing Caltrain right-of-way. In addition, the Caltrain Corridor alignment would provide safety and traffic benefits by grade-separating existing at-grade roadway crossings. For these reasons, the Caltrain corridor has been identified as the preferred alignment for HSR services between San Francisco and San Jose and is the only option being considered.*

Source: <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=fags&cat=8188>

Q69: Why not stop the new HSR from Southern California at San Jose, and have passengers transfer to CalTrain or BART to complete the trip to San Francisco?

A: *This option was considered, but does not meet the legislative requirements of HSR to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles and limit travel time to no more than two hours and 40 minutes. The alignment being discussed now reflects a HSR project that will utilize the Caltrain Corridor through the Peninsula.*

Q70: What is the specific language in the bond that was passed that prevents HSR from ending in San Jose?

A: *Proposition 1A, which provides legislative direction for the project, specifies "Phase 1 of the train project is the corridor between San Francisco Transbay Terminal and Los Angeles Union Station and Anaheim." Therefore, an option that terminates the HSR system in San Jose, with San Francisco passengers continuing north by transferring to Caltrain does not meet the legislative mandate for the project. The option was previously considered and dismissed at the program level as it would not meet the purpose, need or objectives of the new HSR system.*

Source: Official Voter's Guide to Proposition 1A:

<http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/past/2008/general/pdf-guide/suppl-complete-guide.pdf#prop1a>

Q71: Given the lawsuits and questions from elected officials regarding the process and costs, are we "spinning our wheels" with the status of a Peninsula or East Bay alignment still in limbo?

A: *With respect to constructing High Speed Rail through the East Bay vs. the Peninsula, the status of the alignment is not in limbo. A lawsuit was filed challenging certain components of the program level EIR/EIS; however, the conclusion that the Pacheco Pass Network Alternative is the preferred alternative has not changed. Although the revised program EIR/EIS has not yet been re-certified, the City feels it is prudent to continue efforts to engage the community in the planning process.*

Q72: Please provide detailed information regarding the “at grade only” option before and after the Hayward Park Station – why can’t it be underground?

A: *The Alternatives Analysis provides one option (at grade) in the vicinity of the Hayward Park Station. An at grade alignment is necessary in order to match the existing elevation of the station and retain the Caltrain stop. The Hayward Park Station would likely be considered for elimination if an at-grade alignment is not selected. While individual opinions may vary regarding the need for the Station, the City Council has adopted the San Mateo Rail Corridor Plan which provides a long term vision for the area. This plan envisions increased demand for rail service at this station. Retaining the Hayward Park Caltrain stop is an integral part of that plan.*

Other Questions and Comments

Q73: What type of rail alignment will be used in my area?

A: *The following are the alternatives identified for consideration in the Alternatives Analysis document:*

Sub-section	Location	Alternatives Carried Forward					
		Aerial Viaduct	Berm	At Grade	Open Trench	Covered Trench/ Tunnel	Deep Tunnel
3C	Peninsula Ave to Tilton	X			X	X	
3D	Tilton to 12 th Ave	X			X	X	
3E	12 th Ave to SR 92			X			
4A	SR 92 to 25 th Ave		X				
4B1	25 th Ave to So. City Limit	X	X				

Q74: What is the City’s position on HSR through the Peninsula? Do the Mayor and City Council Support the project? Why?

A: *The City Council took unanimous action in 2008 to support Proposition 1A, the High Speed Passenger Train Bond Act. In addition, the Council is supportive of the High Speed Rail alignment within the Caltrain corridor, but is specific on their alignment preferences. The preference is to have a depressed alignment through and north of the downtown, and for a raised alignment in areas South of Highway 92. Those interested in individual opinions from the Council may contact Council Member (contact information is available at: <http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/index.aspx?nid=166>) or may attend the next City Council Meeting where High Speed Rail will be discussed (scheduled for June 21).*

Q75: How was the “preferred alignment” through San Mateo arrived at?

Prior to formal HSR studies, the City had preliminarily identified alignment preferences for Caltrain through San Mateo. This occurred over the course of several years and was discussed in the context of multiple studies such as the San Mateo County Transportation Authority’s (TA) Footprint Studies, the City’s Downtown Area Plan, and the Bay Meadows Plan. Much public input was involved in each of these processes. The preferences in San Mateo were subsequently identified by the City Council as:

Belmont to Hayward Park – Raised alignment with new grade separations at 31st and 28th Avenues and a grade separation at the existing at-grade crossing at 25th Avenue.

Downtown Segment – The City Council reaffirmed its preference for a depressed alignment through downtown San Mateo. The rail alignment north of downtown would depend on the alignment selected in Burlingame.

