

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Bendix, G. Graham, F. Granade, J. Hronowski, (Chair), B. Jenkins, S. Richardson, M. Tekchandani, C. Tucker, B. Wilfley

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, R. Bolon, M. Bouchard, R. Lake, L. Larano

Chair John Hronowski called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Cat Tucker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, requested adding the following comments: On page 1, Public Comment:

- “Doug DeLong attended a Mountain View Human Relations Commission meeting where a group of high school students that had attended a diversity camp made a presentation.”
- Change the word, “current” to “recent,” in the second sentence.
- At the end of the third sentence, add “even though some of them had personal connections to some of those suicides.”

On page three under Public Comment, add, “said the high school students mentioned in his earlier comment reported that their fellow diversity camp attendees had talked at the camp about pressure, grades, depression, contemplation of suicide, and their own suicide attempts. Unfortunately these community realities sometimes interact with the railroad. He said Caltrain would not be liable for a suicide because it is not Caltrain’s fault and he has not seen any damage claim ever come before the JPB for approval of payment. Mr. DeLong said Caltrain is moving to improve the process to notify passengers about delays, including a recent contract award for a new dispatching and predictive arrival system.”

The Committee (Richardson/Bendix) approved the minutes of January 20, 2010 with these changes.

Public Comment

None

Chairperson’s Report

No report

Presentation: San Bruno Grade Separation Project

Deputy Director JPB Capital Program Delivery Liria Larano introduced Project Manager Rafael Bolon and provided details:

- The project goal is to improve safety by eliminating conflicts between trains and vehicular/pedestrian traffic at crossings between Highway 380 and San Felipe Avenue in San Bruno.

- The project includes grade-separated vehicular crossings at Angus, San Mateo and San Bruno avenues, an elevated Caltrain station between San Mateo and San Bruno avenues and pedestrian underpasses at Sylvan and Euclid avenues and a new San Bruno Caltrain Station.
- Final design is complete and the project is now in the procurement phase. The project is to be advertised in March with award of the main construction contract for a two-track, grade-separated structure by July 2010. Construction is expected to last two years with completion in the summer of 2012.
- Overall cost of the two-track structure is \$165 million. Funding sources include the Transportation Authority (TA), Proposition 1B, Public Utilities Commission (PUC) 190; State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding and potential federal stimulus funds.
- The southern limit of the grade separation in the City of San Bruno is San Felipe Avenue and the northern limit is Highway 380.
- One of the first projects to complete will be a temporary shoofly for Caltrain to transfer operations from the mainline to the shoofly and to a temporary station.
- There will be detours to allow for construction at San Bruno and San Mateo avenues and construction of the mechanically stabilized embankments.
- After completion of the two-track grade-separated structure and elevated Caltrain station with the southbound platform, the next phase will be based on what California High Speed Rail (CHSR) will be doing. If for some reason High Speed Rail (HSR) does not go through or is delayed, construction will begin in the next phase to complete the two-track structure and the northbound platform. If HSR is ready in two years, the northbound platform will not be built and the two-track structure will be expanded into a four-track structure. Environmental clearance will be required for the additional two-tracks.

Ms. Tucker asked if there is graffiti abatement in the project plan. Mr. Bolon said this was addressed in the specifications. There will be shrubs and climbing plantings to reduce graffiti. In areas where plantings are not appropriate, there will be a coating applied to the structure, which makes it much easier to remove graffiti.

Ms. Tucker asked if it would then be the responsibility of the local agency to monitor graffiti. Mr. Bolon said Caltrain will maintain Caltrain property such as platforms. Rail Transportation Director Michelle Bouchard said there are a variety of Memoranda of Understandings that Caltrain has with local agencies, which cover items such as tunnels and elevators. There are also various types of arrangements Caltrain has with municipalities that require Caltrain or the cities to abate graffiti.

Chair Hronowski asked what would happen with the northbound trains with only the new southbound platform completed. Mr. Bolon said the temporary station would still be in operation for northbound and southbound trains that would pass through the new station at that time.

Sepi Richardson asked if there will be stores or shops around the new station. Mr. Bolon said San Mateo Avenue is part of a downtown portion of San Bruno with a number of shops but shops are not incorporated into the actual project.

Bruce Jenkins asked what part of funding is from the City of San Bruno. Mr. Bolon said there are various funding sources but the City of San Bruno pays nothing.

Ms. Bouchard said a significant portion of the funding comes from the TA.

Brian Wilfley asked how Caltrain was able to arrive at this design in terms of cooperation with cities and interested parties. Mr. Bolon said a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was commissioned by the City of San Bruno in 2002-2003 when the project was originated with a significant number of working sessions to review all design issues and architectural aesthetics with extensive public input. Two CAC members are currently San Bruno city council members.

Mr. Wilfley asked how Caltrain managed community acceptance of elevated rails. Mr. Bolon said the choice of a partially raised track and partially lowered road is in an area where BART runs adjacent to Caltrain property and Caltrain was constrained from going any lower. Highway 380 is also a constraint for vertical clearance. There is an existing park located near the project and it will be expanded and incorporated into the station design.

Francois Granade asked if there were limited negative reactions to the project walls. Mr. Bolon said there were some concerns but it is fundamentally a safety improvement and Caltrain is constrained by the physicality of the location.

Mr. Granade asked if the project will resemble the grade separation in Belmont. Mr. Bolon replied yes but San Bruno requested a slightly different treatment on the facing and slightly different architectural features. He said it will resemble the San Carlos grade separation.

