

Redwood City Community Workshop
High Speed Rail Alternative Analysis
Veterans Memorial Senior Center
Tuesday, May 11, 2010
7:00 – 9:00 PM
MEETING NOTES
(prepared by Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center)

Purpose of the meeting: *gather community comments/concerns/preferences on the HSR Alternatives Analysis for folding into the City's official comment letter to the High Speed Rail Authority*

Present: Council Members: Rosanne Foust, Jeffery Gee and Barbara Pierce; staff members Chu Chang, Peter Delgado, Phong Du, Jill Ekas, Brian Lee, Saber Sarwary, Malcolm Smith, Jimmy Tan, Peter Vorametsanti, Susan Wheeler, Dan Zack; approximately 50 members of the community, and eight facilitators from the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center

Council Member Rosanne Foust

- Thanked everyone for attending
- Introduced elected/appointed officials present and their role in the meeting
- Introduced PCRC and their role
- Stated the purpose of the meeting and expectations
- Outlined the agenda for the meeting

Chu Chang provided a presentation on the High Speed Rail Alternatives Analysis and answered questions from participants.

Facilitators from the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) facilitated six small group discussions guided around the following questions:

Questions:

1. *What would be advantages of each of the track placement options?*
 - *Aerial*
 - *At-grade*
 - *Trench (covered/uncovered)*
 - *Tunnel*
 - *Covered trench and aerial*
2. *What would be the challenges of each of the track placement options?*
 - *Aerial*
 - *At-grade*
 - *Trench (covered/uncovered)*
 - *Tunnel*
 - *Covered trench and aerial*
3. *What other combinations would you like to be studied? Note: you have blank paper with example diagrams, use that to draw your own for the either or both segments*

4. *Based on the options presented what would be your preferences?*
- *Green sticky dot: your preferred option*
 - *Yellow sticky dot: your 2nd choice*
 - *Red sticky dot: least favorite option*

Each table had a printout of potential options outlined in the Alternatives Analysis, as well as a chart for each participant to vote on potential options. Participants were provided a sheet with rail graphics for designing other options.

Group Comments:

1. *What would be advantages of each of the track placement options?*
- *Aerial*
 - *At-grade*
 - *Trench (covered/uncovered)*
 - *Tunnel*

Group 1 - advantages

Aerial

- Creates usable real estate
- Minimizes construction right of way impact
- Relatively low cost
- Least construction impact compared to tunneling, excavating
- More visual and actual community connectivity
- Low suicide/ vandalism/ terrorism potential
- More aesthetic ride

Open Trench

- Little visual impact
- Less noisy than aerial
- Pedestrian safety relative to at-grade

Covered Trenches

- Less visual impact than open; no fences
- Connectivity
- Usable space above
- Noise

Deep Tunnel for HSR

- Noise (for HSR)
- Narrow Right of Way

HSR Covered Trench / Caltrain Aerial

- Station option exists
- Less construction Right of Way
- Connectivity

Group 2 - advantages

Aerial

- Less expensive and disruptive

At-grade

- 4D segment: less expensive

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- Minimal sound (sideways)
- No visuals
- Take advantage of the land on top → recover land (green space)
- Stacked covered trench: less space, less disruption, less right of way → double stack trench

Tunnel

- Less property taken (less eminent domain)
- Noise minimized
- Aesthetics
- There won't be a high-speed rail station in Redwood City (also listed as a challenge)

Group 3 - advantages

Deep Tunnel

- Could dig anywhere, no right of way issues
- Similar to BART in Berkeley; or BART under the Bay
- Actually a bore; don't have to do construction. Removes issues of stitching lines together
- Neighborhoods, alphabet streets, houses, small businesses (right of way is only 60 feet) → cannot have impacts and the Tunnel option alleviates this
- No advantages to elevated tracks
- Deep Tunnel is most advantageous

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- Allows station in Redwood City
- Allows electrification of Caltrain
- Eliminates grade separation
 - Safety concern with grade separation

Group 4 - advantages

Aerial

- Traffic flow
- Bike path possible under track
 - What is the reality of that option?
- Better rider experience
- Keeps option open for a train station in Redwood City
- Better movement across the right of way

At-grade

- Lowest cost option?
 - Listed on sheet as lowest?
- Right now not an option on 4C section
- No changes to Caltrain section

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- No traffic interference
- Easiest movement
- Not an eyesore
- Land can have other uses
- Noise reduction
- Reduction of danger (security)

Tunnel

- Least destructive during construction
- Won't take as much land
- No interference with utilities
- Noise – none
- Land use
- No railroad station in Redwood City

