
Media Coverage

Appendix E



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Media Coverage, Public Scoping Meetings
Los Angeles to San Diego via the Inland Empire
October 10 – November 3, 2009

Media	Date	Time	Headline
San Diego News Network	October 10, 2009		Lindberg station is on track within new high-speed rail plan
North County Times	October 10, 2009		Bullet train's proposed path rips through Rainbow man's property
CBS2 (web posting)	October 11, 2009		Hearings held for LA-to-Pomona high speed trains
KTTV (web posting)	October 11, 2009		High speed rail hearings start this week
Desert Sun Wire Services	October 12, 2009		Public hearings to discuss high speed rail in Riverside County
San Diego Union Tribune	October 12, 2009		Public comments sought on bullet train system
LA Daily News	October 12, 2009		Public hearings start for high-speed train network
La Jolla Light	October 12, 2009		High-speed rail hearing in La Jolla set for Tuesday
KSWB-Fox 5 News at 6 pm	October 13, 2009	6:20 pm	Climb aboard. A high-speed rail across California is steaming closer to reality tonight...
KUSI-IND – Good Morning, San Diego	October 13, 2009	8:12 am	Several forums will be held the next few days around the county...
KFMB-CBS News 8	October 13, 2009	5:36 pm	High speed rail is coming to San Diego...
XETV-CW News 6	October 13, 2009	10:11 pm	San Diegans got their first of three chances this week...
San Diego Union Tribune	October 14, 2009		Officials sidetrack county's rail plans
San Diego Daily Transcript	October 14, 2009		California High-Speed Rail Authority seeks public input on train route
LA Daily News (Letters to the Editor)	October 14, 2009		Wrong time for high-speed train
North County Times (story and comments)	October 15, 2009		Public views high-speed rail plans
The Press-Enterprise	October 18, 2009		Riverside, San Bernardino counties to hear high-speed rail pitch
The Press-Enterprise	October 20, 2009		High-speed rail line called boost for Murrieta
The Californian (story and comments)	October 20, 2009		High-speed rail meeting kicks off study
San Diego Union Tribune (Blog)	October 24, 2009		If there are 12 stops, then it's not "high-speed" rail. It's...rail
LA Weekly	October 28, 2009		Riled over California's high-speed rail
CHR: BLOG	October 29, 2009		The LA Weekly's Ridiculous Fear-Mongering
Inland News Today	October 29, 2009		High-speed train corridor selection considered
The Sun	October 31, 2009		High-speed route in I.E. mullied
The Sun and Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	November 3, 2009		Residents chime in on high-speed rail potential
The Sun	November 4, 2009		Speed session

Additional broadcast coverage on KFRG, Inland Empire News Radio, KNX News Radio and KABC-TV, but transcripts are not available.

San Diego News Network: Lindbergh station is on track within new high-speed rail plan

Posted By [hoa.quach](#) On October 10, 2009 @ 8:33 am

San Diego residents will have the chance to weigh in on the three proposed routes for the California High-Speed Rail line that is expected to run from Los Angeles to San Diego by 2019.

The state is planning to construct a high-speed train that will ultimately run from San Francisco and Sacramento to San Diego and perhaps include a stop at Lindbergh Field. The railroad line is being planned in eight segments by the California High-Speed Rail Authority with input from regional planning groups.

Three meetings will be held, on Oct. 13, 14 and 15, for the public to comment on the three proposed routes that will stop in University City and then continue Downtown. The meetings will feature various information booths — rather than a lecture presentation — to discuss environmental issues, stations, the process and so on.

“It’s an opportunity for everyone to look at the alternatives, say whether they are the correct alternatives; to indicate where there are flaws [with the proposed routes] or to say whether they think something else should be looked at,” said Mike Zdon, project manager for the Southern California segment of the High-Speed Rail Line, and a consultant with the engineering group HNTB.

The public will have 60 days to submit comments on the proposed routes, either at the meetings (a court reporter will be present) or in writing, until Nov. 21. One of the plans includes a route from a proposed UTC tunnel. The train will surface either at the corner of Rose Canyon or, as an alternative, travel along I-5 to either Lindbergh Field or another Downtown stop. Building a station at Qualcomm Stadium has been ruled out by the High-Speed Rail Authority.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority will likely choose one route to study in-depth for the state environmental impact report (EIR) and the federal environmental impact statement (EIS). Zdon said he expects the EIR/EIS process to take four years, followed by preliminary design work beginning in 2013 and completion of the track by 2019.

“This is the most optimistic scenario,” Zdon said.

Each of the eight sections that make up the California High-Speed Rail Line is being constructed as a complete corridor within itself — meaning that it can operate even if some of the other sections are never completed.

Zdon estimated that the Anaheim to Los Angeles connection will be finished first, followed by the San Jose to San Francisco line and then the Merced to Bakersfield track. In 2008, voters approved Prop 1a to allow the state to issue \$9.95 billion in bonds for the line.

The federal government has also allocated \$8 billion for high-speed rail, and Zdon estimates that a third of those funds will go to California. Congress is also updating the transportation bill, and Zdon said that an estimated \$1.5 billion is expected to go toward high-speed rail.

From Los Angeles, trains will travel east to the Ontario Airport, cut through San Bernardino and Riverside counties and head into San Diego County along I-15 to the first station in the county, Escondido. From Escondido, the train will head to Mira Mesa Boulevard. Zdon said the engineering for the proposed tunnel under UTC has not yet been studied.

“We have to check soils. There are earthquake faults. There could be a whole series of reasons that this doesn’t work, but in the scoping process we have to make the decision about whether we check this out or not, and that’s what’s happening,” Zdon said.

Here’s a schedule of the scoping meetings:

- Tuesday, Oct. 13, 3-7 p.m. Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Drive.
- Wednesday, Oct. 14, 3-7 p.m. Ramada Inn, 1403 Rosecrans St.
- Thursday, Oct. 15, 3-7 p.m. Escondido, California Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd.

North County Times: Bullet train's proposed path rips through Rainbow man's property

CHRIS NICHOLS - cnichols@nctimes.com | Posted: Saturday, October 10, 2009 10:30 pm

Curt Nicolaisen fell in love with Rainbow's rural charm 24 years ago. The town's warmhearted residents and natural beauty convinced him to leave suburban Orange County and build a home on Rice Canyon Road.

But never once did Nicolaisen, a soft-spoken product quality engineer, expect a multibillion-dollar bullet train line could one day run through his peaceful 4-acre property.

That, however, is the California High Speed Rail Authority's rough plan.

A Google map of the project, on the authority's Web site, shows a proposed tunnel cutting through Nicolaisen's land and that of dozens of other Rainbow and Bonsall parcels as the rail runs south along the Interstate 15 corridor.

"Shock and disbelief," was Nicolaisen's first reaction upon viewing the map late this summer. Next came worry and lament.

"In three years, the house is going to be paid off and this comes along," said Nicolaisen, 52, who lives with his wife, Mary, and their two golden retrievers in a country home surrounded by palm, citrus and avocado trees.

"We planned on dying here," he said, adding he will fight to keep his home.

Nicolaisen's case provides a window into the possible challenges state officials will have as they plan and build the 800-mile-long high-speed rail network. Some landowners could force the state to use eminent domain to take their land; others may agree to relocation settlements and turn over their property.

Public meetings about the project are set for this week in Escondido, La Jolla and San Diego, and next week in Murrieta. High-speed rail stations are planned in all four communities.

The meetings will serve as a "kick-off" of a years-long environmental review of the project, said Jose Martinez, who is managing the development of the line's 167-mile Los Angeles-to-San Diego stretch for the rail authority.

Questions and comments are welcome from the public at the meetings, Martinez said.

Once the entire project is complete ---- and that won't be for a decade or more ---- the rail line will connect the state's major cities from San Diego to Sacramento, with trains zipping north and south at more than 200 mph.

California voters last fall approved a \$9.95 billion bond for the project, estimated to cost \$45 billion. Statewide, 52.7 percent of voters supported the proposition. In San Diego County, 48.5 percent approved, while 49 percent said "yes" in Riverside County. Last week, state leaders asked the federal government for \$4.7 billion in stimulus funds to help plan and build the rail line.

Transportation leaders have championed high-speed rail for its potential to ease congestion on state freeways and create tens of thousands of jobs.

The cost of the project, however, has caused some to balk.

"We're spending all that \$40 billion? Who does that really benefit except the people that are building it," said Don Vierstra, a retired land developer who is watching the project closely because he owns property along I-15 in Murrieta. "That money can be spent on so many other things ... our own freeways."

The rail authority's 2008 estimates put the project's land acquisition costs at about \$2.5 billion, earthwork at \$3.5 billion, the cost of the trains at \$4 billion and all structures at \$6 billion. Other costs include designing the project, building the track and grade separations, environmental mitigation and the electrification of the rail line.

Vierstra said the project's cost, more than what might happen to his vacant half-mile strip of land, is his main worry.

Despite residents' concerns, officials say project plans ---- including the route ---- are nowhere near final.

"I think the key word is 'general' route," Martinez said.

He said rail officials won't have answers to all questions at the upcoming meetings ---- in fact, he said they won't be able to address Nicolaisen's particular and very large concern about a tunnel planned under his greenhouse.

"We're not to that level of information," he said.

Still, Martinez said, "What we want is questions to start shaping the route. Right now, we're still at the starting gate."

The local stretch would run south along I-15, with stops in Murrieta and Escondido, and then cut west across Sorrento Valley with a stop in University City. From there, it would continue south along Interstate 5 with a final stop in downtown San Diego.

Planning for the local leg is about three to five years behind compared with the San Francisco and Los Angeles regions. Martinez said environmental review in San Diego County will probably run until the end of 2013.

Construction on the state's earliest rail sections could be complete by fall 2017, although that timeline doesn't apply locally, Martinez said.

Much of the work depends on raising billions more dollars from both the public and private sector, he said.

Nicolaisen, who is a member of the Rainbow Community Planning Group and familiar with the approval process for large projects, said he is worried the route is more fixed than officials are letting on.

"When it gets to the EIR (Environmental Impact Report) point, it's a runaway train," he said. "No pun intended."

Nicolaisen and several neighbors argued the line should run along or underneath I-15 the whole way south. As proposed, it does so for much of the route from Murrieta south but then tunnels through Rainbow and Bonsall just south of Temecula as I-15 bends west.

"Why would you put it under a community's houses? Affect their wells?," asked Bud Swanson, also a member of the Rainbow Community Planning Group.

Swanson and others noted that Rainbow's high water table, which allows a bevy of nurseries to flourish in the area, would likely be drained by such a project. "It would have far less impact on the community (under the freeway)."

Escondido Mayor Lori Holt Pfeiler, who chairs the region's transportation planning agency, said residents in the rail line's path should be dealt with "fairly and honestly."