The alignments presented in the HSR Alternatives Analysis document are those which have been determined by the Rail Authority as desirable, constructible and feasible in terms of environmental, fiscal and other considerations. The City Council asked that the HSRA investigate use of tunneling to construct the preferred below grade alignment. Trench and tunnel options have been included in the Northern portion of our City. The purpose of the community workshops is to gain feedback in order to provide comments on the Alternatives Analysis and designate our “preferred” alignment alternatives.

Q76: Can you explain which “alternative” is planned for downtown San Mateo @ 9th Avenue and Railroad?

A: *This is a transition area, and the Alternatives Analysis presents two options at this intersection. One is an aerial/above grade option. Construction of this option would likely have significant property impacts, as the tracks (as currently proposed) would have to begin their descent in order to come in at-grade at the Hayward Park Station. 9th Avenue would have to be depressed, with walls constructed on either side which would limit access to properties. The other option is below grade, with a transition coming up to grade at the Hayward Park Station. The impacts of either option are not yet known. Factors such as final vertical alignment, horizontal placement of the tracks with the existing right of way, and the construction sequencing will affect the impacts of a selected option.*

Q77: San Mateo should challenge assumptions all the way back to San Jose – why aren’t more boxes checked on the table of alternatives?

A: *The boxes not checked through the Downtown and Northern parts of the City include the “at-grade” and “berm” options. The reason these boxes are not checked is these options would be infeasible to construct due to the close proximity of intersections and the resulting impacts and disruption associated with having to raise or lower streets to accommodate berm or at-grade options.*

In the Southern areas of the City, the alternatives are those which are feasible given that the rail system must ultimately connect with Belmont to the South (Belmont already has elevated tracks), and considering that it is a priority of the Council to retain the Hayward Park Caltrain Station. The “tunnel” options are not checked in the Southern areas of the City for these reasons.

Q78: Why has City accepted that deep tunnel has been dropped as an option? Why are we not insisting that option be carried forward?

A: *The City has not accepted this, and that issue will be considered in comments made by the City Council to the Rail Authority on the Alternatives Analysis Document. At a recent meeting of the HSRA, they eliminated the deep tunnel alternative South of the Diridon Station. The reasons were poor soil for tunneling, infeasible or difficulty in mining deep tunnel stations, and undesirable construction safety conditions. These same conditions would be likely in the Millbrae to Belmont segments.*

Q79: Challenge decisions of City during corridor study to have raised alignments south of 92. That decision was made outside of the context of HSR.

A: *The City has indicated to the High Speed Rail Authority that changes in the existing rail alignment in Belmont would impact the City's willingness to accept the proposed raised alignment. The expectation of the design team is that the existing Caltrain alignment will not be altered. The High Speed Rail Alignment could be at a different elevation. The preference for the raised alignment and the City's belief that this is the best feasible alignment is based on the following conditions:*

- *The existing Caltrain alignment will not be altered*
- *The street grade separations must not require any changes in grades at El Camino Real*
- *The rail station will be moved north to between 28th and 31st Avenues*
- *25th Avenue will be grade separated*
- *The tracks must be at grade at SR 92 and the Hayward Park Station*

If these conditions change, then the City would ask that alternative alignments be considered. This has been communicated to the HSR design and management team.

Q80: If HSR Commission insists on an elevated aerial system downtown, will our City fight that decision?

A: *Individual Council Members have indicated in public meetings that they are opposed to and would object to an elevated system through the downtown. The City Council's position regarding the alignment downtown will be articulated to the Rail Authority in comments on the Alternatives Analysis, and this topic will be discussed at the June 21st City Council meeting.*

Q81: Should San Mateo be willing to put a train over ground and greatly impact the quality of life of its citizens?

A: *The preference for the alignment of High Speed Rail in the downtown area is in fact for a depressed alignment, in order to minimize the impacts. For the segment South of Highway 92, an elevated alignment was anticipated during the San Mateo Rail Corridor Plan development. The raised alignment will permit construction of grade separations at 28th and 31st Avenues in order to improve safety and traffic circulation. The elevated alignment was predicated on the elevation of the existing rail alignment in Belmont and the need to be back to grade at Hwy 92. The limit of 1 percent grade results in very lengthy transitions for elevated to at grade or depressed alignment. The Council's long term vision was crafted as the result of extensive outreach and public input, with the intent of improving the overall quality of life in the City.*

Q82: What benefits will be accrued by the Citizens of San Mateo for allowing the HSR project to bisect our City? What are the benefits to the average citizen? Can we survive without HSR?

