

California High-Speed Rail Authority

San Francisco to San Jose Project Section

Scoping Report

November 2016



TABLE OF CONTENTS

S	SUMMARY	S-1
S.1	Overview of Public and Agency Outreach	S-1
S.2	Relationship to Previous Scoping Process	S-1
S.3	Summary of Key Themes	S-2
1	INTRODUCTION	1-1
1.1	Introduction to the High-Speed Rail System	1-1
1.2	Purpose of Scoping	1-3
1.3	Use of the EIR/EIS Scoping Report.....	1-4
1.4	Description of Previously Proposed San Francisco to San Jose Project Section	1-4
1.5	Previous Scoping Efforts	1-4
1.6	Description of San Francisco to San Jose Project Section and Purpose and Need	1-5
1.6.1	Description of San Francisco to San Jose Project Section	1-5
1.6.2	Project Section Purpose and Need	1-7
1.6.3	Project Alternatives.....	1-7
1.6.4	Notification of EIR/EIS Scoping Opportunities.....	1-8
2	PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT DURING SCOPING PERIOD	2-1
2.1	Summary of Scoping Meetings.....	2-1
2.1.1	Format of Scoping Meetings	2-1
2.2	Summary of Outreach Activities	2-5
3	SUMMARY OF SCOPING TOPICS.....	3-1
3.1	Summary of Comments on Project Elements and Stations	3-1
3.1.1	Grade Separations.....	3-1
3.1.2	Storage and Maintenance Facilities	3-1
3.1.3	Train Route Alignment	3-2
3.1.4	Stations	3-2
3.2	Summary of Community Concerns.....	3-3
3.2.1	Environmental Justice.....	3-3
3.2.2	Growth and Socioeconomics	3-3
3.3	Summary of Environmental Concerns	3-3
3.3.1	Aesthetics and Visual Resources.....	3-3
3.3.2	Agricultural Farmland and Forested Lands	3-3
3.3.3	Air Quality and Global Climate Change.....	3-4
3.3.4	Biological Resources and Wetlands.....	3-4
3.3.5	Cultural Resources	3-4
3.3.6	Hydrology and Water Resources	3-4
3.3.7	Land Use and Development	3-5
3.3.8	Noise and Vibration	3-5
3.3.9	Parks and Recreational Areas and Facilities.....	3-5
3.3.10	Public Utilities and Energy	3-5
3.3.11	Safety and Security.....	3-5
3.3.12	Traffic and Transportation.....	3-6
3.4	Summary of Technical/Engineering Concerns.....	3-6
3.4.1	Engineering	3-6
3.4.2	Technology.....	3-6
3.5	Summary of Project Cost and Operations Concerns	3-6

3.5.1	Project Cost.....	3-6
3.5.2	Construction.....	3-7
3.5.3	Operations.....	3-7
3.6	Summary of Agency Responses to NOP/NOI.....	3-7
4	NEXT STEPS IN THE EIR/EIS PROCESS.....	4-1

Tables

Table 1-1	Display Advertisement Notices.....	1-9
Table 1-2	Articles Covering the Project during the Scoping Process.....	1-10
Table 2-1	Summary of Scoping Meetings.....	2-2
Table 2-2	Scoping Meeting Information Stations.....	2-4
Table 2-3	Language Interpreters Available at Scoping Meetings.....	2-4
Table 2-4	Summary of Outreach Activities (April 1 to July 20, 2016).....	2-5
Table 3-1	Summary of Agency Responses to the NOP/NOI.....	3-7

Figures

Figure S-1	Submissions Received During Scoping by Affiliation Type.....	S-3
Figure S-2	Summary of Major Themes Raised at Scoping Meetings.....	S-4
Figure 1-1	Statewide High-Speed Rail System - Implementation Phases.....	1-2
Figure 1-2	Focus of the Scoping Process.....	1-3
Figure 1-3	San Francisco to San Jose Project Section.....	1-6
Figure 2-1	Authority staff interacting with community members at information stations.....	2-1
Figure 2-2	Project staff engages with stakeholders using a translator at the San Francisco Scoping Meeting.....	2-3

Appendices

APPENDIX A – SCOPING COMMENTS RECEIVED

- Appendix A.1 – Federal Agency Comments
- Appendix A.2 – State Agency Comments
- Appendix A.3 – Local Agency Comments
- Appendix A.4 – Comments from Elected Officials
- Appendix A.5 – Comments from Businesses and Organizations
- Appendix A.6 – Comments from Individuals

APPENDIX B – SENATE BILL 1029

APPENDIX C – 2013 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

APPENDIX D – DRAFT SAN FRANCISCO TO SAN JOSE PROJECT SECTION SCOPING REPORT (2009) WEB LOCATION

APPENDIX E – NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION LIST

APPENDIX F – NOTICE OF INTENT

APPENDIX G – PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF THE EIR SCOPING MEETINGS

- Appendix G.1 – Scoping Meeting Mail Notices
- Appendix G.2 – Display Advertisements
- Appendix G.3 – Electronic Notices
- Appendix G.4 – Press Release
- Appendix G.5 – Media Coverage
- Appendix G.6 – Website Notices

APPENDIX H – SCOPING MEETING MATERIALS

- Appendix H.1 – PowerPoint Presentation
- Appendix H.2 – Station Presentations
- Appendix H.3 – Scoping Meeting Handouts
- Appendix H.4 – Sign-In Sheets

APPENDIX I – SCOPING COMMENT SUMMARIES

- Appendix I.1 – Individuals
- Appendix I.2 – Organizations
- Appendix I.3 – Agencies

APPENDIX J – PICTURES TAKEN AT THE SCOPING MEETINGS

- Appendix J.1 – Pictures Taken at the Scoping Meeting in San Francisco,
- Appendix J.2 – Pictures Taken at the Scoping Meeting in San Mateo, CA
- Appendix J.3 – Pictures Taken at the Scoping Meeting in Mountain View, CA

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Definition
ACE	Altamont Corridor Express
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CSCG	City / County Coordinating Group
CWG	Community Working Group
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
LPMG	Local Policy Maker Group
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOP	Notice of Preparation
PCJPB	Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
PPA	Preliminary Preferred Alternative
PTE	Permit to Enter
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-way
SFO	San Francisco International Airport
SFMTA	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
SFCTA	San Francisco County Transportation Authority
SFPUC	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
VTA	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
CEQ	The Council on Environmental Quality
UCSF	University of California San Francisco

S SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to summarize the scoping process and comments received during the 2016 scoping period for the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section (Project Section) of the California High-Speed Rail System. This report provides a brief project background, description of the scoping process and meetings, list of other outreach activities, and summary of the public and agency comments received during the scoping period.

S.1 Overview of Public and Agency Outreach

On May 9, 2016, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) distributed the Notice of Preparation (SCH No. 2016052019) and Notice of Intent (NOP/NOI), which initiated the scoping period for the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). The Authority filed the NOP with the State Clearinghouse for distribution to responsible agencies. The FRA published the NOI in the *Federal Register* and distributed it to the cooperating agencies.

What is an NOP and NOI?

The NOP and NOI inform the public of an upcoming environmental analysis, describe the project and potential environmental effects, and describe how the public can participate in the environmental process.

The Authority and FRA encouraged broad participation in the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIR/EIS scoping process. They invited comments and suggestions from all interested agencies and the public to inform identification of the range of environmental issues related to the Project Section. The Authority and FRA distributed notices of the start of the scoping period via email and paper mail to federal, state, and local agencies and communities adjacent to the railroad corridor between San Francisco and San Jose. Additionally, the Authority and FRA requested input from public agencies with jurisdiction over the Project Section on the applicable permit and environmental review requirements of each agency, and the scope and content of the environmental information germane to the agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project Section. Scoping activities for the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIR/EIS occurred between May 9, 2016 and July 20, 2016. Approximately 153 persons attended the public scoping meetings.

S.2 Relationship to Previous Scoping

In 2005, the Authority and FRA completed the *Final Program EIR/EIS for the Proposed California High-Speed Rail System* (Statewide Program EIR/EIS) as the first phase of a tiered environmental review process. At the conclusion of this Tier 1 environmental process, the Authority and FRA selected the high-speed rail alternative over the modal alternative to meet California's growing intercity transportation needs. The Authority certified the document under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and approved the proposed high-speed rail system and FRA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) on the document as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Because the Statewide Program EIR/EIS did not select corridors or station locations between the San Francisco Bay Area and the Central Valley, a second program EIR/EIS was prepared.

What are Tier 1 and Tier 2 environmental documents?

Tier 1 environmental documents evaluate the impacts of a broader program—for example, potential locations for a high-speed rail corridor between the Bay Area and Central Valley.

Tier 2 environmental documents evaluate impacts of a specific project included in the program—for example, the San Francisco to San Jose High-Speed Rail Project Section.

The 2008 *Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Rail Program EIR/EIS* further evaluated alignments and station locations to connect the Bay Area and Central Valley portions of the high-speed rail system. The Authority and FRA selected the Pacheco Pass–San Francisco and San Jose termini network alternative, which would construct a four-track fully grade separated system in the existing commuter railroad corridor between San Francisco and San Jose. The Authority

certified the document under CEQA and approved the San Francisco to San Jose corridor alignment, and FRA issued a ROD on the document as required under NEPA.