If necessary, she said, the authority should buy their property, relocate them and not drag its feet.

Nicolaisen said he will have a lot of questions at the Escondido meeting.

"I would like to learn all the details of what they're doing: The exact route, the depth (of the tunnel). Are they condemning my house? Are the pictures on my wall going to shake every five minutes?" Nicolaisen said.

Call staff writer Chris Nichols at 760-740-5426.

Public scoping meetings in local area, all from 3 to 7 p.m.

Tue., Oct. 13, Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Drive, La Jolla

Wed., Oct. 14, Ramada Limited, San Diego Airport, 1403 Rosecrans St., San Diego

Thu., Oct. 15, Escondido Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido

Mon., Oct. 19 Murrieta Public Library, Eight Town Square, 24700 Adams Ave., Murrieta

CBS2: Hearings Held For LA-To-Pomona High-Speed Trains

Oct 11, 2009 9:59 pm US/Pacific

Public hearings will start this week as state officials take comments on proposed routes for the southernmost leg of California's proposed \$40 billion high-speed train network. The plan is to build new tracks along one of three possible paths between Los Angeles and Pomona.

The new tracks will transport 220 mile-per-hour trains from Los Angeles to San Diego via Pomona, Ontario, the Inland Empire, and Escondido. Trains running from the Los Angeles Union Station to downtown San Diego can make the trip in one hour and 18 minutes. Existing Amtrak service between the same cities, down the beaches of Orange and San Diego counties, takes nearly three hours.

Rail planners have identified three potential paths for the bullet trains between Los Angeles and Pomona: along the existing Union Pacific tracks through Commerce, Pico Rivera and Industry, or either parallel to or in the center of the San Bernardino (10) or Pomona (60) freeways.

California legislators have passed a law that the first leg of the \$40 billion, 800-mile statewide system will be a route from Los Angeles down to Anaheim.

The second target would be connections from L.A. to San Francisco and Sacramento. The Riverside/San Diego high-speed leg would likely be funded third, but officials note that construction money could come in fast enough to allow all three legs to be built simultaneously.

The California network will be funded with \$9.95 billion in bond funds approved by voters, and a sizeable chunk of the \$8 billion that Congress has allocated for nationwide high-speed rail seed money as a part of President Barack Obama's commitment to high speed rail. The state has asked for \$4.7 billion, but may end up with about \$3 billion, observers in Washington said.

Congress is expected to add another \$1.5 billion in economic stimulus money as well. The federal government has identified eight city-pairs and corridors across the country as likely recipients of the federal money, but other states are seeking to get a piece of the federal pie.

The President has said California is at the head of the line because of the commitment of local money and advanced state of planning, as well as the fact that California is the only state proposing travel speeds of 220 miles an hour.

Nevada officials are proposing a privately-funded high speed track between Las Vegas and the outskirts of San Bernardino.

Arizona and several other states are setting up planning efforts to investigate building high-speed rail lines between Southern California and Phoenix and Tucson.

This week's hearings will take public testimony on the proposed routes, as the state hears evidence on what issues and alternative routes must be studied during the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

All hearings are set from 3-7 p.m., and Los Angeles County-area hearings are set for:

- Oct. 20, at the [Corona Public Library](#), 650 S. Main St., Corona;
- Oct. 21, at the [Shepherd of the Hills Methodist Church](#), 333 S. Garfield Ave., Monterey Park;
- Oct. 26, at the [West Covina City Hall](#), 1444 W. Garvey Ave., West Covina;
- Oct. 28, at the El Monte Community Center, 3130 Tyler Ave., El Monte;
- Oct. 29, at the [Pomona First Baptist Church](#), 586 N. Main St., Pomona; and
- Nov. 2, at the [Ontario Airport Administration Center](#), 1923 E. Avion St., Ontario.

KTTV: High Speed Rail Hearings Start This Week

Published : Sunday, 11 Oct 2009, 7:43 PM PDT

Posted by: Scott Coppersmith

Los Angeles (myFOXla.com) - Public hearings will start this week as state officials take comments on proposed routes for the southernmost leg of California's proposed \$40 billion high-speed train network, which will include new tracks along one of three possible paths between Los Angeles and Pomona.

The state plans new tracks for 220 mile-per-hour trains from Los Angeles to San Diego via Pomona, Ontario, the Inland Empire, and Escondido, with trains making the trip from LA's Union Station to downtown San Diego in one hour and 18 minutes. Existing Amtrak service between the same cities, down the beaches of Orange and San Diego counties, takes nearly three hours.

Rail planners have identified three potential paths for the bullet trains between Los Angeles and Pomona: along the existing Union Pacific tracks through Commerce, Pico Rivera and Industry, or either parallel to or in the center of the San Bernardino (10) or Pomona (60) freeways.

The high speed trains would cross Pomona along the existing rail lines, and stop at Ontario International Airport. From there, several routes are possible east and then south to UC Riverside, with one option including a loop out to San Bernardino.

Those options take the tracks south on Route 215 to Murrieta, but another option is to head directly south from Ontario Airport along the Ontario (15) Freeway, through Corona and Lake Elsinore to Murrieta.

Tracks would then be built atop or along Interstate 15 south through Escondido to near the Marine Corps Air Station at Miramar. One of several new alignments would angle over towards La Jolla, and the tracks would enter San Diego along Interstate 5 at Mission Bay.

Separate environmental studies are underway for a high speed line from Los Angeles south to end in Anaheim, and also for the tracks from L.A. north to Palmdale.

California legislators have passed a law that the first leg of the \$40 billion, 800-mile statewide system will be the Anaheim leg, and the second target would be connections from L.A. to San Francisco and Sacramento. The Riverside/San Diego high-speed leg would likely be funded third, but officials note that construction money could come in fast enough to allow all three legs to be built simultaneously.

The California network will be funded with \$9.95 billion in bond funds approved by voters, and a sizeable chunk of the \$8 billion that Congress has allocated for nationwide high-speed rail seed money as a part of President Barack Obama's commitment to high speed rail. The state has asked for \$4.7 billion, but may end up with about \$3 billion, observers in Washington said. Congress is expected to add another \$1.5 billion in economic stimulus money as well. The federal government has identified eight city-pairs and corridors across the country as likely recipients of the federal money, but other states are seeking to get a piece of the federal pie.

The President has said California is at the head of the line because of the commitment of local money and advanced state of planning, as well as the fact that California is the only state proposing travel speeds of 220 miles an hour.

Nevada officials are proposing a privately-funded high speed track between Las Vegas and the outskirts of San Bernardino, and are investigating the possibility of bringing it across the mountains to plug into the California network.

Arizona and several other states are setting up planning efforts to investigate building high-speed rail lines between Southern California and Phoenix and Tucson.

This week's hearings will take public testimony on the proposed routes, as the state hears evidence on what issues and alternative routes must be studied during the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The first hearing will be Tuesday in La Jolla, with additional hearings set for later this month in San Diego, Riverside and then Los Angeles counties.

All hearings are set from 3-7 p.m.

- Oct. 19 at the Murrieta Public Library, 24700 Adams Ave., Murrieta;
- Oct. 20, at the Corona Public Library, 650 S. Main St., Corona;
- Oct. 21, at the Shepherd of the Hills Methodist Church, 333 S. Garfield Ave., Monterey Park;
- Oct. 22 at Cesar Chavez Community Center, 2060 University Avenue, Riverside.
- Oct. 26, at the West Covina City Hall, 1444 W. Garvey Ave., West Covina;
- Oct. 28, at the El Monte Community Center, 3130 Tyler Ave., El Monte;
- Oct. 29, at the Pomona First Baptist Church, 586 N. Main St., Pomona; and

- Nov. 2, at the Ontario Airport Administration Center, 1923 E. Avion St., Ontario.

Public hearings to discuss high-speed rail in Riverside County

October 12, 2009

Desert Sun Wire services

Public hearings will be held in Riverside County this month as state officials take comments on proposed routes for the southernmost leg of California's proposed \$40 billion high-speed train network.

The state plans to route 220 mile-per-hour trains from Los Angeles through the Inland Empire to San Diego, with proposed stations in the eastern San Gabriel Valley near Diamond Bar, at Ontario International Airport, in downtown Riverside near the UC Riverside campus, and near the 15/215 split in the Temecula Valley city of Murrieta.

But several alternative plans are penciled in for the Inland Empire, with one plan bypassing Riverside entirely by instead going directly south down Interstate 15 from Ontario to Murrieta. Another plan would loop the tracks all the way northeast into a proposed station in downtown San Bernardino.

Several plans are also up in the air for bringing the tracks from alongside the San Bernardino (10) Freeway at Colton into Riverside near the UC campus.

The 220-mph trains through the Inland Empire would bypass the crowded Amtrak and Coaster tracks along the beaches of Orange and San Diego counties, and would place Riverside County as an important link in a proposed rail network stretching on through Los Angeles, Lancaster and the San Joaquin Valley to San Francisco and Sacramento.

One tentative map for the Inland Empire shows the tracks would be at grade level from Ontario Airport east along the 10 Freeway past Colton, then curve southward on elevated tracks to Grand Terrace.

Under that plan, the tracks would either be at grade level or elevated along Interstate 215 through Riverside, then cross Moreno Valley, Perris and the Temecula Valley. Most of that route would be at grade level along or in the middle of the freeway, although some sections would be elevated, the state's tentative map shows.

Three alternatives exist for crossing the San Gabriel Valley and approaching Los Angeles Union Station: either next to, above or in the middle of the San Bernardino (10) or Pomona (60) freeways, or along the existing Union Pacific tracks through Industry, Pico Rivera and Montebello.

To the south, the tracks would head south above Interstate 15 to Escondido, zigzag west to the La Jolla and end at downtown San Diego. At the request of San Diego officials, a major transportation interchange point at near-capacity Lindbergh Field may be added.

The hearings start in San Diego County this week, and will take public testimony on the proposed routes, as the state hears evidence on what issues and alternative routes must be studied during the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

All of the hearings are from 3-7 p.m., and are set for: -- Oct. 19 at the Murrieta Public Library, 24700 Adams Ave., Murrieta. The second hearing will be from 3-7 p.m. Oct. 20 at Corona Public Library, 650 S. Main St., Corona.

The final Riverside County hearing will be Oct. 22 at Cesar Chavez Community Center, 2060 University Avenue, Riverside. A hearing will be held Oct. 29 at the Pomona First Baptist Church, 569 N. Main St., Pomona.

The first leg of the California network will be funded with \$9.95 billion in bond funds approved by voters, and a sizeable chunk of the \$8 billion that Congress has allocated for nationwide high-speed rail seed money as a part of President Barack Obama's commitment to high speed rail. Congress is expected to add another \$1.5 billion in economic stimulus moneys as well.