Ms. Richardson asked how the governor's proposed budget and subsequent effects on transportation will affect this project. Ms. Larano said Proposition 1B is one of the reasons the project has been accelerated so the project can be advertised by July 1 and not lose \$30 million. PUC 190 funding of \$10 million has been secured because of the ranking of the project in terms of a safety project.

Ms. Richardson asked about stimulus funding. Ms. Larano said less is known about stimulus funding and if it doesn't materialize, Caltrain will have to request funding from the TA.

Ms. Richardson asked if Caltrain qualifies for any shovel-ready projects. Ms. Bouchard said this project is shovel-ready.

Ms. Richardson asked if Caltrain is protected if the vendor does not provide service on time. Ms. Larano said Caltrain has liquidated damages in the contract.

Paul Bendix asked about STIP and PUC 190 funding. Ms. Larano said this is designated funding for grade crossing projects.

Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said this project area intersection has been dangerous with BART construction, trenches and tunnels and he is pleased San Bruno has had a community engagement process to create the product. He said this demonstrates how HSR and other grade separations can be done with community involvement as part of the process; Communities should look at the process in San Bruno to see what they can learn in the design process. He said the San Bruno Station has moved many times and it will now have a permanent home.

Ms. Bouchard said this project began in 2002 and there has been shifting of funding availability, funding sources, and scopes of work, HSR issues and Baby Bullet implementation with subsequent changes in operation of the railroad. She said the project team is remarkable in taking all these variables into account, dealing with contingencies and making a project happen that will be a great benefit to the community and Caltrain and hopefully be used with HSR in the future. She thanked Ms. Larano and Mr. Bolon for the hard work involved in the project.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- State of California received \$2.25 billion in American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding but the specifics of distribution for northern and southern California are unknown. One of the stipulations of using ARRA funding is the requirement that funds be matched 50 percent with Proposition 1A bonds, which would be a doubling of funds received.
- Caltrain has a survey on its caltrain.com Web site to solicit input on how to improve Web site functionality and design. She encouraged CAC members to visit the site and pass along this information to others.
- The Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Train, which is a Martin Luther King Jr. Association event with Caltrain, carried 847 riders compared to 2,200 in 2009. Reduced ridership was due in part to bad weather, a shift in plans in San Francisco and an anticipated protest in San Jose.
- The January 30 Monster Energy AMA Supercross event at AT&T Park carried 4,600 additional riders.
- Annual train counts, which began in January, are being finalized. Data is expected in March with a presentation to the JPB in May.
- Preliminary January ridership is down 5.2 percent, which is an improvement from previous months. Total revenue for January is down 4.4 percent and down 4.5 percent year-to-date.
- The Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility in San Jose experienced a failure in the high pressure water line in late December, which put the wash system and adjacent track out of service. Staff is preparing emergency procurement documents for the repair.

Mr. Jenkins asked if there was a cleaning agent being used that damaged the windows.

Ms. Bouchard said a solution is used with a specific alkalinity to buff out the window corrosion.

Ms. Richardson asked if ARRA funding of \$2.25 billion would be used for capital improvements or one-time use. Ms. Bouchard said it would be for specific capital improvement projects.

Committee Comments

Mr. Wilfley attended the February JPB meeting and was so impressed with the work of staff in running the railroad.

Mr. Bendix said he was so impressed how teamwork with conductors speeds boarding for persons needing assistance. He said the process shows bicyclist what is involved in efficient boarding. He said not all conductors work this way, but when they do it moves things along. Ms. Bouchard said it would be helpful to get the date and train numbers for follow up.

Mr. Jenkins said a conductor expressed his concern at the February JPB meeting about engineer crew reduction. He said maybe there should be a full crew during commute hours to help with loading of bicycles and people needing assistance and perhaps one conductor for midday runs and weekends. Ms. Bouchard said the JPB has asked staff to meet with the United Transportation Union on this issue. Mr. Wilfley suggested this item be agendaized for future discussion.

Ms. Richardson said it is so important for the Chief Executive Officer to be flexible and staff to have input in order to have a seamless budget reduction operation.

Gerald Graham asked how busy second conductors are, especially if they are checking tickets. If there is only one conductor, coverage for checking fares is reduced proportionately and should be considered. One conductor could be used on trains with light passenger loads and he looks forward to hearing staff's opinion.

Ms. Richardson said the California League of Cities is frustrated in how the State budget is being handled and many agencies are involved in putting an initiative on the November ballot to force the State to stop shifting and stealing funds to balance the budget. February 27 is a super Saturday set aside to gather signatures for the initiative and she would like to see everyone involved. Statewide city officials have a goal to collect 460,000 signatures by April 15.

Ms. Tucker said Santa Clara County is involved in collecting signatures.

Ms. Tucker asked for specifics on when train whistles blow in the Gilroy area. Ms. Bouchard will provide this information.

Ms. Tucker asked if CAC members have email addresses on the Caltrain Web site for input from the public. Ms. Bouchard said there is an email, which is cacsecretary@caltrain.com. Correspondence is included in the monthly correspondence file distributed at the meetings. CAC members' names are listed on the Caltrain Web site with county designation.

Chair Hronowski said there will be a memorial service for transit advocate Norm Rolfe on Friday, February 19 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the San Francisco Cable Car Museum at Washington/Mason streets.

Mr. Graham asked about Caltrain service to the Gilroy Garlic Festival. Ms. Bouchard said there have been requests for Caltrain service. The festival was a fundraiser for the Golden Gate Railroad Museum event, and Caltrain was chartered to get people to the Golden Gate Railroad Museum.

Ms. Tucker asked if the board of the Garlic Festival would need to push this forward. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain would like to support it if possible.

Date, Time, and Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 6 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 2nd Floor Bacciocco Auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.