The Authority issued an NOP on January 8, 2009 (SCH No. 2008122079) and the FRA published an NOI in the *Federal Register* on December 29, 2008 to begin the Tier 2 project-level environmental process. The proposed project was an entirely grade separated four-track system between San Francisco and San Jose, with high-speed rail sharing the corridor with Caltrain express commuter trains. Scoping meetings were held in 2009 and approximately 956 comment submissions were received during the scoping period. The Authority suspended further work on the EIR/EIS in mid-2011 to consider blending high-speed rail and Caltrain operations within a smaller project footprint. In November 2011, the Authority proposed blended operations within the Caltrain corridor, which would provide high-speed rail service between the two cities without requiring a four-track system.

The 2016 NOP/NOI rescinded the 2009 NOP and 2008 NOI and presented the blended operations approach for the Project Section, which implements the strategy identified by the Authority's 2012 business plan and subsequent 2014 and 2016 business plans. The blended system would operate substantially within the existing Caltrain right-of-way on a primarily two-track system shared by high-speed rail, Caltrain, and freight tenants. High-speed rail and Caltrain would utilize existing and in-progress infrastructure developed by Caltrain for its electrification project; however, high-speed rail would require additional construction beyond what is needed for Caltrain electrification. The blended system would reduce the impact to communities, as well as the cost of construction and operation, while delivering the benefits of the high-speed rail system. The 2016 NOP/NOI informed members of the public; tribes; federal, state and local agencies; organizations, and other parties about the blended system and solicited their input on the project definition and environmental issues for evaluation in the EIR/EIS.

What is a Record of Decision (ROD)?

The ROD explains the federal agency's decision, describes alternatives considered (including the environmentally preferred alternative), and discusses plans for mitigating potential environmental effects and monitoring those commitments.

What does "blended" mean?

"Blended" refers to integrating the high-speed rail system with existing intercity and commuter and regional rail systems through coordinated infrastructure (blended systems) and scheduling, ticketing, and other means (blended operations).

S.3 Summary of Key Themes

During the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIR/EIS scoping period, the Authority and FRA received 152 comment submittals from agencies, elected officials, organizations and individuals. Submittals included comment forms submitted at the scoping meetings, comment forms submitted via mail, as well as letters, emails, and comments submitted via the website. Figure S-1 shows the proportion of comments received from agencies, elected officials, organizations, and individuals.

The comments received on the proposed Project Section raised a variety of concerns. Figure S-2 on the following page provides a summary of the key themes raised at the three scoping meetings. Additional themes raised via written letter, email, or the website included:

- Aesthetic and visual quality concerns
- Disproportionate impacts
- Flooding concerns
- Flora and fauna concerns
- Integration with freight
- Integration with regional transit
- Maintenance facility planning
- Water supply concerns

Section 3.0 presents a more detailed summary of key themes raised during the scoping period.

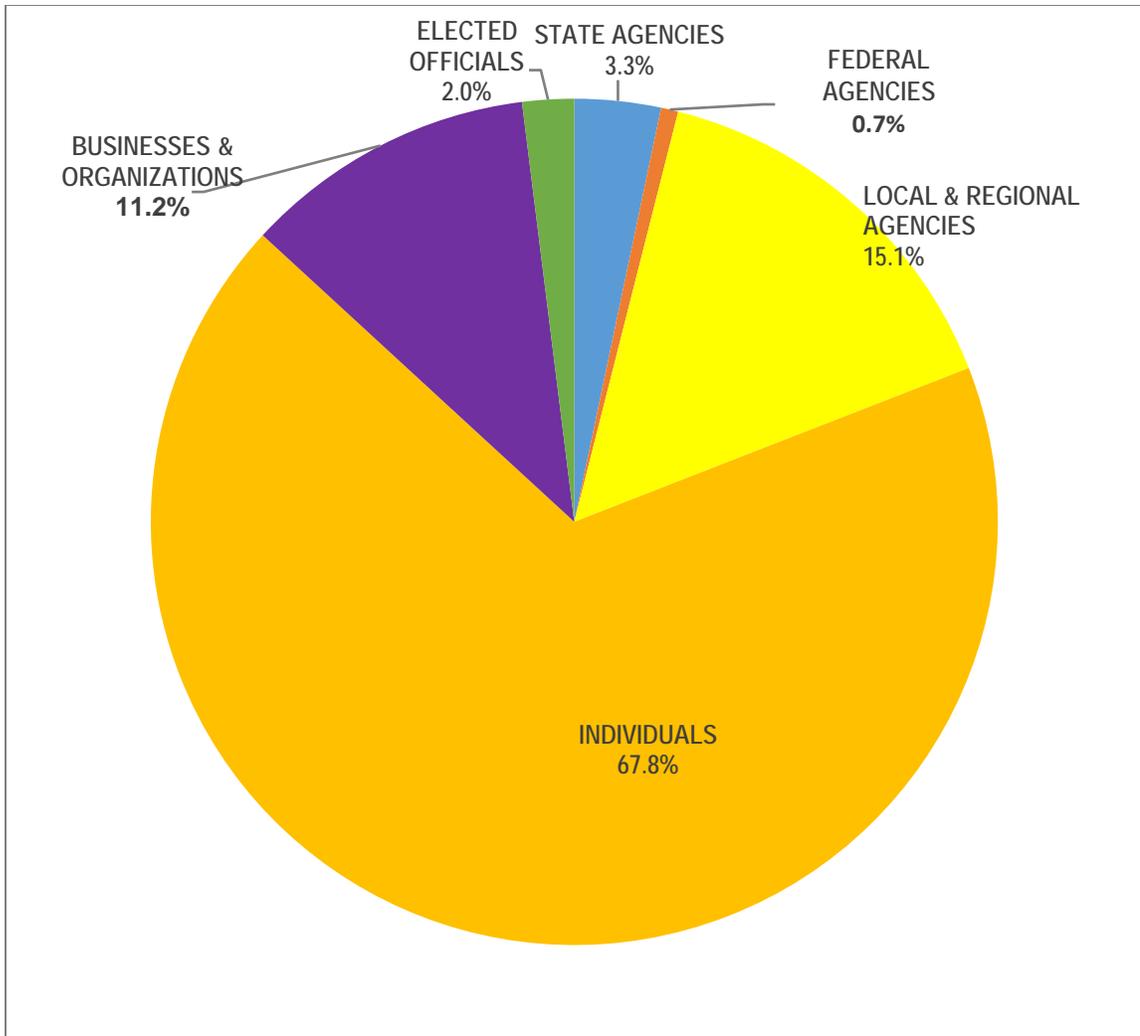


Figure S-1 Submissions Received During Scoping by Affiliation Type

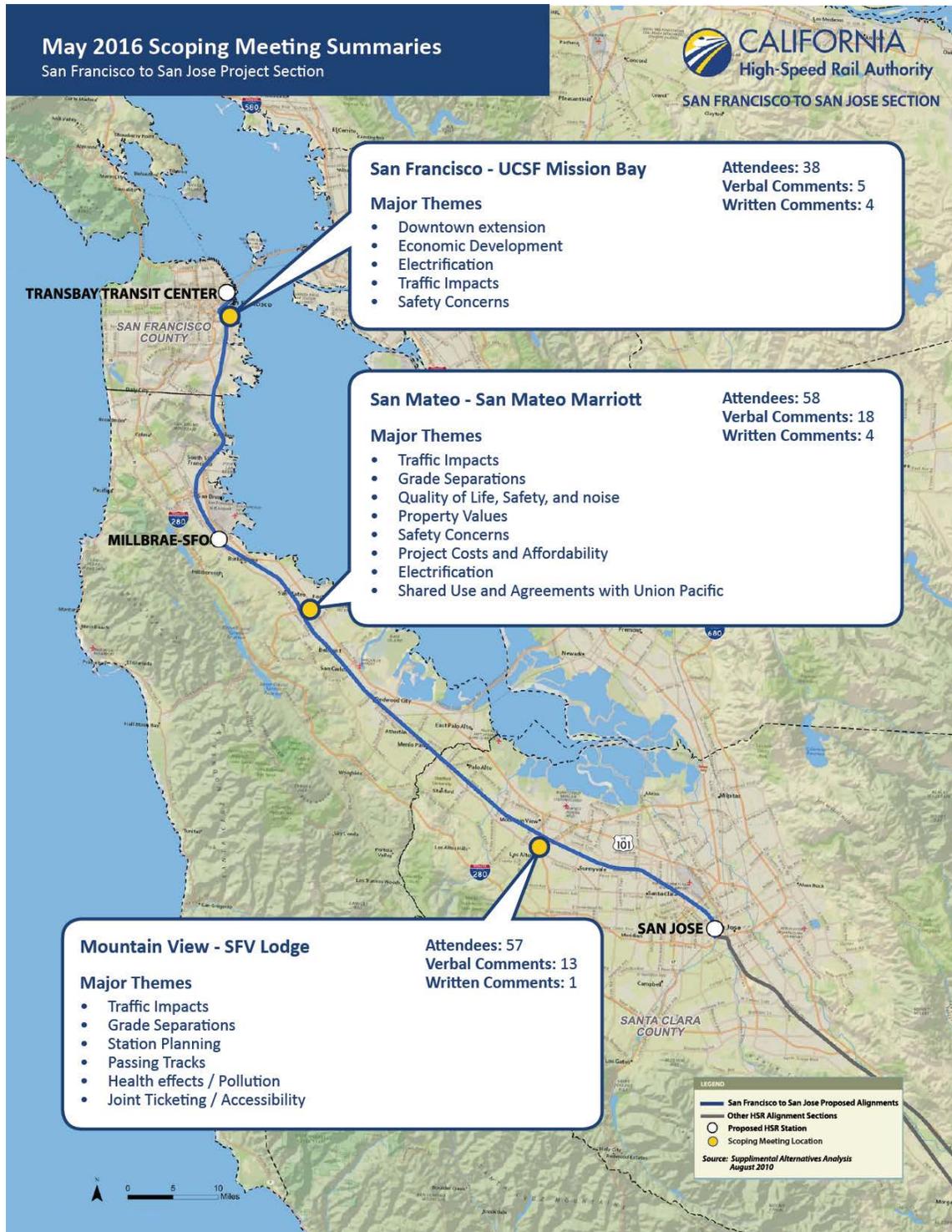


Figure S-2 Summary of Major Themes Raised at Scoping Meetings

1 INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the scoping process for the Project Section. It provides an introduction to the high-speed rail system, explains the purpose of scoping, and describes the previously and currently proposed Project Section. It also describes the scoping notification process, provides information on the three scoping meetings, summarizes the comments received from the public and agencies, and describes the next steps in the environmental review process.