Group 5 - advantages

Aerial

- Walk under it
- Reclaimed land
- Reduce congestion
- Reconnect east and west sides
- For the land underneath:
 - bikeway/ community garden/ etc
 - Opportunity for public art, storage, pedestrian boulevard

At-grade (Section 4D)

- The price
- Potentially can get freight train in and out

Trench (covered)

- Safer
- Enclosed if the train derails
- Don't see train/ visual
- Capture open space
- All contained wouldn't affect traffic
- Might need less right of way
- Wouldn't impact houses and businesses (as much)
- Cover the trench and build on top and create revenue sources to pay for HSR
- Use right of way as revenue generation, real estate

Tunnel

- Because of restrictions to 60' easier to trench it – right of way narrowest
- More economical way to go (possibly)

Group 6 - advantages

Aerial

- Allows for use underneath
- Gives space
- Less safety issues

- Traffic freedom
- Allows for freedom of movement and land use does not divide city

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- Allows for free flow of traffic and community activity
- Allows for building above
 - Parks, living areas
- Allow for diesel fumes to escape
- Most feasible

2. *What would be the challenges of each of the track placement options?*

- *Aerial*
- *At-grade*
- *Trench (covered/uncovered)*
- *Tunnel*

Group 1 - challenges

Aerial

- Integration with at-grade
 - Especially for heavy freight cars
- Noisy
- Safety concern with derailment
- Earthquakes (especially with freight cars and hazardous freight)
- Any station would be up in the air

Open Trench

- Connectivity is reduced
- Vandalism/ terrorism/ suicide
- Maybe fences will be necessary, with visual impact
- Flooding
- Water table
- Large construction right of way impact

Covered Trenches

- Egress safety, train safety
- High cost
- Most disruptive for construction

Deep Tunnel for HSR

- No HSR station
- They won't pay for Caltrain grade separation
- Caltrain at-grade, noisy
- Expensive: could kill the project

HSR Covered Trench / Caltrain Aerial

- Separate train infrastructures – hard to change between HSR and Caltrain
- Difficult construction

Group 2 - challenges

Aerial

- Noise
- Aesthetics
- Accidents (trains can de-rail)

At-grade

- Take more eminent domain

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- Exhaust (fumes)
- Because of width → requires more eminent domain with 4-track option

Tunnel

- Cost
- There won't be a high-speed rail station in Redwood City (could also be an advantage)

Group 3 - challenges

Aerial / At-grade

- Runs directly through downtown:
 - Noise
 - Buffers
 - Cutting the City into two parts (example: El Cerrito)
- All above grade options would mean an entire separation of communities
- Elevated tracks
 - Noise issues similar to the feeling underneath the BART system → terrible noise impact
 - Aesthetically horrible
 - The benefits of Redwood City are that there are no high rises, low impact footprint (height). This would be a visual impact to the downtown area.

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- Eminent domain
- Construction right of way and temporary track
- Noise – needs to be covered
- Venting an open trench is still necessary
 - Vents are where the noise gathers
- Trench is not a solution for everyone
- Open trench still has noise issues
- People can still get into the open trench → safety concerns. You would have potential openings

General Comments on Track Placement

- Lots of ways to grade separate – don't have to elevate to grade separate
 - Don't have to be joined together
- Funding
- How is running HSR through Redwood City going to enhance the city?
 - Noise = intrusive
 - Benefit or detriment?
- Best practices = TGV / Switzerland
- Concerned with commuter trains versus the demand for HSR

- Getting off in San Jose means they couldn't run regular commute service
- Couldn't run as many express trains from San Jose to San Francisco
- Adding extra tracks a necessity no matter what
- Run it near the 101
- Impact to developers/ business
- Cost
- Right of way/ cost
- Question should be: What is the most doable?

Group 4 - challenges

Aerial

- Loitering/ danger issues → gangs
- Litter potential
- Noise/ ugly → visually unattractive
- Worried about speed

Trench (covered)

- Cost and disruption during construction
- Bad user experience

Trench (uncovered)

- Uncovered challenges
- Dangerous → suicide
- Divides the city up
- Eyesore
- Noise level high
- Litter/ graffiti
- Bad for utility crossings
- Weather affects it

Tunnel

- One of the most expensive options
- Evacuation procedures in emergency
- No Redwood City railroad station
- Lousy user experience

Group 5 - challenges

Aerial

- Ugly
- Dangerous when derails
- Challenges to business and commuter
- Noise
- Visual – more prominent and affects views

At-grade

- How many feet right of way?
- May be eminent domain – takes away houses
- Air displacement

- Suicide/ accidents
- The way this is framed (60') does not get at the reality of what is going to be given up
- Noise factor – how does this play out?