The federal government has identified eight city-pairs and corridors across the country as likely recipients of the federal money, but other states are seeking to get a piece of the federal pie. The President has said California is at the head of the line because of the commitment of local money and advanced state of planning, as well as the fact that California is the only state proposing travel speeds of 220 miles an hour.

Nevada officials are proposing a privately-funded high speed track between Las Vegas and the outskirts of San Bernardino, and are investigating the possibility of bringing it across the mountains to plug into the California network.

Arizona and several other states are setting up planning efforts to investigate building high-speed rail lines between Southern California and Phoenix and Tucson.

San Diego Union Tribune: Public comments sought on bullet-train system

2:00 a.m. October 12, 2009

The state agency charged with the creation of a bullet-train system is looking for feedback from San Diego County residents. The California High-Speed Rail Authority will hold three local forums starting tomorrow to discuss the fledgling project and listen to public comments.

The authority hopes to start construction as soon as 2011, beginning with the stretch between Los Angeles and San Francisco. If the project draws enough public and private funding, a Riverside-to-San Diego leg is also planned.

All of the forums will run from 3 to 7 p.m. beginning tomorrow at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Drive, La Jolla.

On Wednesday, it moves to the Ramada Limited hotel, 1403 Rosecrans St., San Diego. The final forum will be on Thursday at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido.

Visit the authority's Web site at cahighspeedrail.ca.gov for more information.

LA Daily News: Public hearings start for high-speed train network

Daily News Wire Services

Updated: 10/12/2009 08:55:45 AM PDT

Public hearings will start next week as state officials take comments on proposed routes for the southernmost leg of California's proposed \$40 billion high-speed train network, which will include new tracks along one of three possible paths between Los Angeles and Pomona.

The state plans new tracks for 220 mile-per-hour trains from Los Angeles to San Diego via Pomona, Ontario, the Inland Empire, and Escondido, with trains making the trip from LA's Union Station to downtown San Diego in one hour and 18 minutes. Existing Amtrak service between the same cities, down the beaches of Orange and San Diego counties, takes nearly three hours.

Rail planners have identified three potential paths for the bullet trains between Los Angeles and Pomona: along the existing Union Pacific tracks through Commerce, Pico Rivera and Industry, or either parallel to or in the center of the San Bernardino (10) or Pomona (60) freeways.

The high speed trains would cross Pomona along the existing rail lines, and stop at Ontario International Airport. From there, several routes are possible east and then south to UC Riverside, with one option including a loop out to San Bernardino.

Those options take the tracks south on Route 215 to Murrieta, but another option is to head directly south from Ontario Airport along the Ontario (15) Freeway, through Corona and Lake Elsinore to Murrieta.

Tracks would then be built atop or along Interstate 15 south through Escondido to near the Marine Corps Air Station at Miramar. One of several new alignments would angle over towards La Jolla, and the tracks would enter San Diego along Interstate 5 at Mission Bay.

Separate environmental studies are underway for a high speed line from Los Angeles south to end in Anaheim, and also for the tracks from L.A. north to Palmdale.

California legislators have passed a law that the first leg of the \$40 billion, 800-mile statewide system will be the Anaheim leg, and the second target would be connections from L.A. to San Francisco and Sacramento. The Riverside/San Diego high-speed leg would likely be funded third, but officials note that construction money could come in fast enough to allow all three legs to be built simultaneously.

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Congress is expected to add another \$1.5 billion in economic stimulus money as well. The federal government has identified eight city-pairs and corridors across the country as likely recipients of the federal money, but other states are seeking to get a piece of the federal pie.

The President has said California is at the head of the line because of the commitment of local money and advanced state of planning, as well as the fact that California is the only state proposing travel speeds of 220 miles an hour.

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Arizona and several other states are setting up planning efforts to investigate building high-speed rail lines between Southern California and Phoenix and Tucson.

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- Oct. 21, at the Shepherd of the Hills Methodist Church, 333 S. Garfield Ave., Monterey Park;
- Oct. 26, at the West Covina City Hall, 1444 W. Garvey Ave., West Covina;
- Oct. 28, at the El Monte Community Center, 3130 Tyler Ave., El Monte;
- Oct. 29, at the Pomona First Baptist Church, 586 N. Main St., Pomona; and
- Nov. 2, at the Ontario Airport Administration Center, 1923 E. Avion St., Ontario.

La Jolla Light: High-speed rail hearing in La Jolla set for Tuesday

Monday, October 12, 2009

Public hearings will be held in San Diego County this week as state officials take comments on proposed routes for the southernmost leg of California's proposed \$40 billion high-speed train network.

The hearings will be held from 3-7 p.m. on:

- Tuesday, at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center, 4126 Executive Drive, in La Jolla
- Wednesday, at the Ramada Limited Hotel at the San Diego Airport, 1403 Rosecrans Street, near Shelter Island; and
- Thursday, at the Escondido Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., in Escondido.

The state plans to route 220 mile-per-hour trains from Los Angeles to San Diego via Ontario, Riverside, and Escondido, with trains making the trip from LA's Union Station to downtown San Diego in one hour and 18 minutes starting just 10 years from now. Existing Amtrak service down the beaches of San Diego County takes nearly three hours between the same cities.

The leg from San Diego to Los Angeles would bypass the crowded Amtrak and Coaster tracks along the beaches of North County. The existing service on the coastal tracks would continue.

The state plans to build high speed train tracks between L.A. and Anaheim as top priority, followed by a connection from L.A. on through Lancaster and the San Joaquin Valley to San Francisco and Sacramento. The L.A.- Riverside-San Diego leg would likely be funded after the first two legs, but officials note that construction money could come in fast enough to allow all three legs to be built simultaneously.

Rail officials stress that no plans are anything more than pencil lines on maps, and this week's hearing are designed to hear from the public on concerns and preferences. But those maps show new grade-separated tracks to parallel Interstate 5 and the existing Coaster/Amtrak line from downtown north, past a possible new travel center at Lindbergh Field, and tracks up Rose Canyon to a proposed passenger station near Noble Drive at Genesee Avenue, near University Town Center.

The state proposes several possible new rail alignments northeast across industrial areas and canyons on Mira Mesa, to hook up with Interstate 15 at Scripps Ranch. The state's first draft of maps includes several possible alignments in and near Carroll Canyon, north of Marine Corps Air Base Miramar.

Across North County, the tracks would be atop or next to the just-widened Interstate 15 past Escondido, Fallbrook and Rainbow. Two possible alignments and station locations are listed in Escondido.

The rail tracks are tentatively planned to be mounted on concrete columns above Interstate 15 near all of the way across North County to the Riverside County line, except for two places where the freeway crosses steep hills and deep canyons, at Pala Mesa Village and Rainbow.

There, the rail tracks might veer off the freeway right of way and dive into a pair of new tunnels. Some orchards and houses might be lost there, according to the state's first draft of maps.

After crossing into Riverside County, stops would likely be near the 15/215 split in the Temecula Valley, and at UC Riverside, Ontario International Airport, and in the City of Industry near Diamond Bar. Final routes across the Inland Empire have not been determined, and the tracks could loop as far northeast as San Bernardino.

Another proposal would bypass both San Bernardino and Riverside, and going directly between Ontario and Murrieta via Interstate 15. Three routes for crossing the San Gabriel valley between Los Angeles and Pomona are also under study.

This week's hearings will take public testimony on the proposed routes, as the state hears evidence on what issues and alternative routes must be studied during the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

The first leg of the California network will be funded with \$9.95 billion in bond funds approved by voters, and a sizeable chunk of the \$8 billion that Congress has allocated for nationwide high-speed rail seed money as a part of President Barack Obama's commitment to high speed rail. Congress is expected to add another \$1.5 billion in economic stimulus moneys as well.

The federal government has identified eight city-pairs and corridors across the country as likely recipients of the federal money, but other states are seeking to get a piece of the federal pie. The President has said California is at the head of the line because of the commitment of local money and advanced state of planning, as well as the fact that California is the only state proposing travel speeds of 220 miles an hour.

Nevada officials are proposing a privately-funded high speed track between Las Vegas and the outskirts of San Bernardino, and are investigating the possibility of bringing it across the mountains to plug into the California network.

Arizona and several other states are setting up planning efforts to investigate building high-speed rail lines between Southern California and Phoenix and Tucson.

KSWB: KSWB-FOX SAN DIEGO, FOX5 News at 6pm

OCT 13 2009 6:00PM

[**06:20:36 PM**] Climb aboard. A high-speed rail across California is steaming closer to reality tonight. The first of three public meetings is underway in La Jolla right now. You can meet with rail officials and ask questions, and you also have the opportunity to weigh in on the proposed route. The high-speed rail would travel 185 miles per hour or more up and down California. San Diegans could travel to LA in roughly an hour and 18 minutes. It's economical. It costs less to transport a person by a high-speed rail than it does by an automobile to any two points between any two-points. \$9 billion in funding has already been approved for the high-speed train system, but you won't be able to ride it until about 2018. Tonight's meeting at the Lawrence Family Jewish Center wraps up at 7:00. For locations and times of upcoming meetings, simply go to our web site, FOX5SanDiego.com.

KUSI: KUSI-IND SAN DIEGO Good Morning San Diego

OCT 13 2009 8:00AM

[**08:12:47 AM**] Several forums will be held in the next few days around the county. David Davis is live now in La Jolla with details on the plan. This is something you may see in a decade from now. And a hundred mile trip that could take about four hours. Here is a representative from the '90s. And she is called the mother of high-speed rail. This has been your baby for a long time. Guest: San Diego is his birthplace. The first time I proposed this was back in 1981 for Governor Brown. The timing is everything. [**08:13:19 AM**] It didn't work then, but it is certainly on its way now. David, California was one of the five corridors that was backed by President Clinton at the time. Guest: We designated five high-speed rail corridors. And today has been extended to 11 when President Obama said that he wanted a high-speed rail to be part of his legacy and put a billion dollars on the table, we had a \$10 billion bond for high-speed rail. So we had money to bring to the table. David, can you tell us where this is all going to happen? Again, the meetings are the first part of the environmental process for the San Diego area. That is what we're going to get. The big picture has it coming down. We are also looking at a terminus at Lindbergh Field.