1.1 Introduction to the High-Speed Rail System

The Authority, a state governing board formed in 1996, has responsibility for planning, designing, constructing, and operating the California High-Speed Rail System. Its mandate is to develop a high-speed rail system that coordinates with the state’s existing transportation network, which includes intercity rail and bus lines, regional commuter rail lines, urban rail and bus transit lines, highways, and airports. FRA is the lead federal agency for complying with NEPA, administers the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, and also has primary responsibility for developing and enforcing railroad safety regulations in accordance with the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-432). The Surface Transportation Board is a cooperating agency under NEPA because of its authority over the construction and operation of interstate rail lines.¹

The Authority proposes to construct, operate, and maintain an electric-powered high-speed rail system in California, connecting the San Francisco Bay Area and Central Valley to Southern California. When completed, the nearly 800-mile train system would provide new passenger rail service to more than 90 percent of the state’s population. More than 200 weekday trains would serve the statewide intercity travel market. The system would be capable of operating speeds up to 220 miles per hour, with state-of-the art safety, signaling, and automated train control systems. The California High-Speed Rail System, as shown on Figure 1-1, would connect and serve the state’s major metropolitan areas, extending from San Francisco to Los Angeles² and Anaheim in Phase 1, with extensions to Sacramento and San Diego in Phase 2. Phased implementation of the high-speed rail system is consistent with the provisions of Proposition 1A, *The Safe, Reliable, High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act* (California Streets and Highways Code, Division 4, Chapter 20, Section 2704 et seq.) adopted by California voters in November 2008. Proposition 1A requires the high-speed train system be designed to achieve certain characteristics, including a nonstop service travel time of 30 minutes between San Francisco and San Jose on an alignment that follows existing transportation and utility corridors to the extent feasible.

Commuter rail passenger transportation

Serves metropolitan and suburban areas within the same region.

Intercity rail passenger transportation

Serves travel markets that cross state or regional boundaries.

Following statewide Tier 1 environmental review, the Authority and FRA approved the high-speed rail system and selected corridors for Tier 2 study. Building a system of such magnitude, complexity, and cost is impractical to implement as a single project. The Authority and FRA have divided the Phase I high-speed rail system into multiple project sections, each connecting a major California city. The system will increase connectivity to other rail providers in California along with other major routes and airports used for intercity and statewide travel within the region. One of these sections is the Project Section, which would operate predominantly in the existing rail corridor between San Francisco and San Jose by sharing tracks with Caltrain.

¹ The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is a bipartisan, independent adjudicatory body. The Board was established by the ICC Termination Act of 1995 (49 U.S.C. §10101 et seq.; Public Law 104-88, December 29, 1995) to assume some, but not all, functions of the ICC. STB has jurisdiction over the construction and operation of new interstate rail lines (49 U.S.C. 10901, 10502).

² The San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles Basin regions are considered the “bookends” of the HSR system.



Figure 1-1 Statewide High-Speed Rail System - Implementation Phases

1.2 Purpose of Scoping

Scoping is an important element in the process of determining the focus and content of an EIR/EIS. Scoping helps to identify the range of alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be included in the EIR/EIS, and helps identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues that are not significant or that have been covered by prior environmental review. Figure 1-2 shows some of the environmental areas the EIR/EIS will address and the focus of the scoping process; the figure is not a comprehensive list of all areas the EIR/EIS will cover. Scoping is also an effective way to bring together and address the concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties about the Project Section. Scoping under NEPA is governed by Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, Section 1501.7. Scoping under CEQA is governed by California Public Resources Code section 20183.9, and California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines) sections 15082 and 15083.

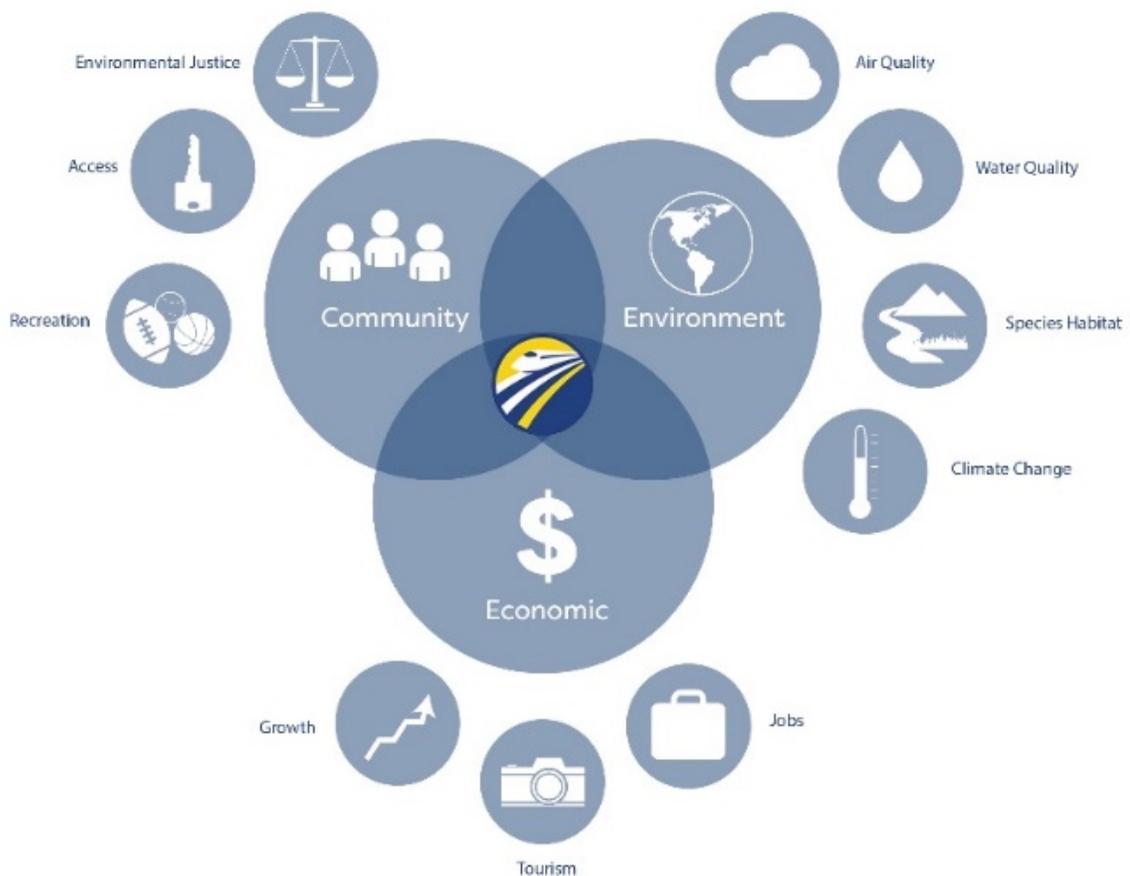


Figure 1-2 Focus of the Scoping Process

Scoping is not intended to resolve differences concerning the merits of a project or to anticipate the ultimate decision on a project. Rather, the purpose of scoping is to obtain input from the public and stakeholders to inform the preparation of a comprehensive and focused EIR/EIS that provides a sound basis for decision-making. The intent of the Project Section scoping process is to:

- Inform public agencies and interested members of the public about the Project Section, including compliance with NEPA and CEQA requirements, and the FRA's and Authority's related actions

- Assist with identifying a range of alignment and station alternatives along the Project Section for consideration in the EIR/EIS
- Assist with identifying the type of environmental impacts and mitigation measures considered in the EIR/EIS
- Develop an expanded mailing list of agencies and individuals interested in future project actions relative to the EIR/EIS

1.3 Use of the EIR/EIS Scoping Report

The Authority and FRA will use this scoping report to inform the EIR/EIS identification of a range of alternatives and the discussion of impacts and mitigation measures. This scoping report summarizes the comments received on the topics of project elements and stations, community affects, environmental effects, technical engineering issues, and project cost and operations. A record of all comments received during the scoping period are provided in Appendix A.

1.4 Description of Previously Proposed San Francisco to San Jose Project Section

The Authority and FRA have prepared two Tier 1 environmental documents for the high-speed rail system under CEQA and NEPA. In 2005, the Authority and FRA completed the Statewide Program EIR/EIS as the first phase of the tiered environmental review process. The Statewide Program EIR/EIS analyzed a No Project/No Action Alternative; a modal alternative involving expanding freeways, airports, and conventional rail systems; and a high-speed rail alternative using electric propulsion and steel-wheel-on-steel-rail vehicles capable of operating speeds of 220 mph on fully grade separated rail alignments with state-of-the art safety, signaling, and communication systems. At the conclusion of the Tier 1 environmental process, the Authority and FRA selected the high-speed rail alternative over the modal alternative and high-speed steel-wheel on steel-rail train technology. The Authority certified the document under CEQA and approved the proposed high-speed rail system and FRA issued a ROD on the document as required under NEPA. The Statewide Program EIR/EIS did not select high-speed rail corridors or station locations between the Bay Area and the Central Valley, which required preparation of a second program EIR/EIS to consider these program elements.

