



MEETING DATE: 4/19/04
ITEM NO. 21. b.

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: April 16, 2004
TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER 
SUBJECT: CONSIDER CITIES ASSOCIATION REQUEST TO SUPPORT THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY'S CONCLUSION TO USE EITHER PACHECO PASS OR DIABLO RANGE FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL SYSTEM INTO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

DISCUSSION:

Attached is material from the Santa Clara County Cities' Association regarding the high speed rail issue.

Attachments:

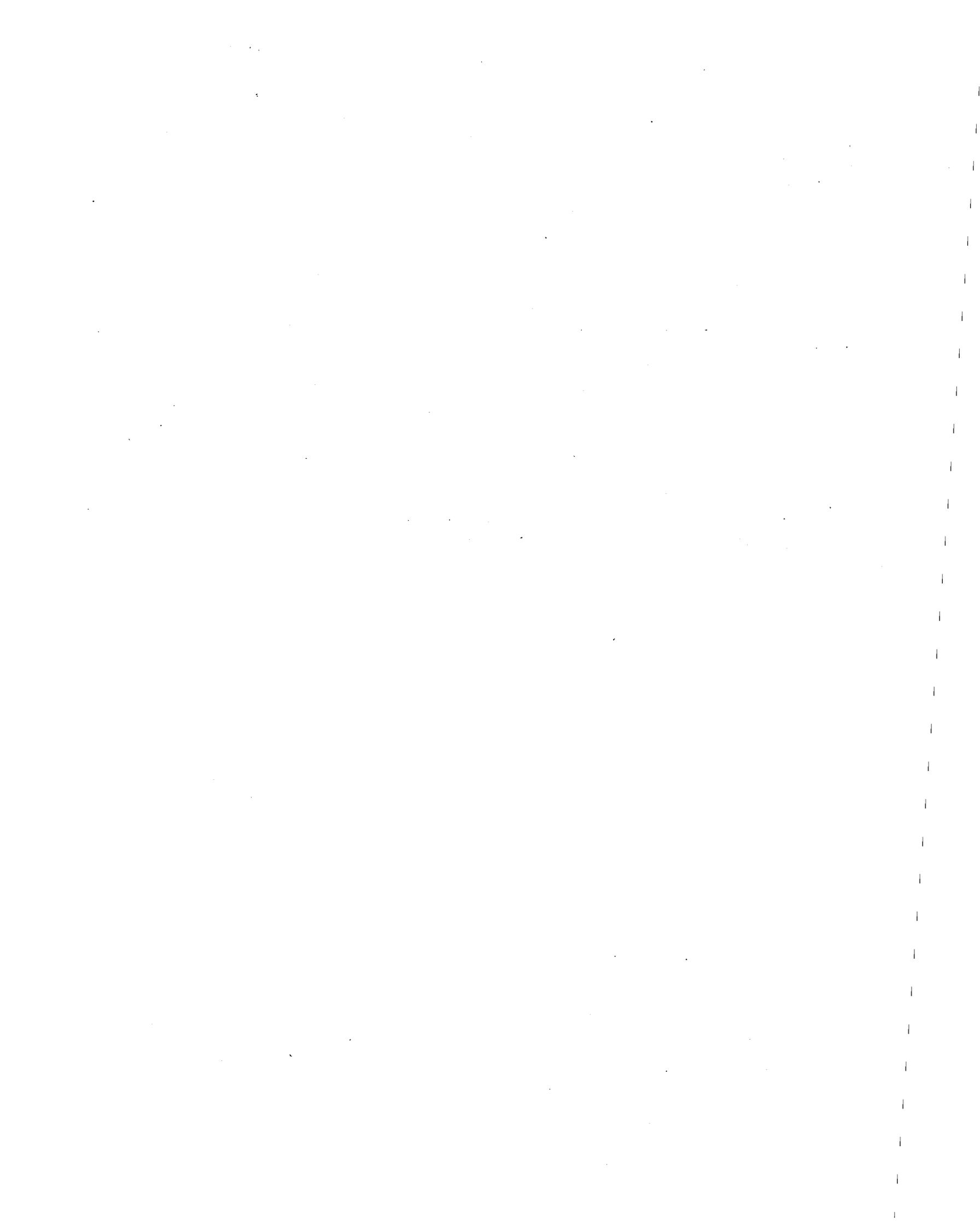
4/15/2004 e-mail from Gillian Moran, Executive Director - Santa Clara County Cities' Association