KFMB: KFMB-CBS SAN DIEGO, News 8 at 5 PM

OCT 13 2009 5:00PM

[**05:36:02 PM**] Reporter: The high speed light rail is coming to San Diego, and project authorities want your opinion on where stations should be built. We'll have the details coming up in a live report. Carlo: sounding off on plans for a light high speed rail system. Barbara-Lee: a decade from now, and state officials are holding public hearings to discuss proposed routes. [**05:36:21 PM**] Carlo: We're live in La Jolla with the feedback. Rekkha. Reporter: there's an interactive meeting going on, they have a video presentation and handouts, and residents are able to speak one on one with representatives from the high speed rail authority. [**05:36:32 PM**] Most of the people we spoke with said they're for the bullet train, but have concerns where it should go and its effect on the environment. This is early in the process. Reporter: thanks to California voters, a bullet train is in the works. And Jose Martinez says residents can now weigh in where they'd like the tracks to run through. They came to do just that. They ought to end it at the Miramar Air Station. It would be connected to a transportation center. Reporter: it would make stops in several cities, including San Francisco, Los Angeles and Riverside. And in San Diego County there are plans to build stations in Escondido, University City and here. Announcer: Today's high speed trains are faster, quieter and more energy efficient than ever. Those in charge of the project are asking residents for their opinion and looking for the funding needed. The final amount needed will be federal money and officials are confident it will happen since President Obama has been an outspoken proponent of the project. The request for federal funding is \$4.7 billion. That doesn't cover all the funding, but the government will provide annual appropriations to this type of system.

XETV: XETV-CW SAN DIEGO, San Diego News 6 at 10

OCT 13 2009 10:00PM

[**10:11:12 PM**] San Diegans got their first of three chances this week to tell state leaders what they think about a proposed high speed rail system. Today, a "scoping meeting" was held in University City to talk about proposed routes for the train which would travel from San Diego to cities as far north as Sacramento and San Francisco. I think if you served LAX you would solve a lot of the problems with Lindbergh Field; I think the routing is not a very good routing. I think they're spending money that they need to spend in a different way. If you'd like to let the California high speed rail authority know what you think, another meeting will be

held tomorrow, at the Ramada Limited, at the Airport. And on Thursday, at the Center for the Arts in Escondido. Both sessions are held from 4 to 7p. And you can stop by anytime during those hours.

San Diego Union Tribune: Officials sidetrack county's rail plans

State bullet-train project favored for federal funds

By Steve Schmidt

2:00 a.m. October 14, 2009

OVERVIEW

Background: Regional planners in San Diego sought \$377 million in federal rail stimulus funds for long-awaited railway improvements along the coast.

What's changing: State officials have decided not to back most of the request and instead want stimulus money for a statewide, high-speed-rail system.

The future: The San Diego Association of Governments will look for other funding for the rail improvements, including state transportation bond money.

DETAILS

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is staging forums in San Diego County this week. They run from 3 to 7 p.m.

Today at the Ramada Limited hotel, 1403 Rosecrans St., San Diego.

Tomorrow at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd.

The public can also offer feedback by e-mailing the authority at comments@hsr.ca.gov.

The scenic railway that threads along San Diego County's coast has been in need of expansion and renovation for years. So when the federal government recently launched its economic stimulus program, San Diego's regional planning agency sought \$377 million to pay for improvements, including laying new track and replacing creaky bridges.

Most of the request never made it to Washington.

Instead, state officials decided to seek rail stimulus money for a single big-ticket project: a bullet train that doesn't include San Diego in its initial development.

Critics argue that the region — part of the second-busiest rail corridor in the nation — was robbed of a chance to move ahead with a series of shovel-ready improvements so the state could seek money for a project that's fatally flawed.

To Jim Mills, the former state senator who helped shape San Diego's modern-day rail system, the request shows misplaced priorities.

"This was a good opportunity to improve existing rail service," said Mills, known as the father of the San Diego Trolley. "San Diego County got shortchanged."

San Diegan Lynn Schenk, a California High-Speed Rail Authority board member, said the rail system will ultimately bring huge benefits to the region, including thousands of construction jobs as well as congestion relief.

Although not the first phase of the project, construction of a Riverside-to-San Diego leg could begin by 2014, with completion by 2022, Schenk said.

The 800-mile, statewide system carries a \$45 billion price tag. If it's completed, travelers will be able to whisk from San Diego to San Francisco in less than four hours, planners say.

Schenk, a former member of Congress and one-time state transportation secretary, said it's critical to take advantage of the federal money for high-speed and intercity rail.

"Timing is everything," she said. The authority is seeking \$4.7 billion, more than half of the stimulus pot.

Schenk said she believes the state has an excellent shot at getting the money, noting that President Barack Obama has praised California's efforts in developing high-speed rail.

Schenk and others say the coastal railway is a worthy candidate for other sources of government money, including state transportation bonds.

The San Diego Association of Governments, the region's planning agency, identified the \$377 million in rail improvements between San Clemente and downtown San Diego.

About 70 trains travel that section on weekdays, including Amtrak, the Coaster and freight cars. Transit officials want to add a parallel set of rails to improve reliability, replace bridges and install new technology to avoid collisions.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's staff declined to support SANDAG's full request, stripping \$327 million worth of projects out of the \$377 million request.

Richard Tolmach, president of the Sacramento-based California Rail Foundation, said he doesn't believe the bullet train will be built. He said the planning has been poorly executed and that the huge amount of money attached to the project has made it a magnet for consultants seeking lucrative contracts.

Authority officials say they have adequate safeguards against misspending.

Tolmach and other critics say parts of the planned route make little sense.

A 2005 study commissioned by the authority, and later backed by agency staff, said the Riverside-to-San Diego leg would run roughly parallel to Interstate 15.

It would turn west near Scripps Ranch and pass by Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, University City and Rose Canyon, then run south, parallel to Interstate 5.

Debby Knight, executive director of the Friends of Rose Canyon, yesterday expressed alarm over the alignment, saying the canyon stretch would devastate the environment.

Preliminary plans call for stations in Escondido, University City and downtown San Diego. SANDAG is studying other possible stops, including Lindbergh Field and the U.S.-Mexico border.

Rail authority officials stress that no final decisions have been made on the route. Environmental studies, along with public hearings, must be completed first.

California voters backed the high-speed-rail system nearly a year ago, approving a \$10 billion bond issue to cover part of the estimated \$45 billion price tag.

The authority wants to raise the remaining amount through other government sources and the private sector, possibly by allowing a private company to operate the train.

SANDAG Executive Director Gary Gallegos expressed enthusiasm for the project but counseled patience, likening its development to the creation of the interstate highway system.

"Just like the interstate, it won't get all done in one year or two years or three years," Gallegos said.

Jack Dale, chairman of SANDAG's transportation committee, also sees value in a bullet train. Still, he was concerned that most of the coastal rail improvements were shelved.

"I was upset, but I understand," Dale said.

San Diego Daily Transcript: California High-Speed Rail Authority seeks public input on train route

By MONICA UNHOLD, The Daily Transcript
Wednesday, October 14, 2009

During the first in a series of scoping meetings Tuesday, the California High-Speed Rail Authority announced the proposed route and allowed residents to voice comments and concerns.

The meeting was hosted at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center in the La Jolla/University City area, near University Town Center where a high-speed train station is proposed.

"We're trying to get people's input and comments to shape the aspects of the project that we study," said Jose Martinez, regional program manager for the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

In November 2008, California voters approved a \$10 billion bond for construction of a high-speed train system to connect the state's major cities. The first phase of construction is set to connect Fresno with Los Angeles and service will later extend to San Diego, San Francisco and Sacramento.

The train will travel at speeds of up to 220 mph on a grade-separated track, allowing San Diego travelers to make the trip to Sacramento in three and a half hours and reach San Francisco in less than four hours.

The proposed route in Southern California, puts the train traveling along the Interstate 15 and 215 corridor. The California High-Speed Rail Authority has identified three stations and three alternative options for stations in San Diego County. The Santa Fe Depot in downtown San Diego is proposed as southernmost terminus for the train, however the California High-Speed Rail Authority also plans to study the possibility of placing the station at Lindbergh Field.

From downtown San Diego, the proposed route follows Interstate 5 through Rose Canyon, with a proposed station and alternative option in University City where the train will likely travel through a tunnel. The route then follows Miramar Road, meeting up with Interstate 15 near Scripps Ranch. The next stop is located in Escondido, where the California High-Speed Rail Authority has proposed to follow the Sprinter line or alternatively build the station further east at the Escondido Transit Center, Martinez said.

The train's next proposed stop is Murrieta in Riverside County. In total, more than 100 cities in Southern California will be affected by the train's route.

"This is a huge part of the state that wants to be connected to other areas," Martinez said.

Construction of the train will be a huge undertaking. To improve safety and reduce noise, the train will be grade separated from surface streets and highways. High-speed trains are not compatible with steep inclines, Martinez said. In order to traverse California's diverse terrain, the train will travel at-grade next to existing highways, occasionally sweeping over highways along aerial structures, darting across hillside cuts and diving into trenches and tunnels 65 feet below ground.

Some University City residents expressed concern about tunneling beneath existing homes in the neighborhood. Elsbeth Erler, who has lived in University City for 32 years, said she worried about the traffic the train may bring to the already densely-populated region.

Erler is also concerned about the train's route through Rose Canyon, which contains a major fault line.

"I certainly wouldn't want to be trapped down there in a tunnel during a quake," Erler said.

Del Mar resident Bill Michalsky attended the scoping meeting to "keep an eye on the project." Though he is skeptical the state will find the money to actually build the track, he is excited about the potential for the train to increase use of public transit and create jobs in the region.

"If they could deliver 90 percent of what they're promising, it'd be fairly fantastic," Michalsky said.

Also in attendance was Carmen Sandoval, director of public policy for the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. The group has supported the train from the beginning because of its potential to be "a trigger for businesses and economic development" in regions served by the train, Sandoval said.

The scoping process is set to end Nov. 20, at which point the environmental review process will begin, Martinez said.

The next scoping meeting takes place Oct. 14 at the Ramada Limited San Diego Airport, followed by an Oct. 15 meeting at the Escondido Center for the Arts. Both open house-style meetings will run from 3-7 p.m.

LA Daily News: LTE: Wrong time for high-speed train: Letters for Oct. 14

Updated: 10/14/2009 08:20:04 PM PDT

Re "Public hearings start for high-speed train network" (Oct 12):

Forty billion dollars is being spent on a train system that won't be completed for at least another 10 years. It's a shame to see all that money being wasted on going to places just a little bit faster. The high-speed train network is not a bad idea, it is just the wrong time to implement it, especially when there are massive furloughs and rising college tuition in California.

How will the citizens of this state be able to afford this new and wonderful transportation? Perhaps granting certain counties one free ride a month? The money needs to be spent on the issues that are happening now, not on something that will be completed within the next two decades

- CHARLIE HSUEH

Escondido: Public views high-speed rail plans

CHRIS NICHOLS - cnichols@nctimes.com | Posted: Thursday, October 15, 2009 10:15 pm |

Thursday's high-speed rail workshop in Escondido couldn't come soon enough for bullet train fans like Lynn Parrish of San Diego. The retired state and county transportation worker said she's waited 30 years for the speedy train idea to become a reality in her hometown.