The 2008 *Final Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train Program EIR/EIS* (Program EIR/EIS) further evaluated alignments and station locations within the corridor between and including the Altamont Pass and the Pacheco Pass to connect the Bay Area and Central Valley portions of the high-speed rail system. The Authority and FRA selected the Pacheco Pass–San Francisco and San Jose termini network alternative, with preferred corridor alignments and station location options. Components of the preferred corridor between San Francisco and San Jose included shared use of the Caltrain corridor with a dedicated four-track high-speed rail system, operating at speeds no greater than 125 miles per hour, stations in downtown San Francisco at the Transbay Transit Center, Millbrae, in downtown San Jose at Diridon, and a potential mid-peninsula station. The Authority certified the Program EIR under CEQA and selected the Pacheco Pass connection, corridor alignments, and station locations for further Tier 2 evaluation. FRA issued a ROD on the Program EIS as required under NEPA.

1.5 Previous Scoping Efforts

In 2009, the Authority and FRA began a Tier 2 environmental review process for a San Francisco to San Jose Project that would share use of the Caltrain corridor with a fully-grade-separated four-track high-speed rail system. The Authority issued an NOP on January 8, 2009 (SCH No. 2008122079) and the FRA published an NOI in the *Federal Register* on December 29, 2008. The formal scoping period meetings for the project-level EIR/EIS took place in early 2009 to receive input on the project and issues for consideration in the EIR/EIS. The Authority held three scoping meetings in the cities of San Carlos, San Francisco, and Santa Clara. Approximately 956 comment submissions were received during the 2009 scoping period. The *2009 San Francisco to San Jose High-Speed Rail Project EIR/EIS Draft Scoping Report* summarized these meetings

(see Appendix D). Materials provided during the previous scoping meetings, including exhibits and handouts distributed at the meetings and the Draft Scoping Report, are available on the Authority's website (www.hsr.ca.gov).

Following completion of project scoping, the Authority and FRA prepared initial and supplemental alternatives screening documents for the proposed fully grade separated four-track high-speed rail system. The four-track system generated concerns from communities along the Caltrain rail corridor between San Francisco and San Jose because of the magnitude of potential impacts to environmental and community resources. In response to these concerns, the Authority suspended further work on the *San Francisco–San Jose Section Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement* in mid-2011 so that it could consider blended operations for the two services within a smaller project footprint. In November 2011, the Authority proposed blended operations within the Caltrain corridor, which would provide high-speed rail service between the two cities and a “one-seat ride” to San Francisco by sharing track with Caltrain, without requiring a dedicated four-track system.

What is a “one-seat ride”?

A “one-seat ride” does not require a transfer between vehicles to complete the trip.

1.6 Description of San Francisco to San Jose Project Section and Purpose and Need

1.6.1 Description of San Francisco to San Jose Project Section

The Project Section would provide high-speed rail service from the Transbay Transit Center, which is currently under construction, in San Francisco to the Diridon Station in San Jose. The Project Section would provide high-speed rail services at two downtown San Francisco stations: Transbay Transit Center and 4th and King; a Millbrae station; and a San Jose station at Diridon. Connections to Caltrain, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and local light-rail and bus transit services would be provided at these stations. The San Jose station would provide additional connections to Amtrak intercity (Capitol Corridor), Amtrak interstate (Coast Starlight) services, and Altamont Corridor Express service. Access to the San Francisco International and San Jose Mineta International airports would be provided via the Millbrae and San Jose stations, respectively. The Project Section would connect to the San Jose to Merced Project Section at the San Jose Diridon Station as shown on Figure 1-3.

High-speed rail stations

The high-speed rail stations support existing and planned transit-oriented development, while providing an interface with San Francisco and San Jose Mineta international airports, regional and local mass transit services, and the San Francisco Bay Area highway network.

The framework for blended operations along the Peninsula³ was memorialized in 2012 through four separate, but related actions: Authority adoption of the California High-Speed Rail Program *Revised 2012 Business Plan*, adoption of the *Metropolitan Transportation Commission Resolution No. 4056 Memorandum of Understanding*,⁴ and passage of Senate Bills 1029⁵ and 557. The blended system would utilize existing infrastructure and in-progress infrastructure developed by Caltrain for its electrification project and additional construction beyond electrification.

³ The Peninsula is San Mateo and northern Santa Clara counties.

⁴ The Authority and eight other San Francisco Bay Area agencies (Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, City and County of San Francisco, San Francisco County Transportation Authority, Transbay Joint Powers Authority, San Mateo County Transportation Authority, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, City of San Jose, and MTC) approved MTC Resolution No. 4056 Memorandum of Understanding in March 2012. The text of this MOU is provided in Appendix C.

⁵ Senate Bill 1029, approved July 2012, amended the Budget Act of 2012 to appropriate funds for HSR projects in the San Francisco to San Jose corridor, consistent with the blended system strategy identified in the Authority's 2012 Business Plan, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission Memorandum of Understanding. See Appendix B for the full text of Senate Bill 1029.



Figure 1-3 San Francisco to San Jose Project Section

The Downtown Extension is a proposed 1.3-mile tunnel that would extend the electrified rail corridor for Caltrain and high-speed rail between the existing 4th and King Station in San Francisco to the Transbay Transit Center as shown by the inset on Figure 1-3. Although the Authority would not construct the Downtown Extension, high-speed rail would utilize this track to reach the Transbay Transit Center, which will serve as a hub for 11 different transit systems. The Downtown Extension project was evaluated in the *Transbay Terminal/Caltrain Downtown Extension/Redevelopment Project Final EIS/EIR* and the recently published *Transbay Transit Center Program Draft Supplemental EIS/EIR*. The San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIR/EIS will therefore focus its analysis on high-speed rail service and infrastructure within the geographic area between the 4th and King Station and the San Jose Diridon Station, which has not been studied in a Tier 2 environmental document. Relevant information and analysis from the environmental documents prepared for the Downtown Extension project will be incorporated into the EIR/EIS.

1.6.2 Project Section Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Project is to implement the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section of the California High-Speed Rail System to provide the public with electric-powered high-speed rail service that provides predictable and consistent travel times between San Francisco and San Jose. The system is also intended to facilitate connectivity to the San Francisco and San Jose international airports, mass transit, the San Francisco Bay Area highway network, and the statewide high-speed rail system. The Project seeks to:

- Achieve high-speed rail service consistent with the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century (California Streets & Highways Code § 2704 et seq.) using blended train operations predominantly in the Caltrain corridor
- Provide blended system infrastructure that supports commercially feasible high-speed rail, while also minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing compatibility with communities along the rail corridor
- Establish a high-speed rail connection to the economic centers of northern California

A further purpose of the Project Section is to construct, maintain, and operate an electrified, high-speed rail system, which includes the construction, improvement, upgrade, operation, and maintenance of new and existing facilities and infrastructure necessary to support the system connecting the Transbay Transit Center in San Francisco to Diridon Station in San Jose. High-speed rail would “blend” with the existing Caltrain system through the primary use of a two-track configuration, and using existing transportation corridors and rights-of-way in a manner that is consistent with state law and minimizing environmental impacts through a reduced project footprint. The system would be designed to provide consistent and predictable travel, capable of achieving a nonstop travel time of 30 minutes between San Francisco and San Jose.

1.6.3 Project Alternatives

The San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIS/EIR will consider a No Project Alternative and one or more high-speed rail alternatives for the Blended System Project.

No Project Alternative: The No Project Alternative (No Action or No Build) represents conditions in the San Francisco to San Jose corridor as they exist in 2016, or as they would exist in future years without implementation of the project. It is based on projected growth, programmed and funded improvements to the intercity transportation system, and other reasonably foreseeable projects through the implementation of Phase 1 operations in 2029 and a future year of operation in 2040. The No Project Alternative takes into account the following sources of information: the State Transportation Improvement Program, regional transportation plans for all modes of travel, airport plans, intercity passenger rail plans, and city and county plans.

Programmed improvements currently underway include the electrification of the San Francisco to San Jose corridor, including the purchase of a new fleet of self-propelled electric multiple unit passenger cars by Caltrain and construction of three new grade separations at 25th, 28th, and 31st Avenues sponsored by the City of San Mateo, with contributions from the high-speed rail program. These will reduce the impacts of the Project Section alternatives. While grade separations are not part of the Project Section, high-speed rail is participating in the technical evaluation and funding plan development for a long-term strategy to fully grade-separate the Caltrain corridor. High-speed rail also considers contributions to grade-separation projects undertaken by the local communities along the San Francisco to San Jose rail corridor.

High-Speed Rail Blended System Alternative(s): The Project Section would provide high-speed rail service from the Transbay Transit Center in San Francisco to Diridon Station in San Jose along approximately 48 miles of blended infrastructure. High-speed rail vehicles would operate at speeds up to 110 miles per hour while sharing tracks with Caltrain, predominantly within the Caltrain right-of-way. There would be up to four high-speed trains per hour per direction in the peak and non-peak periods operating on the San Francisco to San Jose corridor.