Trench

- Cost
- Noise (contained it will need to be vented)
- Internal noise also could be problem
- Safety (advantage → tunnel option)

Tunnel

- Don't like.

Group 6 - challenges

Aerial

- Will cause shadows
- Noise/ vibration concerns
- Decibel levels not known
 - Example: BART is not as quiet as forecasted
- Track will be close to houses
- Would freight stay on Caltrain track?

Trench (covered/uncovered)

- Concern about impact on residences
- Costs go up with trench
- Are 4 tracks necessary, can we use only 2?
- Are tracks functional for both?
- Noise bounces off walls
- Costs
 - How much from taxpayers
- How much open/ how much closed
- Concern that this does not change or interfere with Redwood City
 - We want what is best for our city

3. *What other combinations would you like to be studied?*

Group 1 – other combinations to study

- Stacking in covered trench
- Hybrid low berm

Group 2 – other combinations to study

- Double track cut/cover box
 - Double track in tunnel (deep tunnel is best option)
 - Sheet #11 of 24 on combination draft typical sections HSRA document of 3/24/10
- 67' right of way
 - Double track cut and cover all under-ground

- Box with double track in tunnel
- Double covered trench

Group 3 – other combinations to study

- Note: there is a problem with the approach: integrate Caltrain with HSR. Convert Caltrain to express trains. This is so trains could use each other's tracks with one dispatch system
- Deep tunnel and trench combo
 - Least disruptive
- Deep tunnel and at grade with grade separation, specifically for 4C
- Leave Caltrain as is, go with grade separations as it is now
- Deep tunnel, leave Caltrain as is
- Deep tunnel but with Caltrain in covered trench or at grade with grade separations as needed (road under preferred)
- HSR in tube/trench with Caltrain in trench, stacked

Group 4 – other combinations to study

- Everything in tunnel except at Redwood Junction
- Aerial tracks with sound reflector and close privacy shield

Group 5 – other combinations to study

- Stacked track, cut and cover
- Buildings to span across right of way
- For option 3 as shown on matrix (open trench), cut and cover so only a portion is open
- Park and bike boulevard over the top if covered
- Use some land for mixed use near station and housing between stations

Group 6 – other combinations to study

- Aerial for HSR, at-grade for Caltrain
- Aerial with a bubble/ baffle to reduce noise
- New route
 - Along the Bay
- Why do we have to stick with present Caltrain route?
- Is it possible to have a one-track shoo-fly?
- What about 280 highway route?
- 2 tracks above, 2 tracks below (2 tracks aerial, 2 tracks at-grade)
- Right of way not with Caltrain right of way
- Covered aerial with translucent glass to keep sound/noise from reverberating through neighborhoods
- Hat Trench concept. Tunnel with hat-trench above.

4. *Based on the options presented what would be your preferences?*

- *Green sticky dot: your preferred option*
- *Yellow sticky dot: your 2nd choice*

- *Red sticky dot: least favorite option*

See 8 ½" x 14" sheets from each group

Report Out

Each group briefly reported out highlights of its discussion:

- A. One placement option advantage
- B. One placement option challenge
- C. Other combinations
- D. Sticky dot display board

Next steps:

A written summary of this workshop will be posted on Redwood City’s website and will be sent to the Council’s High Speed Rail Ad Hoc Committee, who will prepare a summary report for the June 14, 2010 City Council meeting. Following the June 14 Council meeting, the City will submit its formal Preliminary AA Report response letter to the HSR Authority (by the end of June). All comments received tonight will be included in the Council’s letter to the HSR Authority. An e-mail link is available on the City’s website at www.redwoodcity.org/HSR.html, where community members may submit additional comments. The City also encourages community members to send their comments directly to the HSR Authority. The City anticipates that the HSR Authority will release its mid-peninsula Station analysis before September 2010. Redwood City will schedule a community meeting for input and discussion when this additional information becomes available.

Meeting Evaluation

What went well, and what might have made the meeting better (plus/delta format).

Plus	Delta
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank facilitators and city for support • Allowing conversation to take place • Feel heard • Like the format of small tables • More dots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit with someone you don’t know for different perspectives • What are the factors that city is waiting for – position of the city • Invite people to these meetings that will be directly affected by the construction of the rail

Additional Input

A workshop attendee sent a follow-up email requesting that the HSR Authority take another look at the 101/Altamont option, as it will be less expensive and much less invasive to residents and businesses.