For others, like Wayne and Havelica Melbo of Escondido, the public meeting was a worrisome rather than welcome event. Their fear was generated by a bright red line they found on a workshop mailer (representing a possible rail route right by their Centre City Parkway home).

Parrish and the Melbos were among roughly 80 people who attended the meeting, hosted by the California High-Speed Rail Authority and held inside the California Center for the Arts, Escondido.

It marked the kick-off of the environmental process for the \$45 billion rail project. Once complete ---- and that's not expected for more than a decade ---- the line will connect the state's major cities from San Diego to Sacramento, with trains zipping north and south at more than 200 mph.

The local stretch would run south along I-15, with stops in Murrieta and Escondido, and then cut west across Sorrento Valley with a stop in University City. From there, it would continue south along Interstate 5 with a final stop in downtown San Diego. California voters approved a \$9.95 billion bond measure to jump-start the project last fall.

At Thursday's meeting, officials fielded questions, kudos and concerns from residents. They said no part of the route is fixed.

"The line is placed as a starting point; to gain input," said Jose Martinez, who is managing the development of the project's 167-mile Los Angeles-to-San Diego stretch for the rail authority.

He said that input will help shape the route's final path. So will the realities of engineering, noted Mike Zdon, a consultant working for the authority. Given I-15's steep grades and bow-shaped bend in Bonsall and Rainbow, a straight-line tunnel under nearby homes and nurseries may be necessary, he said.

Environmental review should last until 2013. Residents along the route, once it's set in stone, would be contacted about relocation or right-of-way acquisition by late 2010 or early 2011, Martinez said.

The Melbos said they hoped for answers sooner than that about the Escondido portion of the route. Martinez said the red line cutting across Escondido was one option should the authority choose to connect its project with the Escondido Transit Center, about a quarter mile east of I-15.

"It's going to kill our home value, plus the noise," a frustrated Wayne Melbo said. Asked what he'd tell the authority, Melbo said "I think I'll tell them that if they run it up Centre City Parkway, I'm going to fight it."

Another bullet train workshop is planned for 3 to 7 p.m. Monday at the Murrieta Public Library, Eight Town Square, 24700 Adams Ave., in Murrieta.

Public comments

Public comments about the project can be submitted on the rail authority's Web site, www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov, or by writing to Dan Leavitt, deputy director, ATTN: Los Angeles to San Diego via the Inland Empire Section HST Project EIR/EIS, California High-Speed Rail Authority, 925 L St., Suite 1425, Sacramento, CA 95814, or by e-mail with subject line "LA-SD HST Section via the Inland Empire" to comments@hsr.ca.gov no later than Nov. 20.

Call staff writer Chris Nichols at 760-740-5426.

Escondido: Public views high-speed rail plans

(15) Comments (related to above story)

1. [Walt](#) said on: October 17, 2009, 10:22 am
For Derek. 2% passenger miles is overall mass transit share. Even the high speed rail in USA most densely populated Boston-Washington corridor pays only 75% of operating cost, and as usual ignores capital costs.
2. [Derek](#) said on: October 17, 2009, 7:48 am
Walt wrote: "Last time I used public transit for a 2 hour meeting near LAX took 14 hours six transfer round trip, and then I drove to/from Solana Beach."
I don't know why it took you 14 hours round trip. It should take less than 8. Try Google Maps, choose "Get Directions", and change the selection from "By car" to "By public transit".
"Once again sales tax amounts to user pays for roads because more than 90% of public benefit from roads, unlike mass transit where only 2 % do."
Just as most people benefit directly from roads, most are also injured by them to the tune of \$1600 per person annually from air pollution. <http://preview.tinyurl.com/6cgele>
And your 2% figure is off. In San Diego, 4.35% of people commute by mass transit, according to the 2000 census. In Los Angeles, it's 10.64%.
"mass transit is a continuous bailout because about 75% operating expenses are subsidized"
That may be true for buses, but high speed rail always makes an operating profit.
3. [Jake](#) said on: October 17, 2009, 6:57 am
"Dave from O'side" has it right! We need power and water infrastructure!! With the internet, there is no reason to travel these corridors in person. High speed rail is a boondoggle and we should ALL vote it DOWN!
4. [Walt](#) said on: October 17, 2009, 6:18 am
Derek forgets the time required to get to the train and from it to the real destinations. Last time I used public transit for a 2 hour meeting near LAX took 14 hours six transfer round trip, and then I drove to/from Solana Beach. Once again sales tax amounts to user pays for roads because more than 90% of public benefit from roads, unlike mass transit where only 2 % do. Not aware of airline bailouts, but mass transit is a continuous bailout because about 75% operating expenses are subsidized, and capital costs ignored as George points out.
5. [George](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 8:49 pm
Hi, Derek! You forgot to point out that the construction cost for high speed rail will be paid by the taxpayers since ticket income will be used for operations only. Private industry can't operate that way -- they have to pay all of the bills: construction, operation, and maintenance. And taxes, plus the cost of regulatory burden.
6. [uncle lou](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 7:34 pm
I don't see how you could ride in a train moving 300MPH+ and call it ancient technology. I rode the trains alot in Europe and found it an excellent way to travel. I'd love to get to SF for \$50 bucks in three hours. Best part is no two hour check-in.
7. [royal710](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 7:32 pm
Build it Im all for it
8. [Derek](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 6:59 pm
gem cutter wrote: "If it was such a good idea why are no private enterprizes itching to build this thing with private money?"
Because they can't compete with sales tax funded freeways and bailed out airlines. Walt wrote: "Getting from real origins to real destinations between the San Diego area, and the LA area will continue to be about as fast and more single vehicle convenient with automobiles." Driving between San Diego and Los Angeles takes 2-3 hours, depending on traffic. High speed rail will take 1 hour 18 minutes. So HSR is quite a bit faster, downtown to downtown.
9. [Walt](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 3:13 pm
Gem Cutter has it right. Getting from real origins to real destinations between the San Diego area, and the LA area will continue to be about as fast and more single vehicle convenient with automobiles. This is bait and switch. Much promoted "Bullet Train" becomes a slightly faster commuter train. Direct non-stop between a central San Diego location and LAX

makes some sense to unload air traffic density, and maybe match commuter air to LAX to catch international connections. Instead one plan has the HSR terminating at Lindbergh Airport where virtually no connections exist, and adding more

congestion.. But just SD to LAX won't attract many voters for future funding thus the proposed time wasting multipl stops. New concepts of automated highspeed small vehicles on narrow guideways and with several loading and unloading sites at both ends would be attractive to more users.

10. [Dave from Oceanside](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 11:34 am
Gem Cutter: you hit the nail on the head.

11. [gem cutter](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 9:12 am
the link with the sprinter and all of these comments ignore one thing....people don't like to take trains if their are alternate means of transport .Therefore this will be the state of californias vietnam as the pour more money down the balck hole of old technology.

If it was such a good idea why are no private enterprizes itching to build this thing with private money?
exactly....it doesn't pencil out!!!

12. [Carter](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 6:19 am
If done properly a high speed rail system could be of benefit. First - we should not give up the serenity in our cities. We should put a dollar value on serenity establishing a limit and stick to it. Second - establish feasible cost and stick to it. Allow for inflation during the coming years plus ten percent. No over runs. Third - All contracts must be let to California construction companies - that is a must. If we need the expertize then we hire from out of the state, and bring those people to the United States and CA. We are still the greatest country and state on the face of the earth with more capability than any other. Let's keep it that way and benefit from any federal assistance in the cost. 2020 deadline sounds feasible - but what ever it is let us stick to it and not add on any fraudulent activity. Anyone caught with his fingers in the till must go live in Afghanistan.

13. [Dave from Oceanside](#) said on: October 16, 2009, 5:10 am
What a waste, we need that money for desalination plants and nuclear power generation.
Without water this place will dry up and blow away.

14. [Mr. Fantastic](#) said on: October 15, 2009, 11:20 pm
Trains only work when they run through the heart of major cities, such as Grand Central station. London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, all high speed trains that work have a main station in the heart of the downtown. This will be a major boost to Escondido bringing revenue and jobs. I can't wait.

15. [prof](#) said on: October 15, 2009, 11:08 pm
Real smart - run the train right through the heart of Escondido.
The train should run as close to the existing transit corridor - the I 15 - a possible, and build another station where it intersects with the Sprinter.

Press Enterprise: Riverside, San Bernardino counties to hear high-speed rail pitch

10:51 PM PDT on Saturday, October 17, 2009

By DUG BEGLEY

The Press-Enterprise

Proponents of a high-speed rail line from Los Angeles to San Diego via the Inland area will hold five meetings to answer residents' questions and concerns, starting Monday in Murrieta.

The four-hour forums are intended to collect responses from the public and respond to questions, organizers said.

The Southern California line, part of a statewide system planned to link Sacramento and San Diego, will cross through a number of cities in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

Plans call for the line to come from Los Angeles following Interstate 10, with stops at Ontario International Airport and San Bernardino.

From there, the trains would follow a path similar to Interstate 215 to a stop in downtown Riverside, then continue east before turning south again with the interstate through Perris.

The line would stop in Murrieta before continuing on to San Diego County.

Some Riverside County officials have suggested the train turn south from Ontario and follow Interstate 15, with stops in Corona and Murrieta.

Riverside Councilman Steve Adams, a member of the county transportation commission, said the meetings are important as a gauge of local interest.

If state officials see how committed the region is to building a bullet train system, it will pressure them to press ahead, Adams said.

At the public meetings, planners of the 800-mile project will answer questions, and residents can look at maps of the proposed route through the two counties.

The five Inland meetings are among a dozen planned in Southern California.

Officials must hold the meetings as part of the environmental review process for building the line.

Planners expect the process of designing the route and receiving clearance from federal environmental and railroad officials to end in late 2013.

Then the state must decide how to pay for the \$45 billion system. Many have suggested a private company will have some role in getting the trains rolling.

Competition for when and where lines get built is already intensifying in some areas, as opposition mounts in others.

San Diego officials are lobbying for work to begin on the southern end of the line by 2014, if not sooner.

Adams said the line is coveted for its development potential.

"Wherever the line is, and even nearby, (there) is going to be growth," he said. "It is going to bring business, and that will bring jobs."

Reach Dug Begley at 951-368-9475 or dbegley@PE.com

Press Enterprise: High-speed rail line called boost for Murrieta

10:00 PM PDT on Monday, October 19, 2009

By AARON BURGIN

A station stop on California's proposed high-speed rail line would be a huge benefit for Murrieta, whether the route is along Interstate 15 or I-215, people who attended a scoping session Monday said.

An audience ranging from city officials to high school students attended the first of three high-speed rail forums in Riverside County hosted by the California High Speed Rail Authority. The guests at the Murrieta Public Library viewed poster boards with information about the rail system, including routes, diagrams of stations and the steps in the environmental review process.