The Project Section is anticipated to include the following elements for evaluation in the EIR/EIS based on public and agency comment.

1. *New and/or Modified Infrastructure*

- Curve straightening and track centers modifications throughout the corridor to support higher speeds, with the potential for reconstruction of Caltrain stations to accommodate these changes
- At least one set of passing tracks, with potential alternative locations for the passing tracks
- A light maintenance facility, with potential alternative locations
- Existing rail bridge reconstruction or replacement as necessary to accommodate mixed traffic
- Right-of-way acquisition as needed in certain locations

2. *Proposed Operations*

- Signal system improvements to accommodate blended service
- Resolution of high-speed rail operations at Caltrain's hold-out rule stations (Broadway, Atherton, Stanford Stadium, College Park)

What is a "hold-out rule" station?

Stations that require some passengers to cross an active track to board have a "hold-out" rule, prohibiting any train from passing a train that is stopped at the station for passengers. (The rule applies even when the passing train is on the side opposite the platform.)

3. *Modifications to Existing Stations*

- Raised and straightened platforms, platform screens
- Passenger facilities necessary for high-speed service at 4th and King, Millbrae and Diridon stations

4. *Safety Modifications*

- Installing perimeter fencing along the ROW
- Implementing four-quadrant gates at all at-grade crossings

1.6.4 Notification of EIR/EIS Scoping Opportunities

The Authority and FRA initiated the scoping process with the issuance of the NOP (Appendix E) and the NOI (Appendix F) on May 9, 2016. The California environmental review process began with filing the NOP with the State Clearinghouse. The Authority sent printed copies of the NOP to previously identified and potential responsible and trustee agencies at state and local levels. FRA sent the NOI to identified and potential cooperating agencies and tribal entities. The NOP and NOI requested that agencies provide written comments about the applicable permit and environmental review requirements of the agency, and the scope and content of the project environmental document germane to the agency's responsibilities in connection with the project section. The Authority and FRA conducted scoping activities for the Project Section between May 9, 2016, and July 20, 2016 (scoping period).

The Authority held three scoping meetings on May 23, 24, and 25, 2016, in San Francisco, San Mateo, and Mountain View. Scoping meeting venues were located within one mile of the Caltrain corridor and proposed high-speed rail alignment. Venues were accessible by public transportation, included elevators and ramps to enter the facility, and were spacious enough to allow for full participation of all attendees. Flyers identified a contact number for special requests for reasonable accommodations made 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting date. Notification materials for the scoping meetings were targeted to multi-language groups and included:

- **Mailing of notices** – The Authority sent scoping meeting notices (Appendix G.1) in English, with a Spanish inset,⁶ to 17,628 property owners, residents, and business tenants within a quarter-mile radius of the proposed stations. This included property owners adjacent to the Caltrain right-of-way.
- **Display advertisements** – The Authority published display advertisements in local newspapers with a collective circulation audience of over one million (Table 1-1 and Appendix G.2).

Table 1-1 Display Advertisement Notices

Publication	Date
San Francisco Examiner	May 9, 2016
Bay Area News Group	May 10, 2016
Daily Post	May 10, 2016
San Mateo Daily Journal	May 10, 2016
Sing Tao (Chinese)	May 11, 2016
Vietnam Daily News (Vietnamese)	May 11, 2016
El Observador (Spanish)	May 13, 2016
The Almanac	May 18, 2016
Mountain View Voice	May 20, 2016

Source: *Kearns and West, 2016*

- **Electronic distribution** – The Authority emailed the electronic scoping meeting notice (Appendix G.3) to 17,102 contacts included in the Project Section stakeholder database. The electronic scoping meeting notice was also featured on the Authority website in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Mandarin and shared with local cities, agencies, elected officials, and key stakeholder groups for posting on their respective websites.
- **Flyer distribution** – The Authority distributed copies of the scoping meeting flyers to 75 libraries, 28 community and civic centers, offices of representative elected officials, and city halls.
- **Briefings** – The Authority notified representative elected officials, cities, and town and neighborhood councils of the upcoming scoping meetings and offered a briefing.
- **Press release** – The Authority sent a press release (Appendix G.4) to local, state, and national media at the start of the scoping period.
- **Social media** – The Authority posted to Facebook and Twitter notifications of the three scoping meetings.

In addition to the display advertisements, there were also a number of articles published prior to and during the scoping process covering the scoping meetings (Table 1-2). Appendix G.5 includes copies of articles and editorials.

⁶ English and Spanish are the predominant languages in the project corridor.

Table 1-2 Articles Covering the Project during the Scoping Process

Date	Publication	Article Title
May 9, 2016	Silicon Valley Business Journal	"High-speed rail begins Peninsula environmental review in hopes of starting construction ASAP"
May 24, 2016	Silicon Valley Business Journal	"High-speed rail begins environmental clearance for Peninsula section"
May 25, 2016	The Almanac Online	"Tonight: Public meeting on high-speed rail from San Francisco to San Jose"
May 25, 2016	Streetsblog San Francisco	"Northern California High-Speed Rail Scoping Meeting"
June 7, 2016	Silicon Valley Business Journal	"High-speed rail, bad feelings return to Gardner neighborhood"
June 14, 2016	San Jose Mercury News	"San Jose: Residents concerned about how high-speed rail may cut through town"
June 22, 2016	Capital Public Radio News	"Bill Would Authorize high-speed rail Bonds For Caltrain"
June 28, 2016	San Francisco Chronicle	"Rail agency taps Brisbane tract eyed for transit-oriented housing"
July 10, 2016	Sacramento Bee (blog)	"Late-blooming measure would fast-track bullet train's bookends"

Source: Google. 2016. News search: San Francisco to San Jose Project section Scoping. 2016.

https://www.google.com/search?q=san+francisco+to+san+jose+project+section+scoping&biw=1152&bih=769&source=Int&tbs=cdr%3A1%2Ccd_min%3A5%2F9%2F2016%2Ccd_max%3A7%2F20%2F2016&lrm=ews (accessed July 20, 2016).

2 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT DURING SCOPING PERIOD

2.1 Summary of Scoping Meetings

Throughout the scoping period, the Authority encouraged the public and agencies to provide input through a variety of activities. Scoping meetings were conducted in an open house format at the three locations listed in Table 2-1 and as shown in Figure 2-1. Comment and speaker cards were available at each meeting for attendees to provide comments on the materials and information presented. A variety of information stations and tables were set up for participants to have one-on-one discussions with project team members (further explained in Section 2.1.1). The scoping comments and questions collected at the meetings and submitted via mail and through the Authority's website comment form are included in Appendix A. Approximately 153 people attended the three scoping meetings, and the Authority collected 45 oral or written comments.



Figure 2-1 Authority staff interacting with community members at information stations.

2.1.1 Format of Scoping Meetings

Three scoping meetings were held between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. that followed a common format. Project team members staffed information stations that included electronic and static displays featuring PowerPoint slides and during the open house portion of each scoping meeting. The stations provided information on the following topics.

- Welcome and Registration
- High-Speed Rail Statewide Overview
- San Francisco to San Jose Project Section
- San Francisco to San Jose Station Planning
- Overview of Environmental Review Process
- Caltrain Electrification Project
- Right-of-Way and Permission to Enter Process
- Comment Station

Authority staff greeted attendees at the entrance and asked them to sign in for the public record and for incorporation into the project stakeholder database, which the Authority uses to disseminate updates and subsequent public involvement opportunities to the public and agencies.

Table 2-1 Summary of Scoping Meetings

Meeting Location & Date	Number of Participants	Number of Comments Collected (Oral and Written)	Elected Officials, Agencies, and other Stakeholder Representatives
May 23, 2016 6:00-8:00 p.m. USCF Mission Bay 1500 Owens St. San Francisco, CA	38	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BART Division 8 ▪ Caltrans ▪ Capitol Corridor Joint Power Authority (CCJPA) ▪ City and County of San Francisco ▪ City of Millbrae ▪ Friends of Downtown Extension ▪ San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA)
May 24, 2016 6:00-8:00 p.m. San Mateo Marriott 1770 S. Amphlett Blvd. San Mateo, CA	58	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BART ▪ Caltrain ▪ Caltrans ▪ City of Atherton ▪ City of Brisbane ▪ City of Burlingame Councilmember Emily Beach ▪ City of Menlo Park ▪ City of San Carlos ▪ City of San Mateo ▪ Office of San Mateo County Supervisor Carole Groom ▪ Office of State Senator Jerry Hill ▪ San Mateo County ▪ San Mateo City Council Member Rick Bonilla ▪ San Francisco International Airport (SFO)
May 25, 2016 6:00-8:00 p.m. SFV Lodge 351 Villa St. Mountain View, CA	57	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Mountain View ▪ City of Sunnyvale ▪ Cypress Point Lakes ▪ Mountain View Coalition for Sustainable Planning ▪ Office of San Jose City Councilmember Raul Peralez ▪ Office of State Assembly Member Rich Gordon ▪ San Mateo County ▪ San Mateo County Economic Development Association ▪ Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

Source: *Kearns and West, 2016*

Each scoping meeting began with a one-hour information forum where meeting attendees could talk to members of the project team as shown in Figure 2-2. Following the information forum a formal PowerPoint presentation introduced the scoping meeting and agenda, shared the current understanding of the Project Section, walked through the project alignment, discussed how to provide effective comments, and provided ground rules for presenting oral comments. After the presentation, a 45-minute period was set aside for participants to provide oral comments recorded by a court reporter. Throughout the remainder of the meeting, participants visited information stations and provided comments at the comment station.