PREPARED BY: **DEBRA J. FIGONE** 
Town Manager

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Reviewed by: _____ Assistant Town Manager ok Town Attorney _____ Clerk _____ Finance
_____ Community Development Revised: 4/16/04 5:41 pm

Reformatted: 5/30/02



From: "Gillian Moran" <GillianMoran@sccca.gov>
To: "Bernie Strojny" <bernies@ci.campbell.ca.us>, "Bob LaSala" <rlasala@ci.sunnyvale.ca.us>, "Brian Loventhal" <bloventhal@montesereno.org>, "Dave Anderson" <davea@saratoga.ca.us>, "David Knapp" <davek@cupertino.org>, "Debra Figone" <manager@town.los-gatos.ca.us>, "Del Borgsdorf" <del.borgsdorf@ci.sj.ca.us>, "Frank Benest" <frank_benest@city.palo-alto.ca.us>, "J. Edward Tewes" <etewes@morgan-hill.ca.gov>, "Jay Baksa" <jay@ci.gilroy.ca.us>, "Jennifer Sparacino" <manager@ci.santa-clara.ca.us>, "Kevin Duggan" <kevin.duggan@ci.mtnview.ca.us>, "Maureen Cassingham" <mcassingham@losaltoshills.ca.gov>, "Philip Rose" <phil.rose@ci.los-altos.ca.us>, "Tom Wilson" <twilson@ci.milpitas.ca.gov>
Date: 4/15/2004 12:11:27 PM
Subject: Cities Association: High Speed Rail

Good morning, A yesterday's Cities Manager Association Meeting, I presented the included information on High Speed Rail. The Cities Association is asking you to help take this to your Councils for their consideration. Thank you very much.
April 13, 2004.

To: County/Cities Managers Association
From Gillian Moran, Santa Clara County Cities Association
About: California High Speed Rail

The Cities Association Board has requested that all member Cities consider supporting the California High-Speed Rail Authority's conclusion to use one of the two southern alignments (Pacheco Pass or Diablo Range) into the San Francisco Bay Area for the state's proposed high-speed rail system.

These two proposed routes alignments would run the first leg between Los Angeles and San Francisco through San Jose. Ultimately, the line would be extended to Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego.

The Draft EIR has been completed, and the public comment period for the EIR is open. There will be a public hearing on the issue in San Jose on May 26.

Information on the High Speed Rail project, and the May 26 hearing, is available at www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov
The EIR is posted there, as well as maps of the proposed routes.

Cities are asked to

1) Consider the sample resolution of support that is attached. Information points about the EIR, prepared by the VTA, are also attached.

The resolutions may be mailed to:
High Speed Rail
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

2) Provide direction to their Cities Association Board members concerning support for the EIR when it is considered by the Board at its at its May 20 meeting.

and

3) Identify a council member or staff representative who would be available to attend the May 26 hearing, . 70 West Hedding, San Jose, 3 p.m.

The Cities Association has received letters of support for the High Speed Rail EIR from San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales, from VTA, from Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, and from San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce. These letters are attached.

Gillian Moran
Executive Director
Santa Clara County Cities Association
505 W. Olive Avenue Suite 630
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
Fax 408 736-2014
Phone 408 730-7770

CC: "Executive Director" <gillianmoran@sccca.gov>, "Ann Sullivan" <asullivan@saratoga.ca.us>, "Karen Jost" <kjost@losaltoshills.ca.gov>, "Patsy Garcia" <pgarcia@losgatosca.gov>