A: *San Mateo will benefit from the grade separations of existing at-grade crossings. This will improve traffic and pedestrian safety and will reduce noise from train horns. On a State level, the High Speed Rail Program will provide an alternative to intra-city air travel at a time when airports are at or will soon be at capacity.*

Q83: Has City studied what to do with land that would be freed up with covered tunnel? Or what to do with land underneath viaduct? Space should be utilized in a beneficial manner.

A: *The City will have an opportunity to perform studies if and when decisions to move forward with the aerial or tunnel alternatives have been finalized by the High Speed Rail Authority.*

Q84: 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.*

Q85: 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? Can residents be assessed to generate the funds needed to ensure construction of a below grade tunnel?

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 fund any added costs. However, the magnitude of these costs could be hundreds of millions of dollars, so the use of local assessments may prove infeasible. The ability of the City to fund this difference by utilizing assessments will be evaluated once the project costs are more well-defined and the preferred project is known. This will occur once the Draft EIR/EIS is released.*

Q86: Will we have an opportunity to vote on this?

A: *Proposition 1A, The Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act has already been approved by voters at the November 4, 2008 election. The project level EIR for the San Francisco to San Jose segment is expected to be released later this year. During the environmental review process, the public will have the opportunity to submit comments and feedback. A direct vote on the project by the electorate is not anticipated unless alternate authorization for funding is requested.*

Q87: Why not use the funds towards the current “going bankrupt” transit systems?

A: *The people of California voted to authorize funding and dedicate it for the High Speed Rail system. Absent of a ballot initiative, Proposition 1A funds cannot be diverted away to other transit systems.*

Q88: Over the next ten years, what is the estimated loss of property tax and sales tax revenue for the city of San Mateo due to the lowered quality of life for residents? Is this number accounted for in the cost estimates for the various options? If not, why not?

A: *The City Council raised similar concerns at their Study Session on High Speed Rail on May 3, 2010, and requested that analysis and discussion of those impacts be included in the Environmental Impact Report (scheduled for release in December, 2010).*

Q89: Why are the most expensive pieces of the HSR System being built first? Wouldn't it be better to build the easiest/less expensive parts first – in areas south of the Joint Powers Board jurisdiction?

A: *Although at first glance it may seem logical to construct the less expensive segments in remote areas first, there are a number of factors which must be considered. The Authority reviewed the different segments within the network, comparing cost, ridership, revenue, and the utility of various segments to each other. The Authority determined it will be more effective to direct initial efforts and resources towards constructing those sections which will result in functional segments and which provide the potential for early utilization. By constructing segments in the more densely populated areas first, the result will be functional links connecting areas of high demand (e.g. San Jose to San Francisco) which can be utilized while the remainder of the system is constructed to connect to the more rural parts of the State.*

Q90: In terms of engineering, and geographical conditions that are relevant to the Peninsula, how is a HSR project appropriate on a peninsula and an earthquake fault line?

A: *With Caltrain and BART, there are already existing rail systems in operation along the Peninsula. There are seismic requirements which have been established for safety and High Speed Rail will be engineered to meet those requirements.*

Q91: Can the project include more pedestrian/vehicle crossings between 9th and 25th Avenue? (overpass/tunnels?) Existing crossings are far between

A: At 9th Avenue the alignment alternatives are an aerial viaduct, open trench, or a cut-and-cover tunnel. The alignment transitions to at-grade into the Hayward Park Station. From the Hayward Park Station to 25th Avenue, the alignment transitions from at-grade to an elevated alignment, either an aerial structure or an raised berm. We would expect that pedestrian/vehicle crossings would be offered at 9th, 25th and at the Hayward Park Station. Creating these grade separated crossings will eliminate existing conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles and trains and improve safety. The City Council will consider whether to request additional pedestrian grade separations as part of the City's comments on the Alternatives Analysis. Draft comments on the Alternatives Analysis will be considered at the Community Workshop on June 16, 2010 at the San Mateo Main Library. The City Council will review draft comments at their June 21, 2010 Study Session.

Q92: Is it possible to get real estate evaluations with respect to the impacts of the different alignment options?

A: The environmental impact report will identify potential property impacts for the various alignment options. Meaningful conversations regarding real estate and property impacts can only occur once a project is selected and that can only occur with certification of the environmental document. A summary of eminent domain related questions and answers is available on the City of San Mateo's website:
<http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentView.aspx?DID=6707>
and on the High Speed Rail Authority's website:
<http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/news.asp?type=faqs&cat=9123>

Q93: Where do the City Officials and Public Works Department employees in charge of this project reside?

