



Agenda Report

19-959

Agenda Date: 9/4/2019

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Informational Report on the State of California's Preferred Alternative for the California High-Speed Rail Project

BACKGROUND

On February 19, 2019, staff from the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) provided an update to the City Council on the California High-Speed Rail (CHSR) Project (Project). At this Study Session, Authority staff provided information on the following: 1) background on the Project, 2) status update of construction activities in the Central Valley, 3) the 2018 CHSR Business Plan, 4) coordination efforts with the Caltrain Electrification project, 5) clarification on California Governor Newsom's February 2019 news release regarding the Project, 6) Project updates and alternatives for the two Northern California segments of the Project including potential impacts to the City of Santa Clara, and 7) next steps and schedule.

Regarding Project alternatives, Authority staff indicated that Alternative B of the San Francisco to San Jose Project segment and Alternative 3 of the San Jose to Merced Project segment have the most impacts within Santa Clara due to the inclusion of a long aerial viaduct as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1, City of Santa Clara Alternatives Overlap

| <u>San Francisco to San Jose Project Section</u> | <u>San Jose to Merced Project Section</u> | <u>Configuration</u> |
|--|---|----------------------|
| B | 1 | Short Aerial |
| B | 2 | Short Aerial |
| B | 3 | Long Aerial |
| A | 4 | Blended at Grade |

Specifically, the Alternatives that include the long aerial viaduct (Alternative B and Alternative 3) are projected to have the following impacts: 1) property impacts to the industrial/commercial properties on the east side of the Caltrain right of way, 2) requirements to covert the existing De La Cruz overcrossing to an undercrossing in addition to lowering the adjacent street interchange and associate vehicle ramps, 3) reconfiguring the existing Santa Clara Station and platform, and 4) significant relocation of various utilities.

Additionally, Alternatives that included either a short aerial viaduct or blended at grade system, had minimal impacts as the proposed system would reside predominately within existing railroad rights of way. With these Alternatives, there are no projected impacts to the Santa Clara Station, however, minor utility relocations would be necessary.

City Council had questions regarding the level of secured funding for the Project, wanted clarification regarding California Governor Newsom's February 2019 news release regarding the project, discussed how there are several rail projects taking place within the Bay Area, had questions regarding connections between the Project and the existing Capitol Corridor/ACE rail system, and expressed concern regarding the Project alternative that would impact the existing Santa Clara Caltrain Station.

On July 2, 2019, Authority staff released their recommendations for the State's Preferred Alternative for the two Northern California Project segments. The two segments are 1) San Francisco to San Jose and 2) San Jose to Merced. Both segments have overlap within the City of Santa Clara. In July and August 2019, Authority staff conducted additional public outreach. At the September 17, 2019 Authority Board of Directors meeting, Authority staff will present its recommendations along with the feedback received during July and August 2019 outreach and will seek direction from the Authority Board of Directors on which alternatives to identify as the State's official preferred routes. Subsequently, the draft environmental documents are scheduled to be released in December 2019 for the San Jose to Merced project section and in March 2020 for the San Francisco to San Jose project section. Authority staff have indicated that while all alternatives will be evaluated equally in the draft environmental documents, identifying the State's Preferred Alternatives will guide the public to what is most likely to become the project. Final CHSR Project decisions will be made at the conclusion of the Project's environmental review process, which is expected in late 2020 and early 2021.

Authority Staff's Recommendations for State's Preferred Alternative

In the San Francisco to San Jose Project section, Authority staff recommends Alternative A as the State's Preferred Alternative. Alternative A, as shown in Attachment 1, includes a light maintenance facility on the east side of the tracks in Brisbane and does not include additional passing tracks in the middle of the CHSR corridor. Additional information is provided by Authority staff in a Fact Sheet on this Project segment (Attachment 2).

In the San Jose to Merced Project section, Authority staff recommends Alternative 4 as the State's Preferred Alternative. Alternative 4, as shown in Attachment 3, utilizes a blended configuration between San Jose and Gilroy in the existing Union Pacific Railroad corridor before continuing to a dedicated high-speed rail alignment through Pacheco Pass. Additional information is provided by Authority staff in a Fact Sheet on this Project segment (Attachment 4)

DISCUSSION

Staff have reviewed the State's Preferred Alternatives for the Project segments and conclude that these alternatives are projected to have the least impacts to the City of Santa Clara except for minor utility relocations.

Most importantly, Alternative 4 for the San Jose to Merced Project section utilizes a blended configuration that eliminates the need for a long aerial viaduct and utilizes the existing Caltrain corridor right of way. This Alternative is not projected to have impacts to industrial/commercial properties, does not require the reconstruction of the De La Cruz overcrossing and adjacent interchange, does not require major utility relocation, and has no impact on the Santa Clara Station.

Consequently, Authority staff have requested that the City of Santa Clara provide a letter in response to their proposed recommendations on the State's Preferred Alternative. Because the State's

Preferred Alternatives were in line with Council's preference at the February 19, 2019 Study Session, the City Manager intends to submit a letter in support of the Authority staff's recommendation for the State's Preferred Alternative for consideration at the September 17, 2019 Authority Board of Director's meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The action being considered does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organization or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no additional cost to the City other than administrative staff time and expense.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the Community Development Department and the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

RECOMMENDATION

Note and file the Informational Report on the State of California's Preferred Alternative for the California High-Speed Rail Project and have the City Manager submit a Letter to the California High-Speed Rail Authority in support of the Preferred Alternative.

Reviewed by: Craig Mobeck, Director of Public Works

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of Authority Staff Recommended State's Preferred Alternative - San Francisco to San Jose
2. Fact Sheet for Authority Staff Recommended State's Preferred Alternative - San Francisco to San Jose
3. Map of Authority Staff Recommended State's Preferred Alternative - San Jose to Merced
4. Fact Sheet for Authority Staff Recommended State's Preferred Alternative - San Jose to Merced