Figure 2-2 Project staff engages with stakeholders using a translator at the San Francisco Scoping Meeting

Project team members staffed the high-speed rail information stations and Caltrain staff answered questions at the Caltrain Electrification station. Table 2-2 describes the activities and information provided at the information stations. The content featured at the information stations is included in Appendix H, except for the Caltrain electrification materials.

Title VI Program materials were available at the registration table featuring details regarding the Authority's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Language interpreters were available at each meeting based on the language needs identified through Census 2010 data, including Spanish, Mandarin/Cantonese Chinese, and Tagalog. Table 2-3 lists the interpreters available at each of the meetings, based on the identified language needs.

Table 2-2 Scoping Meeting Information Stations

Station	Description
Welcome and Registration	Participants were welcomed and registered using sign-in sheets. A monitor displayed the meeting agenda and general information about the meeting format. Participants were informed of the opportunity to submit a written comment card or submit an oral comment to the stenographer and were asked voluntarily to complete a Title VI survey.
High-Speed Rail Statewide Overview	A monitor presented a statewide overview of the project status and a large statewide map of the high-speed rail system was mounted on an easel. Participants were invited to take flyers containing information on jobs created, opportunities for small businesses, environmental benefits, and overview of the project statewide. Project team members were available to answer questions and engage with participants.
San Francisco to San Jose Project Section	A monitor provided an overview of the Project Section with explanations of the blended system, proposed alternatives, safety modifications, potential passing track locations, potential light maintenance facilities, and a summary of the scoping and environmental review process. Posters showing the difference between the 2010 and 2016 projects were mounted on easels. Handouts provided overview information about the Project Section, the environmental process, and timeline of activities. Project team members were available to answer questions and engage with participants.
San Francisco to Jose Station Planning	A monitor presented information regarding the 4th and King, future Transbay Transit Center, Millbrae, and Diridon stations. Maps and footprint posters of each station were mounted on easels. Project team members were available to answer questions and engage with participants.
Overview of Environmental Review Process	A monitor presented the Project Section environmental process and the purpose of scoping. A poster describing the environmental review process was mounted on an easel. Project team members were available to answer any questions and engage with participants.
Caltrain Electrification	An informational poster of the Caltrain electrification project was provided at the station and Caltrain staff provided handouts on its electrification program.
Right-of-Way and Permission to Enter Process	A monitor and posters mounted on easels presented information on the right-of-way processes for permit to enter and right-of-way. Several flyers in English and Spanish were available explaining property rights and the permission to enter process. Authority right-of-way agents were present to answer any questions and engage with participants.
Comment Station	Project team members collected and distributed comment cards. A poster explaining the process for submitting a comment was mounted on an easel. A stenographer was situated at this station to capture any oral comments.

Source: Kearns and West, 2016

Table 2-3 Language Interpreters Available at Scoping Meetings

Meeting Date	Community	Interpreter Services Offered
May 23, 2016	San Francisco	Spanish, Tagalog, Mandarin/Cantonese Chinese
May 24, 2016	San Mateo	Spanish
May 25, 2016	Mountain View	Spanish

Source: Kearns and West, 2016

2.2 Summary of Outreach Activities

Although the scoping period officially began May 9, 2016 with the filing of the NOP with the State Clearinghouse and the publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register*, substantial stakeholder outreach in the Project Section was underway prior to the official initiation of scoping. These efforts generated improved awareness of the Project Section that facilitated the outreach and notification efforts during the scoping period. As listed in Table 2-4, these activities included outreach to business and community groups, early agency coordination, and elected official briefings.

Table 2-4 Summary of Outreach Activities (April 1 to July 20, 2016)

Date	Organization/Individual
Briefings Prior to Scoping Period	
April 5, 2016	Bay Area Council Transportation Committee Presentation
	City Age Summit
	City of Mountain View Staff Meeting
April 12, 2016	Bay Area Chapter of Disabled Veteran's Business Alliance Meeting
	San Jose Community Working Group
April 13, 2016	Northern California Legislative Briefing
April 26, 2016	City of Mountain View City Council Presentation
May 3, 2016	Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Meeting
May 5, 2016	Caltrans District 4 Calmentor Program Meeting
Briefings During Scoping Period	
May 18, 2016	City/County Staff Coordinating Group Meeting
May 26, 2016	Local Policy Maker Group Meeting
June 6, 2016	City of San Jose Transportation and Environment Committee Meeting
June 7, 2016	Town of Atherton Rail Committee Presentation
	San Jose City Council District 6 Briefing
June 10, 2016	Meeting with Mayor Sam Liccardo of San Jose and Carl Guardino of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group
June 13, 2016	Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA) Small Business Event
June 14, 2016	Belmont City Council Briefing
	International Transportation and Health Conference
	South Bay Transportation Officials Association Presentation
June 17, 2016	Diridon Policy Advisory Board
June 20, 2016	Call with Mayor of Palo Alto Pat Burt
	Meeting with Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren
June 22, 2016	Call with Burlingame City Councilmember Emily Beach

Date	Organization/Individual
June 28, 2016	Meeting with Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan, Amah Mutsun, and Ohlone Tribes in Morgan Hill
June 30, 2016	Meeting with Jennifer Easton at BART
	SPUR Briefing
	San Jose Diridon Parking Task Force Work Plan and Property Map Briefing
July 5, 2016	Larry Patterson and Brad Underwood Meeting
July 6, 2016	Brisbane Maintenance Facility Meeting
July 7, 2016	Millbrae Station Area Planning External Meeting
July 19, 2016	Meeting with Jennifer Easton (BART)
July 20, 2016	City/County Staff Coordinating Group Meeting
	Sons in Retirement Branch 32 Meeting
	Peninsula City Managers Meeting

Source: California High-Speed Rail Authority, Kearns and West, 2016

3 SUMMARY OF SCOPING TOPICS

Environmental topics identified during public scoping included, but are not limited to, the topics summarized in the sections below. The Authority and FRA will consider substantive environmental comments when preparing the EIR/EIS. The summary of scoping comments addresses six major topic areas: (1) project elements and stations, (2) community concerns, (3) environmental concerns, (4) technical/engineering concerns, (5) project costs/operations concerns, and (6) summary of agency responses to NOP/NOI. Appendix I includes all scoping comments received from agencies, organizations and individuals.

Comments concerning topics related to project sections other than the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section (such as for the San Jose to Merced section) are not summarized in this scoping report, but will be considered during preparation of the environmental documents pertinent to those sections. Appendix A includes all comments made during the scoping period.

3.1 Summary of Comments on Project Elements and Stations

The Project Section would operate primarily within an existing rail corridor and introduce new or modified infrastructure, blended operations, a maintenance facility, station modifications, and safety features. The project would provide high-speed rail services at two downtown San Francisco stations: Transbay Transit Center (infrastructure provided as part of the Downtown Extension project) and 4th and King, a Millbrae station, and a San Jose station at Diridon.

3.1.1 Grade Separations

Comments from individuals and agencies included requests to evaluate the potential environmental, financial, and community impacts of a full range of grade separation alternatives. Several commenters strongly supported grade separations as part of the Project Section and expressed concerns that the increased train traffic along the corridor would exacerbate existing traffic congestion and increase public safety hazards at the at-grade crossings. The potential for isolation of neighborhoods because of the impeded surface traffic flow also was a concern. Other commenters requested a study of the impact of implementing versus not implementing grade separation options on congestion, multimodal transportation, and safety. Several comments asked for information on the sequencing, costs, and timeline of grade separation alternatives. Other comments requested that the cost for cities to develop automobile, bike, and pedestrian crossings be compared to the cost of including grade separations in the project.

Commenters also requested a discussion of the benefits of four-quadrant gates and existing gate systems versus grade separations. Other comments requested the bicycle, pedestrian, and trail benefits of grade separations compared to at-grade crossings. A study of the effect of not proceeding with grade separations and a description of the relationship between grade separations and train frequencies also was requested. Commenters further requested that high-speed rail have a long-term plan for all grade separations to manage and mitigate traffic, safety, and noise issues.

Comments received around traffic mitigation for existing at-grade crossings requested tunneling or trenching tracks. Commenters also expressed an interest in constructing grade separations as a priority either before or concurrent with the high-speed rail project, as opposed to a phased approach over time.

3.1.2 Storage and Maintenance Facilities

A number of commenters requested that the EIR/EIS consider alternative locations for maintenance facilities and stations such as Newhall Yard, Caltrain Centralized Equipment Maintenance Facility, 4th and King, San Francisco's Piers 80 through 96, and industrial zones in San Francisco. They also requested consideration of opportunities for shared train storage and light maintenance facilities, such as with the Altamont Corridor Express, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, and BART.

Commenters requested consideration of the following in selecting a storage and light maintenance facility: consistency with municipal goals and priorities, consistency with state and

regional policies (e.g. Plan Bay Area), consistency with planned Bus Rapid Transit service, minimized effects on active farm production, compatibility with desired mixed-use development and affordable housing, and effect on zero waste goals.

3.1.3 Train Route Alignment

Several commenters requested routes that would terminate service outside of San Francisco to minimize environmental and community impacts by taking advantage of regional transportation connections. Other comments supported the convenience of a one-seat ride that would terminate in San Francisco. While many commenters did not want high-speed rail to pass through or near their properties, other commenters supported the project because of its economic benefits. Some commenters supported slower speeds along the Peninsula through revisiting Proposition 1A mandates, and others supported alignment options that would increase speeds greater than 110 miles per hour.

