

# REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council  
From the City Manager

March 8, 2004

## INFORMATION ONLY

### Subject

Caltrain Service: Baby Bullet and High Speed Rail

### Recommendation

There is no recommendation from staff at this time.

### Background

1. "Baby Bullet" Express Trains. This spring, Caltrain will start the "Baby Bullet" express service from Gilroy to San Francisco. The addition of this express train will require a change to schedules all along the right-of-way. The express train will not stop at all stations in order to keep an express schedule.

The express stops will be:

- San Jose Diridon
- Mountain View
- Palo Alto
- Hillsdale (San Mateo)
- Millbrae
- San Francisco

All of the above stops except Hillsdale and Millbrae have the highest number of riders. The City of San Mateo (with four current stations) has the highest ridership on the Peninsula, and the Hillsdale Station is more of a mid-point between Palo Alto and Millbrae, for the express train. Millbrae was chosen as a stop due to BART and SFO.

The location of stops for the express trains, and schedules for regular trains are highly dependent on the passing tracks.

With the new schedule, Redwood City will have an additional two trains stopping in both directions during the weekday peak hours, and one less train during midday and evening. These three additional stops will bring the total to 76 for Redwood City during the weekday.

There will be three northbound and two southbound express trains in the morning, and two northbound and three southbound in the evening, none of which stop in Redwood City.

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The only noticeable difference in service in Redwood City will be a slightly extended gap in trains stopping to allow the express train through the station. Currently, at peak hours, trains stop about every 20 minutes. The number of trains stopping will not decrease, but the scheduled stopping times will change.

Attached to this report are:

- Frequently asked questions of Caltrain Changes
- Caltrain Average Weekday Passenger Activity
- Comparative Weekday Service Levels

2. High Speed Rail. The Draft Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) has been released for public comment. The document contain 2,600 pages, but for ease of reading, can be found on their website ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)). Because this is a "Program" EIR/EIS, it does not have the amount of detail that you might expect in a "Project" EIR.

There are no specifics that relate to right-of-way requirements, stations, or traffic. Section 3.7.5, B. states:

**"B. Communities and Neighborhoods**

If a decision is made to go forward with the proposed HST system, alignments would be refined in consultation with local governments and planning agencies, with consideration given to minimizing barrier effects in order to maintain neighborhood integrity. Potential mitigation strategies to reduce the effects of any new barriers would be considered at the project-level environmental review and could include grade separating planned rail lines and streets, new pedestrian crossings, new cross-connection points, improved visual quality of project facilities, and traffic management plans to maintain access during and after construction."

Considering the potential significant impact to Redwood City (and many other cities) during construction and operation of the High Speed Rail, there is little information available to make an informed decision.

From the staff perspective, there are at least three basic design alternatives:

1. Fully grade-separate the existing and proposed rail lines by leaving the rail at ground level and roadways below. This alternative will have significant impacts to existing structures on Broadway, as well as other crossings, and make pedestrian crossings difficult, except at the grade crossings.
2. Raise the tracks above the current street level. This alternative allows easy pedestrian and vehicular access, but can cause a visual problem through town, and may generate more noise than other alternatives. This alternative would require a significant amount of design study.

- 3. Lower the tracks below the street level. This alternative allows easy pedestrian and vehicular access, but is very costly to build. Major utilities would have to be relocated, but that is not an impossible task.

All of the above alternatives create significant impacts within Redwood City. The station facility may also be located in Redwood City. A station capable of handling 6,000 passengers each day would also have to be accommodated. The size of this facility and required parking has not been estimated.


Clearly, the Program EIR/EIS does not provide sufficient information to make an informed decision. Because of the significant impacts, this system would have on many communities on the Peninsula, it might be beneficial for the Cities to work together to come up with a design proposal that we all agree upon. That proposal could then be included in the next phase of environmental studies. This would allow the Cities to be proactive, not reactive.

**Conclusion**


Howard Goode from the Transportation Authority will be present to discuss these two projects, and answer any questions you may have.

**Fiscal Impacts**

The Measure "A" Renewal includes money for station access planning and improvements. Redwood City had asked for funding to help plan the area within the Downtown as part of the Renewal Plan.

  
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