The Southern California line, part of a statewide system planned to link Sacramento to San Diego, will pass through several cities in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Murrieta has been targeted for a station stop in an area near the intersection of the two freeways often referred to as the Golden Triangle.

Officials in the southwest Riverside County city see the station as a potential boon -- possibly a catalyst for commercial development and job growth.

"It makes Murrieta a central point," said Bruce Coleman, the city's economic development director.

Kenneth Ray, a Temecula resident and former school board member, said he supports a high-speed rail stop in the region for many of the same reasons as Coleman.

"Both Murrieta and Temecula are commuter communities, and this gives commuters a new lease on life," Ray said.

Determining which freeway the train will parallel will be part of a lengthy environmental study that begins with the public comments fielded at the scoping sessions, said Jose Martinez, project manager for the Southern California line.

Each route has benefits and drawbacks. The terrain along I-215 is flatter and could allow the train to pass through both county seats. But the I-15 route is shorter and has more available land, said Rick Simon, a project engineer.

Not everyone was supportive. Murrieta mother and son Ken and Louise Appel said they didn't believe that the benefits of the rail line -- shorter commutes and less dependence on foreign oil -- outweigh the costs -- more noise and the estimated \$45 billion price tag for the entire system.

Reach Aaron Burgin at 951-375-3733 or aburgin@PE.com

The Californian: High-speed rail meeting kicks off study

Some residents welcome project, others worry about effects

DAVE DOWNEY - ddowney@californian.com | Posted: Monday, October 19, 2009 8:10 pm |

Jean Hixenbaugh is worried that the state's bullet train will shatter the peace and quiet of her Menifee retirement community. Hixenbaugh's home backs up to Antelope Road, which runs alongside Interstate 215. The California High-Speed Rail Authority is leaning toward building the speedy, European-style railroad in the I-215 corridor between Riverside and Murrieta. Hixenbaugh said she and neighbors would prefer the state put the train in the Interstate 15 corridor instead, as some prominent Riverside County officials have proposed.

"If they put it along the 15, great, but if they put it along the 215, not so good," she said.

Hixenbaugh was among nearly 100 residents who attended an open house Monday afternoon at the Murrieta Public Library that helped kick off a four-year, \$90 million environmental study for the 170-mile project section between Los Angeles and San Diego.

Jose Martinez, a Santa Ana transportation consultant for the rail authority, said the study is expected to be completed by the end of 2013 and clear the way for construction of the southern piece of the statewide railroad venture when money for that segment is available.

Among the items the study will address are whether the rail project should be built along I-215 or I-15, where it should be located in those corridors, and whether it should be on bridges or at ground level, Martinez said.

"What we need to do is start peeling away the layers of the onion, in terms of the alternatives," he said.

State officials say some questions about the ambitious \$50 billion project have been answered: The train is going to run through the Inland Empire rather than on the coast between Los Angeles and San Diego, and there is going to be a train station in Murrieta.

The preferred station site is the Golden Triangle framed by the convergence of I-15 and 215, and Murrieta Hot Springs Road.

The closest train stations would be Riverside to the north and Escondido to the south.

Keeping stops to a minimum is central to meeting the project's lofty travel-time goals. Martinez said the state is aiming to deliver a 48-minute trip for commuters traveling between Riverside and downtown San Diego, and half-hour trip between Murrieta and San Diego.

Martinez said the train would reach speeds between 100 mph and 200 mph in Riverside County and North San Diego County, and hit top speeds in excess of 200 mph in the Central Valley.

A big unknown, however, is when the bullet train will arrive in Riverside County.

California voters agreed last fall to issue \$9 billion in bonds to jump-start the project, but most of the money is expected to be used on the leg between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Some is expected to defray costs of the local environmental study, but very little, if any, of the bond proceeds are expected to be spent on track south of Los Angeles.

The state also has applied for a chunk of the \$8 billion in federal stimulus money for high-speed rail.

Mike Harrold, a retired planner from Murrieta who attended the open house, said he has doubts about the project's viability.

"It's such an expensive project that I have trouble seeing it penciling out in the short run," Harrold said.

Yet, he said he would like having the option of taking a fast train to San Diego International Airport, or Lindbergh Field.

"This would be handy for flying out of San Diego," Harrold said. "You're not only going to save time driving, but you're going to avoid the hassle of trying to find parking."

Harrold and Hixenbaugh were among 95 people who stopped at Monday's four-hour, come-and-go-style meeting, said Raul Velazquez, a Chino consultant for the rail project.

Several said they were looking forward to seeing trains arrive in Murrieta.

"I'm very enthusiastic about seeing something like this come about," said Candace Ransom of Romoland.

For too long, Ransom said, the United States has been content to let Europe and Japan take the lead on bullet trains.

"We're kind of like a Third World country almost because it's taken so long to get to this point," she said.

A reservations agent for Amtrak, Ransom said she sees the need for speedy rail travel repeatedly, as callers inquire about cross-country train options and frequently pass when they find out how long those trips will take.

Jessica Christopher, a real estate agent who lives in Temecula was enthusiastic, too.

"It's way overdue," Christopher said of the project.

And she downplayed concerns about cost.



"If we're going to leave our children with a huge amount of debt, why don't we build something that they're actually going to use?" Christopher said.

But Harrold said it remains to be seen whether large numbers of people will use a bullet train, given Southern California's transportation culture.

"In Europe and Japan they're really popular," he said. "But here, people prefer the convenience of their cars."

Public comments

Public comments about the project can be submitted on the rail authority's Web site, www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov or by writing to Dan Leavitt, deputy director, ATTN: Los Angeles to San Diego via the Inland Empire Section HST Project EIR/EIS, California High-Speed Rail Authority, 925 L St., Suite 1425, Sacramento, CA 95814, or by e-mail with the subject line "LA-SD HST Section via the Inland Empire" to comments@hsr.ca.gov no later than Nov. 20.

Call staff writer Dave Downey at 951-676-4315, ext. 2623.

The Californian: High-speed rail meeting kicks off study

Comments (from above story)

1. [Yadayadayada](#) said on: October 20, 2009, 5:10 pm
Jean, lighten up. We're not talking about "Iron Horse" steam locomotives of years ago. The high speed trains I have used in asia (taiwan and korea) are so quiet, their passing in the night thru your bedroom would go unnoticed...okay, behaps I exaggerate, but the proof is easy enough to provide...just ask for dB levels from various distances from high speed trains already in operation, to put the noise in perspective...but, then again, those opposed will not accept noise level testing as scientific, but that's a whole different issue!
2. [TK](#) said on: October 20, 2009, 2:45 pm
Perhaps they should go to China to look at their transportation solutions...
3. [BigBadJohn](#) said on: October 20, 2009, 8:37 am
Of course the train will never be built. It's the study that's the boondoogle. A kind of sophisticated welfare for those performing the study.
4. [Scorpion](#) said on: October 20, 2009, 6:59 am
Hixenbaugh doesn't need to worry. It will never be built in her lifetime. The state can't afford to keep its office doors open, but we're supposed to find \$50 billion for a new train? And that \$50 billion pricetag will turn into \$250 billion before the first shovelful of dirt is dug. (When it was approved in the early 90s, the Sprinter was supposed to cost \$80 million and ended up at what, \$350M 15 years later? And that was on tracks and right of way that already existed!)
5. [LakeFan](#) said on: October 20, 2009, 5:46 am
It's going to take a while, but it's a good idea, and it needs to run along the 15 corridor,
6. [mbsjam1985](#) said on: October 19, 2009, 10:14 pm
kinda funny with all the nimbys how the voters actually passed this thing. personally i think its a waste of money that could be spent on schools, freeway improvments, city improvements, etc. most people in southern california dont even ride the city busses, how are they suddenly going to start riding the train? most people here like the convienence of using their own car, and with mpg's getting higher and higher, what will be the ultimate reason to want to ride this train, im sure it wont be cheap to ride
7. [Vegas Guy](#) said on: October 19, 2009, 9:29 pm
Got Train????
Get over it or move! Hixenbaugh you make no sense. You say your home backs up to the 215, if so you already have more noise from freeway traffic then you will have with a high speed train. The train will whiz by your home in a second or two and you won't even know it went by. Besides you should be at work a majority of the day and then you will be sleeping the rest of the day so stop worrying. Why does this have to be about you?? Sacrifice a little, this train is needed and will be built behind your home. This is for the southwest region and it is about the thousands of people that will use the train and benefit from it so stop making it about you, because it is not and you are outnumbered by the people that want and need this train. With a station in Murrieta, I am sure you will be riding the train to San Diego when you go to San Diego and We will not hear a peep out of you then. Enough said.
8. [Swigs](#) said on: October 19, 2009, 9:06 pm
Yea. And the people along the 15, want it to stay along the 215....and then, after all is said and done, nothing will get built and that will give everyone else something else to bellyache about...
You know what I wish? I wish all these projects had been built 25 years ago. BEFORE, everyone showed up and decided on the NIMBY attitude! Build the darn thing!!!!

San Diego Union Tribune (Blog): If there are 12 stops, then it's not "high-speed" rail. It's rail.

On Thursday, the U-T ran a sharp column by The Sacramento Bee's Dan Walters dissecting the California high-speed rail project, which got \$9.95 billion in bond seed money from state voters last November with the approval of Proposition 1A. Walters noted the unlikeliness of the state receiving the vast federal aid or private investment needed to make a \$40 billion-plus high-speed rail system a reality. He also detailed daffy profit and job-creation projections.

The daffiness hardly stops there. Virtually all of proponents' claims are absurd.

Amtrak — with about 300 trains linking 500-plus destinations in 46 states — carried 29 million people in 2008. Backers of Prop 1A claimed their high-speed rail system would carry 100 million people a year.

There were also loony claims about how much air pollution would be reduced because high-speed rail would change the transportation habits of millions of people — as if it would be used for commuting.

Now there is a hilarious new twist. To build up support for high-speed rail, advocates are promising an increasing number of cities and suburbs that they will have stops.

But the whole reason the system is supposed to be such a wonderful, cool idea is that it's high-speed. If a train linking, say, Anaheim and San Francisco has 12 stops, that's not a three-hour ride. That's a seven-hour ride, at least. It takes the train a long time to accelerate and decelerate.

This isn't high-speed rail. It's rail.

On the other hand, this whole line of thinking is out of place. High-speed rail in California isn't about reason, com common sense, reality. It's a silly fantasy — the nuttiest thing I've seen in 19 years in California.

