



MEETING DATE: 5/3/04
ITEM NO. 5

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: MAY 3, 2004
TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: DEBRA J. FIGONE, TOWN MANAGER *[Signature]*
SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY'S CONCLUSION TO USE ONE OF THE TWO SOUTHERN ALIGNMENTS INTO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA FOR THE STATE'S PROPOSED HIGH-SPEED RAIL SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution (Attachment No. 1) supporting the California High-Speed Rail Authority's conclusion to use one of the two southern alignments into the San Francisco Bay Area for the State's proposed High-Speed Rail System.

BACKGROUND:

Established in 1996, the California High-Speed Rail Authority is charged with planning, designing, constructing, and operating of a state-of-the-art high-speed train system. The proposed system would provide intercity travel in California between the major metropolitan centers of the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento in the north, through the Central Valley, to Los Angeles and San Diego in the south. The proposed high-speed train system is projected to carry as many as 68 million passengers annual by the year 2020.

In June 2000, the Authority adopted a Final Business Plan for an economically viable high-speed train system capable of speeds in excess of 200 miles per hours on a mostly dedicated, fully grade-separated track with state-of-the-art safety, signaling and automated train control systems.

To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the California High-Speed Rail Authority in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration undertook an environmental study in May 2001 to assess the proposed high-

[Signature]
PREPARED BY JENNY HARUYAMA, ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

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Reviewed by: PSS Assistant Town Manager OK Town Attorney _____ Clerk _____ Finance
_____ Community Development Revised: 4/23/04 12:36 pm

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speed train system for intercity travel in California. Preparation of the environmental study involved more than thirty (30) months of identification, planning, review, and evaluation of travel alternatives and seventeen (17) public scoping meetings, plus several briefings and presentations to large and small resident/community/business groups.

On January 27, 2004, a draft environmental report and impact statement was released for public review. Based on the analysis, the Authority and Federal Railroad Administration identified the high-speed train system as the preferred system alternative to meet California's future intercity travel demands and recommended alignment options for the northern (San Francisco Bay Area) and southern (Central Valley, Los Angeles, and San Diego Areas) mountain crossings.

DISCUSSION:

Upon completion of its environmental analysis, the California High-Speed Rail Authority recommended two alignment options for the proposed high-speed rail system as it relates to the northern mountain crossing (San Francisco Bay Area). The alignment options include a route 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 also considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, known as the Altamont Pass due to complex operational and environmental challenges. 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 this alignment option.

The Authority will be holding a series of public hearings on results of the environment impact report throughout the State and will address the proposed alignment options. For the Bay Area region, a public hearing has been scheduled for May 26, 2004 at the Isaac Newton Center Auditorium in the Santa Clara County Building. The hearing will open at 3 p.m., with an informational open house, followed by public comments beginning at 4 p.m.

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Agencies supporting the Pacheco Pass/Diablo Range alignment options include, but are not limited to the Santa Clara County Cities Association (SCCCA), Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group (SVMG), Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), City of San Jose, and the San Jose Chamber of Commerce. The SCCCA has officially taken a position of support regarding the Authority's two recommended alignment options for the Bay Area and is requesting that member cities, including the Town of Los Gatos, adopt resolutions supporting the proposed alignment alternatives. Member cities have also been encouraged to attend the upcoming public hearing. A resolution supporting the recommended alignments has been attached for Council consideration.

CONCLUSION:

On January 27, 2004, the California High-Speed Rail Authority in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration released for public review, an environmental impact report, assessing travel alternatives to meet California's intercity travel needs. Based on the analysis, the Authority and Federal Railroad Administration identified the high-speed train system as the preferred system alternative and alignment alternatives for the northern and southern mountain crossings. The proposed alignment locations for the Bay Area include a route through the Pacheco Pass or a series of tunnels through the Diablo Range. The SCCCA has requested that the Town of Los Gatos adopt a resolution supporting the use of one of the two proposed alignments for the State's proposed high-speed rail system as it relates to the San Francisco Bay Area.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of a resolution supporting the California High-Speed Rail Authority's conclusion to use one of the two southern alignments into the San Francisco Bay Area for the State's proposed high-speed rail system.

Attachments:

Attachment No. 1: Resolution Supporting the California High-Speed Rail Authority's Conclusion to Use One of the Two Southern Alignments into the San Francisco Bay Area for the State's Proposed High-Speed Rail System

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS SUPPORTING THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY'S CONCLUSION TO USE ONE OF THE TWO SOUTHERN ALIGNMENTS INTO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA FOR THE STATE'S PROPOSED HIGH-SPEED RAIL SYSTEM

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; and

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; and

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; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority considered and rejected one other Bay Area alignment, known as the Altamont Pass alignment due to financial, operational, and environmental reasons; and

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; and

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.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Los Gatos 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 the Town of Los Gatos 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.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos, California, held on the 3rd day of May, 2004 by the following vote:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

SIGNED:

MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

ATTEST:

CLERK OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS

LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

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