SAMPLE RESOLUTION HIGH-SPEED RAIL

Whereas, a high-speed rail line connecting northern and southern California would relieve highway and air traffic congestion between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, which is one of the busiest air traffic corridors in the nation.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the organization responsible for planning, designing, constructing, and operating the state's high-speed rail system, plans to run the first leg between Los Angeles and San Francisco through San Jose. Ultimately, the line would be extended to Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority is recommending two alignment options—through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo Range—to bring high-speed rail into the San Francisco Bay Area through San Jose. The line would then split, with one set of tracks paralleling the Caltrain Commuter Rail Corridor up the Peninsula to San Francisco and the other set running up the East Bay to Oakland.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority concluded that entering the Bay Area from the south would offer faster travel times; more frequent service to San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland; higher ridership; and more revenue.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, the so-called Altamont Pass alignment. Following this route, the high-speed rail trains would enter the Bay Area over the Altamont Pass to Union City. From Union City, the trains would then split into three lines—one south to San Jose, another north to Oakland and a third to San Francisco over a new bridge across the bay.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority concluded that the Altamont Pass alignment would be problematic from an operational and environmental standpoint. According to the authority, splitting the service into three, rather than two, lines would reduce train frequencies and ridership, while substantially increasing operating costs. In addition, the authority noted that the costs of building a new rail bridge across San Francisco Bay and the environmental hurdles that would need to be overcome to do so make the Altamont Pass alignment impractical.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority released its program-level environmental document in late January 2004 and is now in the process of holding a series of public hearings on it throughout the state. In addition, the authority will be accepting written public comments on this environmental document until mid-August 2004.

Whereas, a southern alignment into the Bay Area for the proposed high-speed rail system will maximize ridership, minimize operating costs and ensure that Silicon Valley is well-served by the new high-speed rail line.

Whereas, a southern alignment into the Bay Area, by utilizing the entire Caltrain Commuter Rail Service Corridor, will help Caltrain achieve several of its long-term goals, such as electrification, grade-separating the corridor, and increasing the speed and frequency of the service. These benefits could not be achieved for the entire CalTrain Corridor by using the Altamont Pass alignment for the state's high-speed rail system.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that (City Name) supports the California High-Speed Rail Authority's conclusion to use one of the two southern alignments (Pacheco Pass or Diablo Range) into the San Francisco Bay Area for the state's proposed high-speed rail system.

Be it further resolved, that (City Name) will communicate this position to the California High-Speed Rail Authority in writing as part of the public record for the authority's program-level environmental document.

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS HIGH-SPEED RAIL

- The California High-Speed Rail Authority is recommending two alignment options—through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo Range—to bring high-speed rail into the San Francisco Bay Area through San Jose. The line would then split, with one set of tracks paralleling the Caltrain Commuter Rail Corridor up the Peninsula to San Francisco and the other set running up the East Bay to Oakland.
- The California High-Speed Rail Authority considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, the so-called Altamont Pass alignment. Following this route, the high-speed rail trains would enter the Bay Area over the Altamont Pass to Union City. From Union City, the trains would then split into three lines—one south to San Jose, another north to Oakland and a third to San Francisco over a new bridge across the bay.
- The alignment for entry of the state's proposed high-speed rail system into the Bay Area is of importance to Santa Clara County.
- A southern alignment would have higher ridership, raise more revenue, be easier and less costly to operate, and offer faster travel times for passengers than the Altamont Pass alignment.
- A southern alignment would provide more direct, faster and more frequent service to the three largest urban centers in the region—San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. The Altamont Pass alignment would split service between these areas, resulting in San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland all having fewer high-speed rail trains serving them.
- By utilizing the entire Caltrain Corridor, a southern alignment into the Bay Area would help Caltrain achieve several of its long-term goals, such as electrification, grade-separating the corridor, and increasing the speed and frequency of the Caltrain service. These benefits could not be achieved by using the Altamont Pass alignment.
- The Altamont Pass alignment would not provide direct, mainline service to San Jose, the largest city in the Bay Area.
- The Altamont Pass alignment would require a new bridge to be built across the bay for service to San Francisco, which would be costly, have significant environmental consequences and result in significant schedule delays.

- The Altamont Pass alignment already has been thoroughly studied by the California High-Speed Rail Authority and was withdrawn from further consideration because it would be problematic from an operational and environmental standpoint. There is no compelling reason for the authority to reconsider this alignment.

April 5, 2004

Joe Pirzynski – President
Santa Clara Counties Cities Association
505 West Olive Avenue
Suite 360
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-7632

Dear Mr. Pirzynski,

As you may aware, in late January the High Speed Rail Authority released its draft EIR/EIS containing its analysis of and recommendations for the high speed rail project. The report recommends alignments through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo mountain range that would bring high speed rail into the Bay Area through San José. The tracks would then split with one set of tracks paralleling the Caltrain tracks up the Peninsula to San Francisco and the other set of tracks going up the East Bay and ending in Oakland.