LA Weekly: Riled over California's high-speed rail

It sounded like such a good idea. But the highly disruptive routes anger many

BY JASON S. MANDELL

Published on October 28, 2009 at 6:23pm

Last Wednesday afternoon in the basement of a church in Monterey Park, a dozen consultants paced quietly around shiny poster boards illustrating the wonders of California's high-speed rail. On a projector screen off to the side of the room, a video ran on repeat, celebrating the train's success in Europe. Free cookies and tiny water bottles sat on a nearby table.

A handful of curious citizens watched the video, perused the poster boards and chatted with representatives of the multibillion-dollar bullet-train program.

"We're in the honeymoon period," chuckled one rep. "No one's mad at us."

That may be true in the outskirts of L.A. County, but in downtown L.A. and surrounding areas, the honeymoon between residents and the still-obscure board members who control the California High Speed Rail Authority is over.

"They need to work in partnership with us rather than shoving stuff down our throats," says environmentalist Melanie Winter. Winter is part of a diverse set of environmental advocates, community leaders, elected officials and taxpayer watchdogs who are banding together in the hopes of changing the direction of the rail authority.

The rail authority's members have little, if any, connection to actual California voters, who polls say are sick of partisan politics. In fact 20 percent of California voters are now registered as "decline to state" political independents. Meanwhile the rail authority board is almost entirely made up of Democratic and Republican operatives and partisans appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature. Its chairman is Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle, a Republican with a big stake in the route, since Anaheim is a major hub on the proposed line. The others include David Crane, a Schwarzenegger adviser; longtime Sacramento insider Mehdi Morshed; Silicon Valley Democratic insider Rod Diridon Sr.; Democratic political consultant and MTA board member Richard Katz; former Democratic Congresswoman Lynn Schenk; failed Democratic state Assembly candidate Fran Florez; Operating Engineers Local 3 business manager Russ Burns; and Manatt, Phelps attorney Tom Umberg. Retired judge Quentin L. Kopp is one of the powerful board's few politically independent members.

Five years ago, ANG Newspapers published an explosive investigation by Sean Holstege, reporting on a meeting led by Democratic politico Willie Brown and attended by Katz, Diridon and Morshed, at which Brown advised a roomful of engineering and construction firms that to win contracts to build California's bullet train they first had to pony up \$1 million in fees for Katz and other political consultants. According to the story, the consultants would then pull strings in the Legislature, aimed at getting a bullet train plan on the ballot. The controversy died, but several insiders present at that May 11, 2004, meeting with the big firms hold posts on the rail board.

Few California voters knew this back story last November, when they approved a vaguely worded, \$10 million bond measure to begin construction of high-speed rail. The details were fuzzy on where, exactly, the tracks would go, what they would look like, and whether property might be seized.

A year later, Gov. Schwarzenegger is petitioning the White House for half of the federal government's \$8 billion in high speed-rail stimulus funds — although skeptics say California will not win that much. And the state rail authority is narrowing its plans for the route taken by the 125- to 200 mph supertrains.

Plenty of unanswered questions and neglected concerns remain, say those who've been interacting with the rail officials. First there's the murky cost — not only to build the system but also to promote it, using public funds.

In a move that got them tremendous negative press, the rail authority board decided to spend a whopping \$9 million on a public-relations campaign supposedly intended to inform Californians about what's happening. The authority members chose Mercury Public Affairs, a firm that employs GOP political operatives, including Gov. Schwarzenegger insiders Steve Schmidt and Adam Mendelsohn, as well as former Democratic California Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez.

A few days ago, in the face of ugly public reaction, the Republican and Democratic insiders on the rail board decided to re-bid the contract, and Mercury dropped out. Now, many bullet train watchdogs question whether California voters, and their vision for the trains, will be taken seriously by the politically driven rail authority board.

One emerging dispute involves a proposal to build the rail line down the middle of I-5. Some activists say the idea makes sense, especially when the alternative would be to run the rail lines through communities and parkland, in some cases cleaving them in half. But state officials seem to have dismissed the I-5 route long before real hearings even took place.

“There hasn’t been a rigorous study of that alternative,” says Damon Nagami, a staff attorney with the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an organization of high-powered lawyers working with communities affected by potential routes. “We don’t understand why the rail authority wants to eliminate this option at this very early stage.”

Another debate is over downtown’s historic Union Station. The rail authority seems bent on making Union Station the hub for multiple lines that would meet there. But residents of mostly Latino, mostly working-class Lincoln Heights, Cypress Park and Glassell Park worry that trains will tear up their communities.

Nagami says he’s pressuring the state to consider building an annex near Union Station to serve as the high-speed hub. “We’re getting the sense the rail authority has its chosen route and is going to push for that,” adds Nagami, whose organization helped to successfully sue the state eight years ago, when it tried to sell empty land near Union Station to an unpopular developer. “The whole point of an environmental-impact review is to carefully examine a range of options.”

Perhaps the most emotional and complex issue is the fate of the Los Angeles River. The river has long been both a target for jokes (“L.A. has a river? You mean the giant half-pipe where they filmed *Terminator*?) and the object of a slow but concerted revitalization effort, which some fear will be quashed by a train route touted on some maps.

Since 2001, California has spent roughly \$100 million developing parks along the river, and many of those newly green areas could be ruined by the bullet train.

“This project, if it’s done wrong, will undo years and years of work, on top of the millions of dollars that have been invested,” says Sean Woods, in charge of L.A. parks for the California State Parks department. Though employed by the state, Woods is part of the coalition fighting to make sure L.A. isn’t steamrolled.

At stake are two parcels near the L.A. River, commonly known as the Cornfield and Taylor Yards. Eight years ago, activists, including lawyers from the NRDC, sued the state and essentially forced it to buy the abandoned plots on the northern edge of downtown Los Angeles and turn them into parks.

Then-Mayor James Hahn vowed to spend \$800,000 each year to maintain the Taylor Yards site, half of which is now El Rio de Los Angeles Park. While river supporters want the parks to provide access to the river, one obstacle is the train tracks slicing through Taylor Yards.

“Rail has been the barrier to access to the river,” says L.A. River activist Joe Linton, who writes the “Creek Freak” blog. “For eight miles in the downtown area there are tracks along the river. The high-speed rail can either make that a worse barrier or it can make that less of a barrier.”

The plan apparently favored by political types who dominate the rail authority would make that barrier worse. Linton says the inviting green areas now envisioned could mutate into an industrialized backyard for a supertrain. “Those were huge struggles that resulted in parkland for communities that absolutely needed it,” Linton says.

An expensive alternate plan calls for the high-speed rail to go underground. Lewis MacAdams, a poet and founder of Friends of the L.A. River, who is also creating a working group of architects and urban planners, known as the Piggyback Group, to propose a new vision for the land around Union Station, says, “That’s the only way to reconnect the city to the river.”

Correction: This article erroneously described Russ Burns as a union leader for train engineers. In fact, his union represents construction workers and equipment operators.

BLOG: The LA Weekly's Ridiculous Fear-Mongering

Thursday, October 29, 2009

The LA Weekly used to be one of the truly great newspapers in California. Founded during the late 1960s, it quickly earned a reputation as both an independent as well as an informative, investigative paper that by the 1970s and 1980s had become a must-read for anyone who wanted to know anything about Southern California politics. They kept up this reputation into the 21st century.

But it has been lost, particularly after a merger with the New Times corporation. New Times' approach to "journalism" is to throw bombs and make wild accusations based on scanty evidence. It's a hollow shell of the standards the LA Weekly had been known for. Former editor Marc Cooper charted the paper's sad decline, and Harold Meyerson, a leading progressive writer, has long since left its pages.

That is crucial background for an examination of a sensationalistic and ridiculous article the LA Weekly published regarding high speed rail this week. The criticisms of the paper's appalling decline in journalistic standards aren't my own, and they predate the article. It's unfortunate that HSR is this week's target of shoddy and misleading "journalism," but, here we are.

The article is essentially a grab bag of attacks on high speed rail, none of which are new, few of which make sense. It includes a rehash of the LA River "controversy" that the LA Times already covered (it used to be the case that the Times followed the Weekly, not the other way around). Let's take some of the more egregious parts of the article:

"They need to work in partnership with us rather than shoving stuff down our throats," says environmentalist Melanie Winter.

Winter is part of a diverse set of environmental advocates, community leaders, elected officials and taxpayer watchdogs who are banding together in the hopes of changing the direction of the rail authority.

The article doesn't say who these people are, exactly, making the group seem larger than it is. And Winter doesn't explain her concerns - instead the quote is designed to make HSR look like the bad guy, instead of the environmentally-friendly form of mass transit, well-integrated with the community and supported by a majority of Californians that it actually is.

The rail authority's members have little, if any, connection to actual California voters, who polls say are sick of partisan politics. In fact 20 percent of California voters are now registered as "decline to state" political independents. Meanwhile the rail authority board is almost entirely made up of Democratic and Republican operatives and partisans appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature.

OK, this is just absurd. 80% of Californians are registered Republicans or Democrats, and most of those DTS voters consistently cast ballots for Dems. In fact, the members have quite a lot of connection to actual CA voters, if we're going to use this ridiculous metric, since 80 is larger than 20. Moreover, they are all duly appointed and confirmed by the elected representatives of the people of the state - apparently the Weekly has forgotten how representative government works.

Ironically, right after they say the board is illegitimate because it is stacked with Dems and Republicans (as is the state of California!) they write this about the CHSRA's former chairman:

Retired judge Quentin L. Kopp is one of the powerful board's few politically independent members.

Which of course totally invalidates their earlier point. But there it is, in print, bizarrely enough.

Five years ago, ANG Newspapers published an explosive investigation by Sean Holstege, reporting on a meeting led by Democratic politico Willie Brown and attended by Katz, Diridon and Morshed, at which Brown advised a roomful of engineering and construction firms that to win contracts to build California's bullet train they first had to pony up \$1 million in fees for Katz and other political consultants. According to the story, the consultants would then pull strings in the Legislature, aimed at getting a bullet train plan on the ballot. The controversy died, but several insiders present at that May 11, 2004, meeting with the big firms hold posts on the rail board.

What does this accusation have to do with the present? Did Katz win a contract? Is Willie Brown still involved with HSR? And since HSR didn't go to the ballot until 2008, did this meeting have any relevance whatsoever to the present situation? The only reason this is mentioned is the desire of the authors to throw every possible accusation at HSR to set up their article, regardless of whether the accusation has merit or relevance.

Few California voters knew this back story last November, when they approved a vaguely worded, \$10 million bond measure to begin construction of high-speed rail. The details were fuzzy on where, exactly, the tracks would go, what they would look like, and whether property might be seized.

Um, no. The bond measure was not "vaguely worded," it instead specified a very specific corridor as laid out in a very explicitly and not-vague EIR document approved by the board last summer. The details were clear on where exactly the tracks would go, though in some places the tracks could go in a number of places.