A: To clarify, the City is not "in charge" of this project. The High Speed Rail Project was approved by the voters of California and is being managed by the California High Speed Rail Authority, a state entity responsible for planning, constructing and operating the HSR system. The City Council has directed City staff to facilitate discussions with the San Mateo community so that the Council can in turn make comments to the HSRA which reflect the preferences of San Mateo's residents.

Q94: Segment 3C crosses into Burlingame and we'll need to coordinate; we should initiate discussions with Burlingame

A: City officials have been engaging in discussions with the Cities of Burlingame and Millbrae over the last year, and these conversations will continue.

Q95: If the new tracks were aligned to the West, wouldn't the Movie Theatre have to be ripped out?

A: The Downtown Cinema is located adjacent to the narrowest part of the Right of Way. The horizontal alignment of High Speed Rail has not yet been determined, so the impacts are not yet clear. The City plans to request that the Rail Authority's design team provide additional clarification regarding the horizontal alignment as the design proceeds and is refined.

Q96: What input from the April 15th Workshop was provided to the City Council on May 3rd? What did the City Council conclude?

A: The purpose of the May 3rd City Council Study Session was to provide the Council with a review of the material contained in the Alternative Analysis Document. No decisions were made at this meeting. The staff report, exhibits and meeting minutes are available for you to read online:

<http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/index.aspx?nid=170>

Feedback received at the community workshops will be incorporated into draft comments which will be presented to the City Council at their June 21, 2010 meeting.

Q97: Why is San Mateo not aligned with other Peninsula cities in the Consortium?

A: *The cities of Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, Menlo Park and Palo Alto formed a group called the Peninsula Cities Consortium (PCC) 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. The City of San Mateo is meeting regularly with the Cities of Burlingame and Millbrae to discuss HSR issues, identify shared interests and to share professional resources where possible. The City also participates as a member of the HSR Technical Working Group and Policy Maker Working Group which includes representatives from all cities and agencies within the corridor.*

Q98: What degree of influence does this process have on decision making?

A: *The purpose of these workshops is to allow community members to have a voice and provide input regarding the alignment options, so the City Council can subsequently make a recommendation to the HSRA regarding San Mateo's preferences. The final alignment decisions will be made by the HSRA, and will take the City's preference into account, but will also include factors such as cost and impacts, etc.*

Q99: What happened to some City Council members' strong statements that if tunnels were not considered/offered, there would be a BIG fight?

A: *A tunnel is proposed through and North of the Downtown and this is the alternative the City Council prefers and supports. This preference will be reaffirmed in comments to the Rail Authority on the Alternatives Analysis.*

Q100: Why does the City prefer an above-grade alignment through the Bay Meadows area?

A: *See answer to Question 79.*

Q101: How can we organize politically to request California reconsider its decision before these costs become sunk costs.

A: *The people of California voted to authorize funding and dedicate it for the High Speed Rail system. A statewide ballot initiative would be required to repeal Proposition 1A and the associated funding which has been designated for High Speed Rail. Some cities and individuals have filed suit against the HSRA to either alter the proposed HSR Program or halt its progress.*

Comment: **There is no conforming working width that is properly fitting for either downtown west or east San Mateo.**

Response: *Agreed. It is clear that a four track rail system cannot be built through downtown San Mateo without property impacts.*

Comment: **HSR through San Mateo downtown should be underground, stacked option, to preserve character and authentic center of our community. CUT AND COVER.**

Response: *The City Council agrees and has gone on record in support of a depressed alignment in the Downtown.*

Comment: **I am still not satisfied with the explanation regarding ending the HSR system in San Jose and connecting to San Francisco using Caltrain.**

An explanation has been provided that an option to end in San Jose was considered but dismissed at the program-level review, as it did not meet the purpose, need or objectives of the new HSR system, nor the legislative requirement for HSR to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles and limit travel time to no more than two hours and 40 minutes.

In addition ridership studies have indicated that without a direct connection from San Jose to San Francisco, ridership would drop by almost 15%; this would render the entire project infeasible.

From Caltrain's perspective, it would be impossible to absorb these additional passengers into the existing Caltrain system. The Caltrain system is currently operating at full capacity during peak periods.

A number of residents share your dissatisfaction with the proposed San Jose to San Francisco segment. This position can be expressed directly to the HSRA.

