

High Speed Rail (HSR) Working Group (WG) mtg  
Tuesday evening, August 2, 2016, at 157 Moffett Boulevard, Mountain View.  
Informal notes by L. Ames.

Participants:

- \* Staff: included Ben Tripousis, Dominic Spaethling, Morgan Galli, Bruce Fukuji, half-dozen others.
  - \* Working Group round table: appointed public members, including Adina Levin, Harvey Darnell, Ed Rast, John Urban, Shani Kleinhaus (for Sierra Club: opposing HSR), someone representing Stanford, a few others.
  - \* Audience: me, Roland Lebrun, and some more staff.
- [Roland publicly asks: why so few working group members attending (A: schedule conflicts); why wasn't public notified? (A: on website; oh wait, we haven't posted it yet, but this is a WG mtg, not a public outreach.)]

Staff gives overview of system, San Francisco to San José (SF - SJ).

- \* DTX: Downtown Extension, for 4th/King to the TransBay Terminal
- \* Proposed operations: 110 MPH (Fed rules require grade separation if over 125 mph): Can meet budget by not having to upgrade all the existing at-grade crossings.
- \* Plan for 4 HSR + 6 CalTrain trains per hour per direction: 20 trains/hr.
- \* Plan for a single mid-peninsula station at Milbrae; plans dropped for a station at Palo Alto.
- \* Discussion on maintenance yard in Brisbane (on a site coveted by developers). Two alternatives: E or W of the tracks.
- \* Several options were presented for the location of a "passing lane" in the mid-peninsula.
- \* Discussion on station design: needs to be 1,410 ft long. Diridon: elevated or at-grade. At this point, I raise issue of the Joint Powers Board (JPB) going out for bid to replace the CalTrain bridge at Los Gatos Crk, ask if the new set of bridges are compatible w/ HSR; if not, does that preclude at-grade option? If there is a de-facto decision, should it be acknowledged so SF-SJ Working Group can deal w/ the remaining Option? No resolution, other than Ben saying HSR is in conversation w/ JPB. (Roland's comment: parking lots at Diridon conflict w/ PG&E power station: will it be moved? A: no; parking is only at-grade -> no conflict. [LLA thought: an at-grade parking seems like a waste of good close-in Diridon Station area real estate!])
- \* Safety: quad-barriers and/or median dividers. Comment: drive-arounds not an issue here, but being stuck in a queue / traffic jam is. Need to coordinate traffic signals.
- \* Plan for new grade separations at 3 sites in one town (San Mateo?). Q: why only there? A: they're paying for half the cost.

The moderator broke the participant into groups for a priority-setting exercise. The public was invited to participate; Roland declined; I was invited to join "the big table" rather than be alone. The group I joined emphasized the development of, and connectivity to, the Diridon Station area. We had a discussion re: impact of HSR on CalTrain schedules: currently the trains are fairly periodic, but HSR would cause "clumping" of CalTrain so as to leave "gaps" for HSR to zip thru. A: schedule is preliminary, can be tweaked. Note: affected by location and configuration of "passing lane" tracks.

After the Priority Exercise, we all go off to tables w/ detailed maps of entire route. Everyone is given markers and invited to add info to the charts.

- \* I dump many details re: Diridon, LG Crk, CalTrain, Greater Gardner nghbrhd, elevated vs at-grade: most of which are included in my EIR Scoping comments (see: <http://www.wgbackfence.net/NC/SF-SJ%20EIR%20Scoping%20Questions.pdf> )
- \* John Urban expressed concerns about the impacts of elevated HSR tracks north of Diridon, and he noted that the Greater Gardner community was well organized and loud even though the impacts of elevated tracks north of Diridon would affect many more residents than would be impacted by the at-grade alternative south of Diridon.
- \* A discussion was held concerning the emphasis given to low-income nghbrhds and the balance relative to many more affected nghbrhds north of Diridon.

\* Someone pointed out that the housing in Santa Clara near the tracks are is newer and better sound-proofed, whereas Gardner has old, noisy housing.

\* I marked the "Freight Wye" on map and pointed out that I'd been informed that HSR can't land and blend in to the shared tracks until past that point. Staff (Dominic?) says that's not true: while it is convenient to land past the wye, HSR >can< land much earlier, which would avoid the elevated line thru Santa Clara & past most residences, but it would require some more land near Hedding (on E side, away from Bellarmine).

\* Dominic commented that the at-grade alignment north of Diridon would cause HSR to lose 45 sec twisting and turning around the CalTrain maintenance yard at Stockton/Lenzen.

\* I ask about slopes, and learn that HSR can handle a steeper grade than used for freight: HSR can climb a 3% grade for short distances (although the tracks do have to be level at and near the station).

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I see a potential win-win solution: have the HSR tracks elevated around the Greater Gardner district and at the Diridon Station, have them fly over the maintenance yard, and then land at Hedding. Might need to rebuild the Hedding bridge (or reconfigure as an undercrossing), but the cost would be less than elevating HSR all the way to Scott Blvd in Santa Clara. And while the HSR tracks need to be 60' above-grade at Diridon (due to nearby I-280/87 ramps), they don't have to remain 60' above maintenance yard: the tracks can start descending (perhaps at Cinnabar or Lenzen?). This would give nearly a mile before the tracks need to reach at-grade at I-880: this works out to just over a 1% grade – far less than the allowable 3%.

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There will be 2 more Working Group meetings, plus community meetings.

These are informal notes. Additions and corrections by other attendees would be welcome!

~Larry Ames, 8/5/16