One emerging dispute involves a proposal to build the rail line down the middle of I-5. Some activists say the idea makes sense, especially when the alternative would be to run the rail lines through communities and parkland, in some cases cleaving them in half. But state officials seem to have dismissed the I-5 route long before real hearings even took place.

"There hasn't been a rigorous study of that alternative," says Damon Nagami, a staff attorney with the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an organization of high-powered lawyers working with communities affected by potential routes. "We don't understand why the rail authority wants to eliminate this option at this very early stage."

If that's NRDC's position, they are fools. It's unclear where on I-5 they're referring to, but it doesn't much matter. Nobody lives along I-5 in the San Joaquin Valley, so it makes no sense to put the train there. The trains should go where the people are. If you're talking about I-5 in the LA metro area, that's a truly idiotic plan that should never be given the light of day. It would not only produce much less riders, and might not be feasible given the curves of I-5 in the San Fernando Valley, but the cost would be astronomical and it would have a far greater impact on homes and communities than would following the rail corridors as currently planned. The I-5 alternative should be eliminated because it is senseless and stupid.

Another debate is over downtown's historic Union Station. The rail authority seems bent on making Union Station the hub for multiple lines that would meet there. But residents of mostly Latino, mostly working-class Lincoln Heights, Cypress Park and Glassell

Nagami says he's pressuring the state to consider building an annex near Union Station to serve as the high-speed hub. "We're getting the sense the rail authority has its chosen route and is going to push for that," adds Nagami, whose organization helped to successfully sue the state eight years ago, when it tried to sell empty land near Union Station to an unpopular developer. "The whole point of an environmental-impact review is to carefully examine a range of options."

First off, Union Station is going to be the hub because it **already is** the hub of the LA mass transit system. It would be truly insane to not have trains stop there, with easy transfers to Metro Rail, buses, and Amtrak California and Metrolink trains. The trains won't "tear up their communities" since they'll follow existing ROW and corridors. This is NOT the Century Freeway, despite the LA Weekly's sensationalistic desire to paint HSR as such.

The range of options have already been carefully examined in previous EIRs, and the current program EIR will carefully examine the specific details of bringing trains to and from Union Station.

Perhaps the most emotional and complex issue is the fate of the Los Angeles River. The river has long been both a target for jokes ("L.A. has a river? You mean the giant half-pipe where they filmed Terminator?") and the object of a slow but concerted revitalization effort, which some fear will be quashed by a train route touted on some maps.

Since 2001, California has spent roughly \$100 million developing parks along the river, and many of those newly green areas could be ruined by the bullet train.

"This project, if it's done wrong, will undo years and years of work, on top of the millions of dollars that have been invested," says Sean Woods, in charge of L.A. parks for the California State Parks department. Though employed by the state, Woods is part of the coalition fighting to make sure L.A. isn't steamrolled.

LA isn't going to be "steamrolled," as Woods should know. The city of LA's River Revitalization Plan makes clear that the river will continue to be a railroad corridor, and specifically mentioned HSR as part of it. Further, CHSRA is well aware of the desire to connect the riverfront park to the neighborhood, which is why it plans to use the HSR project as an opportunity to achieve that, as this video makes extremely clear. Apparently some people haven't gotten the message:

"Rail has been the barrier to access to the river," says L.A. River activist Joe Linton, who writes the "Creek Freak" blog. "For eight miles in the downtown area there are tracks along the river. The high-speed rail can either make that a worse barrier or it can make that less of a barrier."

The plan apparently favored by political types who dominate the rail authority would make that barrier worse. Linton says the inviting green areas now envisioned could mutate into an industrialized backyard for a supertrain. "Those were huge struggles that resulted in parkland for communities that absolutely needed it," Linton says.

First, the tracks along the river - whether north or south of Union Station - aren't going anywhere. Anyone who thinks they are is out of their mind. Those tracks have been there for a century and will be there for at least one more. Further, as the video makes abundantly clear, HSR **will** make it less of a barrier.

Of course, the LA Weekly doesn't anywhere mention the CHSRA's video, their plans, their scoping process. Nor does it even appear they tried to reach CHSRA for comment, the way a normal journalist would. Instead they plowed right ahead with their hit piece. Shameful.

Inland News Today: High-speed train corridor selection considered

ONTARIO--Support for high-speed trains in California may be switching onto the fast track.

The last in a series of meetings to gather public input will be held Monday at the Ontario Airport followed by a concluding session Tuesday at the Feldheim Library in San Bernardino.

Project Manager Jose Martinez says funding issues are being overcome.

"Voters passed the statewide initiative for high speed rail last November. Now, the Obama Administration is committed to making high-speed trains a reality."

At the forefront is the selection of the corridors the 200 mile-an-hour trains will use. Interstates 15 and 215 through the Inland Empire are under consideration.

The high-speed train system will run connect Los Angeles and San Diego via the Inland Empire.

San Bernardino Sun: High speed route in I.E. mulled

Joe Nelson, Staff Writer

Posted: 10/30/2009 07:04:54 PM PDT

High speed rail is coming to the Inland Empire. The only question is, will it run through San Bernardino or Riverside county. The tug-of-war gets underway this week with public meetings to weigh in on the ambitious project.

At stake is an economic boon for whichever county lands the rail line.

"It'll be a whole new system of transportation that will employ hundreds of thousands of people," said San Bernardino Mayor Pat Morris, who serves on the board of San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), the county transportation planning agency.

The 800-mile, \$45 billion high-speed train system will haul passengers from Sacramento and the Bay Area to San Diego. The focal point of next week's public meetings will be the section of the rail line from Los Angeles to San Diego via the Inland Empire.

At the public meetings, attendees can talk to project planners and look at maps of the different routes.

"It's a great chance to get involved in the early stages of the process and get that feedback now," said Cheryl Donahue, spokeswoman for Chino-based Arellano Associates, a sub-consultant on the project.

Several routes are proposed in the Inland region. Tracks can run parallel to the 10 Freeway and then bend north, running adjacent the Metrolink line, or run parallel to Holt Avenue in Ontario. The tracks can then either continue east into San Bernardino and run south, parallel to the 215 Freeway. Or they can run south from Ontario, adjacent the 15 Freeway, through Riverside County, Donahue said.

The project is aimed at complementing existing Metrolink and Amtrak services, as well as multiple high-speed rail and rapid transit projects planned for the San Bernardino Valley in coming years.

"Those systems are designed to be what we call feeders into the high-speed rail, so it's very important we have those light rail and bus services that will feed into the high speed network," Donahue said. "The more of those feeder systems are available, the greater the ridership will be."

OTHER PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

A regional transit center planned for Rialto Avenue and E Street in San Bernardino is currently in the conceptual design phase, said Wendy Williams, marketing director for Omnitrans, the lead agency on the project.

It will provide connections to Metrolink, a planned high-speed rail service from Redlands to San Bernardino, and the planned \$192 million SBX high-speed bus line linking Cal State San Bernardino to Loma Linda University Medical Center.

"It is intended to be a transit hub for the greater San Bernardino area," Williams said of the transit center. "If high speed rail's on the horizon, we want to be able to adapt to that mode of transportation as well."

The \$250 million high-speed rail line from Redlands to San Bernardino will follow the old Santa Fe railroad line from the University of Redlands to San Bernardino, said Mitch Alderman, SANBAG's director of transit and rail programs.

SANBAG is also planning to build a \$35 million double-track that will allow Metrolink trains to travel independently in opposite directions once the new transit center on Rialto Avenue is built. Requests for bids on design proposals go out next week.

"We're going to have this confluence of different transit modes at the same location," said Alderman. "About the only other thing we can add there is an airport, a boat and the docks."

Regional transportation officials are also looking at a rail line project, possibly an inverted monorail system, aerial tram or all-weather train service that will elevate passengers from San Bernardino to the Big Bear Valley.

The project, which would run parallel to Highway 330, would take anywhere from 10 to 20 years to build, Supervisor Neil Derry said.

THINKING GREEN

Aside from the myriad transportation systems that will feed into the high-speed train system, Donahue said the project has a number of environmental benefits as well.

The electric train system uses one-third the energy of airplanes by passenger miles and a fifth of the energy of passenger cars. It will reduce the dependence on foreign oil by 12.7 million barrels a year, and is also expected to cut greenhouse gases by 12 billion pounds a year, she said.

And that's not the only green the transportation project can bring.

A study conducted by local economist John Husing last year concluded that the high-speed rail project will create at least tens of thousands of jobs in the county by 2030, which will lead to increased wages and salaries of area residents, Donahue said.

The environmental study is expected to be completed in late 2013.

"We are the historic crossroads. To get anywhere in the L.A. basin, you have to come through our city," said Morris, the San Bernardino mayor. "That's our one advantage: location, location, location."

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San Bernardino Sun (and Inland Valley Daily Bulletin): Residents chime in on high-speed rail potential

James Rufus Koren, Staff Writer

Posted: 11/02/2009 06:51:54 PM PST

Why give Corona a boost when it's San Bernardino that needs the help?

That's what Rancho Cucamonga resident Richard Ortiz wanted to know after attending a Monday afternoon meeting aimed at getting Inland Empire residents' views on a proposed high-speed rail line that will link San Diego and Los Angeles. Heading out of Temecula on the way to Ontario, the route could go northwest through Corona or north through Riverside and San Bernardino before turning west.

"Corona's doing good already - it's already accessible," Ortiz said at the meeting held at Ontario Airport. "San Bernardino is dead right now. This could generate a lot of activity."

That's exactly the kind of input project planners are hoping to get from similar meetings across the region. Another meeting will be held from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. today at the Norman F. Feldheim Central Library in San Bernardino.

Jose Martinez, a regional program manager for the high-speed rail authority, said the meetings are a chance for Inland Empire residents to let project planners know what they think of different possible routes, station locations and the impacts a high-speed train would have on their communities.

Along with interested residents like Ortiz, Monday's meeting drew representatives of local government agencies that could be affected by the high-speed train project. Keith Owens, principal engineer for the Western Municipal Water District, said he attended Monday's meeting to start getting an idea of how the train could affect the water district.

The meetings, called scoping meetings, will help project planners in nailing down some of the specific issues that will be covered in an environmental impact report - a major study of how the proposed plan would affect traffic, water quality and air quality, among other things.

The scoping meetings are one of the first steps of the process. A final environmental impact report for the Inland Empire section of the high-speed train route won't be finished for another three or four years.

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San Bernardino Sun: Speed session

November 4, 2009

The second of two public meetings to discuss the prospects of a high-speed railroad system in the region was held Tuesday at the Norman F. Feldheim Central Library in San Bernardino. Planning officials are deciding whether to run the \$45 billion San Diego-to-Los Angeles rail line through San Bernardino or Riverside county. An environmental impact study is expected to be completed in 2013.