I support the Authority's preferred alignment because an alignment that bring high speed rail through San José to serve the Bay Area will:

- offer faster travel time between L.A. and the Bay Area;
- offer better frequency of service to the Bay Area;
- have higher ridership and revenue potential than Altamont (1.1 million more riders and \$56 million more in annual revenues);
- be easier and less costly to operate; and
- not require a Bay crossing to get to San Francisco.

As part of the EIR/EIS review process, the High Speed Rail Authority is currently holding a series of public hearing throughout the state. There will be a public hearing in San Francisco on April 15 and a public hearing in San José on May 26. Because the availability of high speed rail service would be a significant addition of transportation infrastructure to the South Bay, I am requesting that you ask your members to take the following supportive measures:

1. get the Cities Association to take a "support" position on the alignment recommended by the High Speed Rail Authority;

2. ask each individual member city of the Association get on the written record by asking their city council to take a "support" position on the recommended alignment; and
3. ask that your members to attend the May 26 public hearing in San José to express support for the recommended alignment. The public hearing will take place in the Isaac Newton Center in the County Building located at 70 West Hedding. The hearing will open at 3 p.m. with an informational open house, followed by public comments beginning at 4 p.m.

High speed rail will be a significant transportation addition to Santa Clara County. I hope the Cities Association will agree and support the High Speed Rail Authority's recommended alignment.

Sincerely,

Ron Gonzales
Mayor



March 30, 2004

224 Airport Parkway, Suite 620
San José, California 95110
(408)501-SVMG (7864) Fax (408)501-7861
<http://www.svmg.org>

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Working Council Chair
NANCY NOE
Alza Corporation
Founded in 1977 by
DAVID PACKARD

High Speed Rail Authority Board
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L. Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairperson Petrillo and Members of the Board:

I write on behalf of the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group (SVMG) to express our support for the conclusion reached by the High Speed Rail Authority in its draft EIR/EIS to use one of two southern alignments (Pacheco or Diablo Range) into the Bay Area and to eliminate the Altamont Pass from further consideration.

As you may know, the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group (SVMG), founded in 1978 by David Packard of Hewlett-Packard, represents 180 of the Valley's most respected employers. SVMG members collectively provide nearly 225,000 local jobs, or one of every four jobs in Silicon Valley.

SVMG has long supported the concept of a high-speed rail (HSR) line connecting southern and northern California. High-speed rail would relieve highway and air traffic between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, one of the busiest air traffic corridors in the nation. It would increase the capacity of our airports, many of which are at or near their limits, by enabling them to focus on longer haul, higher passenger volume flights. And it would also be two to three times less expensive (as well as less polluting and more energy efficient) than expanding highways and airports to accommodate the travel demands of an additional 11 million California residents—a total of 45 million people—by 2020

Constructing a high-speed rail system would also boost commuter rail service in Silicon Valley. The HSR service will help Caltrain achieve several of its long-term goals: electrification, grade-separation, and increasing the speed and frequency of the commuter rail service. It will also amplify the efforts already underway in our region to improve the connectivity of our existing transit systems.

We support the Authority's decision to reject the Altamont Pass alignment after thorough consideration. The operational and environmental hurdles posed by this route are so high as to make this option impractical. At the same time, we appreciate the concerns environmentalists have raised in relation to the two southern routes proposed by the Authority. However, given the scale of this project, there is no route the high-speed rail could take that would not have an impact on the environment.

The draft EIR/EIS acknowledges that the Diablo Direct and the Pacheco Pass alignments could have a significant impact on parks, wetlands, natural and historic resources, and farmland. But the alternatives—expanding highways and airports—would be far worse. The project-level EIR/EIS, the next stage in the HSR development, will give the HSR Authority and the public more information on the specific potential impacts of these routes and ways those might be mitigated. Studying the Altamont Pass further will not make it more operationally or environmentally viable.

SVMG has consistently advocated that the HSR line utilize a southern alignment into the Bay Area to maximize ridership, minimize operational costs, and ensure that Silicon Valley is served by the new service. For demographic and economic reasons alone, we believe Silicon Valley must serve as the fulcrum for the high-speed rail system in Northern California. Consequently, we strongly support the High Speed Rail Authority's decision to pursue a southern alignment—Pacheco or Diablo Range—into the Bay Area and eliminate the Altamont Pass from further consideration.

