

REPORT

**To the Honorable Mayor and City Council
From the City Manager**

May 18, 2009

SUBJECT

Council discussion and input on public outreach efforts related to the development and local construction of the High Speed Rail/Caltrain Electrification project.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide input to Caltrain staff for use in their development of a Public Outreach Plan for development and construction of the High Speed Rail/Caltrain Electrification project.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, California voters approved a bond measure to finance construction of the California High Speed Rail (HSR) system. In January, 2009, the HSR Authority issued a Notice of Preparation of a project Environmental Impact Report/Statement for the peninsula segment of the system, and proceeded with several scoping sessions.

The scoping sessions illustrated the great need for a local "face" and voice for the project, to work directly with - and ensure sensitivity to - local communities as this project moves into its planning and environmental review phase. The Council supported the Memorandum of Understanding between Caltrain and HSR to create, in effect, a single project incorporating HSR and the electrification of Caltrain, to be managed in a highly coordinated fashion, and engaging the public with one voice through Caltrain. Such an approach will serve to create a more inclusive and positive forum for communication, and provide a clear, localized line of communication for residents and businesses.


Caltrain staff has met with City staff for discussions of the principles and scope of outreach to the Redwood City community. Tonight, Caltrain staff will make a brief presentation to Council reviewing the development schedule and the baseline approach to the coordinated community outreach and public participation process. The Council may then discuss the public outreach approach, and Caltrain staff will utilize that discussion as input into their public outreach plan.

ALTERNATIVES

The Council could choose not to address these issues at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.



Peter Ingram, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Draft outline of community outreach principle, scope, and concepts, for Council discussion purposes

RELATED DOCUMENTS IN CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

None

Community Outreach for Caltrain/HSR – Discussion Points

City Council Meeting

May 18, 2009

1. Overarching Principle: From a community relations standpoint, the development and implementation of the HSR/Caltrain electrification facilities must take place with profound attention to the interests of the surrounding communities, stakeholders, and sensitive audiences, offer an augmented level of community outreach, communication, and involvement, and minimize negative impacts and effects on the communities in which the project will operate.

2. Redwood City Stakeholders
 - a. Property owners/residents/businesses within ½ mile of the alignment
 - b. Sequoia Station retailers
 - c. Boards and Commissions
 - i. Bike/Ped Working Group (to be superseded with “Complete Streets Committee”
 - ii. Housing and Human Concerns Committee
 - iii. Planning Commission
 - iv. Historic Resources Advisory Committee
 - d. Downtown Business Group
 - e. Chamber of Commerce
 - f. City staff including public safety, planning, engineering, manager, etc.
 - g. City elected officials
 - h. Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson
 - i. Assemblyman Ira Ruskin
 - j. Senator Joe Simitian
 - k. Neighborhood Associations – Centennial, Stambaugh-Heller, Redwood Village
 - l. Redwood City Elementary School District and Sequoia Union High School District
 - m. Faith communities within ½ mile of alignment
 - n. Advocates for a HSR station in Redwood City (should a group or groups form)
 - o. Opponents of a HSR station in Redwood City (should a group or groups form)

3. Sensitive/critical audiences
 - a. Residents and businesses within 1/4 mile of the alignment
 - i. Particular attention to bilingual outreach for residents along corridor south of Woodside Road, including into unincorporated North Fair Oaks area

- b. Schools within ¼ mile of the alignment (esp. during construction)
- c. Motorists – in general (for detours, etc. – will require generic publicity)
- d. Caltrain users
- e. Bicyclists/pedestrians

4. Scope/types of outreach

- a. Compilation/use of email list – regular updates
- b. Periodic direct mail to all within ¼ mile of alignment – frequent contact at milestones/key events
- c. Advertising to support outreach at milestones/key events
- d. Community workshops to provide overviews at periodic points in the development/construction
- e. Use of community focus groups to evaluate project design alternatives
- f. Program/construction hot line for problems/issues
- g. Information/education outreach elements to include:
 - i. Overall education on the basics of the HSR proposal, benefits and impacts
 - ii. Information on HSR grade and station options, what those options might look like, comparing impacts and benefits.
 - iii. Schedule and phasing of local construction.
 - iv. Descriptions of construction activity, hours/days/times of construction, visual/auditory/aesthetic construction impacts.
 - v. Traffic management plan, detours, construction worker designated parking, safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, etc.
 - vi. Maintenance of Caltrain service during construction
 - vii. Potential station site and its likely impacts, both during construction and once in-service.
 - viii. Graphic representations of various alternatives, grades, station siting, etc.
- h. Consider local task force for research/opinion/discussion of potential station site in Redwood City
- i. Presentations to Boards and Commissions, Council

5. Questions for Council discussion

- a. How to involve Boards and Commissions?
- b. How are the possible HSR alternatives consistent with our vision for community, with the Downtown Precise Plan, and the General Plan?
- c. How to best utilize/allocate our own staff and consultant resources?
- d. Depending on our allocation of resources, how might this affect Council's priority strategic initiatives?