Consideration of other corridors was requested, such as along Highway 101, east of Highway 101 in the Baylands, in the East Bay to Oakland and Sacramento, or the Altamont Corridor instead of on the existing rail corridor between San Francisco and San Jose. Within the proposed high-speed rail corridor, commenters requested consideration of alternatives that would eliminate or minimize the need to acquire right-of-way, including consideration of a hybrid or stacked Caltrain/high-speed rail option to reduce the footprint and right-of-way requirements.

Comments suggested having four-tracks at all the Caltrain commuter stations to allow high-speed rail to bypass Caltrain at these stations. At-grade, aerial, and tunnel options for approaching the Diridon Station were proposed, along with consideration of alternatives to bring the aerial alignment north of Diridon back to grade earlier than Scott Boulevard, such as just south of I-880.

Commenters further suggested that the Authority consider the following criteria in selecting the train route alignments:

- Minimize displacements and effects to communities
- Maximize traffic reduction
- Increase opportunities for rail connectivity
- Provide stations at urbanized downtown areas

Specific recommendations regarding the use of the corridor included:

- Relocate the Bayshore Station to integrate better with local land-use planning
- Consider extending the blended system south to Gilroy
- Consider alternatives to the adopted Downtown Extension route to the Transbay Transit Center described in the City of San Francisco's Railyard Alternatives and I-280 Boulevard Feasibility Study (RAB)⁷

3.1.4 Stations

Commenters expressed a range of recommendations for station amenities and design to improve the boarding process, safety, and speed up transfer times, including passenger walkways, level boarding,⁸ platform width, and visual and aural warnings of trains. These recommendations included consideration of common level boarding at all high-speed rail and Caltrain stations to improve the boarding process and including passenger walkways between main terminals to speed up transfer times. Commenters requested that the EIR/EIS evaluate station improvement options and infrastructure related to those improvements. A variety of commenters suggested the importance of preserving and reusing existing buildings as new stations and the need to better

⁷ Note that the City of San Francisco in its scoping letter did not request that the Authority study the RAB alternatives in the high-speed rail EIR/EIS, but instead noted that the City itself would be studying potential options in the RAB study as part of a separate process.

⁸ Level boarding platforms are level with the interior doors of trains such that a passenger transferring from one train to a second train is not required to climb up or down steps to gain access the second train on the same platform.

analyze and mitigate maintenance facility effects. Commenters requested definition of amenities needed for high-speed rail for the joint station locations and the effects of grade separation.

Commenters expressed concerns regarding traffic, parking, transit, pedestrian and bicycle access. Recommendations to address these concerns included creating a station access policy that prioritizes space-efficient and sustainable modes of travel including multi-modal access to stations, in particular bicycle and pedestrian access to stations; identifying parking needs for all transportation operators at stations; and including current and projected use of transportation networking companies systems (e.g., Lyft, Uber, future services). Commenters also requested that the EIR/EIS consider the effect of identified Authority funding limitations on visual and functional improvements and on parking, pedestrian, and bicycle access.

Comments regarding station management and maintenance included:

- Develop station area management plans
- Analyze operating rules and dispatching protocols and include in the terminal capacity analysis

3.2 Summary of Community Concerns

Comments on community effects focused primarily on the topics of environmental justice and growth and socioeconomic considerations. Reduced community connectivity was also a concern.

3.2.1 Environmental Justice

A variety of comments requested that the EIR/EIS consider the disproportionate effects that may fall on environmental justice populations related primarily to noise, vibration, and the effects of grade separations on community amenities and neighborhoods. A variety of commenters requested more information on how at-grade and elevated crossings and right-of-way acquisitions might affect specific underserved neighborhoods.

3.2.2 Growth and Socioeconomics

Commenters expressed concern over the impacts of the San Francisco to San Jose project on schools, residents, and jobs. Commenters suggested that the EIR/EIS evaluate and mitigate the effect of high-speed rail to nearby businesses and property values as well as the potential effects of construction, noise, and freight, to community connectivity and traffic on local roadways.

3.3 Summary of Environmental Concerns

Comments on potential environmental topics covered the range of resources that would be considered in the EIR/EIS. Commenters requested that the EIR/EIS assess the construction and operational effects of the Project Section on aesthetics and visual resources, agricultural farmland and forested lands, air quality and global climate change, biological resources and wetlands, cultural resources, hydrology and water resources, land use and development, noise and vibration, parks and recreation, public utilities and energy, safety and security, and traffic and transportation.

3.3.1 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

Many commenters expressed concern about the aesthetic effects of the Project Section on communities. Commenters requested mitigation of the visual and aesthetic effects of grade separations including, vegetation removal (e.g., trees that are local distinctive urban elements), shadows cast on homes, neighborhoods, and parks from overhead structures, graffiti on elevated structures, and structural changes to scenic views. A few commenters suggested recommendations for improving visual quality of rail crossing designs such as creating an iconic feature of the rail or incorporating design elements that could be adapted to the local context.

3.3.2 Agricultural Farmland and Forested Lands

Commenters recommended that the EIR/EIS evaluate and mitigate effects to active and fallow farmland and other agricultural lands.

3.3.3 Air Quality and Global Climate Change

Commenters requested that the EIR/EIS assess the health effects of air pollution, greenhouse gases and the potential effects from climate change in the Bay Area. Several commenters suggested an assessment of the air quality link to potential health risks, in particular for existing and future sensitive populations. They also requested that the EIR/EIS include a toxic air contaminant and greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis, including technical information in the appendices. The U.S. *National Climate Assessment* and the Council on Environmental Quality *Revised Draft Guidance for Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change Impacts* were recommended as information sources to help with the analysis, including development of mitigation measures. Commenters suggested use of design to accommodate future and anticipated effects resulting from climate change.

A variety of commenters expressed concern about the effect that traffic congestion and construction might have on air quality and global climate change. Some comments highlighted the importance of linking to regional air quality plans and guidelines and using the best available control measures for pollutants, including evaluating the project's consistency with the Air Districts' 2010 Clean Air Plan. Commenters also suggested consulting the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) 2012 Air Quality Guidelines for guidance on how to evaluate construction, operational and cumulative air quality effects.

Commenters also provided recommendations for mitigating and adapting to global climate change, such as utilizing the best available control measures for all pollutants, including fugitive dust source controls, mobile and stationary source controls, and administrative controls, developing design considerations and developing a construction emissions mitigation plan for fugitive dust and diesel particulate matter (DPM). The BAAQMD Guidelines were a recommended source for mitigation measures.

3.3.4 Biological Resources and Wetlands

Commenters suggested a complete assessment of the flora and fauna within and adjacent to the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section, with particular emphasis on the identification and mitigation of endangered, threatened, and sensitive species and sensitive habitats, as well as construction and operational impacts to habitat connectivity and movement corridors. Commenters requested that the EIR/EIS analyze and mitigate how increased use of the areas adjacent to rail stations could affect habitat and wildlife and the effect of the San Francisco to San Jose project on tidal marshes and flats. There were comments requesting detailed impact analyses on ecological areas, natural habitats, wetlands and wildlife corridors for both temporary and permanent impacts. Comments also requested that the EIR/EIS provide information on the trees to be removed (e.g., species, health, size) and why a tree removal could not be avoided. Additionally, commenters requested that the EIR/EIS include a replacement schedule for any trees proposed for removal with locations, species, size, and number of replacement trees, in line with city tree ordinance requirements.

3.3.5 Cultural Resources

Commenters requested preservation of the architectural elements of existing Caltrain stations at combined Caltrain/high-speed rail stations. Commenters expressed concern about potential impacts to historic Caltrain stations. A variety of comments also requested preservation of landmark resources, including trees, such as the El Palo Alto and the historic eucalyptus tree groves in Burlingame.

3.3.6 Hydrology and Water Resources

Comments inquired about potential impacts of the San Francisco to San Jose Project on existing creeks, culverts, or other flood protection facilities and on flood flows. Commenters expressed concern about a number of topics, including: the effect of sunlight blockage from newly constructed bridges on creeks and creek-beds, trail flooding resulting from bridge construction and operation, the potential effects to creek flow capacities, the potential for any needed

modifications to existing bridges that cross existing creeks, culverts, or other flood protection facilities, and the potential for construction to alter existing flood flows or flood patterns.

Commenters were also concerned about the potential for the San Francisco to San Jose project to affect groundwater quality or natural groundwater recharge and water supply. Additional concerns were the potential effects to water supply facilities during construction or in the long term, and the potential for sea level rise to affect the proposed project.

3.3.7 Land Use and Development

A few comments requested the assessment and mitigation of the impact of the project on land use and development potentially generated by higher density zoning of properties along the Caltrain right-of-way. The environmental and community effects from potential land use changes and effects to businesses and property values was a particular concern. Commenters also requested that the EIR/EIS evaluate potential negative effects of right-of-way acquisition. Other commenters expressed concerns regarding the potential for the Project Section to visually or physically divide a community.

3.3.8 Noise and Vibration

Many commenters expressed concern over potential noise and vibration effects on neighborhoods and communities near rail construction and operations. These comments were primarily oriented towards residential and downtown areas and were particularly noted as important in areas disproportionately affected by train noise and areas with disproportionate concentrations of low-income or minority communities. Concerns included the extent of construction noise and its effects on local residents and businesses, the effect that noise may have on community lifestyle, property values, and quality of education, and the effect of noise and vibration in neighborhoods that already experience noise and vibration from existing freight trains. Vibration effects to the Brisbane Bayshore Railroad Museum and to existing water systems were also a concern. Recommended mitigations included creating quiet zones and reducing or eliminating horns at grade crossings.