Comment: **This project impacts people least likely to benefit from HSR, and disproportionately affects the certain neighborhoods**

Response: *The entire City of San Mateo will benefit from the improved safety provided by grade-separated rail crossings, as well as train horn noise reductions. Clearly, the most significant impacts will be to those who live, operate a business, and/or own property adjacent to the rail right-of-way. 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: **Concerned about reinforcing division between east and west side**

Response: *Project impacts (including any disproportionate impacts to our neighborhoods) will be identified and discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report. During the process of reviewing the EIR we will examine the impacts and advocate for any needed mitigations. The City's preferred alignment retains east and west access in north San Mateo and downtown. The preferred alignment south of SR 92 will permit improved access through construction of grade separation at 28th and 31st Avenues. In addition, the option for a raised alignment on structure would also enhance east west access.*

Comment: **We should spend money on making good transit improvements to what we already have**

Response: *Proposition 1A actually does provide funds to improve current commuter urban and intercity rail systems. An allocation of \$950M will be available to improve intercity and commuter rail systems. Funds will be available upon appropriation by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act.*

Comment : **If whole sections can't be covered, would like to see covered tunnel from 1st to 9th Avenue, or Tilton to 9th Avenue**

Response: *The City will have an opportunity to submit specific comments such as these during the comment period on the Environmental Impact Report (scheduled for release in 12/2010). Based on previous comments from City Council Members, it is anticipated that the City Council will request a covered trench between 1st and 9th Avenues.*

Comment: **Please have a binder containing HSR information available at the City's recreation centers for public access.**

Response: *Thank you for this suggestion. We have committed to providing up-to-date documentation on High Speed Rail for public access at the Main Library and San Mateo Senior Center, as well as on our City's website. The hard-copy material is voluminous and the content changes frequently; for these reasons, it is more efficient to maintain hard copies at these two high traffic locations. If you would like a hard copy of a particular document, you may contact Sheri Costa-Batis at scosta-batis@cityofsanmateo.org*

Comment: **The weeds along the existing Caltrain right of way are horrible**

Response: *Agreed. We anticipate an improvement of these conditions throughout the entire corridor with the implementation of the High Speed Rail Project.*

Comment: **Hayward Park would like to have some sort of mitigation for at grade alignment. This could include tall trees , an attractive park-like feel, overhead pedestrian crossings, a sound wall, and other measures to reduce impacts of trains and catenary poles.**

Response: *Noted. Both you and the City will have an opportunity to submit specific comments such as these during the comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS (scheduled for release in December 2010).*

Comment: **We are already suffering from the loud and frequent Caltrain horn noises**

Response: *High Speed Rail will actually alleviate much of the impact of train horn noise. See response to Q60/61.*

Comment: **Unhappy certain alternatives on the peninsula have been dismissed**

Response: *Noted.*

Comment: **Spend the money to protect quality of life in San Mateo and not trying to help Burlingame's tunnel.**

Response: *The City Council has identified preferences for the alignment options in San Mateo, and those preferences include a depressed alignment through the Downtown and in the Northern part of the City. This preference has been made in the interest of minimizing impacts in our city; not to strengthen Burlingame's case for a tunnel. Any money expended by the City of San Mateo in relation to the HSR project will be focused on the segments that are within the City limits.*

Comment: **Concerned that reduction in population density in north central will result in loss of tax revenue**

Response: *The City Council raised similar concerns at their Study Session on High Speed Rail on May 3, 2010, and requested that analysis and discussion of those impacts be included the Environmental Impact Report (scheduled for release in December, 2010).*

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: **At 15% design we'd like to see where the Right of Way (ROW) widths are and the impacts – details are still too sketchy**

Response: *Although there are many questions we will not be able to answer until the project reaches 15% design, we do have the ROW widths for the various alignment alternatives, and we know the existing ROW width of the different segments along the corridor. Assessing the potential impacts was the primary purpose of the May 13th workshop.*

Comment: **The San Francisco Peninsula is so urbanized. It makes no sense to disrupt everyone by trying to insert new, high speed rail within the existing context.**

Response: *That is why the Caltrain corridor was selected--because it is urbanized, and because rail service is already contained in the existing corridor. Most of the infrastructure needed to support HSR is already in place and utilizing this corridor actually has the fewest impacts. Use of another alignment (e.g., US101) would require significant modification to the existing highway. It would also place the new HSR Millbrae station away from the existing BART Caltrain station. Combining stations will provide easy transfers and would allow riders to take advantage of the existing BART parking.*

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: *Comment noted. Station alternatives will continue to be discussed as the project review proceeds.*

Comment: **Give us remediation clout commensurate with our population (as opposed to Atherton's dollars).**

Response: *San Mateo has been working in cooperation with the Rail Authority throughout the review process, rather than spending money to work against them. We believe our comments are as valuable as those submitted by any other City.*