Thank you for your leadership on this important project. We look forward to working with you to make California's high-speed rail system a reality.

Sincerely,

Carl Guardino
President & CEO

April 6, 2004

The Honorable Joe Pirzynski, President
Santa Clara County Cities Association
505 West Olive Avenue, Suite 360
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-7632

Dear Joe:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), I am writing to request that the Santa Clara County Cities Association support the California High-Speed Rail Authority's conclusion to use one of the two southern alignments (Pacheco Pass or Diablo Range) into the San Francisco Bay Area for the state's proposed high-speed rail system. In addition, we request that the Association ask each of its member cities to have its respective city council support this recommendation and communicate that position to the authority.

VTA has long supported the concept of a high-speed rail line connecting northern and southern California because it would relieve highway and air traffic congestion between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, which is one of the busiest air traffic corridors in the nation. The California High-Speed Rail Authority, the organization responsible for planning, designing, constructing, and operating the system, plans to run the first leg between Los Angeles and San Francisco through San Jose. Ultimately, the line would be extended to Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego.

The authority is recommending two alignment options—through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo Range—to bring high-speed rail into the Bay Area through San Jose. The line would then split, with one set of tracks paralleling the Caltrain Corridor up the Peninsula to San Francisco and the other set running up the East Bay to Oakland. The authority concluded that entering the Bay Area from the south would offer faster travel times; more frequent service to San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland; higher ridership; and more revenue.

The authority considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, the so-called Altamont Pass alignment. It concluded that this alternative would be problematic from an operational and environmental standpoint. Following this route, the high-speed rail trains would enter the Bay Area over the Altamont Pass to Union City. From Union City, the trains would then split into three lines—one south to San Jose, another north to Oakland and a third to San Francisco over a new bridge across the bay. Splitting the service into three, rather than two lines, would reduce train frequencies and ridership, while substantially increasing operating costs. In addition, the costs of building a new rail bridge across the bay and the environmental hurdles that would need to be overcome

make the Altamont Pass alignment impractical. However, proponents of this alternative are pressuring the authority to reconsider it.

The authority released its program-level environmental document in late January 2004 and is now in the process of holding a series of public hearings on it throughout the state. There will be a public hearing in San Jose on May 26, which will take place in the Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium in the County Building. The hearing will begin at 3 p.m. with an informational open house, followed by public comments at 4 p.m. We would encourage the Association and its member cities to attend this hearing to show support for a southern alignment into the Bay Area.

A southern alignment into the Bay Area for the proposed high-speed rail system will maximize ridership, minimize operating costs and ensure that Silicon Valley is well-served by the new high-speed rail line. Therefore, we hope that the Association and its member cities will join in supporting this recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Don Gage, Chairperson
Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority



CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

April 2, 2004

Joe Pirzynski, President
Santa Clara Counties Cities Association
505 West Olive Avenue, Suite 360
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-7632

RE: Support for High Speed Rail Draft EIR/EIS

Dear President Pirzynski:

On behalf of the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, I urge your support for a Southern Gateway into the Bay Area for the proposed California High Speed Rail system as outlined in the Draft EIR/EIS recently released by the High Speed Rail Authority.

Specifically, I am asking you to support the Authority's conclusion to use of one of two southern alignments (Pacheco or Diablo Range) into the Bay Area.

Our urban based, regional Chamber is made up of nearly 2,000 Silicon Valley businesses employing some 250,000 people. These firms represent the entire supply chain of commerce that has resulted in the Silicon Valley's economic success. Our member companies are depending on a first class transportation system move both goods and people swiftly and efficiently.

The Chamber has been a long-time supporter of a high-speed rail line connecting southern and northern California, particularly the first leg of the system between Los Angeles and San Francisco via San Jose. Ultimately, the line would be extended to Oakland, Sacramento and San Diego. High-speed rail would relieve highway and air traffic between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, one of the busiest traffic corridors in the nation.

In terms of operational and ridership success, either of the southern alignments are far superior to another gateway that was earlier considered and rejected by the Authority -- the Altamont Pass alignment -- which they concluded would be more problematic from an operational and environmental standpoint.

Please add your support for the southern alignments as recommended in the Draft EIR/EIS.

Sincerely,

Jim Cunneen
President & CEO
San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce
310 S. First St.
San Jose, CA 95113
408-291-5277