3.3.9 Parks and Recreational Areas and Facilities

Commenters recommended that the EIR/EIS evaluate and mitigate the effects of the Project Section relating to parks and park visitors. One comment suggested that the State ensure an equitable sharing of any negative effects among the affected communities.

3.3.10 Public Utilities and Energy

Commenters suggested the need to evaluate the effects of electrification on urban utility rates; how at-grade, elevated, and below-grade alignment options could potentially affect city utilities, including storm drains; and options for energy savings by utilizing different sources of energy. Commenters also recommended ways to improve public utilities and energy conditions, including utilizing water efficient equipment, recycled water, and meeting local water-efficient ordinance requirements.

3.3.11 Safety and Security

Many commenters expressed safety and security concerns and recommended the assessment of increased congestion on emergency evacuation routes, increases in emergency service response time, and delays in hospital access. Additional concerns were provided regarding the effects on pedestrian and bicycle safe passage with an emphasis on school proximity, and the effects on police facilities and emergency dispatch centers. Commenters also were concerned about the potential effects of platform design, crossing, and station placement on suicide attempts.

Commenters suggested recommendations for improving safety and security, including the following:

- Fence grade separated areas to prevent intrusion
- Construct and operate rail segments only after they are safe

- Plan for potential future passenger screening requirements

3.3.12 Traffic and Transportation

Many commenters discussed the effects of high-speed rail on congestion and multimodal transportation. Particular concerns included the ability for stations to maintain or enhance bicycle and pedestrian access and effects on roadway congestion. Congestion during peak traffic, peak train crossings, times when schools are in session and their associated safety implications was a concern. Other common concerns included parking needs and the need to analyze and mitigate the effects to traffic congestion. Suggested studies for inclusion in the EIR/EIS included: high-speed rail effects on increased parking needs, freight trains, commuter services, and expressways. Commenters also requested that the EIR/EIS evaluate construction effects on traffic and the effects of the blended system on vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, commenters were concerned about effects from the increased congestion to Caltrain stations and the effects on Caltrain schedule quality, travel time, and reliability.

Commenters' suggestions on how to reduce traffic and improve multimodal mobility included tunneling or trenching tracks below ground, considering alternative access points around high-traffic crossings, grade separation studies, grade separation prompt construction, and utilizing and updating ridership data. Some comments also inquired about the effects of the project on freight and airport traffic and the associated environmental consequences. Recommended mitigation projects included bicycle and pedestrian improvements, between local destinations (e.g. schools, parks) through a bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvement program. Commenters further suggested consulting the San Mateo County Transportation Authority grade separation program footprint studies and the preliminary *Expressway Plan 2040* project list for mitigation measures for significant effects to expressways.

3.4 Summary of Technical/Engineering Concerns

Comments involving technical concerns focused primarily on engineering issues and technology issues.

3.4.1 Engineering

Several comments requested further assessment of engineering topics, such as track capacity and power outage issues. Many commenters inquired about different freight options, such as a mixed-use rail (freight/passenger) system. Comments included recommendations to include vehicle detection sensors at crossings and use existing third tracks at stations. A variety of comments inquired about the sequence of Caltrain electrification and its relationship to high-speed rail construction and service.

3.4.2 Technology

A few comments inquired about using technology options, such as Hyperloop, direct current, and building renewable energy along the route in lieu of electrification. One comment expressed the benefit of waiting for further technological advancements before continuing high-speed rail construction.

3.5 Summary of Project Cost and Operations Concerns

Commenters expressed concerns about direct and indirect costs, construction impacts, and integration of high-speed rail with other rail operations along the corridor and in the stations.

3.5.1 Project Cost

Commenters expressed concern regarding the cost of the Project Section and the use of tax dollars on this project instead of using them for other purposes. Commenters requested consideration of the costs to develop automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure for connectivity of high-speed rail service with other modes along the corridor, the operational and financial impact to Caltrain, and the cost of various grade separations. Commenters requested further Project Section cost estimates and cost differences based on different construction

scenarios and disproportionate cost burdens. Some commenters also commented on the cost of using high-speed rail compared to air travel.

3.5.2 Construction

Many comments indicated concern of the impacts, sequencing, and timing of project construction. A variety of comments questioned the sequencing of grade separation construction and the potential scalability of the Project Section route alignment and track expansion.

3.5.3 Operations

Some comments indicated a preference for integrated high-speed rail ticketing with existing local cards, including ticket pricing that includes a transfer option. A variety of comments inquired about the possibility of late night scheduling to reduce drunk driving accidents and commuter wait time. Commenters also recommended that the Authority include scenarios for passing options and their effect on schedule and reliability.

Commenters requested that the EIR/EIS analyze the potential impact to other local and regional rail or transportation operators' operations and capacity of facilities, including Caltrain, UPRR freight, BART, ACE, San Francisco Muni, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. Elimination of the hold-out rule at Caltrain stations was also recommended. Commenters expressed concern over the Union Pacific Railroad's right-of-way and operating rights. A commenter requested that the Authority acknowledge and disclose the railroad's exclusive rights, including trackage rights, and further requested consideration of related memorandum of understandings.

3.6 Summary of Agency Responses to NOP/NOI

The Authority received numerous letters in response to the NOP/NOI. Table 3-1 lists the federal, state, regional, and local agencies that provided comments in response to the NOP/NOI and/or provided comments at the scoping meetings. Copies of the agency comments submitted are included in Appendix A.

Table 3-1 Summary of Agency Responses to the NOP/NOI

Agency	Name of Commenter	Title of Commenter
Local and Regional		
Bay Area Air Quality Management District	Jean Roggenkamp	Deputy Executive Officer
Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)	Ellen Smith	Department Manager
City and County of San Francisco	John Rahaim Edward D. Reiskin Harlan L. Kelly Tilly Chang	Planning Director SFMTA Director of Transportation SFPUC General Manager SFCTA Executive Director
City of Belmont	Carlos de Melo	Community Development Director
City of Brisbane	John A. Swiecki	Community Development Director
City of Burlingame	Ann Keighran	Mayor
City of Menlo Park	Rich Cline	Mayor
City of Millbrae	Ray Chan	Public Works Director
City of Mountain View	Linda Forsberg	Transportation and Business Manager
City of Palo Alto	Patrick Burt Joshua D. Mello	Mayor Chief Transportation Official

Agency	Name of Commenter	Title of Commenter
City of San Carlos	Jeff Maltbie	City Manager
City of San Jose Department of Transportation	Jim Ortbal Harry Freitas	Director of Transportation Director of Planning Building and Code Enforcement
City of San Mateo Public Works	Larry Patterson	City Manager
City of Santa Clara	John Davidson	Principal Planner
City of South San Francisco	Marian Lee	Assistant City Manager
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB)	Michael Burns	Chief Executive Officer
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission	Dan Leavitt	Manager of Regional Initiatives
San Mateo County	Steven Monowitz	Community Development Director
San Mateo County Transit District	Douglas Kim	Director of Planning
Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department	Aruna Bodduna	Associate Transportation Planner
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority	Andrea Mackenzie	General Manager
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority	Roy Molseed	Senior Environmental Planner
Santa Clara Valley Water District	Yvonne Arroyo	Associate Engineer
Town of Atherton Rail Committee	James R. Janz	Vice Chair
Transportation Agency for Monterey County	Christina Watson	Principal Transportation Planner
State		
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Scott Wilson	Regional Manager
California Department of Transportation	Patricia Maurice	District 4 Branch Chief
Native American Heritage Commission of California	Sharaya Souza	Staff Services Analyst
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission	Isaac Pearlman	Coastal Program Analyst
University of California San Francisco (UCSF)	Lori Yamauchi	Associate Vice Chancellor
Federal		
Environmental Protection Agency	Carolyn Mulvihill	NEPA Reviewer – Transportation

Source: Kearns and West, 2016

4 NEXT STEPS IN THE EIR/EIS PROCESS

The information on impacts, mitigation measures, and proposed alternatives developed through the scoping process will inform the analysis that the Authority and FRA will conduct in the Draft EIR/EIS. The Authority and FRA will identify a reasonable range of alternatives for further evaluation following additional coordination with agencies and the public. The final range of alternatives will be determined through coordination with USACE and USEPA pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding integrating NEPA and Clean Water Act Sections 404 and 408. Prior to publishing the Draft EIR/EIS, the Authority will identify a staff recommended Preliminary Preferred Alternative based on the environmental analysis and reflecting public and stakeholder input. The Draft EIR/EIS will analyze existing conditions in the project area and potential impacts of the Project Section alternatives. The Authority will continue to conduct public outreach so that the public is provided updates of the Project Section's progress through the environmental process and has the opportunity to provide additional input.

Once the analysis of existing conditions and potential impacts of proposed alternatives is complete, FRA and the Authority will publish a Draft EIR/EIS, followed by a public comment period, which will begin following filing of the EIR Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse and publishing the EIS Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. The Authority and FRA will hold public hearings in the project area to solicit comments from the public and agencies on the Draft EIR/EIS. These public hearings will be advertised in local newspapers, included in the Notice of Availability, and posted on the Authority's website. Verbal and written comments provided at these public hearings will be recorded and formally documented. The Authority and FRA will consider all substantive comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and publish a Final EIR/EIS that will respond to those comments. Public comments as part of the Final EIR/EIS will be available for decision makers prior to approval of the Project.